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## **Creative teaching practice among Islamic education lecturers: The influence of gender, age, and teaching experience**

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### **ABSTRACT**

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Higher education plays an important role in providing human resources that will contribute to the sustainable development of a country. Thus, lecturers are the main support to shape the students in the best way to become qualified manpower in the future through a creative and effective teaching process. This study aimed to identify the level of creative teaching practices among the Islamic Education lecturers in the Polytechnic Central and Southern Zones. Furthermore, it was aimed to identify the influence of gender, age, and teaching experience on creative teaching. In order to achieve this, a questionnaire was administered online and a total of 74 respondents were involved. The collected data were analyzed through descriptive analysis of frequency, percentage, and mean and inferential analysis of t-test, Pearson correlation, and regression. The findings indicated that the level of creative teaching practice among Islamic Education lecturers in the Polytechnic was at a high level. In addition, the findings showed that there is no significant difference in creative teaching practice according to gender, age, and teaching experience. The findings can be useful for the polytechnic's faculty members in ensuring that creative teaching was implemented in the teaching and learning process.

**Keywords:** creativity, creative teaching, teaching, and learning, polytechnic

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The curriculum delivery process at the polytechnic provides various strategies for lecturers to impart knowledge using a systematic and effective approach to meet the set standards of ensuring quality delivery (Malaysian Polytechnic Standard, 2015). Accordingly, this change demands that the element of creativity can be applied in the teaching and learning process. Creativity and innovation are one of the key core values in the Strategic Plan of the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education 2018 - 2025. Therefore, it is important for the lecturers is to be more creative to produce excellent and capable students by implementing creative teaching.

Teachers and lecturers are viewed as separate identities as they teach at different levels and institutions. In spite of the fact, they play the same role and perform the primary task to educate students and impart knowledge. They have the same scope of essential duties towards their students. Thus, for the purpose of this study, the review of the literature regarding teachers in teaching is also related to lecturers as well as educators. Many concepts and definitions of creative teaching have been highlighted in the previous research and has been variously defined. According to Tan & Goh (2007), creative teaching refers to the use of techniques to increase the effectiveness of learning and this process will help students to learn better and cultivate their creativity. Creativity also involves teachers' competency in terms of classroom activity management. It is also mentioned that creative

teaching is the process of making something better and is closely related to effective teaching especially in the interaction between educators and students (de Sousa, 2011). Creative teaching is a process of building unique and meaningful knowledge in a learning context (Rinkevich, 2011). Sale (2015) defines creative teaching as a process of a creative teacher who can create instructional strategies that make learning a meaningful experience. The same definition can also be seen in Jasni & Zainal (2020), who states that the diversity of techniques and methods in teaching is a creative approach that has an impact on teaching. Besides, creative teaching is also produced through creative pedagogical elements in education, such as creative teaching elements, teaching for creativity and creative learning (Lin, 2011). Creative teaching is also linked to several other components such as creative elements, creativity practices, curriculum, environment, teaching strategies and teaching aids (Al-karasneh & Jubran, 2013; Ayob et al., 2013; Faizuddin, 2017). Creative teaching according to the Islamic perspective using Quranic methodology can provide a learning environment that is capable to increase students' creativity (Al-Karasneh & Saleh, 2010). Thus, the concept of creative teaching can be seen through various creative elements existing in the teaching that can help teachers to provide a learning environment that suits the needs of students, improve classroom management and achieve teaching and learning objectives. When viewed from the context of Islamic Education, the concept of creative teaching is actually in line with the Quran and Sunnah. Based all of the definitions, creative teaching succeed from the role of educators who use various strategies and activities as well as build relationships with students to make effective teaching.

Recent studies in creative teaching has been conducted to explore different aspects in various fields. Huang & Kin Lee (2015) studied the beliefs of Hong Kong teachers in creative teaching. Nazeri Mohammad et al. (2015) conducted a study to test the active learning variables as mediators of the appropriate variables between the teaching and guidance of teachers with creative teaching in Design and Technology in secondary schools of peninsular Malaysia. The study by Popoola Kareem (2016) identified the factors influencing creative teaching among Islamic private schools in Kuala Lumpur. Gulozer & Alpan (2020) developed a scale related to teachers' perceptions of creative teaching in Turkey. Nur Mustafa et al (2020) investigated the convergent, construct and discriminant validity of creative teaching instrument and explored the issue of teachers' creative teaching in Indonesian secondary schools. Another study in Indonesia carried out by Suyudi et al (2022) who determined the effect of instructional leadership and creative teaching as the main aspects in maximizing student input and potential in order to achieve learning satisfaction and self-actualization for the educational success of the students in *madrasah* and vocational high schools. Furthermore, Mahmoud Alali (2020) developed a scale of creative university teaching practices at King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia and identified the relationship between creative teaching practices and some personality variables. Deng et al (2020) investigated the status quo of higher school physical education teachers' personality traits, resilience, and creative teaching status in China. This indicates that the study of creative teaching has gained the attention of researchers and shows useful findings.

A number of researchers have done investigations on teaching practices and showed there was less emphasis on creative teaching practices among teachers. The study conducted by Al Najjar's (2012) in Saudi Arabia aimed to know how teachers of scientific material had creative teaching skills and the relation with academic attainments in college. The study showed that all of the teachers did not possess creative teaching skills but practiced traditional teaching. Muhamad Zaki et al. (2013) identified that teachers did not understand the concept and implementation in adopting creative teaching elements to their teaching. The weakness of teaching teachers efficiently and effectively illustrates a low level of teaching creativity practice among Islamic Education teachers in schools (Kasim, 2011). Ahmad Fkruddin et.al (2019) found that lecturers in the polytechnic needed to diversify

teaching methods as an initiative to encourage students to understand what was taught to them even they showed a high level of acceptance to the subject. A research conducted by Al-Lami and Lefta (2013) found there was a weakness in the effective teaching practice performance. Huang et.al (2019) found that there was a lack of substantial support for teachers within the school setting although there was a considerable consensus that creativity could be achieved inside school. Moreover, the study by Radeljic et al (2020) in Croatia mentioned that lack of creativity led to boredom or monotony which was often the case in schools.

There were many studies investigating other variables affecting teaching. Fatma and Tugay (2015) indicated that teachers with a minimum of ten years of teaching experience were more effective in teaching and good in classroom management skills. A study accomplished by Khodabandeh & Jamali (2019) on Iranian English of Foreign Language (EFL) teachers showed that teacher age was found to be a factor influencing teachers' perspectives on creativity and classroom management. The study also found that gender had an effect on teachers' creativity in classroom management although there were no statistically significant differences between male and female teachers in terms of their attitudes towards classroom management. A review of US research by Podolsky et al. (2019) found that teaching experience is positively associated with student achievement throughout much of a teacher's career and more experienced teacher benefits to their colleagues. Graham et al. (2020) conducted a study among Queensland primary school teachers and showed no evidence of lower teaching quality for beginning teachers of 0-3 years' experience, but some evidence of a decline in teaching quality for teachers with 4-5 year's experiences.

However, there were several research that has been done to investigate on the gender differences in creative teaching among lecturers especially among Islamic Education lecturers. Nee et al. (2016) in their study among Malaysian secondary school teachers found out that there was no significant difference among male and female teachers in their creative teaching tendencies. The study conducted by Al-Assaf & Awamleh (2019) aimed to find out the degree to which teachers practicing social studies in Jordan used creative teaching skills and how the variables of qualification, experience and gender affected these skills. They found that the degree of creative teaching skills used by teachers practicing social studies in Jordan in light of variables was large and another notable finding showed that there were no significant differences in the variable of gender in the degree of creative teaching skills.

Based on the literature review, the researcher has seen the lack of research conducted on creative teaching in polytechnics. There were gender differences investigated in the previous study. However, there was a lack of research that investigated the gender differences in creativity among lecturers, particularly on the differences in creative teaching. Thus, this study determined the level of creative teaching practices among Islamic Education lecturers in polytechnics in the Central and Southern Zones and its relationship to gender, age and teaching experience.

## **METHOD**

This study implemented a quantitative approach using survey methods. Five-point Likert scale questionnaires were administered online to obtain respondents' feedback. Simple random sampling was used to select participants and 74 respondents involved in this study from 120 population of polytechnic Islamic Education lecturer in the Central and Southern Zone. The questionnaire contained 24 items and employed a five point Likert scale with the level of agreement that was 1 = never (NV), 2= seldom (SL), 3= sometimes (ST), 4= often (OF) and 5 = almost always (AA). The reliability of the items as indicated by the Cronbach's alpha value which was  $\alpha = 0.941$ . This value indicated

that the instrument had good reliability. Next, the obtained data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistic Version 26.0 using descriptive and inferential analysis. Data analysis were conducted in three steps. The first step considered doing the normality test as a statistical procedure using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk. Then followed by running the descriptive analysis using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation to identify the level of creative teaching practice among Islamic Education polytechnic lecturers. In the third steps, inferential statistics using t-test, Pearson correlation and regression to determine the differences of creative teaching according to gender, age and teaching experience.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Finding**

#### ***Normality test***

The results of the normal distribution of data based on the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* and *Shapiro-Wilk* statistical tests as shown in Table 1 indicates that the study variables that creative teaching practices are normally distributed where *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* and *Shapiro-Wilk* have significant test results,  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, the data in this study is suitable for further analysis.

**Table 1. Normality test**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Creative Teaching Practice	.075	74	.200*	.982	74	.371

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

#### ***Level of creative teaching practice***

This current research measured the level of creative teaching practice of lecturers by 24 items represented from B1 to B24. Table 2 shows that three items had very high scores while the other twenty-one items had high scores. Based on the table, item B11 which was "Linking problems with everyday life" recorded the highest mean of 4.41 and standard deviation of 0.701. Meanwhile item B15 which was "Explain the concepts from concrete to abstract" recorded the lowest mean of 3.62 and standard deviation of 0.887. Based on the findings in Table 2, as a whole, the level of creative teaching practice (mean = 3.99, SD = 0.471) among the Polytechnic Islamic Education lecturers was at a high level. In addition, item B11 clearly showed that Islamic Education lecturers in the polytechnics tried to impart good values to students in an effort to produce students with good morals.

#### ***Differences in creative teaching practice by gender***

The result of this study was expected to be able to identify the differences in creative teaching practices between male and female lecturers. The results of t-tests to test the differences in creative teaching practices based on gender are shown in Table 3. An independent t-test was conducted to compare creative teaching practices among male and female lecturers. The results of the t-test analysis in Table 3 presents that there was no significant difference in creative teaching practice [ $t = -0.120$ ,  $p = 0.905$ ],  $p > 0.05$  between male and female lecturers. These findings explain that gender did not play a significant role as there were no differences in creative teaching process.

#### ***Correlation between gender, age, and teaching experience with creative teaching***

Table 4 shows gender ( $r = 0.014$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ); age ( $r = 0.116$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ); and teaching experience ( $r$

= 0.004,  $p > 0.05$ ) were not correlated with creative teaching practice among Islamic education lecturers.

**Table 2. Level of creative teaching practice**

No	Statement	NV N (%)	SL N (%)	ST N (%)	OF N (%)	AA N (%)	Mean	SD
B1	Trigger new ideas for students to think about.	1 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	18 (24.3)	39 (52.7)	16 (21.6)	3.93	.764
B2	Present various forms of solutions to the same problem.	1 (1.4)	2 (2.7)	20 (27.0)	38 (51.4)	13 (17.6)	3.81	.805
B3	Use illustrations to explain problem-solving in teaching.	1 (1.4)	6 (8.1)	24 (32.4)	30 (40.5)	13 (17.6)	3.65	.913
B4	Guide students to master the content of teaching until it gives them meaning.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (10.8)	40 (54.1)	26 (35.1)	4.24	.637
B5	Introduce new solutions to a topic.	0 (0.0)	5 (6.8)	18 (24.3)	41 (55.4)	10 (13.5)	3.76	.773
B6	Integrate technology in teaching according to the suitability of the topic.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	27 (36.5)	28 (37.8)	18 (24.3)	3.85	.806
B7	Explain content in stages from easy to difficult.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.7)	15 (20.3)	33 (44.6)	24 (32.4)	4.07	.800
B8	Present other ideas that are different from the usual.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.7)	22 (29.7)	41 (55.4)	9 (12.2)	3.77	.693
B9	Apply one's own style in teaching.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (14.9)	40 (54.1)	23 (31.1)	4.16	.663
B10	Improve the quality of teaching by combining the latest methods.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (23.0)	40 (54.1)	17 (23.0)	4.00	.682
B11	Linking problems with everyday life.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	6 (8.1)	29 (39.2)	38 (51.4)	4.41	.701
B12	Give ideas to trigger students to think about.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	8 (10.8)	38 (51.4)	27 (36.5)	4.23	.693
B13	Introduce new activities in teaching.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	20 (27.0)	39 (52.7)	14 (18.9)	3.89	.713
B14	Adjust teaching methods based on students' interests.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (23.0)	41 (55.4)	16 (21.6)	3.99	.672
B15	Explain the concepts from concrete to abstract.	1 (1.4)	5 (6.8)	27 (36.5)	29 (39.2)	12 (16.2)	3.62	.887
B16	Practice discussion sessions in a conducive environment.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	15 (20.3)	40 (54.1)	18 (24.3)	4.01	.712
B17	Implement 'hands-on' student activities.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (31.1)	44 (59.5)	7 (9.5)	3.78	.603
B18	Avoid 'talk and chalk' teaching methods.	1 (1.4)	3 (4.1)	21 (28.4)	42 (56.8)	7 (9.5)	3.69	.757
B19	Changing the teaching approach when it turns out to be less effective.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	14 (18.9)	44 (59.5)	16 (21.6)	4.03	.640
B20	Provide examples of solutions suitable for the teaching topic.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (8.1)	48 (64.9)	20 (27.0)	4.19	.566
B21	Use of teaching aids that are appropriate with the topic of instruction.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	7 (9.5)	47 (63.5)	19 (25.7)	4.14	.626
B22	Modify teaching based on student feedback.	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	9 (12.2)	51 (68.9)	12 (16.2)	3.97	.682
B23	Encourage students to access the internet to explore topics they do not master.	1 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	7 (9.5)	33 (44.6)	33 (44.6)	4.31	.757
B24	Give a simple definition of the terms used in teaching.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	8 (10.8)	30 (40.5)	35 (47.3)	4.34	.727
Total							3.99	.471

(Levels: Low = 1.00 – 2.00, Moderate Low = 2.01 – 3.00, Moderate High = 3.01 – 4.00, High = 4.01 - 5.00)

**Table 3. T-test comparison in creative teaching practice by gender**

	Gender	N	Mean	std	t	Sig.P
Creative Teaching Practice	Male	32	3.99	.513	-.120	.905
	Female	42	4.00	.443		

**Table 4. Pearson correlation coefficient analysis**

	Creative Teaching Practice	
	r	Sig. P
Gender	.014	.905
Age	-.116	.327
Teaching Experience	.004	.976

***Relationship between gender, age, and teaching experience with creative teaching practice***

The results of this study were expected to be able to identify the relationship between gender, age and teaching experience with creative teaching practices.

**Table 5. Coefficient analysis for creative teaching practice**

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.113	.253		16.267	.000
Gender	-.005	.112	-.006	-.047	.962
Age	-.173	.114	-.271	-1.517	.134
Teaching Experience	.139	.120	.207	1.161	.250

$R^2 = 0.032$ ;  $F(3, 70) = 0.772$ , Sig.  $F = 0.514$

The results in Table 5 presents that gender, age and teaching experience did not significantly predict creative teaching practice,  $R^2 = 0.032$ ,  $F(3, 70) = 0.772$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . Further analysis found that gender,  $Beta = -0.006$ ,  $t(70) = -0.047$ ,  $p > 0.05$  did not significantly affect creative teaching practices. It also indicates age,  $Beta = -0.271$ ,  $t(70) = -1.517$ ,  $p > 0.05$  did not significantly affect creative teaching practice. Also, it shows teaching experience,  $Beta = 0.207$ ,  $t(70) = 1.161$ ,  $p > 0.05$  did not significantly affect creative teaching practice. Thus, gender, age and teaching experience do not influence creative teaching among Polytechnic Islamic Education lecturers.

**Discussion**

Based on the findings of this study, the descriptive analysis shows that the level of creative teaching practices of Islamic Education lecturers in Central and Southern Zone polytechnics was at high level and moderately high level. It was found that they also focused on the element of creativity in delivering lessons because there was a variety of application of these elements in terms of techniques, methods and strategies for their teaching. This also proved that creative teaching has been applied among polytechnic Islamic Education lecturers but has not been fully implemented. This situation might be due to the lack of training and exposure on creativity as well as skills that have not been fully mastered by them.

This is also in line with Ahmad Fkruddin et al. (2019) that lecturers needed to diversify teaching methods. A study conducted by Mohd Nawi (2011) found that Islamic Education teachers had the ability to produce style reforms and diversify creativity practices in the process of teaching Islamic Education in schools. The use of innovative and creative teaching techniques and student learning activities prevented boredom (Shah & Udgaonkar, 2018). However, lecturers had to continue to strive to improve creative teaching and did not give up making the teaching and learning process a success. The effective teaching and learning of Islamic Education also depended on the teaching style of Islamic Education teachers (Kamarul Azmi et al, 2012). Conforming this, Ahmad Firdaus et al. (2014) stated that Islamic Education lecturers should pay attention to their teaching and learning so that appropriate skills could be applied to produce a high understanding by students, thus made them appreciate and practice the knowledge they

acquire.

Another notable finding in this study was the highest mean score of items B11 which was "Linking problems with everyday life" recorded the highest mean of 4.41. The actions of Islamic Education lecturers that linked problems to daily life could help students improve their thinking ability because indirectly students could realize the relationship between problems and their daily lives. This is also in line with Mohd Nor et al. (2020) who stated that engaging students with the teaching and learning process was one of the class management elements of outstanding lecturers of Islamic education in polytechnics. Creative teaching also required teaching strategies that related lessons to real life and students' experiences ((Horng et al. 2005; Mahmoud Alali 2020) This allowed students to think and generate their ideas to further increase their involvement in the teaching process.

The result obtained from the table indicated that gender, age and teaching experience were not correlated with creative teaching practice among Islamic education lecturers. This indicates that creative teaching did not decline with gender, age and teaching experience. The result was inconsistent with (Mahmoud Alali 2020) that indicated the reliance of the male on creative teaching practices was more than the females. This finding was found to be consistent with the previous study about age influence in creative teaching. Ab. Halim Tamuri et al. (2004) stated that there was no significant difference between teaching practice and gender in the teaching of Islamic Education. Nee et al. (2016) also revealed there was a significant difference between creative teaching tendency (CTT) among male and female secondary school teachers. This finding is also similar to that of Al-Assaf & Awamleh (2019) showing that there were no significant differences in the variable of gender in the degree of creative teaching skills. The recent study reported that there was gender difference in level of quality. A study conducted by Kasmin et al. (2019) revealed that the demographic aspect of the age of teachers of 45 years and above had different levels of quality compared to Islamic teachers in other age categories. This situation shows that Islamic Education teachers aged 45 and above had a better level of quality practice compared to other age category teachers.

## **CONCLUSION**

As a conclusion, the level of creative teaching practice among Islamic Education lecturers in polytechnics in the Central and Southern Zones was at a high level. Islamic Education lecturers in polytechnics implemented the creative teaching in their teaching and learning process. This study has implications for the lecturers to be more creative in teaching to achieve teaching and learning outcomes. This study also revealed that creative teaching did not influence by gender, age and teaching experience of Islamic Education lecturers in polytechnics. Although the results did not prove the relationship between gender, age and teaching experience and creative teaching significantly, but it generated new knowledge for certain issues and context of educational needs. Moreover, creative teaching played a crucial role to develop students' outcome. It can be concluded that creative teaching provided a form of positive changes in the lecturers' teaching pattern. The Islamic Education lecturers were not at all bound by traditional teaching patterns. Creative teaching could be used effectively by the lecturers to attract students, increase creativity and apply good values in the teaching and learning process. For future research, this study needs to be conducted in a wider range of polytechnics in Malaysia. Although creativity was applied in teaching, in-depth research into creative teaching in the teaching of Islamic Education lecturers in polytechnics needed to be implemented. The aspects of creativity practice should be emphasized so that the teaching of lecturers could be improved because through creativity lecturers could plan, implement and complete teaching creatively.

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