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Arabic Learning Design Using an Alef Education Platform-Based Blended Learning Model Jared M. Carman Perspective

Noor Zinatul Hamidah^{a,1}, Primasti Nur Yusrin Hidayanti^{a,2}, Abdul Wahab Rosyidi^{a,3},
Muhammad Ghafar^{b,4}, Aulia Humaira^{c,5}

^aUIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

^bInstitut Agama Islam Negeri Ponorogo, Indonesia

^cInternational Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia

¹zinatul1994@gmail.com, ²asprimastii@gmail.com, ³wahab@pba.uin-malang.ac.id,

⁴ghafar@iainponorogo.ac.id, ⁵aulia.humaira@live.iium.edu.my

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*Corresponding

Author:

Name:

Noor Zinatul
Hamidah

Email:

zinatul1994@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to design a blended learning model using the Alef Education Platform based on the perspective of Jared M. Carman. The type of research approach in this study is a qualitative approach through literature review. This study classifies data based on the research areas examined by the researcher, which are related to the blended learning model and the Alef Education platform. The results of the research showed that the blended learning model learning design based on the Alef Education platform is Jared M. Carman's perspective, placing five keys to the blended learning model, namely: 1) Live events: namely initial orientation regarding objectives, material, time, learning steps, and the learning system that will be implemented. 2) Self-paced learning: After learning in class is finished, students can continue the material online at home according to predetermined targets. 3) Collaboration: Apart from using the Alef education platform, teachers can also use social media. 4) Assessment: In the case of assessments using blended learning, teachers can combine several types of assessments carried out online and offline. 5) Performance support materials: The supporting teaching materials used in blended learning here, the main thing is to use the Alef Education platform. Apart from that, teachers can also use other teaching materials for maximum learning results, such as books or other media that can support the learning process.

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Keyword

Alef Education; Blended Learning; J.M. Carman

مستخلص البحث

الهدف من هذا البحث هو تصميم نموذج التعلم مدمج باستخدام منصة ألف التعليمية (alef education) بناءً على وجهة نظر جاريد م. كارمان (Jared M. Carman). نوع المنهج البحثي في هذا البحث هو المنهج النوعي من خلال استعراض الأدبيات. تصنف هذا البحث البيانات بناءً على مجالات البحث التي قام الباحث ببحثها. والمتعلقة بنموذج التعلم المدمج ومنصة ألف التعليمية (alef education). ظهرت نتائج البحث أن تصميم نموذج التعلم المدمج المعتمد على منصة ألف التعليمية (alef education) هو وجهة نظر جاريد م. كارمان (Jared M. Carman) التي تضع خمسة مفاتيح لنموذج التعلم المدمج وهي: (1) الأحداث الحية، وهي التوجه الأولى فيما يتعلق بالأهداف والمادة والوقت وخطوات التعلم ونظام التعلم الذي سيتم تنفيذه، (2) التعلم الذاتي، بعد الانتهاء من التعلم في الفصل، يمكن للطلاب مواصلة المواد عبر الإنترنت في المنزل وفقًا لأهداف محددة مسبقًا، (3) التعاون، بصرف النظر عن استخدام ألف يمكن لمدرسي منصة التعليم أيضًا استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، (4) التقييم، في حالة التقييمات التي تستخدم التعلم المدمج، يمكن للمدرسين الجمع بين عدة أنواع من التقييمات التي يتم إجراؤها عبر الإنترنت وغير متصل. (5) مواد دعم الأداء، وهي المواد التعليمية الداعمة المستخدمة في التعلم المدمج هنا، والشئ الرئيسي هو استخدام منصة ألف التعليمية، وبصرف النظر عن ذلك، يمكن للمعلمين أيضًا استخدام مواد تعليمية أخرى لتحقيق أقصى قدر من نتائج التعلم، مثل الكتب أو الوسائط الأخرى التي يمكن أن تدعم عملية التعلم.

التعليم الإلكتروني؛ تكنولوجيا التعليم؛ التعليم اللغة العربية.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology has significantly transformed the education system (Mustafa, 2022; Qureshi et al., 2021). Technological developments have simplified access to learning (Patricia Aguilera-Hermida, 2020), enabling students to acquire diverse information with ease (Ari et al., 2022; O'Dell & Sulastri, 2019). Information technology serves as a key medium for transmitting knowledge from educators to students, shaping education into a technology-driven domain. This shift has led to the widespread adoption of technology in education and the emergence of diverse, technology-enhanced learning models (Oktaria, 2018).

In this context, educators, including Arabic language teachers, are required not only to keep pace with technological advancements but also to proactively master and integrate these developments into their teaching practices (Ghavifekr et al., 2014; Elstad & Christophersen, 2017). This necessitates continuous professional development and the acquisition of relevant technological skills to address evolving educational demands (Aldunate & Nussbaum, 2013). Arabic language teachers must also adapt their instructional methods to align with technological innovations, thereby creating engaging and relevant learning experiences for students (Rapanta et al., 2021).

One effective technology-driven instructional approach is blended learning, which combines online and face-to-face teaching methods to create a flexible and engaging learning environment (Oktaria, 2018). In an era marked by rapid advancements in information and communication technology, blended learning offers a practical solution to meet students' needs while enhancing learning outcomes (Rahayu et al., 2022; Puspitarini, 2022).

Blended learning allows students to access online learning materials tailored to their individual schedules and learning styles (Akkoyunlu & Soyulu, 2008). At the same time, it incorporates direct interaction in traditional learning environments, such as classrooms (Alammary et al., 2014). This model strikes a balance between online and face-to-face learning, leveraging the strengths of both approaches (Ningtyas & Sihombing, 2023).

Research by Muhammad Haris Hadiansyah on the effectiveness of the blended learning model in improving student performance at MAN 1 Tulungagung demonstrated that blended learning is highly effective for teaching Arabic. Specifically, it was shown to enhance students' skills in one of the core aspects of the language (Hadiansyah, 2017). Similarly, Jamil (2021) concluded that blended learning is among the most effective and efficient learning models available today.

Several studies have highlighted the growing use of technology in Arabic language instruction (Hamed, 2012; Pikri, 2022). One focus of recent research is the implementation of the Alef Education platform as an innovative tool to enhance students' comprehension and communication skills in Arabic. Alef Education has been adopted by various educational institutions, offering students access to research materials, practice exercises, and other resources in a practical and interactive format (Emara et al., 2023; Maslaha, Irvan, 2023). The platform has been particularly effective in improving Arabic listening and speaking skills through its innovative use of advanced technology (Nuroh & Ubaidillah, 2023; Arab et al., 2024). By facilitating a digital transformation in Arabic language learning, Alef Education has significantly enhanced teaching practices, better equipping students to meet the challenges of the 21st century (A. Alyammahi, 2020).

Surayanah et al., (2022) found that the Alef Education platform enhances elementary school students' higher-order thinking skills. A. H. Alyammahi (2019) also stated that Alef Education improves student performance, particularly in terms of motivation, engagement, and academic outcomes. As a leading digital education platform, Alef Education provides various tools and resources designed to facilitate Arabic language learning. Recognizing its potential, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and Alef Education signed a memorandum of understanding in November 2020 to advance the Indonesian education sector by integrating adaptable and advanced educational technologies (Sani, 2022).

The novelty of this research lies in two primary aspects. First, it seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the blended learning model and the Alef Education platform, with a particular emphasis on the platform's application. This involves exploring the foundational concepts that underpin the effectiveness of blended learning within the context of modern education. Second, the research aims to apply these insights to the design of Arabic language instruction by integrating the blended learning model with the Alef Education platform. This research aspires to contribute both to the conceptual understanding of blended learning and to the development of practical teaching materials for Arabic language education.

METHOD

This qualitative research was performed using a literature review as the primary method. The research process involved gathering both primary and secondary literature sources, which were classified based on the focus of the research: the blended learning model and the Alef Education platform. This

approach was designed to uncover theories relevant to the research problem, serving as foundational references for analyzing the findings (Sugiyono, 2020). The results of the literature review were used to identify the advantages of implementing the blended learning model supported by the Alef Education platform in Arabic language learning.

The data analysis process was conducted in four stages to ensure a systematic examination of the data. First, during the data collection stage, the researcher compiled relevant materials, including journals, articles, and other literature, to address the research problem, particularly the effectiveness of the lattice method in multiplication for reducing students' problem-solving difficulties. Second, the collected data was identified and categorized to ensure relevance and alignment with the research focus. Third, the data was described in detail by presenting findings from the relevant literature clearly and comprehensively. Finally, conclusions were drawn by synthesizing all collected and analyzed data (Sidiq, 2019, p.45).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Blended Learning Model

Blended learning was first introduced as “hybrid learning”, referring to an advanced form of the e-learning model that combines face-to-face and virtual learning to address technological constraints and limitations in human resources (Oktaria, 2018). This integration of learning activities has been shown to offer opportunities for optimizing the learning process (Boelens et al., 2017). With the progression into the digital age, blended learning has undergone further refinement, incorporating web-based learning, video streaming, and both synchronous and asynchronous video communication alongside traditional classroom learning (Waskito, 2018).

Blended learning is a technology-integrated model that can equip students to face the challenges of the digital world (Faraniza, 2021). The model offers flexibility and accessibility, allowing students to learn in accordance with their individual preferences (Khan & Khan, 2024). Several studies have demonstrated that the blended learning model supports diverse student learning styles (Béres et al., 2012; Hu et al., 2021). Furthermore, blended learning has been shown to foster students' independence and responsibility in their learning process (Yulianti & Sulistiyawati, 2020), while also enhancing motivation, understanding of the material, and learning outcomes (Han, 2024).

Inprasitha (2023) found that 84.9% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the benefits of implementing the Blended Learning Model (BLC). The

research highlights valuable insights into the strengths, challenges, and effectiveness of the model (Inprasitha, 2023). Similarly, research by Cheyene indicated that students' satisfaction with blended learning was high, self-efficacy increased, and there was a positive impact on students' work readiness through enhanced self-efficacy (Go et al., 2024). Several basic principles of blended learning model as Carman (2005) mentioned are explained as follows.

Live Events

Live events are face-to-face learning that is led by an instructor within the same time and place, either in a live classroom or in a different virtual classroom.(Carman, 2005; Okaz, 2015)

Self-learning with online content

Self-directed learning experiences can occur anytime and anywhere (asynchronously) through online content (Carman, 2005). The learning process can utilize text-based or multimedia-based media (such as video, animation, simulations, images, audio, or a combination of these), all of which are accessible online, either via the web or mobile devices. These resources, including videos and eBooks, allow students to engage with learning materials at their convenience (Karma et al., 2021).

To effectively design a blended learning approach, educators or self-motivated learners must foster collaboration between students and teachers using communication tools such as chat rooms, discussion forums, email, online chats, websites, and social media. These platforms facilitate material deepening, problem-solving, and project-based tasks (Chen et al., 2020). This collaborative process allows students to expand their knowledge, benefiting from the involvement of various stakeholders and access to diverse learning resources.

Collaboration

To design an effective blended learning environment, educators should prioritize fostering collaboration between students and teachers through various communication tools, such as chat rooms, discussion forums, email, online chats, websites, and social media. These platforms serve as means for in-depth material exploration, problem-solving, and project-based tasks (Carman, 2005). By integrating these communication channels, students are not only able to engage with their peers and instructors but also benefit from a broader range of learning resources, thereby enhancing their understanding and expanding their scientific knowledge (Hoic-Bozic et al., 2009).

Assessment

An educator seeking to enhance learning through blended learning can incorporate various types of assessments, such as non-traditional or authentic assessments, which can be presented in the form of projects or products that

may be completed either online or offline. This flexibility allows for a more adaptable and comprehensive evaluation process (Carman, 2005). Assessments play a crucial role in measuring students' knowledge and progress. Pre-assessments can be conducted prior to face-to-face learning and self-paced research to gauge students' prior knowledge. Post-assessments, typically carried out following scheduled online learning sessions, help measure the transfer of knowledge and learning outcomes (Oktaria, 2018).

Performance support materials

Reference materials are crucial for enhancing student retention and learning outcomes in the blended learning model (Carman, 2005). To support student competence in mastering a subject, teaching materials must be prepared in digital formats, ensuring accessibility both offline and online (Faraniza, 2021).

Platform Alef Education

Alef Platform History

Alef Education is a global educational technology company headquartered in Abu Dhabi, one of the world's most innovative and cosmopolitan cities (Herawati, 2022). The concept of the Alef Platform originated in 2015, with the goal of addressing the needs of the local public school system in the United Arab Emirates. Over time, this concept expanded, evolving into a vision that integrates digital education transformation for both early childhood education (PAUD/TK) and secondary education (*Platform Belajar Matematika, Bahasa Arab, Bahasa Inggris | Alef Education Indonesia*, n.d.-a).

Alef Education's flagship product, the Alef Platform, is an AI-driven platform designed to provide a personalized learning experience for students, significantly enhancing learning outcomes (Cukurova et al., 2023). In addition to supporting students, the platform assists teachers by offering engaging content, games aligned with the curriculum, and tools for student assessment and management. Furthermore, the Alef Platform generates real-time data to provide timely and relevant feedback to both students and teachers, fostering transformative processes. This feature has played a crucial role in the platform's success (*Platform Belajar Matematika, Bahasa Arab, Bahasa Inggris | Alef Education Indonesia*, n.d.-a).

Features on Alef Platform

Alef Education's Alef platform offers a variety of advanced features that deliver a customized and engaging Arabic learning experience, making the process both enjoyable and effective for students (Herawati, 2022). Arabic learning materials are presented through interactive mediums, including videos, games, and engaging topics, which help maintain student motivation and ensure

a fun learning environment. Through the Alef Platform, teachers receive access to content that aligns with the Indonesian language learning curriculum, ensuring that it meets educational standards while remaining captivating for students (Nuroh & Ubaidillah, 2023).

All learning materials are seamlessly integrated into the Alef Platform, making them easy for teachers to apply. In addition to the engaging content designed for students, the platform also includes a comprehensive assessment and evaluation system, which is automatically generated. According to Team Alef Education (2021), the Alef platform includes numerous features that enhance both distance and face-to-face learning, offering a broad and complete array of tools that support the efficiency of the learning process as follows (*Platform Belajar Matematika, Bahasa Arab, Bahasa Inggris | Alef Education Indonesia*, n.d.-b). (a) Task Features. Teachers can add lesson materials by creating tasks for students through the alef platform. (b) Game Features The teacher can create a quiz game, and the students can join at the same time. This can improve interaction in the classroom and stimulate student creativity. (c) Group features. This feature allows teachers to classify students based on their competence in order to determine the specific needs of each student. (d) Analytical features. Teachers is able to analyze students based on their competencies in order to provide support tailored to each student's needs.

The entire features of Alef Platform are explained in the following session (Alef Education, n.d.):

A Lesson Card feature consisting of (1) Visual audio on the alef platform is presented using fun and interactive images and sounds. (2) Arabic Games. The games on the Alef Platform were adjusted to the material presented in the learning video. (3) Test of your understanding Questions: The questions of the test on the Alef Platform are organized from the lowest level to the highest level (HOTS). After completing the questions, students will receive their scores. (4) Class progress feature: This feature enables teachers to analyze students' achievement and students' progress in completing the learning card. (5) Student Progress Features: The percentage of student progress and stars obtained by students are presented in the Student Progression feature. On this feature, teachers can also see the star history obtained by students on each student's lesson card. (6) Student Achievement Features: This feature allows teachers to identify student's personal values and details of their learning challenges and achievement. This feature also shows the learning progress of students, thereby teachers can apply strategies to help underperforming students reach the learning objectives.

The analytical features of this research include: (1) Weekly targets. Weekly target feature allows teachers to set the load of lesson card that should be

completed within. This feature can appear in different sets to meet each student's ability and needs. (2) Student distribution. This feature is presented in a point diagram consisting of students who need guidance, need intervention, need enrichment, and students are still in the development zone with the highest value and star. (3) Class comparison. This feature allows teachers to observe and compare students' learning achievement in each class.

Administrative Features The administrative features are divided into three sections: teacher groups, student lists, and class information. Alef Education's blended learning model provides a learning experience that is adaptive, flexible, and tailored to meet the individual needs of students. Several studies have shown that the use of Alef Education enhances student engagement by incorporating interactive content such as videos, quizzes, and technology-based activities, which in turn increases student motivation and positively influences learning outcomes (Diniati, 2023). This approach also improves learning efficiency, as it allows teachers to utilize class time for discussions, practice, and collaborative activities, while basic learning and concept reinforcement are facilitated through the Alef platform (Bielikovà et al., 2014).

The platform's real-time monitoring and evaluation features provide teachers with data-driven reports that enable them to track student progress in real time. This allows teachers to quickly identify students who may need additional support. Moreover, the platform fosters collaboration among students, teachers, and parents through shared access to student progress data, making the learning process more inclusive (Emara et al., 2023).

However, several factors must be considered for the successful implementation of learning using Alef Education. These include the technological readiness of educational institutions, teachers, and students ((Surayanah et al., 2022); the preparedness of teachers and students to effectively use the Alef Education platform; and the integration of the Alef Education curriculum with the local curriculum to ensure standardized learning (Fitriyati et al., 2022).

Arabic Learning Using a Blended Learning Model Based on the Alef Education Platform

After gaining an understanding of the blended learning model and the Alef Education platform, the next phase involves applying the blended learning model, utilizing the Alef Education platform, to the teaching of Arabic in madrasahs. In developing this model, the researchers drew on Jared M. Carman's framework, which identifies five key components of the blended learning model: live events, self-paced learning, collaboration, assessment, and performance support materials (Carman, 2005).

Live event

At the live event, the teacher explained the learning goal as well as the steps of learning. Teachers communicated several aspects to be achieved: material, time, learning steps, and learning system in the classroom and online independently using the blended learning model. Students were also given the support and assistance in registration and administration. Teachers provide materials and procedures for using Alef education to ensure that the learning experience hits the expected purposes.

Self-paced learning

After the classroom session was over, students can continue learning online at home.

Collaboration

Aside from Alef education platform, teachers can also use social media, such as WhatsApp groups to interact with students and provides assistance on demand.

Assessment

The assessment of blended learning activities can be done by combining online and offline assessment. In online assessments, Alef education can be used to determine the progress of students during home learning

Performance support materials

The supporting materials utilized in the blended learning approach primarily rely on the Alef Education platform which can be added with materials from additional resources, such as textbooks or other media, to optimize learning outcomes. These supplementary materials can enhance the learning process by providing diverse and complementary perspectives to the digital platform.

Alef Education platform effectively supports most of the five key elements of blended learning outlined by Jared M. Carman. It excels in facilitating self-paced learning, performance support, and technology-based assessments. However, the collaboration component requires further enhancement, particularly in supporting virtual discussions. Additionally, Alef needs to offer more tools for teachers to design interactive and relevant live activities tailored to digital learning environments.

From Carman's perspective, the Alef Education platform's blended learning design aligns with most of the key elements. To maximize its effectiveness, strengthening the integration of collaborative features and hands-on activities is crucial. This could be achieved by leveraging digital tools that foster greater student interaction. With the right development, this model has the potential to serve as a comprehensive approach to improving educational quality in the digital age.

CONCLUSIONS

Alef Education's blended learning model offers an effective combination between traditional and digital learning. It offers personalization, efficiency, and real-time data monitoring for better education quality. However, adequate implementation of the program requires proper infrastructure, trained teacher, and integration to the curriculum. The model developed in this research supports educational transformation in the digital era.

This research proposed several suggestions. The of e-learning in learning Arabic in the modern era is important for teachers as it functions as a reference source in developing Arabic language learning by utilizing the Alef platform as an alternative. This research limitedly focusing on the integration of Alef in a blended learning model. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct in-depth discussion on the utilization, strategies as well as advantages and disadvantages of Alef platform.

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