Problematics of Arabic Language Learning: Case Studies in Islamic Educational Institutions

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Abstract

Arabic language learning often faces various challenges, both linguistic and non-linguistic. These obstacles can affect the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and the achievement of learning objectives. This study aims to identify and analyze the problems faced in Arabic language learning, as well as provide recommendations for strategies that can be applied to improve the quality and effectiveness of Arabic language learning at various levels of education. This research uses descriptive qualitative method through literature study, data collected through in-depth review of various literatures, scientific journals, and relevant documents that discuss the problems of Arabic language learning. The results of this study indicate that there are five causes of Arabic language learning problems, the five are i.) low student motivation, ii.) lack of language proficiency, listening, writing and reading iii.) Less varied learning media, iv.) lack of vocabulary and v.) using the lecture method while students are the audience. This study recommends the importance of providing continuous training programs, so that Arabic language learning will become more effective, interesting, and relevant to students' needs, as well as contribute to improving Arabic language competence.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the main fundation in shaping the quality of superior and competitive human (Bennell, 2023; Dawson et al., 2018; Rüschenpöhler & Markic, 2019; Webber, 2024). However, the reality of education in Indonesia still faces various complex challenges Among them are the low quality of learning, the lack of equitable access to education and the weak literacy skills of students. In addition, many teachers are still not optimal in applying learning methods that are in accordance with the times and the needs of students. One of the international languages in the world is Arabic, Arabic is an important language in the world of education which has a major role in Islamic civilization and science (Mohammad, 2016; Moreno-Fernández & Otero, 2008; Palfreyman & Al-Bataineh, 2018; Sehlaoui, 2008; Soliman & Khalil, 2022).

Arabic is the language of the Qur'an, hadith, and various scientific and literary works in Islamic history. In the context of education in Indonesia, Arabic has an important place, especially in educational institutions. Arabic is not only taught as a language skill, but also as a key to understanding classical and modern scientific treasures. Arabic is not only used as a means of communication, but also as a window to understanding diverse Islamic literature. Therefore, mastering Arabic is an urgent need for students to be able to access and understand the sources of Islamic knowledge as a whole. However, the Arabic learning process still does not show optimal results in many educational institutions, both in terms of methods, motivation, and supporting facilities (Annisa & Safii, 2023; Pera Aprizal, 2021; Sya'bani & Has, 2023).

The main problems in learning Arabic include low student motivation, limited teacher competence in managing language classes, lack of creativity in presenting material, and limited media and supporting facilities (Takdir, 2020). In various places, learning is still watching and teacher-centered, with the lecture method that has minimal interaction. As a result, students have difficulty understanding vocabulary, sentence structure, and the ability to communicate actively in Arabic. A less supportive learning environment, as well as the lack of application of daily linguistic practices are also inhibiting factors in achieving language proficiency (Aldawood et al., 2023; Alhamami & Almosa, 2023; Towler, 2024).

To overcome these problems, revitalization steps are needed in Arabic language learning. Teachers as the spearhead of learning need to be given continuous training to improve their competence, both in mastery of material and varied and interactive teaching strategies, such as videos, educational games, and digital technology, which can increase student involvement in the learning process. Creating an environment that supports language practice is also important, for example through daily conversation programs, Arabic language corners, or language communication. Thus, learning Arabic can become more lively, fun and meaningful.
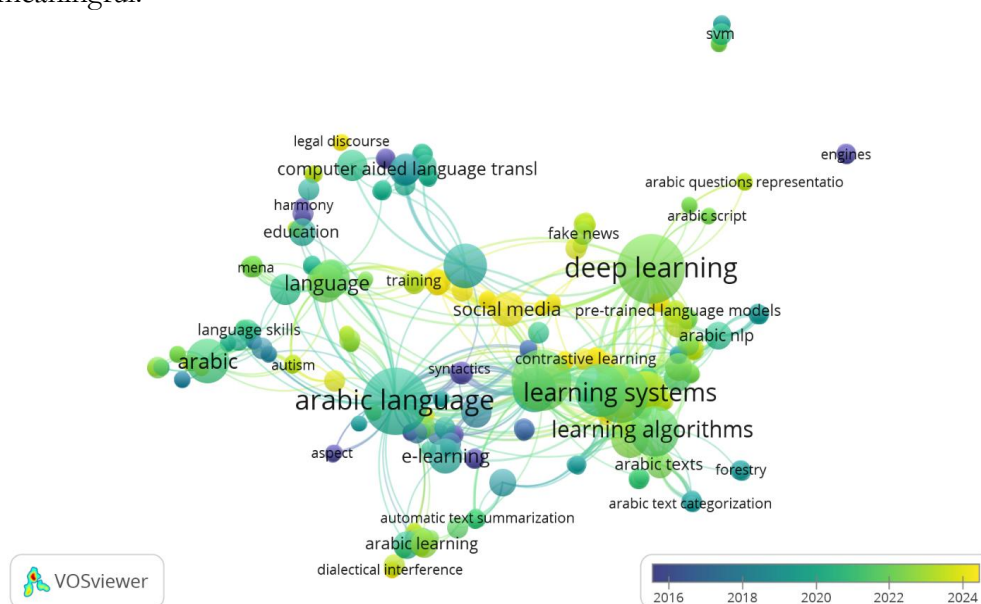

**Fig 1. Bibliometric visualization using VOSviewer with keywords
Arabic language, Deep learning, and learning systems**

Based on the bibliometric visualization generated through VOSviewer software from international publications in the period 2016 to 2024, it can be concluded that the study of Arabic Language has developed significantly. Terms such as deep learning, learning algorithms, and learning systems occupy a central position in the network, indicating that these topics are a major focus in contemporary research related to Arabic language learning. Lighter colors (green to yellow) indicate that these topics have received increased attention in recent publications. This indicates a paradigm shift from conventional teaching methods to technology-based approaches, where the utilization of social media-trained language models, and contrastive learning techniques become highly relevant. In addition, topics such as social media, e-learning, computer-aided language translation, and automatic text summarization emerge as important nodes that are closely connected to the main center of study. The emergence of these terms reflects the integration between digital technologies and language education, reinforcing the global trend towards digitization of learning. The presence of concepts such as fake news and contrastive learning shows that Arabic language teaching is also extended to social issues and natural language processing. This shows that researchers are not only interested in linguistic aspects, but also how Arabic is automatically processed and understood by computer systems in various social, educational and global communication contexts.

Another unique feature of this visualization is the cross-disciplinary connections between education, linguistics and computer science. Terms such as autism, legal discourse and dialectical interference show that Arabic is also studied in the context of special needs, law and complex dialectal differences. This strengthens the position of Arabic language learning as a multidisciplinary field of study that demands a cross-field approach. The novelty in this research lies in how Arabic language learning is transformed through high-tech interventions, and how big data and machine learning approaches play a role in supporting the efficiency and effectiveness of language learning. Thus, the results of this visualization provide an overall picture of new directions and scopes in Arabic language learning research that are relevant to the challenges of the times and the needs of the future world of education.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, which aims to describe and analyze phenomena in depth, especially those related to challenges and solutions in Arabic language learning. This method allows researchers to comprehensively understand the various factors that influence the learning process, both from linguistic and non-linguistic aspects (Dwijayanti & Syafril, 2024; Engkizar et al., 2023). In its implementation, this research relies on library research as the main source of data. Data were collected through an in-depth review of various literatures, scientific journals, and relevant documents that discuss the problems of Arabic language learning. The analysis is conducted using an inductive approach, where the researcher identifies common patterns from the data collected to draw valid conclusions. This approach provides flexibility in exploring multiple perspectives and allows the researcher to develop a richer understanding of the challenges faced in Arabic language learning as well as the strategies that can be implemented to overcome them.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Arabic language learning in various Indonesian educational institutions still faces a number of serious challenges that affect the effectiveness and learning outcomes of students. Low student motivation, suboptimal teacher competence, limited facilities and infrastructure, and difficulties in creating an environment that supports the use of Arabic (Linur, 2022). Teaching methods that tend to watch and center on lectures, the lack of teacher creativity in utilizing learning media, and the lack of understanding of special needs such as the use of braille letters also exacerbate the condition. All of these impacts not only have an impact on weak vocabulary acquisition, but also hamper learners' ability to listen, speak, read and write in Arabic effectively.

The findings this time the researcher focused on (5) five difficulties faced by students towards Arabic language education, the five are: i.) low motivation to learn, ii.) lack of language proficiency, listening, writing and reading iii.) Less varied learning media, iv.) lack of vocabulary and v.) using the lecture method.

Low student learning motivation

One of the fundamental challenges in learning Arabic is the low motivation of learners (Chang et al., 2014; Comadena et al., 2007; Syah et al., 2016). Many students perceive Arabic as a difficult subject and irrelevant to daily life, especially for those who are not in a pesantren or madrasah environment. This is exacerbated by the lack of contextual approaches in teaching Arabic which makes students feel disconnected from the practical functions of the language. This lack of motivation has a direct impact on students' activeness in the learning process and reduces their enthusiasm for developing language skills.

The problem of student motivation in learning Arabic is not only related to internal student factors, but also influenced by the way teachers build emotional relationships and a supportive classroom atmosphere (Hilda, 2023). Teachers who only act as material providers without creating emotional closeness with students will find it difficult to foster interest in learning. In fact, positive and appreciative interactions from teachers can trigger students' enthusiasm for learning, especially in dealing with subjects that are considered difficult (Hanaris, 2023).

In addition, the overcrowded and inflexible curriculum is also an obstacle to the growth of student motivation. The Arabic curriculum in some schools emphasizes grammatical aspects and memorization, without accommodating students' interests, learning styles or backgrounds. When students are not given the space to explore and be creative in learning, they will feel constrained and not find learning satisfaction. A contextualized and flexible curriculum is needed so that students feel more connected to the material being studied.

The absence of modern and relevant learning media exacerbates the lack of motivation to learn. In this digital era, students are more interested in visual and interactive media, such as videos, animations and learning applications. Unfortunately, not all schools have the facilities or educators who are able to integrate technology in the Arabic learning process. Without interesting media, lessons will feel monotonous, so students are increasingly reluctant to be actively involved in learning (Chaimaha et al., 2024; Ge, 2021).

Support from parents and the surrounding environment also plays an important role in shaping students' learning motivation. If the family environment lacks encouragement or does not appreciate the importance of Arabic, students will

tend to underestimate this subject. Conversely, when the family also encourages and shows the real benefits of mastering Arabic, such as scholarship or career opportunities, then students' enthusiasm will increase. evaluation that only focuses on the end result and not on the learning process can be a trigger for low learning motivation. Students will tend to study only for grades, not because of the urge to master language skills. Arabic language learning should emphasize process, communication practice, and gradual achievement. With a holistic and humanistic evaluation approach, students will be more motivated to learn sustainably, without excessive pressure (Diniaty, 2017).

Based on the data obtained, the low motivation of students in learning Arabic is caused by various factors. As many as 78% of students stated that the lack of Arabic language practice outside the classroom was the main obstacle. This shows that learning that only takes place in the classroom without the support of an Arabic-speaking environment causes students to have difficulty developing language skills actively. In addition, 72% of students feel that Arabic is a difficult language to learn, when students find it difficult, they tend to lose interest and are reluctant to continue the learning process. As much as 70% of the factors that contribute to the learning method are boring and 65% of students consider Arabic unimportant, because teaching methods that are not varied and less interactive make students quickly feel bored, while 60% of students feel that their achievements in learning Arabic are less rewarded, which causes a reduced enthusiasm for achievement.

Lack of listening, speaking, writing and reading skills

Arabic has several steps or stages in learning it, someone can be said to be proficient in Arabic if he passes these stages first, listening (Maharatuk istima') second, speaking (maharatul Kalam) third, writing (maharatul kitabah) fourth, reading (Maharatul Qira'ah). These stages need to be applied in depth in learning Arabic, but if you do not recognize or do not learn these stages, it will result in problems in learning Arabic. The following is the explanation (Wijaya & Kholifah, 2023).

The first, listening (*Maharatul istima'*)

The ability to listen is the initial foundation in language acquisition, especially Arabic which has its own distinctive sounds, it is unfortunate that many students do not have access to authentic Arabic audio media, this makes it difficult for them to familiarize their ears with Arabic pronunciation and intonation. As a result, when teachers deliver spoken material in Arabic, students often do not catch the content. This lowers their confidence and makes the learning process confusing. Without good listening skills, other skills such as language and reading are hampered due to limited context understanding and vocabulary (Asyhari, 2022; Fairuza Mumtaz & Maman Abdurrahman, 2022). As a solution, educators need to provide regular listening exercises such as audio dialogs, short films, or audio-based practice questions. Activities like this can increase students' sensitivity to Arabic sounds and foster listening skills in a natural and fun way.

The second, speaking (*Maharatul Kalam*)

Speaking is a productive skill that requires students to express ideas fluently and precisely. However, many students experience difficulties due to fear of being wrong, lack of vocabulary, and rarely get the opportunity to speak actively in class. So that students become passive and tend to only answer if appointed. Lack of speaking practice makes them unaccustomed to composing sentences well in

Arabic, shyness, fear of being laughed at, and not used to thinking in Arabic exacerbate this condition. In order to improve speaking proficiency, students need to be invited to dialogue, discuss and make simple presentations. These activities encourage students to think actively and practice spontaneity in Arabic without pressure (Syamaun, 2015).

Third, reading (*Maharatul Qira'ah*)

Reading in Arabic requires not only the ability to recognize letters, but also an understanding of sentence structure and vocabulary meaning. Lack of habituation to reading varied Arabic texts makes it difficult for students to understand the content of the reading. Students who are not accustomed to reading will be slow in understanding the text and often do not catch the meaning of the reading. This causes them to lose interest in reading. The solution is that teachers need to introduce reading texts that are light, contextual, and interesting to students, and provide reading exercises with comprehension questions. The more texts that are read, the wider the vocabulary that students master (Ansyah et al., 2020).

Fourth, writing (*Maharatul Kitabah*)

Writing in Arabic demands mastery of sentence structure, letter spelling, and complex grammatical rules such as I'rab. Many students find it difficult due to lack of writing practice. Often students just copy the text without understanding the sentence patterns used. So students' writing tends to be stiff, full of errors, and uncommunicative. This also shows that they have not been able to express ideas in Arabic writing freely. Improving writing skills requires regular practice, starting from simple sentences to narrative or descriptive paragraphs. Teachers also need to give specific and motivating feedback so that students feel valued and want to continue improving their writing.

Based on the above results, it summarizes the various problems faced by students in mastering the four main Arabic language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each skill has its own challenges, ranging from the lack of learning media to the lack of practice and motivation. As a result of these problems, students have difficulty in understanding and using Arabic actively and communicatively. This condition not only hampers the learning process, but also lowers students' interest and confidence. Therefore, innovative and solutive learning strategies are needed according to the needs of the skills to be developed. Teachers need to be present as facilitators who are able to create a learning environment that is rich in practice, interactive, and appreciative.

Less Varied Learning Media

Arabic, learning media plays a very important role in increasing the effectiveness of material delivery. Arabic, which is known to have its own complexities, such as verb forms, sentence structures, and differences between formal language (fusha) and

shows that the learning media used are still very limited and monotonous. Many teachers only rely on textbooks and the lecture method, without integrating other media that are more varied and in accordance with the times. This lack of media variation makes the learning process feel rigid and less lively. Students only become passive recipients, without being given many opportunities to experience or experience the use of Arabic in real contexts. When learning only revolves around memorizing vocabulary or translating texts, students tend to feel bored and find it difficult to understand the language structure as a whole. This is one of the reasons why many students consider Arabic as a difficult and unpleasant subject (Wijayanti

& Utami, 2022).

One of the root causes of the lack of variety in learning media is teachers' limited understanding of the importance of media differentiation. Many teachers have not received training on modern media-based learning design or are not used to utilizing digital technology in teaching. On the other hand, there are also teachers who feel less confident or afraid to try new things for fear of disrupting the established rhythm of learning. In fact, explorative and innovative learning can actually increase students' interest in learning. The lack of media variation in Arabic learning also stems from the lack of support from educational institutions for teachers' professional development. Many schools do not provide regular training, educational technology workshops, or modern learning facilities that encourage teachers to innovate. Without adequate support, teachers tend to feel alone in facing learning challenges, so they continue to use methods and media that have long been used, even though they are no longer relevant to the needs of today's learners.

The impact of the lack of media variety is felt in the students' low ability in the four Arabic language skills: istima' (listening), kalam (speaking), qira'ah (reading), and kitabah (writing). When the learning process is not supported by audio media, videos, educational games, or digital simulations, students only memorize without being able to apply it communicatively. This creates a gap between theory and practice, which in turn decreases students' motivation and confidence in using Arabic actively. so the lack of varied learning media also has an impact on students' perceptions of Arabic itself. Arabic is often perceived as a difficult, rigid, and unpleasant subject. In fact, with a visual, interactive, and contextual approach, Arabic can be delivered in a lighter and more fun way. For example, the use of animated stories, songs, videos of daily conversations, and online quiz games can help students understand the material in a more natural way. When the media used is in accordance with the student's learning style, the learning outcomes will be maximized (Arifin et al., 2024; Febriani et al., 2022; Guspita et al., 2025; Nurfadhilah et al., 2024).

Therefore, a concerted effort is needed from teachers, schools and the government to encourage more varied and interesting Arabic language learning. Teachers need to be encouraged to collaborate, share good practices and continue to develop their creativity. Schools also need to provide spaces and facilities that support the exploration of learning media, including access to relevant technology. With these steps, it is hoped that learning Arabic will not only be a process of mastering the material, but also a fun and memorable learning experience for students.

Lack of Vocabulary

Vocabulary mastery is the main foundation in language learning. Without adequate vocabulary, students will have difficulty in understanding texts, constructing sentences, or expressing ideas orally and in writing. In the context of Arabic language learning in Indonesia, low vocabulary mastery is a serious challenge that is often ignored. Many students are only able to memorize temporarily, but are unable to use it in real communication. One of the main causes of weak vocabulary mastery is learning methods that overemphasize memorization and translation. Teachers tend to provide a list of vocabulary words without the context of their use, so students do not understand the functional meaning of the word. As a result, the memorized vocabulary is easily forgotten because it is not used in real and meaningful communicative contexts.

Moreover, the lack of learning media that support vocabulary enrichment also exacerbates the situation. In many schools, vocabulary materials are only sourced

from textbooks, without any reinforcement through visual, audio or interactive digital media. In fact, such media is proven to help students associate words with images, sounds and situations, making them easier to absorb and remember in the long run. The learning environment that does not support the active use of Arabic is also an inhibiting factor. Outside the classroom, very few students get the opportunity to interact using Arabic. The lack of practice causes the vocabulary learned to never live in daily conversation. In fact, language will develop when it is used, not just memorized.

Students' attitudes towards Arabic also affect how much vocabulary they can master. Many students perceive Arabic as a foreign language that is difficult and irrelevant to their lives, so the enthusiasm to enrich themselves with new vocabulary decreases. This is a motivational challenge that must be addressed with interesting and meaningful learning strategies. teachers as learning facilitators have a key role in building students' interest in vocabulary acquisition. Teachers need to present learning activities that trigger the exploration of new words through language games, dialogs, Arabic comics, quizzes, or digital applications that allow students to learn independently and have fun. Project-based learning, such as creating vlogs or presentations in Arabic, is also very effective.

In today's digital era, there are many resources that can be utilized to enrich Arabic vocabulary. Learning apps such as Duolingo, Memrise, and various educational video platforms on YouTube provide varied and interesting Arabic content. However, there are still many teachers and students who are not accustomed to or reluctant to make maximum use of them. Low digital literacy and lack of technology integration in learning are obstacles that need to be addressed through continuous training and mentoring.

Vocabulary development can also be done through activities that connect language with students' real experiences. For example, keeping a daily journal in Arabic, conducting simple interviews between friends, or making a shopping list in Arabic. These activities, although seemingly simple, can help students understand that Arabic is not just a subject in the classroom, but a living communication tool that can be applied in various situations. The weak mastery of vocabulary in Arabic is not an isolated problem, but the result of a combination of various factors, ranging from monotonous teaching methods, lack of supporting media, to the lack of practice and student motivation. To overcome this, a paradigm shift in teaching Arabic is needed, namely making vocabulary acquisition an active, fun and contextual process. With the right approach, vocabulary is no longer an obstacle, but a bridge to real Arabic language understanding and skills.

Using the Lecture Method

In education, the lecture method is one of the oldest and most widely used teaching techniques, especially in secondary schools and madrasahs. This method relies on the active role of the teacher as the main source of knowledge, while students are in a passive position as listeners. Ideally, lectures are used to convey information concisely, systematically and within a limited time. However, in practice, the lecture method is often overused without considering students' needs and characteristics. As a result, students do not gain meaningful learning. The main problem with the lecture method that is not accompanied by interaction is the tendency for students to become "spectators" in the learning process. When the teacher is constantly talking without giving space for students to ask questions, discuss or explore, then students only absorb information passively. This has a direct impact on decreased learning

motivation, distraction, and difficulty in remembering material. In many cases, students admit to not understanding the material explained despite having listened carefully.

Tangible evidence of this condition can be found in various educational survey results. Based on data from the Center for Educational Assessment (Puspendik), as many as 63% of senior high school and high school students feel bored during the learning process due to monotonous learning methods, with lectures as the dominant method. This shows that this method is less effective if not combined with other approaches that are more participatory and contextual. If learning only becomes a one-way process, then there is no real construction of knowledge within students. Nor does the lecture method address the needs of students' diverse learning styles. Some students learn better through visualization, such as pictures, graphs and videos. Others absorb information better through hands-on practice or discussion. By relying solely on lectures, teachers indirectly ignore the potential and individual needs of students. As a result, only a small percentage of students can follow the lesson well, while others fall behind or lose interest. Not only that, the dominating lecture method also reduces students' critical thinking skills. In ideal learning, students need to be invited to think, analyze, solve problems, and draw their own conclusions. Constant lectures make students accustomed to receiving information without questioning. As a result, they become passive learners who only pursue grades, not understanding concepts.

The sole use of the lecture method also slows down students' communication skills, especially in language learning, such as Arabic. Skills such as speaking (kalam) and listening (istima') can only develop if students are given space to practice, dialogue and experience language use first-hand. If the teacher constantly dominates the voice in the classroom, then students lose the golden opportunity to develop their communicative abilities.

Ironically, some teachers assume that the lecture method is the only way to "complete the syllabus." This assumption is actually misleading, because completing the material without student understanding is futile. Learning should not only focus on administrative completeness, but also on student competency achievement. A wise teacher will adapt the method to the class conditions, rather than imposing a method on different students. An alternative is to combine lectures with participatory methods such as group discussions, open-ended questions and answers, simulations and case studies. In this approach, the teacher remains the main facilitator, but students are no longer just spectators, but active participants in the learning process. This mixed method is proven to be more effective as it creates two-way interaction, strengthens students' absorption, and increases their sense of ownership of the learning.

As evidence of the success of the interactive approach, research from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia in 2021 showed that classes using mixed methods experienced an increase in learning outcomes of up to 32% higher than classes using only the lecture method. This fact reinforces the view that diversity of methods is more beneficial for students' cognitive and affective development. Thus, it can be concluded that the lecture method is not the wrong method, but its use needs to be limited and combined with other strategies that involve students more. Meaningful learning is learning that arouses curiosity, engages emotions, and provides space for students to construct their own knowledge. The teacher is not just a conveyor of information, but a facilitator who brings the classroom to life. So, it is time for

teachers to not only talk, but also listen and give space for students to grow.

CONCLUSION

Arabic language learning faces various challenges that affect the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. One of the main factors is students' low motivation to learn, which is often caused by the perception that Arabic is difficult to understand. This can discourage learning and make students feel less confident in using Arabic, both in oral and written contexts. In addition, the lack of proficiency in the four main Arabic language skills-listening (istima'), speaking (kalam), reading (qira'ah), and writing (kitabah)-is also a significant obstacle. The difficulty in integrating the four skills is often caused by the lack of vocabulary mastery, lack of habituation to speaking Arabic, difficulty translating texts, and lack of mastery of nahwu and sharaf. To overcome this problem, an innovative and contextualized learning approach is needed. Teachers need to apply methods that can increase student motivation and develop all four Arabic language skills in a balanced manner. In addition, support from the surrounding environment, such as family and friends, is also very important to create a positive and supportive learning atmosphere.

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Author contribution

Rosi Guspita: Data curation, Writing-Original draft preparation, **Suci Fajriani:** Writing-Reviewing and Editing, **Burhanuddin:** Visualization, **Achyar Rahman:** Supervision, Formal analysis, **Rosi Guspita:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, **Rosi Guspita:** Supervision, Software.

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