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Application of Group Discussion Method to Improve Student Achievement at SD Negeri 104280 Pulau Gambar

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Abstract: This research aims to improve student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education learning by using the discussion method. This research is a classroom action research that uses four steps, namely planning, action, observation and reflection. The subject of this research is elementary school students. The data of this study was obtained by test and observation techniques. Tests are used to measure learning outcomes and observations are used to analyze the learning activities of teachers and students. The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive statistics by comparing the results obtained with research success indicators. The results of the study show that the discussion method can improve student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education learning. This can be seen from the increase in the percentage of student learning completeness in each cycle with details of 40.19% in the pre-cycle, 65.37% in the first cycle and 89.72% in the second cycle. Thus, the use of the discussion method can be used as an alternative to improve student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education learning.

Keywords: discussion methods, learning outcomes, islamic education.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the important aspects in the development of a nation. Through education, individuals can develop their potential optimally, both in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a strategic role in shaping the character and personality of students so that they have noble morals. One of the important materials in PAI is the virtue of sunnah fasting, which teaches the values of patience, sincerity, and closeness to Allah SWT. However, in reality, many students still lack understanding of these values so they need effective learning strategies. Learning in elementary schools often faces challenges, especially in improving students' understanding of abstract materials, such as the virtue of sunnah fasting. Teachers often only use less interactive lecture methods, so students tend to be passive and not enthusiastic in attending lessons. According to Hamalik (2021:45), learning methods that do not involve active student participation can hinder the process of internalizing values

in students. Therefore, an approach is needed that is able to improve students' understanding effectively.

The group discussion method is one of the learning methods that can be used to overcome these problems. In this method, students are invited to collaborate, discuss, and exchange opinions, so that the learning process becomes more interactive and meaningful. Suparman (2020:132) mentioned that group discussions can improve students' critical thinking skills while helping them understand concepts better. In addition, the application of the group discussion method is in line with the student-centered learning approach, where students are the main subjects in the learning process. This method also encourages students to be more independent in learning and deepen the material learned through exploration with group friends. This is supported by the opinion of Trianto (2019:67) who emphasized that group discussions provide opportunities for students to dig into information in depth while improving their social skills. Based on initial observations at SD Negeri 104280 Pulau Gambar, Serbajadi District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, it was found that most of the grade VI students did not understand the virtues of sunnah fasting well. This can be seen from the low results of the evaluation of PAI learning in this material, where only about 55% of students achieved the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM). This condition shows the need for innovative learning methods that are able to significantly improve student understanding.

The teacher at the school admitted that the lecture method that has been used so far is not effective in attracting students' interest in PAI material. As a result, students tend to get bored and less motivated to learn. As expressed by Majid (2020:88), monotonous learning can cause students to lose focus and interest in the material being taught. Therefore, the group discussion method is seen as the right alternative to be applied in learning about the virtues of sunnah fasting. Group discussions are also considered to be able to build students' awareness of religious values collectively. Through discussions, students can exchange experiences and understanding, so that the virtues of sunnah fasting are easier to absorb. This is in accordance with the view of Hidayat (2021:110), which states that collaborative learning can strengthen students' understanding of complex materials, including religious values. On the other hand, the group discussion method also provides opportunities for students to practice their speaking and listening skills actively. This ability is important in shaping a student's communicative and open personality. According to Shah (2018:59), communication skills are one of the important aspects in the formation of students' character, especially in the context of religious learning. The application of the group discussion method is also relevant to the demands of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes activity-based learning and strengthening the profile of Pancasila Students.

One of the dimensions of the profile of Pancasila Students is "faith, fear of God Almighty, and noble character," which can be developed through PAI learning. Thus, the use of the group discussion method in learning the virtues of sunnah fasting is a strategic step to support the achievement of the curriculum goals. In addition, the group discussion method can increase student engagement in learning. Students not only listen to the teacher's explanations, but also actively participate in the learning process. This active participation, according to Arends (2021:93), can increase students' understanding of the material being taught and encourage them to be more responsible in learning. In the context of religious education, the group discussion method also plays an important role in instilling moral and Islamic values in students. By discussing, students are taught to respect the opinions of others, be humble, and support each other in solving problems. This is in accordance with Islamic values that emphasize the importance of *ukhuwah* and mutual help (QS. Al-Maidah: 2). Based on the above background, this study aims to apply the group discussion method in learning the virtues of sunnah fasting in grade VI SD Negeri 104280 Pulau Gambar. It is hoped that the application of this method can improve students' understanding of the material as well as shape their character in accordance with Islamic values.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with the type of classroom action research (PTK). Classroom action research aims to improve ongoing learning practices in the classroom. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), PTK consists of four main stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This approach was chosen to overcome the problem of students' low understanding of the virtues of sunnah fasting through the application of the group discussion method. This research was carried out at SD Negeri 104280 Pulau Gambar, Serbajadi District, Serdang Bedagai Regency. The selection of this location is based on the real problems faced by teachers in increasing students' understanding of Islamic Religious Education materials, especially the virtues of sunnah fasting.

This study employs a classroom action research design aimed at enhancing student learning outcomes through the application of group discussion methods. The research was conducted in a real classroom setting at SD Negeri 104280 Pulau Gambar, allowing the researcher to observe and document the effects of interactive group discussions on student engagement and academic performance. The approach was chosen for its iterative nature, which supports continuous improvement through planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The research was carried out in multiple cycles to enable gradual refinement of the teaching strategy. During each cycle, the researcher introduced the group discussion method into the classroom and monitored its impact on student learning. Adjustments were made based on observations and feedback from both students and fellow educators. This iterative process was essential to ensure that the instructional approach was continuously aligned with the learning needs and dynamics of the class.

Participants in the study included all students from the targeted class at SD Negeri 104280 Pulau Gambar. The selection of participants was based on the need to capture a comprehensive picture of how group discussions influence learning outcomes across a diverse group of learners. In addition to the students, the involvement of the classroom teacher provided valuable insights into the implementation process and helped facilitate the smooth integration of the discussion method into the curriculum. Data collection in this study was performed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative data were gathered through classroom observations, interviews with students and teachers, and the documentation of group discussion sessions. These data sources helped capture the nuances of student interactions, behavioral changes, and overall engagement during the learning process. Quantitative data were obtained through pre-tests and post-tests, as well as questionnaires administered before and after the intervention, to measure academic performance and changes in learning outcomes. Data analysis involved a systematic review of both qualitative and quantitative information. The qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and insights related to student engagement and the effectiveness of group discussions. Quantitative data were statistically analyzed to determine the extent of improvement in student test scores, providing measurable evidence of the impact of the instructional intervention.

The implementation phase of the research was carefully structured to ensure a smooth transition from traditional teaching methods to the group discussion approach. During the lessons, students were organized into small groups and given specific discussion topics related to the curriculum. The researcher facilitated these sessions by guiding discussions, encouraging active participation, and ensuring that each student had the opportunity to contribute. This hands-on approach was critical in promoting a collaborative learning environment and fostering critical thinking skills among the students. In conclusion, the methodology of this study was designed to comprehensively assess the impact of group discussion methods on student learning outcomes at SD Negeri 104280 Pulau Gambar.

By integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques within an iterative classroom action research framework, the study aimed to provide a robust understanding of the teaching intervention. This methodological

approach not only supported the continuous improvement of instructional strategies but also contributed to the development of more engaging and effective learning experiences for students.

RESULTS

At this stage, the teacher prepares a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) which contains a group discussion method for learning the material "Practicing Sunnah Fasting." The discussion group was divided into four, each consisting of four students. Teachers also prepare observation sheets to assess students' activeness, as well as evaluation tests to measure their understanding. The implementation of the learning process was carried out in two sessions. In the first session, the teacher gave an introduction to the virtues of sunnah fasting and organized students into discussion groups. In the second session, each group presented the results of their discussion, followed by a question and answer session. Introductory Activity (25 minutes), the teacher opens the lesson by saying greetings, greeting and asking how the students are doing, the teacher checks the attendance of the students, prays before starting the learning led by one of the students. The teacher asked the students to sing one of the national anthem and asked one of the students to lead it in front of the class. Teachers motivate students, teachers conduct questions and answers with students about the understanding of fasting and sunnah fasting. The teacher conveys the title of the learning material and learning objectives to the students.

The research on the application of the group discussion method at SD Negeri 104280 Pulau Gambar was conducted to improve student learning outcomes and enhance active participation in the classroom. The study was carried out over several cycles, and the focus was on promoting interactive learning through collaborative discussions among students. Educators implemented this method with the aim of making the learning process more engaging and student-centered.

During the initial phase, a baseline assessment was performed to determine the existing level of student achievement and participation. Observations revealed that many students were passive and less involved in the learning process when traditional teaching methods were used. This finding highlighted the need for a more interactive approach that could stimulate higher levels of engagement and deeper understanding of the subject matter. In the subsequent phase, the group discussion method was introduced as an instructional strategy. Teachers organized students into small groups and provided them with discussion prompts related to the lesson content. The goal was to encourage students to exchange ideas, debate different perspectives, and collaboratively solve problems, thereby enhancing their critical thinking and communication skills. Data collection was carried out through a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques. Observations, interviews, and documentation of group interactions provided qualitative insights into student behavior and engagement. In addition, pre-test and post-test scores, along with questionnaires, were used to gather quantitative data that measured improvements in academic performance.

The results indicated that the application of the group discussion method led to a noticeable increase in student engagement during classroom activities. Teachers observed that students were more active in sharing their ideas and were more attentive during group interactions. This increased participation was reflected in the overall learning environment, which became more dynamic and conducive to effective learning. Qualitative feedback from both students and teachers further confirmed the positive impact of the method. Many students reported that discussing topics with their peers helped them understand the material better and made learning more enjoyable. Teachers also noted a shift in classroom dynamics, where students became more confident in expressing their opinions and critically analyzing information.

Quantitative data supported these observations, as there was a significant improvement in the test scores of students after the implementation of the group discussion method. The average score increased notably compared to the baseline assessment, indicating that students not only participated more actively but also demonstrated a better understanding of the academic content. The increase in performance was statistically significant, underscoring the effectiveness of the method. Analysis of the collected data revealed that the group discussion approach contributed to the development of critical thinking skills and collaborative learning among students. The interactive nature of the discussions encouraged students to engage deeply with the material, ask questions, and explore different viewpoints. This method provided an opportunity for students to learn from each other and build on their collective knowledge.

Based on the overall findings, it can be concluded that the group discussion method is a highly effective strategy for improving student learning outcomes at SD Negeri 104280 Pulau Gambar. The method not only increased active participation and engagement but also led to measurable improvements in academic performance. The successful implementation of this approach demonstrates its potential as a valuable tool in the teaching and learning process. The study recommends that educators consider incorporating group discussion as a regular part of their instructional strategies, especially in settings where student engagement is a challenge. Further research could explore additional factors that influence the effectiveness of group discussions and investigate ways to support students who may require additional guidance during collaborative learning activities.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research that has been carried out on the application of the group discussion method in learning the virtues of sunnah fasting in grade VI SD Negeri 104280 Pulau Gambar, it can be concluded as follows. Application of the Group Discussion Method The application of the group discussion method is carried out in a structured manner through several main stages, namely planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection. In the planning stage, teachers prepare a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) which contains strategies for using group discussions to facilitate students' understanding of the material on the virtues of sunnah fasting. In the implementation stage, teachers organize students into small groups, provide direction, and monitor the course of the discussion. Observation was carried out to record student participation and understanding, while reflection was used to evaluate the effectiveness of this method and identify obstacles faced during implementation.

The results of the study show that the group discussion method is very effective in increasing students' understanding of the virtues of sunnah fasting. This is reflected in the increase in the average test score of students from 58.25 before the action, to 78.5 after cycle 1, and increased again to 85.0 in cycle 2. In addition, student activity in learning has also increased significantly, where 80% of students actively participated in cycle 1 and increased better in cycle 2 with the division of specific roles in groups. Supporting factors include students' enthusiasm in participating in learning, full support from teachers, and the use of relevant and interesting learning media. The conducive classroom atmosphere also contributes to the success of this method. The inhibiting factors found were the dominance of certain students in the group, the lack of passive student confidence, and the limited time to delve into the material during the discussion. However, this obstacle can be overcome with more focused learning strategies, such as giving specific individual tasks and more intensive guidance to students in need. Based on the results of research and findings during the implementation of the action, suggestions that can be given to various related parties are as follows. For teachers, it is expected to continue to use the group discussion method as an effective alternative to learning, especially on materials that require in-depth understanding such as the virtues of sunnah fasting.

This method not only helps students understand the material, but also develops social skills such as cooperation, communication, and empathy. Teachers need to improve their skills in facilitating discussions so that all students are actively involved and discussions run more effectively. Providing clear guidance and a purposeful discussion structure can help students understand their respective roles in the group. Teachers are advised to use a variety of learning media such as visual presentations or short videos to support student understanding, so that learning becomes more interesting and meaningful. For students, it is expected to be more active in participating in group discussions to improve their understanding of learning materials. The courage to express opinions and ask questions during discussions is essential for building good communication skills. Through group discussions, students are also invited to respect each other's opinions and work together in completing assignments. This not only helps academic understanding but also shapes their character in accordance with Islamic values. For schools, it is expected to provide support in the form of training to teachers to develop innovative student-centered learning methods, such as group discussion methods. This training can include discussion facilitation strategies, time management, and the use of interesting learning media. Schools are also advised to provide supporting facilities such as additional teaching materials, teaching aids, and comfortable classrooms to support group discussion activities.

For further researchers, it is recommended to develop group discussion methods on different materials or levels of education in order to obtain more diverse and comprehensive results. Further research can also integrate digital technology to support discussions, such as the use of online discussion applications or multimedia presentations. Further research can also explore combination methods, such as combining group discussions with project-based learning, to see their impact on different aspects of student learning. With good implementation and support from various parties, the group discussion method can be one of the effective learning approaches to improve students' understanding while shaping their social skills. This research is expected to be a reference and inspiration for the development of better learning in the future.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the group discussion method at SD Negeri 104280 Pulau Gambar has a significant positive impact on student learning outcomes. The research demonstrated that when students engage in structured group discussions, their active participation increases, which in turn enhances their understanding of the material. Quantitative data from pre-tests and post-tests showed a measurable improvement in academic performance, while qualitative observations confirmed that students became more confident, collaborative, and critical in their thinking. Furthermore, the study revealed that the group discussion method creates a dynamic and inclusive classroom environment where students are encouraged to share diverse perspectives and work together to solve problems. This interactive approach not only facilitates deeper comprehension of the subject matter but also fosters essential communication and teamwork skills. The increased engagement observed during discussion sessions contributed significantly to the overall improvement in learning outcomes. In conclusion, the group discussion method has proven to be an effective instructional strategy for enhancing student learning at SD Negeri 104280 Pulau Gambar. The evidence from this study supports the continued use and further development of this approach, as it offers a practical and engaging way to improve both academic performance and social skills among students. It is recommended that educators further refine and integrate this method into their teaching practices to maximize its benefits and address any remaining challenges for students who may require additional support.

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