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COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT AMONG MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT ASSISTED RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS (SABK) STUDENTS

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Abstract

In Malaysia, Government Assisted Religious Schools frequently find a place for parents to give their youngsters spiritual discernment and character development in addition to excellent academic instruction. This study examined the cognitive and affective development of students in Government Assisted Religious Schools using Bloom's Taxonomy for both domains. Higher order thinking skill question sets about Islam, student Level of Mastery records, and interviews are the three main instruments that are used. Three schools that were chosen based on specific criteria are the subjects of the purposive sampling method. Three schools that were chosen based on specific criteria were subjected to the purposive sampling technique. The research instrument was further examined using coding, theming, and document analysis, along with triangulation with teachers who assessed student development. The study's findings showed that some students weren't proficient in the fundamental methods for answering questions about thinking skills. From a cognitive perspective, the student's answer pattern is at a moderate level, with 71 percent of writing concentrated on low level, particularly Application. Because 79% of the students are at the level of Organizing and Characterizing, they exhibit very good affective development in line with the schools establishment objectives. To strengthen students' cognitive ability, particularly in growing higher order thinking skills along with their moral

development, the government and teachers need to pay attention to instruction and expertise.
Keywords: Cognitive, Higher Order Thinking Skills, Affective, Moral, SABK, Religious Curriculum

Introduction

Government Assisted Religious School (SABK) is one of the academic and spiritual based secondary education options in Malaysia. Similar to government-owned schools, SABK aims to develop qualified students who will contribute as professionals and uphold Islam in Malaysia. Therefore, with the use of the present educational curriculum, it is anticipated that the development of SABK students' education will be comparable to that of children in day and boarding schools. In order to balance student quality and meet the demands of human capital in our era, cognitive and affective development must be nurtured simultaneously. This is due to the fact that a learner must methodically gain knowledge through Aqli and Naqli considerations. This will assist them in developing more well-rounded, admirable personalities. True to its name, SABK unquestionably carries a heavy responsibility for the community, religion, and country.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cognitive and affective

Cognitive thinking describes any deliberate or involuntary thought activity. It is a typical reaction of people to their surroundings. In the context of education, students' cognitive abilities are developed, starting with fundamental skills like perceiving the environment, categorizing objects and progressing to more complex skills like making assumptions, framing ideas and problem-solving. Typically, Bloom's revised six-level cognitive taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002) is used to explain these stages of cognitive development, with Create being the highest level and Remember being the lowest. The Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Domains, which summarised early efforts to conceptualise cognitive domains, was refined over the course of 45 years after it was first published in the 1950s (Anderson, Krathwohl, et al., 2001). The constantly evolving educational system gives students the freedom to think more freely without being too exam-oriented or constrained by particular schemes that would simply limit the students' cognitive ability in the stages of their education. The revised version of Bloom's taxonomy levels is shown in Figure 1 below:

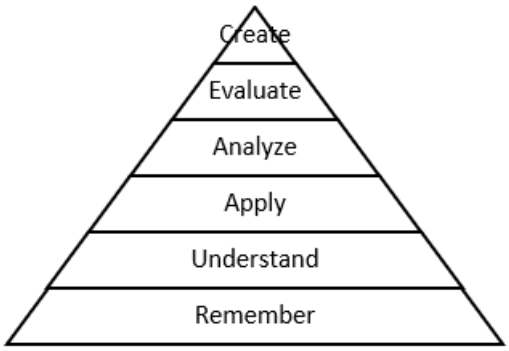

Figure 1. Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Cognitive Domain)

The elements of appreciation make the information the student's cognitive capacities assimilate more significant and simpler to retain in memory. To develop a knowledgeable student personality, the affective component is equally crucial because, without affectivity, profound and critical knowledge appears to be inert. The student's attitude is further determined by their affective ability, which can be expressed as emotional capacity toward a stimulus and information such as feelings of appreciation, acceptance of values, passion, and interest (Rao, 2020). The appreciation and development of each student's personality will enhance the meaning of the knowledge that has been obtained methodically. The Bloom Affective Taxonomy (Morshead, 1965) is shown in Figure 2 below:

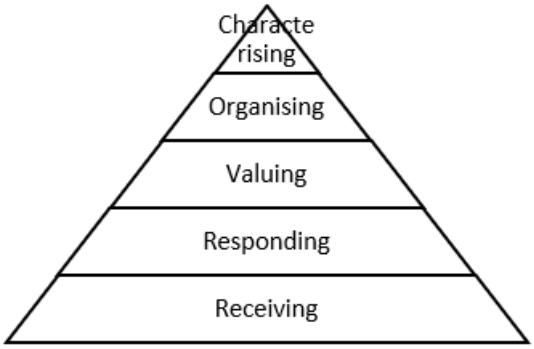

Figure 2. Bloom's Taxonomy (Affective Domain)

In order for the knowledge they have learned to be stored in long-term memory, students must consistently integrate their cognitive and affective abilities (Benedek & Fink, 2019; Bohn-Gettler & McCrudden, 2022). The knowledge will stick in a person's memory longer if it is tied

to emotions. Ibnu Khaldun refers to this combination as malakah, where students learn information most effectively through critical conversation rather than rote memory (Bahri, 2020; OK, 2022). This may help put the knowledge students have learned into practice every day. Conversely, subconscious knowledge will be forgotten by the student and will no longer be practised. So it is clear that in order for spiritual information to be retained in the heart and afterwards converted into alms of worship, it must be learnt via the best cognitive-affective approach. Every topic in the school needs to use the finest practices, and those practices should be applied to other educational institutions as well.

Islamic education and religious schools

Application in a more focused situation increases the significance of developing cognitive and affective ability. It encompasses, in general, all fields of human knowledge. When it comes to character development, religious education is undoubtedly the main priority. Kiflee et. al. (2020) discovered a strong connection between classroom learning and students' personality development. This is because it cultivates excellent and admirable character in students and instills in them a sense of moral integrity. The Standard Secondary School Curriculum (KSSM) in Malaysia includes subjects like Islamic Education, Al-Quran and As-Sunnah Education, Islamic Syariah Education, Islamic Tasawur, and Arabic Language. The Dini Integrated Curriculum (KBD) and Tahfiz Integrated Curriculum (KBT), along with other more specific Islamic studies disciplines, offer a more focused Islamic education package. To further prepare students for further study in the Middle East, particularly at Al-Azhar universities, numerous schools now offer the Azhari Curriculum.

Islamic education is also provided by the private sector in Malaysia, either entirely independently or with government support. By utilising national and Azhari curriculum standards, these schools are a result of the founders' great efforts and goals to assist Islamic education in Malaysia and develop future Islamic religious leaders (Othman & Anas, 2020). These institutions typically have the same strengths as public schools, but resources, infrastructure, knowledge, academic credentials, and teaching competence are frequently limitations (Ridza et al., 2017). This contributes to the disparity between the learning environments provided by public and private secondary schools to some extent. Government Assisted Religious Schools (SABK) have a strong chance of competing with public schools. SABK is technically a private school that is registered with and overseen by the Malaysian Ministry of Education, although it has been granted autonomy in several areas in accordance with the school's original objectives. In Malaysia, there are 184 SABK and clearly the purpose of these

institutions is to contribute value in a distinctive and consistent manner rather than simply support the current educational system.

Education curriculum in Government Assisted Religious Schools

The Standard Secondary School Curriculum (KSSM), the Dini Integrated Curriculum (KBD), the Tahfiz Integrated Curriculum (KBT), or the Azhari Curriculum (Husaini et al., 2018) are examples of appropriate curricula offered by SABK, which, like mainstream schools, uses whatever is deemed appropriate by the institution. The effectiveness of learning is measured in addition to written and oral evaluations up to the level of students' practises outside the classroom, such as involvement in extracurricular activities, good conduct in the hostels, and socialising with friends. According to the government's aspirations, which are reflected in the Malaysian Education Plan (PPPM) 2013–2025, these curricula aim to help students succeed on all fronts, including knowledge, higher order thinking skills, communication, values, and fostering harmony. The Curriculum and Assessment Standard Document (DSKP) makes a clear statement of each of these curricula for guidance on aspects of content, learning activities as well as learning assessment.

As the teacher creates learning activities, several ways are used to evaluate the learning outcomes in line with the teacher's reasonableness and consideration. Students are awarded a Level of Mastery (known as TP) score at the completion of their learning stages that ranges from 1 to 6, indicating the level they have attained so far. This score can definitely be upgraded over time until the end of the academic year. It is obvious that this approach represents a serious attempt by the Malaysian government to lessen the reliance of educational assessment and measurement primarily on written tests and student ranking. Through qualitative justification and the professional judgment of teachers serving as assessors, this TP descriptions can be mapped with five levels of the Affective Taxonomy in addition to cognitive levels. According to Table 1 below, the student Level of Mastery is as follows:

Table 1. Table of Student's Level of Mastery (TP) and its Interpretation

Level of Mastery	Interpretation
1	Students can perform fundamental tasks, know basic concepts, and react to basic stimuli
2	Students demonstrate understanding by adapting their communication style or by translating and elaborating on what they have learnt
3	Students apply their knowledge to put a skill to a circumstance
4	Students perform a skill in a systematic or organised manner, such as by following a protocol
5	Students demonstrate a talent in a novel setting by adhering to a protocol or acting methodically, consistently, and positively

6	Students are able to consistently apply their knowledge and skills in novel contexts, exhibit optimism, creativity, and innovation, and can be role models

The Government Assisted Religious School encounters special challenges because it is not entirely owned and run by the government. Several studies indicated that SABK effectively continues the learning system from the perspectives of learning activities, assessment, teacher innovation, and administration (Ghani et al. 2018, Hussain, Yusoff, Lubis, & Jusoh: 2020, Mustafa, Umbak, Martin & Ayudin: 2021). This demonstrates how SABK is not falling behind and consistently tries to fulfil its educational duties to the fullest. However, it is unable to completely eliminate some issues, such as those related to the environment, teacher skill, student attitudes, detrimental cultural influences, and school infrastructure (Ishak, Sabilan, Lip, & Rashed, 2018; Fakhruddin et al., 2019; Baba, Omar, & Hassan , 2021). With the exception of issues related to finances and teacher competence, which lean more towards completely government operated schools, these strengths and limitations clearly demonstrate that there are no appreciable differences between Government Assisted Religious Schools and mainstream schools in Malaysia.

Discussions on the development of education and Government Assisted Religious Schools raise a number of issues, such as how much learning, particularly through Malaysian curricula, affects students' cognitive and affective development. The students that the institutions will create must be able to meet the expectations of society in terms of cognitive aptitude, particularly in terms of thinking and problem-solving abilities. In line with the status of these schools, which place a high priority on academic, spiritual, and humanitarian education, these students are expected to be model citizens in all respects, including the affective one. It is essential to do research on the cognitive and affective development of the students in Government Assisted Religious Schools in order to strengthen national curriculum in general and education in these institutions in particular. To meet the needs of the country's expanding educational system, mainstream, semi-private, and fully private education are all interdependent.

OBJECTIVES

This study thus intends to achieve following objectives:

a) Analyzing the Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy-based cognitive levels of research participants as they answer questions requiring higher order thinking skills.

b) Integrating students' Level of Mastery with Bloom's Affective Taxonomy to analyze the affective levels of study participants in their school-based learning.

METHODOLOGY

The data collection and analysis of this study was carried out through a qualitative approach. A set of HOTS questions, forms of students' Level of Mastery and an interview used as the instruments. For the mentioned instruments, analysis of content, documents and themes has been done. Sets of 10 open-ended questions of high order thinking skills (HOTS) were validated and distributed to the selected participants. The questions given are general related to life and religion without being specific to the content of the Dini Integrated Curriculum (KBD) syllabus such as Usuluddin and Syariah. This is intended to encourage research participants to respond more candidly and to concentrate on high cognitive elements. They were given one week to answer all the questions without anyone's help to determine the extent to which the research participants' experience through KBD had the ability to influence their way of thinking, particularly from the cognitive and affective perspectives. The distribution of the questions and their components for cognitive analysis is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2 Distribution of the components and number of questions

No.	Component	No. of question
1.	Al-Quran	2
2.	Hadith	2
3.	Islamic Laws	2
4.	Islamic civilization	2
5.	Morality	2

Purposive sampling technique was used to determine the study participants. Three SABKs with various academic accomplishment records in Perak were chosen after consultation with the State Education Department and Malaysia Ministry of Education. A total of 327 study participants were obtained from the three schools randomly by complying with research ethics as outlined by the authorities. Participants in the study were given time to answer to a set of questions based on their knowledge of and experiences with the national education curriculum while attending school. The host teachers provided assistance during the data collection procedure to promote more sincere and original responses.

The analysis of the results was divided into three stages, to be specific technical format analysis, content analysis and document analysis. In the principal investigation stage, a sum of six experts evaluated all the scripts to affirm the utilization of the right answer format by the participants. The mark allocation for each question is four marks making the total for a set of 10 questions 40 marks. Then, the complete

research instruments were qualitatively analyzed through cognitive aspects guided by the Bloom's Taxonomy (Cognitive Domain) (Morshead, 1965; Huitt, 2011). Descriptive and interpretive content analysis (Lindgren, Lundman, & Graneheim, 2020) was carried out to examine participants' expressions and perspectives through the writing of their answers throughout national curriculum learning which emphasizes elements of thinking skills and the application of values. According to the research team's competence, the outcomes of student writing were assessed overtly and indirectly. Finally, the Level of Mastery (TP) forms of the student were subjected to a document analysis, after which it was compared to the levels of Bloom's affective taxonomy. Interviews with the teachers served as a third source of verification for this data. Additionally, frequency is used to clarify the analysis' findings.

RESULTS

All 327 responses from study participants were accepted, so none were dismissed for the following stage of analysis. A total of 327 complete answer scripts were received from SABK A (87 scripts), SABK B (119 scripts) and SABK C (121 scripts). In the initial phase of the technical review, it was determined that every study participant made an effort to respond to each question item. Out of 40 marks, the average overall score obtained by all study participants is at a medium level which is 20 marks (Modunny, 2009) with the lowest score being 9 marks and the highest score being 40. SABK B recorded the highest mean score while SABK A had the lowest. At this stage, the scoring of answers is based on the Malaysian Examinations Board (LPM) guidelines currently in use. For unmet technical reasons, there were study participants who wrote longer answers but did not get full marks, and vice versa.

Undoubtedly, 17.13% participants struggle with the fundamental techniques for writing the right HOTS answers, like writing extended descriptions and providing examples. Only 2.45% percent of the study participants got a full score of 40 marks for the given set of questions Only 2.7 percent of the study participants got a full score of 40 marks for the set of questions given while the remaining 80.42% recorded high, medium and low scores. Overall, the participants answered all the sets of questions given and met the criteria to be analyzed in more depth at the next stage of content analysis. Table 3 below explains the distribution of the returned answer scripts along with the mean score for each school.

Table 3 Table of the scripts received and the mean recorded through the technical score review

No.	School	Mean		Score category					Total
		Score	=	V. High	High	Medium	Low	V. Low	
	SABK A	15	Low	0	3	19	28	37	87
	SABK B	23	Medium	7	45	32	33	2	119
	SABK C	21	Medium	1	37	36	30	17	121
	Total	20	Medium	8	85	87	91	56	327

*Moidunny, 2009

Cognitive

The study's analysis has moved on to examine how the study participants' answers were written, particularly their cognitive components in answering the HOTS questions. Participants in the study were expected to provide responses that demonstrated their degree of thinking ability by meeting the levels of analyze, evaluate, and create. As is customary and regulated by the Malaysian Examinations Board, research participants were asked to provide four interconnected points to each brief essay. There are several patterns for accepted answers, such as providing more valid points of answer and vice versa. Thus, the overall frequency reported is not evenly distributed given the number of participants. A total of 11,878 answering points from research participants have been identified using content analysis. Based on the number of participants, which should be at least 13,080 points, this quantity is lower than anticipated.

The analysis's findings showed that the Al-Quran component obtained the fewest response scores (1837), while the morality components received the greatest answer points (3127). In addition, 8500 answer points were written at the LOTS level and 3378 at the HOTS level. Although the research participants generally give LOTS answer points, the weighting of the answers at the application level is satisfactory and close to the HOTS level. The cognitive analysis distribution of the research participants' answer writing is shown in table 3 below:

Table 4 Analysis of cognitive aspects in the writing of research participants

No	Components	Level						Total
		LOTS			HOTS			
		L1	L2	L3	H1	H2	H3	
1.	Al-Quran	261	90	293	91	82	51	868
2.	Al-Quran	290	100	311	107	80	81	969
3.	Hadith	312	151	340	76	71	50	1000
4.	Hadith	350	169	322	110	102	71	1124
5.	Islamic Laws	320	162	311	139	119	101	1152
6.	Islamic Laws	312	158	341	123	109	89	1132
7.	Islamic civilization	289	192	363	171	128	124	1267

8.	Islamic civilization	317	231	332	139	107	113	1239
9.	Morality	382	239	419	192	112	107	1451
10.	Morality	357	308	478	273	136	124	1676
		3190	1800	3510	1421	1046	911	11878
			8500			3378		

L1: Remember, L2: Understand, L3: Apply, H1: Analyze, H2: Evaluate, H3: Create

Affective

Identifying the students' affective attributes advances the study's analysis. A total of 327 profiles were acquired from the schools, each of which had information on student development and Level of Mastery (TP). The five affective levels of Bloom's taxonomy were then applied to the six Level of Mastery (TP1-TP6) attained by students based on teacher interviews. In order to reach consensus based on both the research team's findings and the teachers' professional judgement, the mapping of TP to the levels of Bloom's affective analysis was also discussed. According to the observation and monitoring of the teachers, all had agreed that each level for the most students that has been mapped is appropriate to define their affective level. For instance, after reading the analysis of a TP3 student who was mapped with Responding, various comments were made, including:

Oh, dia ni ok sebenarnya. Tapi tulah liat sikit.

(Actually, this pupil is okay, but he or she lacks awareness and constantly needs to be reminded).

SABK1PG1

(Senyum) Susah sikit dia ni. Teruk tu tidak tapi kita pun tak tau sangat masalah dia.

This student takes a little pushing to put up with things (smiles). We are not even aware of his personal issues; therefore, he is not too troubled.

SABK1PG2

The teachers agreed with the students whose maps included Organizing and Characterizing as well. Most of the students who were awarded TP5-TP6 are qualified in the opinion of the teachers. No recommendation was made to lower the taxonomy in comparison to the TP given to the students. However, some students do receive ML5, but strongly recommended to be mapped as Characterizing. The proposed modifications to the mapping to the Affective Taxonomy take place from a wider viewpoint because the awarding of TP grade is in some ways connected to the curriculum's content and is academic in nature. In short, practically all TPs are easily mapped to the Affective

Taxonomy, with the exception of a small number of students who have particular uniqueness's. Following are some of the comments made by teachers:

Ini ketua pengawas! Apa-apa hal dia bertindak dulu… Cikgu pun kemudian.

He is the head of students and acts proactively in carrying out his duties.

SABK2PG4

Murid ni ok sangat. Kawan-kawan dia pun ramai. Orang suka dia.

This student is excellent. He has lots of buddies who adore him.

SABK3PG2

Dia ni walaupun dapat TP gitu (TP5) tapi banyak dah perubahan. Cuma mungkin dia jenis segan, tak menonjol sangat.

There has been a change even though the accomplishment is tiny. He is only a less well-known student, that's all.

SABK1PG4

According to the study's findings, 133 students were identified as Characterizing. A total of 126 were Organizing whereas 64 students were marked as Valuing. In all SABKs, no students are mapped to the Receiving taxonomy, the lowest level. This result is consistent with predictions assuming that SABK, for instance, strives to encourage students' noble behavior and instils in them positive values. On the basis of specific justifications, four students are, nonetheless, identified as Responding. This is typically impacted by outside factors including motivation, individual challenges, familial ties, and environmental adaptations that set them apart from others. The mapping analysis of SABK students' affective development is described in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Analysis of affective aspects in the writing of research participants

No	SABK	Level					Total
		Rc	Rs	Va	Or	Ch	
1.	SABK 1	0	4	13	35	35	87
2.	SABK 2	0	0	30	38	51	119
3.	SABK 3	0	0	21	53	47	121
	Total	0	4	64	126	133	327

Rc: Receiving, Rs: Responding, Va: Valuing, or: Organizing, Ch: Characterizing

DISCUSSION

According to this research's early analysis, students technically answered HOTS questions using the guidelines established by the Malaysian Examinations Board. However, there are also those students who are unaware of the techniques. Without underestimating the value of education on the practical side of daily life, any fundamental structure, like the technique of writing HOTS answers, also has its own significance. It functions as a framework that directs students to provide more organized responses and encourages them to elaborate critically and in-depth on the information in their responses. Students will be able to organize and construct arguments in their thoughts using this framework as a starting point, which will enable them to express with more confidence, eloquence, and effectiveness. Sharp thinking develops a student's attractive personality and signifies the beginning of other primary effect that will benefit the student's self-development into adulthood.

It was discovered through the analysis of cognitive aspect that students' writing is more oriented and focused on lower order thinking skills. Most of the answers are reiterations. Students are asked to comment on and express original, fascinating, and dynamic ideas in the HOTS practice concept. However, the analysis's findings also indicate that the amount of writing at the Apply level is encouraging. This demonstrates unequivocally that, with serious effort from competent teachers, there is still a great chance to advance such skills. Furthermore, these students are also held in high regard as potential future religious and thinkers leaders of the nation. This initiative is also a means of assisting the government and the ministry in sustaining SABK's reputation in Malaysia as an added values to the variety of the country's education options.

The analysis's findings also indicate that SABK students have made significant progress in their affective development. This is consistent with SABK's reputation as a center that fosters moral development in people and preserves spiritual training. In light of that, SABK must keep cultivating good character in students and even elevate it to a higher degree. With this stellar reputation, SABK should also take the initiative to make sure that its name is known as one of the educational options whose caliber is unquestionable. Considering society, the mindset of sending troubled youths to SABK or other religious educational institutes must be eliminated. Since the family should be the first source of education, this practice makes things difficult for the teachers. In other words, the community has to understand that education requires collaboration between parents, teachers, and society at large.

Students in SABK do not consistently exhibit comparable cognitive or affective growth in comparison. It was discovered that affective development was higher than cognitive development in students. It is implied that SABK's environment for instilling Islamic values must be maintained and improved upon. However, in order to enhance students' cognitive growth, the academic aspect must be strengthened. With respect to this, the findings of this research have major repercussions for four areas: exposure, learning, nurture, and culture. Students must be made more aware of and exposed to the KBAT technique in order for it to serve as a framework for their critical thinking and writing. Critical thinking must be emphasized in the classroom through the use of resources, teaching, questioning, and modelling. Continuous, appropriate encouragement of critical thinking is required, both inside and outside of the classroom. Finally, even if it is not through formal education sessions, with or without reinforcement, critical thinking needs to develop a culture in the school environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this study was to examine the cognitive and affective development of SABK students. The results of this analysis revealed that students' cognitive development is underdeveloped and needs attention from the areas exposure, learning, nurture, and culture. The affective development is consistent with the expectations, but it has the potential to grow into a preeminent institution that will supply the nation's assets in the future. The community, on the other side, needs to play a part by doing things like getting rid of the reversed paradigm surrounding the function of SABK, promoting high-quality early education at home, and finally, assisting financially if necessary. To ensure that students in Malaysia receive a comprehensive education, extensive research on cognitive and affective development must be conducted. In order to produce more human capital that is balanced from an academic, religious, and personal perspective in addition to bearing the trust of students' families as clients of their institutions, studies related to the educational development of students in Government Assisted Religious Schools must also be carried out comprehensively. It is believed that the findings of this study would help SABK continue to develop in Malaysia.

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