



Analysis of Arabic Language Learning Needs in Vocational High Schools Based on the Independent Curriculum

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the needs of vocational high school students for Arabic language learning in the Merdeka Curriculum based on deep learning as a basis for compiling relevant textbooks. The method used is a descriptive quantitative approach by distributing needs analysis questionnaires to 474 students from three public vocational high schools in DKI Jakarta. The results of the study concluded that 1) 84.3% of students have basic Arabic reading skills, however, 84.4% want transliteration and Latin reading; 2) 92.4% want grammar material and 93.8% want proficiency material presented on themes in the home, classroom, and school environment; 3) 79% of the material is presented in the form of textbooks and 56.7% online systems that direct visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning tendencies. This study provides an initial contribution in the form of data on the real needs of vocational high school students that can be used to design more applicable and student-centered teaching materials, namely contextual, communicative, and flexible learning in accordance with the characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Keywords: Vocational High School; Independent Curriculum; Needs analysis; Curriculum.

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Introduction

Along with the issuance of the Independent Curriculum¹ The government reiterated that the target of Arabic language mastery in Indonesia is directed towards mastery of communication.² In other words, Arabic language learning can lead learners to integrate with the international Arabic-speaking community.³ because after all, Arabic is one of the 6 languages recognized by the UN⁴. The international Arabic-speaking community is not only in countries in the Middle East, which are divided into Arab Gulf countries, Arab countries of Syria, Arab countries of Africa, Iraq, and others.⁵ But also non-Arabic speaking countries that study Arabic in America⁶, Europe, Australia⁷, China⁸, Korea⁹ And others. In this regard, it is crucial to compile Arabic language textbooks in schools that develop communicative skills.

Secondary schools in Indonesia generally consist of Senior High Schools (SMA), Vocational High Schools (SMK), Islamic Senior High Schools (MA), and Vocational Senior High Schools (MAK)¹⁰. These four schools have their own characteristics. SMA and MA have similarities in that they direct their graduates to become academics, while SMK and MAK have similarities in that they direct their graduates to have specialized skills¹¹. The difference between SMA and SMK, and MA and MAK, is that MA and MAK have a more Islamic

¹ No. 12 of 2024 (2024).

² Tasha Ayu Azzahra and M. Muhajir, "Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Arabic Language learning," *Curriculum Innovation* 20, no. 2 (2023): 261–74, <https://doi.org/10.17509/jik.v20i2.59793>.

³ Suci Ramadhanti Febriani and Kddour Guettaoui Bedra, "Design of Arabic Learning Based on the Merdeka Curriculum through PjBl for Islamic Senior High School," *Asalibuna* 7, no. 01 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.30762/asalibuna.v7i01.865>.

⁴ General Assembly, 1974 (1974).

⁵ Arabic Subject Learning Achievement Phase F (2022).

⁶ Jeffrey Bale, "Arabic as a Heritage Language in the United States," *International Multilingual Research Journal* 4, no. 2 (2010): 125–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2010.499041>.

⁷ Jennifer Baldwin, "The Place of Arabic Language Teaching in Australian Universities," *History of Education Review* 47, no. 1 (2018): 77–86, <https://doi.org/10.1108/HER-05-2016-0021>.

⁸ Yousef Ali Ahmed Al-Nahdi dan Shuo Zhao, "Learning Arabic language in China: Investigation on instrumental and integrative motivations of Chinese Arabic learners," *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 27 (Januari 2022): 767–97, <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v27i1.5369>.

⁹ Ahmad Hidayatullah Zarkasyi dkk., "Kurikulum Merdeka for Arabic language learning according to Piaget's cognitive development theory," *Inovasi Kurikulum* 20, no. 2 (2023): 305–16, <https://doi.org/10.17509/jik.v20i2.61359>.

¹⁰ Undang-Undang RI No. 20 (2003).

¹¹ Faridah Faridah and Ansar Ansar, "ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCE: THE PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION," *Lentera Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan* 25, no. 2 (2022): 192–203, <https://doi.org/10.24252/lp.2022v25n2i2>.

religious curriculum. Arabic language learning is included in the curriculum at all four schools.

Learning Arabic at MA and MAK is much more in-depth than learning at SMA and SMK.¹² Because the curriculum is designed for the Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah level by the Ministry of Religious Affairs¹³, while the Ministry of Education and Culture designs the curriculum in SMA and SMK studied from grade XI SMA and or SMK¹⁴. The MA and MAK curriculum is closely related to Islamic religious nuances.¹⁵, which is Islam itself, is actually closely related to Arabic (Hefner, 2009). The Arabic curriculum for SMA and SMK actually still refers to the same curriculum, namely, referring to the Education Assessment Curriculum Standards Agency (BSKAP). Still, the Arabic curriculum for SMA and SMK really must be differentiated because each has its own character. In SMA, the orientation is academic, while in SMK, the orientation is professional.¹⁶ Thus, the textbooks and teaching modules should be different. However, in the field, what happens is that the textbooks circulating in both SMA and SMK are still the same.¹⁷

The school's¹⁸ Uniqueness and local wisdom. Its implementation then directs students not only to have competencies but also Pancasila character that is packaged into intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular learning activities.¹⁹ Those who utilize various learning methods and technologies to create differentiated learning and flexibility in learning. Thus, every teaching material in the curriculum, including Arabic, must be adapted to support the expected learning outcomes in the school.

¹² Mohammad Jailani and Djamaludin Perawironegoro, *The Reality of Arabic Language Learning at the Senior High School/Vocational High School and Islamic Boarding School Level: Implications on Arabic Language Education in the Era of COVID-19*, tt

¹³ TP, ATP, and Teaching Modules of the Madrasah KSKK Directorate (2022).

¹⁴ BSKAP Decision 2024 (2024).

¹⁵ State Islamic Institute of Samarinda, Indonesia, zurqoni@iain-samarinda.ac.id et al., "Has Arabic Language Learning Been Successfully Implemented?" *International Journal of Instruction* 13, no. 4 (2020): 715–30, <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13444a>.

¹⁶ Husaini Usman and Nuryadin Eko Raharjo, "LEARNING LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES TOWARD THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2013 CURRICULUM," *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan* 5, no. 1 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v5i1.1253>.

¹⁷ Refiyana Yolanda et al., "Analysis of Teaching Materials 'Hayya Nata'allam al-Arabiyah' Class XII SMA/SMK Theory Perspective Abdullah Al-Gali and Abdul Hamid Abdullah / Analysis of Teaching Materials 'Hayya Nata'allam al-Arabiyah' Class 2 (2024): 257, <https://doi.org/10.36915/la.v5i2.124>.

¹⁸ Hilmin Hilmin et al., "REGIONAL GOVERNMENT POLICY IN IMPLEMENTING THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM," *Khatulistiwa: Journal of Education and Social Humanities* 2, no. 2 (2022): 148–62, <https://doi.org/10.55606/khatulistiwa.v2i2.565>.

¹⁹ Sujarwo et al., "Implementation of Character Values in the Pancasila Student Project with Expert Visitation for Phase E Students (16 – 18 Years)," *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan* 13, no. 2 (2024): 1809–18, <https://doi.org/10.58230/27454312.447>.

Among the spirits of implementing the Independent Curriculum is the freedom of students to learn²⁰ and the transparency of student competencies towards learning achievements²¹, therefore, in the Independent Curriculum, understanding the characteristics of students before starting learning is an important part of the learning element²². Understanding student characteristics makes it easier for teachers to formulate learning plans and determine various learning methods and media that can generally serve their various needs and learning tendencies.

Understanding student characteristics is a key element in development. Things to consider in the analysis of development activities include: 1) Establishing learning objectives; 2) Analyzing student characteristics (background, abilities, learning context); 3) Identifying existing resources (materials, facilities, human resources); 4) Determining the delivery system/channel (face-to-face, online, blended, etc.)²³

Many studies have been conducted on the development of Arabic language teaching materials in schools. However, there is still a lack of research on the development of Arabic language teaching materials for vocational high schools (SMK) based on the Merdeka curriculum. Yolanda et al. stated that Arabic language learning in MA is still not in accordance with student needs²⁴. Habibi stated that there are many problems in Arabic language learning in high schools, one of which is the need for teaching materials that are appropriate to students' needs²⁵. Solihati Ratnasari stated that high school textbooks in terms of language proficiency practice have fulfilled the four skills²⁶. Ismail T revealed that textbooks from the

²⁰ Ibrahim Ibrahim et al., "Evaluation of the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum," *Yudistira Journal: Publication of Educational and Language Science Research* 2, no. 1 (2023): 137–49, <https://doi.org/10.61132/yudistira.v2i1.402>.

²¹ Elly Damayanti Pulungan et al., "Development of Independent Learning Assessment for Senior High Schools," *Ideguru: Journal of Teacher Scientific Work* 10, no. 1 (2024): 225–30, <https://doi.org/10.51169/ideguru.v10i1.1491>.

²² Cindy Helda Ferrary et al., "The Urgency of Understanding Student Characteristics in Learning in the Independent Curriculum," *Basicedu Journal* 8, no. 5 (2024): 3994–4012, <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v8i5.8708>.

²³ Robert Maribe Branch and Tonia A Dousay, *Survey of Instructional Design Models*, 5th ed. (AECT, 2015).

²⁴ Yolanda et al., "Analysis of Teaching Materials 'Hayya Nata'allam al-Arabiyah' Class XII SMA/SMK Theory Perspective Abdullah Al-Gali and Abdul Hamid Abdullah / Analysis of Teaching Materials 'Hayya Nata'allam al-Arabiyah' Class

²⁵ Burhan Yusuf Habibi, *DEVELOPMENT OF ARABIC LANGUAGE CURRICULUM AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE SUBJECT IN HIGH SCHOOL (SMA) (Case Study in SMA Negeri 2 and SMA Negeri 8, no. 2 (2016).*

²⁶ Septia Solihati et al., "Dirāsah Tadribat Maharah Allughah Fī Kitāb Ta'lim Allughah Al'arabiyah Lilshafi Altsānī Altsānawī Liwizārah Alsyu`ūn Aldīniyah," *Ukazh: Journal of Arabic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2022): 78–86, <https://doi.org/10.37274/ukazh.v3i1.563>.

Ministry of Religious Affairs for grade 1 MA still use a grammar approach. Fathoni stated that books published by Toha Putra based on K-13 are suitable for use, but are still not interactive²⁷. In this regard, in this study, the researcher wants to reveal how Arabic textbooks for vocational high schools are compiled in accordance with the Merdeka curriculum approach in the initial stage, namely, by analyzing student needs.

This study uses a descriptive quantitative research approach with data in the form of questionnaire results analyzed using descriptive statistics, aimed at obtaining information about the needs of students at DKI Jakarta Vocational High Schools in learning Arabic based on the independent curriculum approach. Quantitative research with descriptive methods, as stated by Whitney (1960), aims to find facts and provide appropriate interpretations.²⁸ The research stages in providing interpretations are: 1) Conceptualizing the problem; 2) conducting a literature review; 3) compiling an instrument in the form of a questionnaire; 4) analyzing data with descriptive statistical analysis; 5) providing conclusions.²⁹

Thus, the researcher conducted a literature review by collecting various information, including laws, regulations, and other rules regarding the independent curriculum, as well as various supporting scientific articles. From this literature review, questionnaire items were produced. These questionnaire items were used to combine students' desires to learn Arabic with the government's expectations in implementing the independent curriculum. Then, at the end, suggestions and conclusions were provided. The population was all students of Jakarta State Vocational High Schools, while the samples were three State Vocational High Schools in DKI Jakarta, namely: 1) State Vocational High School 11 Jakarta; 2) State Vocational High School 6 Jakarta; and 3) State Vocational High School 56 Jakarta, with a population of class IX semester 1. From the distribution of the questionnaire, 474 students responded.

²⁷ Alfiannor Fathoni, "Analysis Buku Ajar Bahasa Bahasa Kelas XI Madrasah Aliyah K-13 Revisi KMA 183 Terbitan Karya Toha Putra," *Kilmatuna: Journal Of Arabic Education* 3, no. 1 (2023): 12–20, <https://doi.org/10.55352/pba.v3i1.84>.

²⁸ AS Hamdi and E. Bahrudin, *Quantitative Research Methods Application in Education* (Deepublish, 2014).

²⁹ Najwa Ammara Jauza and Meyniar Albina, "Quantitative Research Models and Approaches: Philosophical, Methodological, and Applicative Studies," *QOUBA: Journal of Education* 2, no. 1 (2025): 104–11, <https://doi.org/10.61104/qb.v2i1.280>.

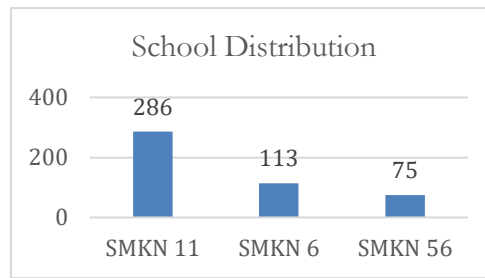


Diagram 1

Results and Discussion

In principle, the preparation of Arabic language teaching materials based on the Independent Curriculum is the same as the preparation of teaching materials in general, namely covering three elements: 1) Learning Outcomes; 2) Learning Process; 3) Learning Evaluation.³⁰ The difference between the independent curriculum and other curricula is the emphasis on these three elements, namely: 1) Faith, Devotion to God Almighty, and Noble Morals; 2) Independence; 3) Mutual Cooperation; 4) Global Diversity; 5) Critical Reasoning; 6) Creativity.³¹ Thus, in preparing teaching materials, the material must imply these 6 elements. The following is an explanation of each stage:

1. Learning Outcomes

To determine learning outcomes, researchers refer to the BSKAP Learning Outcomes, namely: "Students are expected to have Arabic language skills, both oral, written, and multimodal, in various situational contexts and cultural contexts. Students can interact with others in everyday situations/conditions in the school environment." This achievement is the final achievement of phase F that students must master. To achieve this, it is necessary to map learning targets per level from grade 11 semester 1 to grade 12 semester 2, or the Learning Target Flow (ATP) for phase F. Each ATP can be regrouped into CP-CP per semester. On this occasion, the researcher's focus is on grade 11 semester 1.

Before researchers determined the ATP and CP for learning activities for 11th-grade students in semester 1, researchers collected data and information from students covering their backgrounds and expectations. As is understood, the backgrounds of vocational high school

³⁰ Sepriyadi and Anwar Rudi, "IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM IN ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING," *BARAJI: Journal of Arabic Language Science and Teaching* 1, no. 02 (2024): 71–82, <https://doi.org/10.52185/barajj.v1i02.397>.

³¹ Wahyudin Dinn et al., *Independent Curriculum Academic Study*, 1 (Center for Curriculum and Learning, 2024).

students in DKI Jakarta are very diverse, considering that DKI Jakarta is the capital city where almost all tribes and ethnicities in Indonesia are present. In addition, Arabic language lessons in vocational high schools are not actually a core subject but rather an elective subject. However, many vocational high school students, including non-Muslims, want to study it for various reasons. The information we managed to collect is as follows:

a. Religion

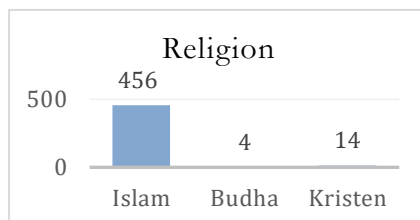


Diagram 2

The diagram shows that the distribution of student religions is: 1) Islam, 456 students or 96.2%; 2) Christianity, 14 students or 2.95%; 3) Buddhism, 4 students or 0.84%. From this distribution, we can predict that 3.8% of non-Muslim students have no Arabic language experience at all.

b. Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School or equivalent

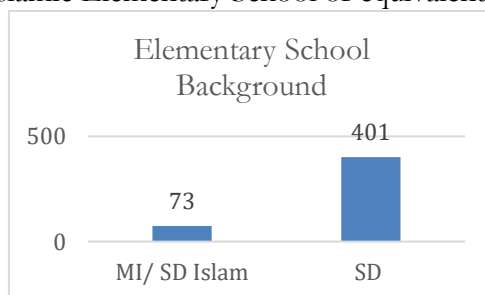


Diagram 3

The diagram shows that the distribution of student backgrounds during elementary school is: 1) 401 students attending elementary school (84.5%); 2) 73 students attending Islamic elementary school (MI) and/or Islamic elementary school (15.4%). From this distribution, we can predict that the majority of students have no Arabic language experience, as Arabic is generally taught in Islamic elementary schools (MI) or Islamic elementary schools.

c. Junior high school/Islamic junior high school or equivalent background

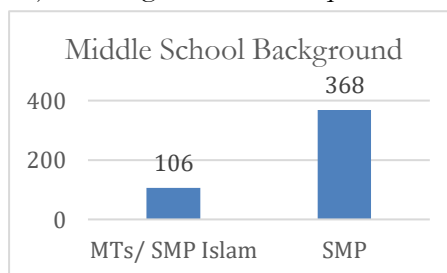


Diagram 4

The diagram shows that the distribution of student backgrounds at junior high school/Islamic junior high school is: 1) 368 elementary school students or 77.6%; 2) 106 Islamic junior high school students or 22.3%. Students from elementary school may continue to MTs, and students from MI or Islamic elementary school may continue to junior high school. From this distribution, we can predict that there will be an increase in student experience in Arabic because Arabic is studied at MTs.

d. Ability to read Arabic letters

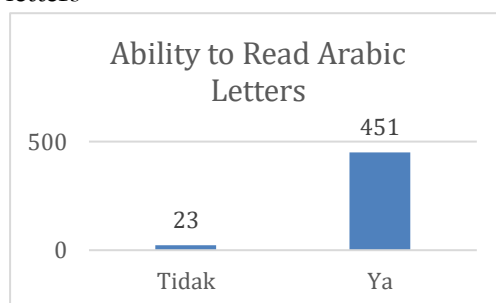


Diagram 5

The diagram shows that the distribution of student abilities is: 1) 451 students or 95.1% can read Arabic letters; 2) 23 students or 4.8% cannot read Arabic letters. This large percentage comes from Muslim students; however, even though they are able to read Arabic letters, their quality still needs to be validated.

e. Arabic reading ability level

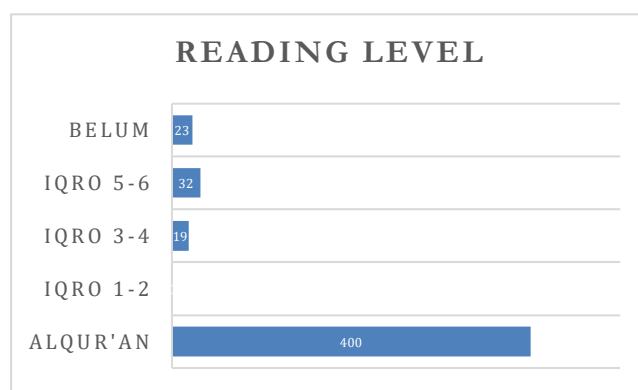
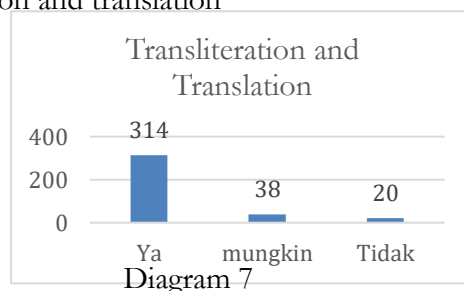


Diagram 6

From the diagram it shows that the distribution of students' level abilities is 1) Do not have the ability to read Arabic letters 23 students or 4.8%; 2) Have the ability to read the level of Iqro3-4 19 students or 4%; 3) Have the ability to read the level of Iqro5-6 32 students or 6.7%; 4) Have the ability to read the level of the Qur'an 400 students or 84.3%. Although we see that most students have the ability to read Arabic letters at the level of the ability to read the Qur'an, their abilities are still weak sometimes. Based on this, a follow-up questionnaire

is needed to determine whether they prefer teaching materials equipped with subtitles and transliteration. The results are in point f.

f. Textbooks use transliteration and translation



As shown in Diagrams 5 and 6, some students were completely unfamiliar with Arabic script. The results of this questionnaire were somewhat surprising: 314, or 84.4%, of students wanted transliteration and translation. This means that Arabic textbooks should be provided with transliteration and translation.

After determining basic Arabic language skills, the next step is to determine Arabic language learning targets.

g. Language theme

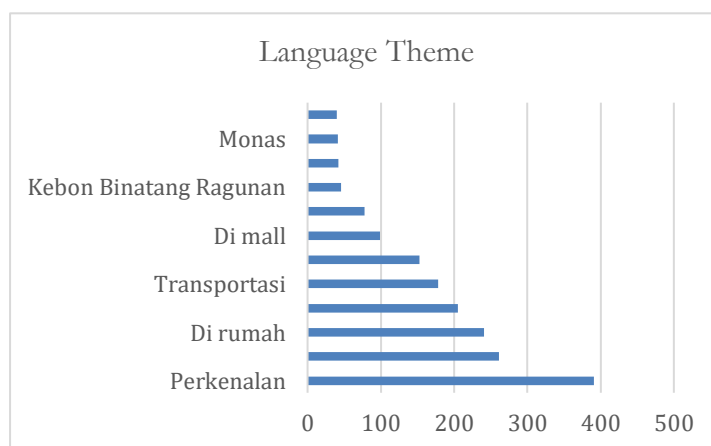


Diagram 8

After obtaining information about students' basic Arabic language skills, the next step is to determine the theme of the material that will be mastered in order to achieve the expected learning outcomes gradually. This aims to ensure alignment with BSKAP learning outcomes and determine CP and ATP (Communication Skills), as well as develop material that integrates elements of grammar and language proficiency.

The information above shows that the language theme covers several topics, but the topics that students most want to master are introductions, school environment, home

environment, transportation, and Jakarta, because these are most suitable for the beginner level.

h. Grammar Material

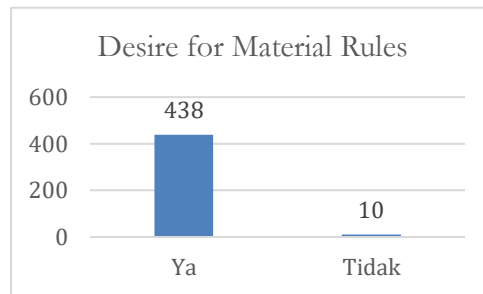


Diagram 9

From the diagram, it can be seen that 438 students, or 92.4% of students, want to master grammar, while 10 students, or 2.1%, do not want to.

i. Skill Material

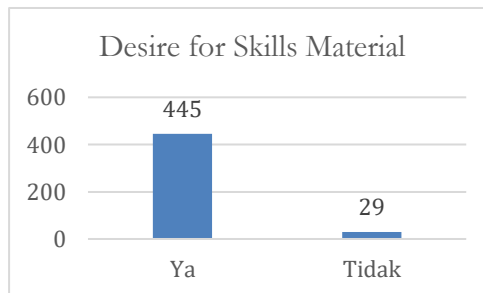


Diagram 8

From the diagram, it can be seen that 445 students, or 93.8% of students, want to master grammar, while 29 students, or 6.1%, do not want to.

j. Vocational language theme

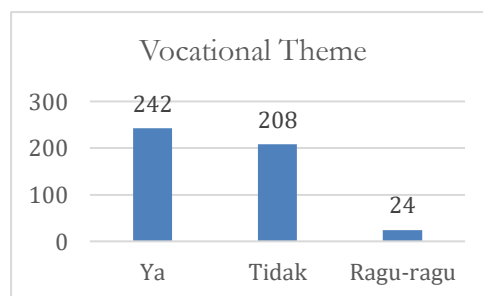


Diagram 10

This survey is a supplementary survey, useful for determining the specific Arabic language learning themes for study programs in vocational schools. The diagram shows that 242 students, or 51.05%, agreed, 208 students, or 43.8%, disagreed, and 24 students, or 5.06%, were undecided.

The results of the questionnaire above show that, in determining the learning outcomes of the Arabic language for SMK students in grade 11, semester 1, it can be considered that the mastery of hijaiyyah letters comes first before entering the communicative Arabic language material. The communicative Arabic language material will give rise to cultural elements, which, in this case, BSKAP limits to the school atmosphere, such as introductions, school atmosphere, and so on. The language theme will indirectly produce various vocabulary, grammar, and simple discourse choices, and in addition to that, the language theme will also determine various learning activities that lead to the expression of the four language skills.

2. Learning and Evaluation Process

In the independent curriculum, the learning and evaluation processes are conducted simultaneously, known as authentic assessment. Here is some information obtained from students:

a. Learning style

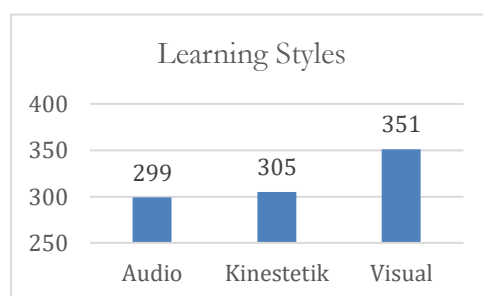


Diagram 11

Understanding learning styles before the learning process is an important element that is not only useful in using learning but also in arranging teaching materials and media used. In this questionnaire item, students are given the option to choose more than one. The results show that 63% have an audio learning tendency, 64% have a kinesthetic learning tendency, and 74% have a visual learning tendency.

b. Learning media

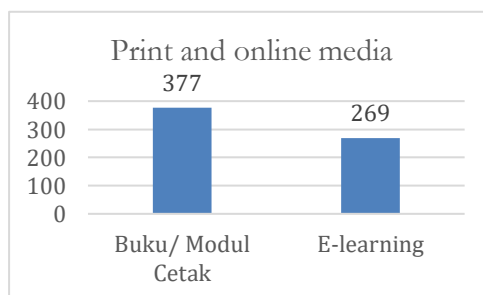


Diagram 12

After understanding learning styles, the next step is to provide appropriate learning media. Learning media here is used not only to review lessons but also for exercises and evaluations. This questionnaire, similar to the previous one, provides students with more than one choice. The diagram shows that 377, or 79%, of students prefer learning using printed textbooks, while 269, or 56.7%, prefer learning using e-learning. This means that both printed and online media are necessary to facilitate their learning.

c. Learning Mode

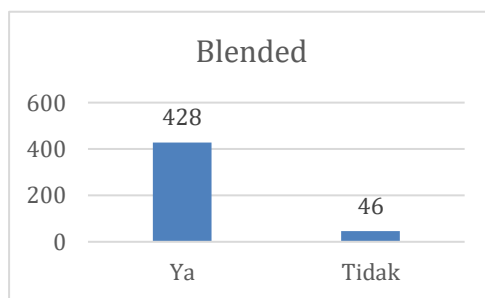


Diagram 13

As in diagram 12, where the majority of students want print and online media, in this questionnaire, the majority of students, namely 428 or 90%, want blended learning, which combines learning activities in class and outside the class with the help of the internet.

d. Method

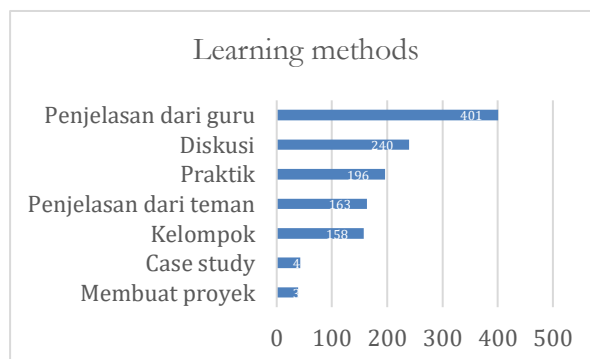


Diagram 14

The independent curriculum emphasizes the integration of all learning elements to ensure a memorable learning experience for students. Diagram 14 shows that although the majority of students (84.59%) chose the teacher-assisted learning method, this is understandable considering that high school/vocational school students still require intensive developmental guidance from teachers. Nevertheless, we implement other learning methods to enable them to express their potentially hidden abilities through their learning styles, such as group work, projects, discussions, and others.

Based on several questionnaires, it shows that for the process and evaluation for grade 11 semester 1, which will be used for Arabic language learning activities based on the independent curriculum, a variety of learning media and methods are needed that can facilitate students' learning tendencies, namely audio, visual, kinesthetic, and/or a combination of two or three of these elements. In addition to the method, no less important is the blended learning mode equipped with printed and online learning media. This way, students remain active under teacher supervision and guidance in class, and also provide opportunities for flexible learning outside of class. And textbook media should be provided with transliteration and translation.

Conclusion

As stated by BSKAP, the Arabic language learning objectives are "Students are expected to have Arabic language skills, both spoken, written, and multimodal, in various situational and cultural contexts. Students can interact with others in everyday situations/conditions within the school environment." From the CP, it seems there is no difference between the CP for high school. It is necessary to compile Arabic language teaching materials for vocational high schools that have special characteristics and still direct the implementation of learning based on the real needs of students, integrating communicative, flexible, and differentiated approaches as the characteristics of the Independent Curriculum.

This study shows that vocational high school students' needs for Arabic language learning based on the Independent Curriculum are very specific and must be tailored to their characteristics and vocational education goals. The needs analysis revealed that the majority of students have a general educational background with minimal Arabic language experience, but generally have the ability to read Arabic. They also show a strong tendency to study aspects of grammar and language proficiency, and require learning media that support audio, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles in an integrated manner. Another important finding is students' preference for blended learning using print and digital media, as well as the need for transliteration and translation in textbooks.

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