

Original Article

Optimization of Islamic Religious Education Through Corpse Muhammad Training at Muhammadiyah 25 Senior High School

Fadhil Zainurraziq ^{1*}, Nur Aqsara Mahdani ¹

¹ Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Syariah Darussalam Pesisir

*Corresponding author: fadhil@gmail.com

Abstract

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and spirituality, as well as equipping them with practical skills useful in community life. Among these crucial skills, the embalming of the body—a collective obligation (*fardhu kifayah*) in Islam—is rarely taught in-depth in schools. Beyond providing religious knowledge, this skill also strengthens students' sense of social responsibility within the Muslim community. This community service program aims to improve the understanding and skills of students at Muhammadiyah 25 Pamulang High School in carrying out embalming of the body through *Participatory Action Research* (PAR)-based training. The PAR approach allows students to actively engage in practical learning, where they not only learn theory but also practice each stage of embalming the body, from washing and shrouding to burial, in accordance with Islamic law. The training results show a significant increase in students' skills and understanding, as well as an increased awareness of their social responsibility as members of the Muslim community. In addition to improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, this program serves as a model for applicable and participatory education, which is expected to be continuously integrated into the school curriculum. By providing hands-on experience and understanding of religious obligations, this training equips students with valuable life skills and prepares them to actively contribute to society, in accordance with core Islamic values. The program also demonstrates the potential of a PAR-based approach to creating a sustainable and impactful model of religious education in schools.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education, Funeral Services, Fardhu Kifayah, Participatory Action Research (PAR)*



Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an integral part of Indonesia's national education system, strategically shaping the character, morals, and spiritual awareness of students. PAI aims not only to instill a conceptual understanding of religion but also to develop practical skills relevant to social life. One such practical skill with high spiritual and social value is the burial of the body, a series of actions that include washing, shrouding, praying, and burying the body according to Islamic law (Pahrudin, 2017). This practice is considered a *fardhu kifayah*, a collective obligation of Muslims, which, if not carried out by some, will result in the entire Muslim community being responsible for its sins (Bukhori, 2015; Sadat, 2011).

Despite its importance, the aspect of funeral arrangements remains under-recognized in formal education, particularly at the high school level. The Islamic Religious Education curriculum tends to focus more on cognitive and conceptual aspects, often marginalizing the learning of practical skills such as these (Effendi, 2023). Consequently, many students experience a skill gap in social-communal religious practices. Active involvement in funeral arrangements can foster a profound spiritual awareness and foster empathy, solidarity, and social responsibility (Maryam et al., 2016; Rahmawati et al., 2024).

This phenomenon underpins the need for corpse handling training as part of optimizing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in schools, particularly at SMA Muhammadiyah 25 Pamulang. This training aims not only to improve students' religious literacy but also to instill comprehensive Islamic values through hands-on practice. The training program utilizes a *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) approach, emphasizing active student participation in a reflective, collaborative, and action-oriented learning process (Galletta et al., 2019).

The PAR approach is highly relevant for practice-based training such as corpse handling, as it encourages students' direct involvement in learning activities that are not only theoretical but also practical. In this context, students not only learn the Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) laws regarding corpses but also gradually put them into practice through simulations and field practice activities. This approach aligns with Morales' (2016) view that PAR is effective in enhancing professional capacity and active participation in educational contexts.

Various previous studies have shown that training in religious skills, such as corpse management, significantly impacts students' religious understanding and character development. Research by Ainiyah et al. (2023) demonstrated that corpse management training in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) can improve students' competence and spiritual awareness in carrying out socio-religious functions. Similarly, Astuti et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of strengthening corpse management at the community level as part of Islamic-based community empowerment.

From the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, this training reflects an integral and transformative approach. Islamic education not only directs students toward mastery of religious knowledge but also toward internalizing values based on exemplary behavior, practical practice, and social transformation (Apriliansah & Faridi, 2024; Asy'ari, 2014). The funeral preparation training provides a strategic platform for realizing the vision of Islamic education as a process of developing complete human beings (*insān kāmil*) capable of benefiting themselves and their environment.

Furthermore, this training program also strengthens collaboration between schools, families, and the community. In the spirit of communal education, this training not only educates students as individuals but also as members of society with social responsibilities to their fellow believers. Research by Humaidi et al. (2024) emphasizes the importance

of cross-institutional collaboration in providing education based on the real-life experiences of Muslims, such as funeral arrangements, as a form of collective worship that strengthens Islamic brotherhood.

The implementation of this training also takes into account the psychological aspects of the students. According to Rohimah et al. (2024), good Islamic education must address the psychological dimensions of students, including emotional readiness and internal motivation to understand the holistic meanings of worship. Activities related to the dead are often considered emotionally taxing, so a wise and compassionate approach is necessary to enable students to participate in these activities comfortably and meaningfully.

Within this framework, this community service is designed to address the current needs of Islamic education, particularly in the context of secondary schools. The funeral preparation training program implemented at Muhammadiyah 25 Pamulang High School aims to: (1) improve students' understanding of the concept of fardhu kifayah in Islam; (2) hone students' practical skills in funeral preparation procedures; and (3) strengthen students' social and spiritual awareness as a provision for living in society. With a PAR approach, this program is expected to become a model for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning practices that are more participatory, transformative, and contextual. Thus, the optimization of Islamic Religious Education does not only stop at cognitive understanding, but extends to the formation of character and real competencies in religious life.

Literature Review

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a strategic role in shaping religious understanding, character, and spiritual competence in secondary school students. Several previous studies have emphasized that strengthening PAI can be achieved through various learning methods, such as classroom-based teaching, instilling moral values, and integrating religious activities and daily worship (Suryani, 2019; Fauzi, 2020). These studies focused on the cognitive and affective aspects of students' understanding of religious teachings, but have not yet addressed the implementation of PAI through practical, practical skills that are applicable and contextual, such as funeral preparation.

In this context, the funeral preparation training at Muhammadiyah 25 Pamulang High School represents an innovation in optimizing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) that differs from previous studies. This training not only emphasizes theoretical knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) laws related to burial and funeral procedures, but also provides students with hands-on practical experience. This enables them to understand religious values, social responsibility, empathy, and concern for others in a concrete way, while fostering a deeper moral and spiritual awareness.

Previous literature tends to emphasize the integration of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) values into the formal curriculum through conventional methods, such as classroom learning, lectures, and discussions (Hidayat, 2018; Rahman, 2021). Unlike this study, the approach of corpse handling training offers a context of real-life experiences, enabling religious education to be not only theoretical but also applicable and transformative. This aligns with the experiential learning paradigm, which enables students to internalize religious values through direct practice.

Thus, this research on optimizing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) through funeral preparation training presents a new contribution to the literature on Islamic education,

demonstrating that concrete spiritual practice experiences can enhance students' religious understanding, social skills, and character development more effectively than conventional PAI learning methods. This approach opens up opportunities for developing a PAI curriculum that is more applicable, relevant, and responsive to the real needs of secondary school students.

Implementation Method

This community service activity uses the *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) approach, a research model that integrates concrete actions and active participation from the participants, in this case the students and Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMA Muhammadiyah 25 Pamulang. This approach was chosen because it aligns with the practical, reflective, and transformative characteristics of the funeral preparation training (Galletta et al., 2019). The PAR model emphasizes not only the achievement of training outcomes but also the involvement of participants as subjects who contribute to determining the process, from problem identification and activity design to outcome evaluation (Clark et al., 2022). This process strengthens a sense of ownership and social responsibility in Islamic Religious Education learning.

The implementation of this activity is carried out in four main stages: (1) Participatory Planning, (2) Action Implementation, (3) Observation and Documentation, and (4) Joint Reflection. In the planning stage, the community service team coordinates with the school and Islamic Religious Education teachers to prepare training materials and identify students' learning needs. The training materials are prepared based on Islamic jurisprudence references and corpse handling practices that comply with sharia standards.

The implementation phase includes face-to-face training in the form of lectures, demonstrations, and live simulations on the procedures for bathing, shrouding, praying, and burying the body. The learning strategy employed is based on a practice-based Islamic education approach and spiritual values. The training is delivered interactively, involving students as the primary actors to effectively internalize Islamic spiritual values such as caring, cleanliness, and social responsibility (Delisa et al., 2024; Maryam et al., 2016).

Data collection methods were conducted through participant observation, activity documentation, and semi-structured interviews with participants and teachers to capture changes in students' understanding, skills, and attitudes after participating in the training (Morales, 2016). In addition, a reflective questionnaire was also administered to evaluate the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of participants based on the Islamic learning taxonomy. Data were analyzed qualitatively through a descriptive-analytical approach by following the steps of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions as developed by Miles & Huberman. This analysis was used to assess the effectiveness of the training in optimizing Islamic Religious Education learning in the realm of socio-religious practices.

The results of this activity are measured not only by the students' technical success in embalming the body, but also by increasing spiritual and social awareness as part of the integrative mission of Islamic Religious Education. Therefore, this community service is expected to become a model for Islamic Religious Education learning practices that are applicable, contextual, and have a long-term impact on developing students' character and life skills.

Results and Discussion

Results

The funeral preparation training held at Muhammadiyah 25 Pamulang High School is part of an effort to optimize Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which focuses not only on cognitive aspects but also on affective and psychomotor aspects of students. This training was held four times over four weeks from November to December 2024 with 58 participants. Based on the results of participatory observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation during the activity, it was found that this program had a significant impact on improving students' understanding of *fardhu kifayah* and strengthening their social and spiritual awareness in community life.

In general, students' initial understanding of corpse preparation procedures is still limited. The majority of participants are only familiar with the shrouding and burial stages, while the process of washing and praying for the corpse is not yet fully understood. This aligns with findings (Ainiyah et al., 2023; Astuti et al., 2022; Bukhori, 2015), which indicate that formal education rarely teaches these skills in practice. However, as explained by Sadat (2011), corpse preparation is a collective obligation of Muslims that should be mastered by some members of the community.

This training program was implemented using a *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) approach, which allows students to become not only objects of learning but also active actors in designing, implementing, and reflecting on the training process. This method refers to the guidelines of Galletta et al. (2019), which emphasize the importance of actively involving students to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility in learning. Morales (2016) also emphasized that the PAR approach is highly effective in the context of participants' professional and social development, including in religious education.

The training results showed a significant increase in cognitive aspects in the form of understanding of *fardhu kifayah* and procedures for handling corpses. This is evident from the results of individual and group understanding evaluations which showed an increase in the average score from 58 (pre-training) to 88 (post-training). In the psychomotor aspect, specifically the students' ability to practice the process of washing, shrouding, and praying for the corpse according to Islamic law, there was an increase in the average score from 60 (pre-training) to 92 (post-training) based on the results of individual and group practical evaluations. This finding is supported by the results of research by Maryam et al. (2016), which showed that *fardhu kifayah* training effectively shaped students' social-communal character through direct practical activities.

From the social attitude aspect, there was an increase in students' awareness of social responsibility towards religious and humanitarian obligations from an average score of 66 (pre-training) to 94 (post-training). Meanwhile, from the spiritual attitude aspect, there was an increase in students' awareness of the inevitability of death and the importance of doing good deeds for the afterlife from an average score of 65 (pre-training) to 97 (post-training). Many participants stated that they better understood the importance of the presence of Muslims in the management of the corpse as a form of social solidarity and the importance of competing to do good deeds for the afterlife. These findings are in line with Humaidi et al. (2024) and Hidayat (2024) who emphasized that Islamic educational values such as cooperation, compassion, and social responsibility can be formed through spiritual experience-based learning.

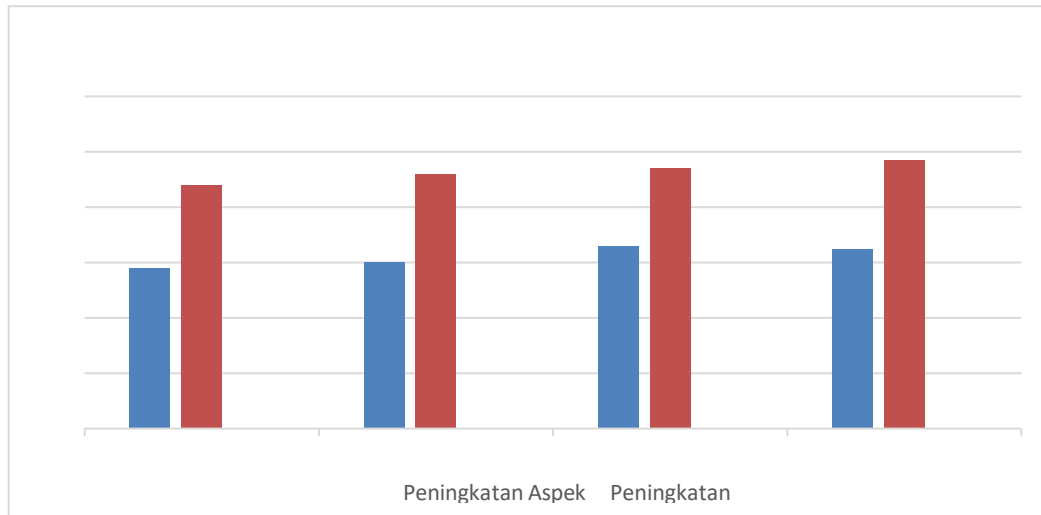


Figure 1. Graph of Increase in Corpse Handling Training Scores

Furthermore, from the perspective of integrating Islamic Religious Education (PAI) values into the curriculum, this training also serves as concrete evidence that Islamic education practices can be adapted to philosophical and strategic approaches. As explained by Apriliansah et al. (2024) and Mahariah et al. (2021), Islamic education not only addresses normative teachings but also shapes students' character and social skills. In this context, the funeral training serves as a medium for actualizing the teachings of monotheism, brotherhood, and trustworthiness, not merely theoretical.

The training method used combines a demonstrative approach, reflective discussion, and group simulations. This strategy aligns with the principles of contextual learning in religious education proposed by Effendi (2023) and Rozali et al. (2023), which argue that students more easily understand Islamic teachings when directly exposed to real-life practices. During the training, students are divided into work groups to practice each stage of funeral preparation, from preparing equipment and cleaning the body (simulation), shrouding the body, and simulating the funeral prayer.

Methodologically, a descriptive qualitative approach was used to evaluate the results of this activity. Observations were conducted during the practical activities, while interviews were conducted with 10 participants and 2 Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to identify their perceptions and experiences during the training. Data analysis utilized data reduction, categorization, and triangulation techniques according to the Miles & Huberman model. The analysis confirmed that the PAR approach used was able to improve not only skills but also a deeper awareness of students' spiritual values.

Thus, this training demonstrates that optimizing Islamic religious education can be achieved through participatory learning methods that are applicable and possess high spiritual value. In addition to equipping students with relevant *life* skills, this training also strengthens the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in character development and social service, in line with the goals of comprehensive Islamic education.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a strategic role in shaping students' character and spirituality, particularly in Islamic-based schools such as Muhammadiyah 25 Pamulang High School. One important aspect of Islamic education that rarely receives attention in formal educational practices is the burial of the body. According to Sadat (2011), the burial of the body is a form of *fardhu kifayah*, a collective obligation in Islamic teachings that must be fulfilled by a portion of the community. If no one

performs it, then all Muslims in the community will bear the sin. This obligation encompasses a series of processes, from bathing and shrouding the body, praying for the deceased, to burying the body in accordance with Islamic law. Therefore, it is important for Muslims, including the younger generation, to understand and be able to carry out the burial of the body as part of their social and spiritual responsibilities in community life.

This community service activity aims to fill this gap by integrating practical training in corpse handling into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning process in an applied manner. As emphasized by Hidayat (2024), the integration of Islamic values in education must be realized through direct experiences that strengthen students' character. Therefore, this training is not only a transfer of knowledge but also a transformation of attitudes and values. By actively involving students in religious practices such as corpse handling, they not only understand Islamic teachings theoretically but also internalize them in real life.

This training activity uses a *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) approach, which positions students not merely as training objects but as active subjects throughout the learning process. Galletta and Torre (2019) emphasize that the PAR approach is highly effective in educational contexts because it allows for critical reflection, collaboration, and concrete action. Morales (2016) adds that PAR is suitable for use in professional development, including teacher and student education, due to its democratic nature and orientation toward social change. With this approach, the mortuary training becomes a learning space that empowers and directly shapes students' social and spiritual awareness.

In this corpse preparation training, students are directly involved in the stages of corpse preparation, from bathing and shrouding to offering prayers and burial. These activities are not merely symbolic but are structured based on a practical curriculum that references guidebooks such as Bukhori's (2015) and the community service results of Ainiyah et al. (2023), which demonstrate that these skills can be taught systematically and effectively to adolescents. This direct involvement also aims to foster a deep spiritual experience and social responsibility in the students.

Furthermore, this training reinforces social values such as responsibility, empathy, and caring for others. This aligns with the findings of Maryam et al. (2016) who demonstrated that *fardhu kifayah* training in a school context can strengthen students' social responsibility. Research by Humaidi et al. (2024) also demonstrated that corpse management can be a collaborative learning medium involving the wider community, strengthening social bonds and Islamic values. Within the context of an Islamic educational approach, this training also emphasizes the importance of using methods appropriate to the development of students. Apriliansah et al. (2024) and Asy'ari (2014) suggest the application of methods that are not only cognitive, but also affective and psychomotor. These methods are implemented in training through a demonstrative approach, hands-on practice, and reflection on the spiritual values contained in each stage of the burial process.

This training also strengthens the effectiveness of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum through an integrative approach. Effendi (2023) stated that the development of a modern Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum must be responsive to the needs of students and society, and include relevant practical competencies. By incorporating funeral rites as part of the learning content, this training bridges students' spiritual, social, and practical needs. From a psychological perspective, this training also has a positive impact on character development and students' emotional maturity. As stated by Rohimah et al. (2024), Islamic education linked to real - life experiences has

great potential in creating a balance between students' cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects. A similar finding was also found by Sofiani et al. (2024), who showed that understanding Islamic values can significantly develop students' emotional intelligence.

During the activity, students demonstrated high levels of participation, and teachers stated that the training helped reinforce Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material contextually. This supports the view of Rozali et al. (2023) who stated that Islamic Religious Education learning will be more effective if accompanied by practical, contextual methods and a focus on life skills. Finally, this program demonstrated that mortuary preparation training not only optimizes Islamic religious education but also shapes students to be more spiritually and socially mature. This activity can be used as a model for curriculum development based on local wisdom and the needs of the Muslim community. With active student involvement through the PAR method and an Islamic values approach, this training demonstrates that religious education can be implemented in a transformative and applicable manner in the school environment.

Conclusion

The corpse-handling training conducted at Muhammadiyah 25 Pamulang High School has proven effective in optimizing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning holistically. Through a *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) approach, this activity was able to improve students' understanding, practical skills, and social awareness of one of the collective obligations in Islam, namely fardhu kifayah. This activity not only touched on cognitive aspects, but also built character values such as responsibility, empathy, and social solidarity. The integration of Islamic values into practical training makes religious education more applicable and contextual. In addition to enriching the learning process, this training also showed great potential to be used as a participatory learning model that can be adopted sustainably in the school curriculum. Thus, the corpse-handling training not only supports the objectives of the PAI curriculum but also serves as a strategic tool in developing students who are religious, socially competent, and ready to contribute actively to community life in accordance with the core values of Islamic teachings.

Bibliography

- Ainiyah, Q., Mirrota, DD, & Azizah, M. (2023). Training and Guidance on Procedures for Handling Corpses for Students of El Hufadz Islamic Boarding School, Jombang. *An Nafa: Journal of Community Service*, *i* (1), 16.
- Apriliansah, DF, & Faridi, F. (2024). *Islamic Education Methods in the Perspective of Islamic Educational Philosophy*. *2* (4).
- Astuti, P., Has, MH, Samsu, S., & Basri, H. (2022). Management of Funeral Arrangements for the Kendari City Hijrah Muslim Women's Community (KMHK). *Al-Munazzam: Journal of Thought and Research on Da'wah Management*, *2* (2), 42. <https://doi.org/10.31332/munazzam.v2i2.5375>
- Asy'ari, M. K. (2014). Islamic Education Methods. *Qathruna*, *1* (1), 193–205.
- Bukhori, K. A. (2015). *Practical Guide to Organizing Funeral Management*. Madani Institute.
- Clark, Adam T, Ahmed, Ishrat, Metzger, Stefania, Walker, Erin, & Wylie, Ruth. (2022). Moving From Co-Design to Co-Research: Engaging Youth Participation in Guided

Qualitative Inquiry. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 16094069221084792. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221084792>

- Delisa, Ernawati, E., & Arnadi. (2024). Approaches in Islamic Education. *Tarbiyatul Ilmu*, 2 (2), 139–149.
- Effendi, S. M. (2023). Various Approaches in Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Development. *Journal of Ar Ro'is Mandalika (Armada)*, 3 (3), 131–140. <https://doi.org/10.59613/armada.v3i3.2832>
- Galletta, A., & Torre, M. E. (2019). *Participatory Action Research in Education*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.557>
- Hidayat, IK (2024). Integrating Islamic Education Values: The Key to Character Education of the Young Generation. Al-Hikam Perspective. *EDURELIGIA: Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, 8 (1), 90–101. <https://doi.org/10.33650/edureligia.v8i1.8596>
- Humaidi, MN, Saefulloh, A., Nalus, S., & Risman, K. (2024). Collaboration as a Value in Islamic Education from Learning from Corpse Management. *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education*, 8 (3).
- Mahariah, & Assingkily, M. S. (2021). Islamic Education Approach in Islamic Studies. *Pharmacognosy Magazine*, 75 (17), 399–405.
- Maryam, R., A., R., T., A., A., & Ni, L. (2016). *Strengthening Social Responsibility Through Fardu Kifayah Training: A Communal Education Strategy at SMAIT Nurul 'Ilmi Tenggara*. 04 (02), 1–23.
- Morales, M.P.E. (2016). Participatory action research (PAR) cum action research (AR) in teacher professional development: A literature review. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, 2 (1), 156–165. <https://doi.org/10.21890/ijres.01395>
- Pahrudin, A. (2017). Teaching and Learning Strategies for Islamic Religious Education in Madrasahs. In *Banjarbaru: Grafika Wangi Kalimantan* (Vol. 2). Bandar Lampung: Pusaka Media.
- Rahmawati, M., Hidayat, NS, & Azhar, M. (2024). Project Based Learning Model Improves Students' Arabic Speaking Skills: Experimental Research. *Ukazh: Journal of Arabic Studies*, 5 (2), 256–271.
- Rohimah, S., Sugiyarti, S., & Sanusi, M. (2024). *The Role of Psychology in Islamic Education*. 3 (2), 452–476.
- Rozali, M. H., Jasmi, K. A., Mohamad Nazim, M. A. A., & Sahran, R. (2023). Practical teaching and learning methods in Malaysian Islamic education. *SYAMIL: Journal of Islamic Education*, 11 (1). <https://doi.org/10.21093/sy.v11i1.6157>
- Sadat, A. (2011). *FARDHU KIFAYAH (An Analysis of Prof. KH Ali Yafie's Legal Thought)*. 9, 132–138.
- Sofiani, IK, Nabila, N., Neviani, N., & Syalini, S. (2024). Islamic Educational Thought in Building Students' Emotional Intelligence. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Multidisciplinary Education*, 03 (05), 895–900. <https://doi.org/10.58806/ijirme.2024.v3i5n26>