Bridging The Un-Bridged Yet: The Learning Innovation through *Neuro Linguistic Programming* (NLP) for Islamic Religious Education in Higher Education

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Abstract. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in Higher Education (HE) is one of the studies that attracts a lot of interest and enthusiasm of researchers. Starting from the Islamic education thoughts, evaluation systems, curriculum and other contemporary discourses, namely gender, human rights, moderatism and learning innovations related to IRE. Therefore, this study focuses on the formulation of IRE using the Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) method as an innovation to improve learning achievement and productivity. NLP is a process of modeling or imitation of a person, which involves communication, excavating patterns of behavior. There are four life skills related to NLP, namely self-skill, strategic thinking skill, relational skill and systemic thinking skill. Explicitly, this study provides an alternative offer to formulate an IRE learning innovation at HE by using the NLP method. It must be admitted that studies related to NLP have been widely discussed through prior research on the topic, but the novelty that researchers want to show is to bridge NLP in IRE at HE. This study involved student participation at *Universitas Negeri Malang* and State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN), Kediri in the 2022 academic year, with approximately 120 students in both locations. The selection of respondents by considering the distribution of gender, semester, and background of the department/faculty. Structured interviews and participatory observations were carried out to obtain data that were in accordance with the topic and related to data analysis using the NLP indicator checklist sheet and comparative studies between library research and field findings. The results of this study will represent the use of self-skills, strategic thinking skills, relational skills, and systemic thinking skills in the context of IRE learning, through the selection of modified learning methods.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Neuro Linguistic Programming, Learning Innovation

1   Introduction

Learning innovation in Islamic Religious Education (hereinafter IRE) in Higher Education is one of the research topics that has been thoroughly investigated by prior academics [1], [2]. Due to the pressing need for IRE to be a required course at the university level, regardless of status, cluster, or ministry, IRE courses are offered alongside Citizenship Education and Indonesian Language courses [3], [4]. The academician had to recognize the learning innovation in IRE because it was evident in numerous discussions. Moving from the current concerns on Islamic studies in IRE, such as gender [5], [6], politics [7], and human rights [8] to the issues related to learning, such as the curriculum [9], [10], learning evaluation [11] and learning contents, IRE must adapt to the creative learning environment, especially in higher education. In order to adapt IRE to the creative learning model, technology and learning as well as the multidisciplinary views of media must be optimized [12].

However, a number of previous research found that students studying IRE to be bored because there were not many innovative teaching methods used at Higher Education [13], [14] and another conclusion is that IRE learning motivation is strongly connected with high or low learning achievement, depending on the lecturer's teaching style [15]. With a stronger emphasis on evaluating student perceptions as recipients, this study seeks to close any gaps in the literature, particularly about IRE learning innovations implemented in universities using the Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) technique. NLP techniques will not only be directed at psychology-based learning for students, but also in Islamic religious education. This is due to the style and character of NLP that is compatible with Islamic Religious Education (IRE) where the accommodation of students' religious experiences will be more optimal through strengthening structured languages in NLP.

This study uses the NLP method to examine how students see learning innovations of IRE at institutions. It is important to realize that psychological research is the primary focus of the study of NLP. This research is distinctive in that it uses NLP as a kind of innovation in the way of IRE lectures are delivered at Universitas Negeri Malang and IAIN Kediri. The mapping in relation to students' perceptions of IRE-based learning innovation using NLP is the study's primary focus. To present the thorough findings, a table and a graphic will be used as illustrations. This study provides a different perspective on how NLP is applied in IRE as well as psychological reviews. Furthermore, Higher education requires that learners understand IRE learning not only cognitively but also affectively and psychomotor. In NLP, it is consistently highlighted that there are filters—namely, deletion, distortion, and generalization—at work when information is received [16], [17]. In order to investigate material that has been removed, altered, or generalized, a question must be used. These inquiries are made in an effort to locate the source of the issue. By measuring students' perceptions of the application, the research issue aims to address the difficulties in creating IRE learning advances in universities. The outcomes of these tests will serve as the foundation for additional NLP method-related actions within IRE, such as evaluation, modification, or reformulation.

2   Method

With reference to the idea of written and directed interviews, the researchers employ a structured interviews methodology. This study utilizes the State University of Malang (UM) and IAIN Kediri as its research environment. There are at least two important factors to consider when choosing the site: 1) UM is one of the universities with a cutting-edge heritage of IRE learning, as evidenced by a number of earlier studies that looked at the dynamics of IRE implementation. 2). The fact that UM has won the Nationally-MTQ (Quranic Reciting Competition for Students) champion four times further demonstrates the success of IRE learning. Meanwhile, IAIN Kediri was the Islamic State Higher Education in Kediri, East Java, organized by Ministry of Religious Affairs. This study was carried out to support the earlier IRE investigations and conclusions at UM and IAIN Kediri based on these two factors.

The interview technique was set up in accordance with the research goal, which called for mapping student replies in relation to IRE learning innovations using NLP. The instrument is a checklist sheet with appropriately for twenty questions. The interview's findings were condensed into a scale of enthusiasm with high, medium, and low scales. Four IRE classes at the UM and IAIN in the 2021–2022 academic year were among the responders. In each class, there are 30 students with the total respondents is 120 students. The mapping of respondent's gender as stated below:

Table 1. Mapping of Respondents (Universitas Negeri Malang and IAIN Kediri)

No	Institutions	Gender	
		Male	Female
1	**Universitas Negeri Malang (60 Students)**		
	a) Class A	14 (46,6%)	16 (53,3%)
	b) Class B	18 (60%)	12 (40%)
2	**IAIN Kediri (60 Students)**		
	a) Class C	14 (46,6%)	16 (53,3%)
	b) Class D	20 (66,6%)	10 (33,3%)

It can be seen from the distribution data above those respondents in UM and IAIN Kediri were quietly balance both men and women. One of the sub-discussions will address the relationship between gender and perceptions of learning innovation through NLP in IRE.

3   Findings and Discussion

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), also known as the biggest advancement in the field of ability and self-development in the 20th century [18], [19]. Since it offers a useful method of understanding how the brain functions, this discipline has become highly well-known in the United States and Europe as a psychology of excellence [20],

[21]. According to the root words that make up NLP, neuro-linguistic programming, it is about change. By employing language to alter, the neural program in our thoughts, we can effect and change [22]. Because both physiological and emotional processes are viewed in NLP as a unity that impact one another with the mind as the center, practicing NLP will help one become more focused. The intervention process is simply a communication process between our inner components so that it is in line with the desired direction of change, which is why language is employed so heavily in NLP [23].

By modifying each context in reference to IRE, NLP implementation can be used at the university level. The discussion of the four components of NLP implementation—self-skills, strategic and systemic thinking, and relational skills [19]—begins with the following example:
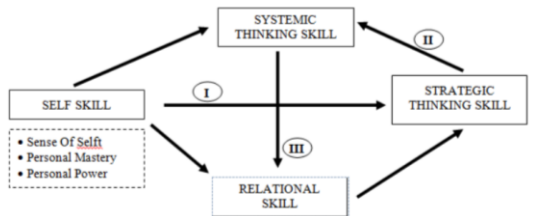

Fig. 1. Illustration Scheme

Here is a brief overview of each of the four skills: 1). *Self-skill*. People are more disciplined and conscious of all the risks they will face at this stage since they already know what their life's purpose is. From then, the power of the human arises to be able to govern the following three pillars; 2). *Systematic thinking skill*, building systems requires the ability to think in systems. With this, a person will be able to methodically use the first pillar to articulate what they want, making this an effective root cause of problem solutions. A person's capacity for systematic thought is a measure of his or her maturity in obtaining the intended outcome; 3). *Relational skill*, a competence in relationships is establishing connections with others. This ability is how we effectively interact with people so that all that is the intended outcome of communication can be achieved; 4). *Strategic thinking*, the ability to develop one's relational quality to a strategic level with implications for a better developed self-quality is known as strategic thinking ability [18], [24]. When used to IRE learning, the four aforementioned of NLP principles will be characterized as follows:

Table 2. Mapping of NLP Principles

No	Principles	Elaboration
1	Self-skill	Students must be conscious of their religious literacy and understanding, as well as be able to reflect on the past.
2	Systemic thinking skill	The ability to clearly and methodically convey their various religious understandings is expected of students. The ability to expound on earlier experiences and make them known to others is imparted.
3	Relational skill	Students must not only be able to articulate their religious experiences, but also to frame them within the framework of their own life.
4	Strategic thinking skill	The ability to construct this experience as a platform and foundation for developing a mentality related to IRE learning or information is demanded of the students.

Empirically, *firstly*, teacher students explore the past experiences related to the religious dimension, either through experiences of differences in worship practices or differences in religious views. Increasing students' self-skills in critical thinking related to religious experiences is the hallmark of the first stage. *Secondly*, the teacher directs the religious experience in the form of a framework of thinking systematically, so that students can construct it comprehensively. In the sense, that students are able to reflect on the experience and narrate clearly the experience. *Thirdly*, teachers and students relate past experiences in religious matters and then relate them integrally to the conditions of today's students. The process of bridging between past experiences and contextual experiences needs to be conveyed to students so that they are able to bring experiences in a concrete form.

The researchers measured the students' opinions about the usage of the NLP approach in IRE based on the aforementioned elaboration. The student excitement scale is built on an interview grid that examines data regarding student engagement, efficacy, and comprehension of the NLP approach at IRE. According to observations and data gathered from the field, there are at least three main reactions to the use of NLP in IRE learning, namely a) strong enthusiasm; b) medium enthusiasm; and c) low enthusiasm. The mapping for the four classes that served as responders is as follows:

Table 3. Mapping of students' responses on NLP Principles in IRE

No	Institutions	Responses [Number of students]		
		Strong	Medium	Low
1	**Universitas Negeri Malang (60 Students)**			
	c) Class A	12 (40%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)
	d) Class B	15 (50%)	10 (33%)	5 (17%)
2	**IAIN Kediri (60 Students)**			
	c) Class C	18 (60%)	10 (33%)	2 (7%)
	d) Class D	14 (47%)	10 (33%)	6 (20%)

According to these results, pupils are distributed differently in class A and B at UM. In class A, 40% students have strong enthusiasm on NLP as learning innovation, meanwhile 40% students have a medium enthusiasm, and 20% students have a low enthusiasm. On the other hand, in class B, there is a subtly fair comparison between students in strong, medium and low enthusiasm. There are 50% of student have strong enthusiasm on NLP as learning innovation, meanwhile 33% students have a medium enthusiasm, and 17% students have a low enthusiasm

The situation is different in class C and D at IAIN Kediri. In class C, 60% students have strong enthusiasm on NLP as learning innovation, meanwhile 10% students have a medium enthusiasm, and 2% students have a low enthusiasm. On the other hand, in class D, there is a subtly fair comparison between students in strong, medium and low enthusiasm. There are 47% of student have strong enthusiasm on NLP as learning innovation, meanwhile 33% students have a medium enthusiasm, and 20% students have a low enthusiasm. The findings above are illustrated as follows:
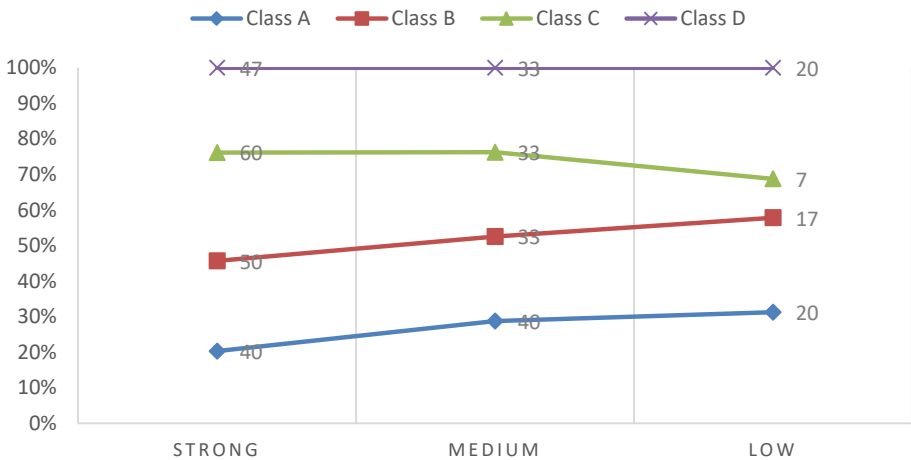

Fig. 2. the illustration of enthusiasm's respondents

4   Conclusion

It is clear from the findings above those students have a variety of opinions about how NLP is being used in IRE. NLP can be used in IRE learning as a learning innovation by utilizing the four concepts of self-skill, systemic thinking skill, relational skill, and strategic thinking skill. Given that strong and medium levels of perception prevail among the four classes used as research respondents, identifying students who have low perceptions of IRE learning advances via NLP is still challenging. Through NLP, educators are able to bring the past religious experiences of students and reflect on these experiences in the contemporary learning process. so in the sense that the process of

connecting experiences through language strengthening in NLP needs to be emphasized in IRE learning

Acknowledgments

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