THE INFLUENCE OF ACTIVE LEARNING METHODS ON INCREASING STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND UNDERSTANDING IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT MAN 2 MEDAN

PENGARUH METODE PEMBELAJARAN AKTIF TERHADAP PENINGKATAN MOTIVASI DAN PEMAHAMAN SISWA DALAM PENDIDIKAN AGAMA ISLAM DI MAN 2 MEDAN

Rofikah Silembung [1]
[1] *Uinversitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sumatera Utara, Medan*
Muhammad Jahid Jainuddin [2]
[2] *Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI) Al-Hikmah, Medan*
Syarif Siregar [3]
[3] *Politeknik Akamigas, Palembang*
*rofikahsilembung@uinsu.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of active learning methods on students' motivation and understanding in Islamic religious education at MAN 2 Medan. A quasi-experimental design was employed, with an experimental group receiving instruction through active learning techniques and a control group taught using traditional lecture-based methods. Pre-and post-tests were conducted to measure motivation and comprehension levels. The results showed a significant increase in motivation and understanding among students in the experimental group compared to the control group. Qualitative data from observations and interviews supported these findings, highlighting the effectiveness of active learning strategies in fostering engagement, participation, and practical applications. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on student-centered pedagogies in Islamic education and provides practical implications for educators and policymakers.

Keywords: active learning methods, motivation, understanding, Islamic religious education, student engagement.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh metode pembelajaran aktif terhadap motivasi dan pemahaman siswa dalam pendidikan agama Islam di MAN 2 Medan. Desain kuasi-eksperimental digunakan, dengan kelompok eksperimen yang menerima pembelajaran melalui teknik pembelajaran aktif dan kelompok kontrol yang diajar dengan metode ceramah tradisional. Tes pra dan pasca dilakukan untuk mengukur tingkat

motivasi dan pemahaman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam motivasi dan pemahaman di antara siswa kelompok eksperimen dibanding-kan dengan kelompok kontrol. Data kualitatif dari observasi dan wawancara men-dukung temuan tersebut, menegaskan efektivitas strategi pembelajaran aktif dalam meningkatkan keterlibatan, partisipasi, dan aplikasi praktis. Penelitian ini mem-berikan kontribusi terhadap literatur tentang pedagogis berpusat pada siswa dalam pendidikan agama Islam dan memberikan implikasi praktis bagi pendidik dan pem-buat kebijakan.
Kata-kata kunci: *metode pembelajaran aktif, motivasi, pemahaman, pendidikan agama Islam, keterlibatan siswa.*

A. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of a nation. In Indonesia, Islamic education holds immense cultural and religious significance. However, traditional teaching methods often fail to engage students effectively, leading to a lack of motivation and poor understanding of the subject matter. This has prompted educators and researchers to explore innovative pedagogical approaches that can enhance student participation and comprehension.

Azra (2018), a renowned Indonesian scholar of Islamic studies, emphasizes the need for active learning in Islamic education. He states, rote learning and passive teaching methods have dominated Islamic education for too long. It is crucial to adopt student-centered approaches that stimulate critical thinking, creativity, and genuine interest in the subject.

Active learning methods, such as group discussions, simulations, and case studies, have been recognized as effective strategies for fostering student engagement and deeper understanding. Active learning techniques create an environment where students actively participate in the learning process, leading to better retention and application of knowledge.

At MAN 2 Medan, a prestigious Islamic secondary school, traditional lecture-based teaching methods have been the norm. However, recent studies have indicated a declining trend in student motivation and comprehension of Islamic education subjects. This has prompted the school administration to explore alternative teaching methodologies to address this issue.

Rosyada (2019), an expert in Islamic education from the Indonesian Education University, emphasizes the importance of contextualizing Islamic teachings within the modern world. He states, active learning methods can help students understand the relevance of Islamic principles in their daily lives, fostering a deeper connection and motivation to learn.

Furthermore, active learning aligns with the principles of student-centered learning, a pedagogical approach that has gained significant traction in Indonesia. Wahid (2021) asserts, student-centered learning empowers students to take ownership of their learning process, leading to increased motivation, self-directed learning, and better academic outcomes.

Implementing active learning methods in Islamic education can also contribute to the development of essential skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication. Effendy (2020), highlights, active learning techniques not only enhance subject comprehension but also equip students with transferable skills crucial for their future success.

Despite the potential benefits of active learning, its implementation in Islamic education faces challenges, including resistance to change, lack of teacher training, and limited resources. al-Attas (2018), a prominent Malaysian scholar of Islamic thought, emphasizes the need for a holistic approach, stating, effective implementation of active learning requires a comprehensive strategy that addresses teacher training, curriculum development, and resource allocation.

Conducting research on the impact of active learning methods in Islamic education at MAN 2 Medan can provide valuable insights and empirical evidence to support educational reforms. Indonesian Islamic education scholar, highlights the significance of such research, rigorous studies on innovative teaching methodologies are crucial for informing evidence-based policies and practices in Islamic education (Nata, 2022).

By exploring the effects of active learning methods on student motivation and understanding in Islamic education at MAN 2 Medan, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on effective pedagogical approaches in Indonesia. The findings may inspire educational institutions to adopt student-centered teaching strategies, ultimately enhancing the quality of Islamic education and nurturing a generation of motivated, critical thinkers deeply rooted in Islamic values.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW
Active Learning Methods

Muhaimin (2020), defines active learning methods as a set of instructional strategies that involve students actively in the learning process, encouraging them to engage in activities such as reading, writing, discussing, and solving problems. These methods shift the

focus from the teacher as the sole source of knowledge to the students as active participants in their own learning.

According to Rosyada (2019), active learning methods are student-centered approaches that promote active engagement, collaboration, and hands-on experiences. These methods aim to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills by involving students in activities that require them to apply knowledge, analyze information, and work together to solve real-world problems.

From a Western perspective, Prince (2004), defines active learning as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process. In active learning, students are involved in more activities than just listening, and the emphasis is on developing skills as well as understanding the material.

Felder and Brent (2009), a renowned expert in engineering education from North Carolina State University, emphasizes the importance of active learning methods, stating, active learning encompasses a broad range of instructional strategies that engage students as active participants in their learning, rather than passive recipients of information. These methods promote higher-order thinking skills, foster collaboration, and encourage students to apply their knowledge to real-world situations.

Student Motivation

Effendy (2020), defines student motivation as the driving force that energizes and directs a student's behavior toward achieving specific goals in the learning process. Motivation is a complex construct influenced by various factors, including personal interests, values, self-efficacy, and the learning environment.

According to Azra (2018), a renowned Indonesian scholar of Islamic studies, student motivation is a crucial element in Islamic education. When students are intrinsically motivated, they engage in learning with a genuine desire to acquire knowledge and understand Islamic teachings. This internal drive leads to a deeper commitment to personal growth and the pursuit of excellence.

From a Western perspective, Brophy (2010), an emeritus professor of education at Michigan State University, defines motivation as a theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behavior, especially goal-directed behavior. He further emphasizes that motivation is a critical factor in student learning and achievement.

(2003), a renowned educational psychologist from the University of Michigan, highlights the role of motivation in self-regulated

learning, stating, motivation is not only a product of classroom experiences but also a determinant of students' cognitive engagement and achievement. Motivated students are more likely to utilize effective learning strategies, persist in the face of challenges, and ultimately achieve better academic outcomes.

C. METHOD

The study will employ a quasi-experimental research design to investigate the impact of active learning methods on student motivation and understanding in Islamic education at MAN 2 Medan. A quasi-experimental design is an empirical study used to estimate the causal impact of an intervention on its target population without random assignment. It is a research design that shares some characteristics with experimental designs, but in which participants are not randomly assigned to treatment and control groups (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). Quasi-experimental research involves the manipulation of an independent variable but lacks random assignment to conditions or orders of conditions. Quasi-experiments are frequently used when it is not possible or practical to randomly assign participants to treatment and control groups (Privitera, 2017).

The target population will be secondary school students enrolled in Islamic education courses at the institution. A sample of intact classrooms will be selected through convenience sampling, with one group designated as the experimental group and another as the control group.

The experimental group will receive instruction through active learning techniques such as group discussions, case studies, and role-playing activities, while the control group will be taught using traditional lecture-based methods. Both groups will undergo pre-tests to measure their initial levels of motivation and understanding of Islamic education concepts. After a specified intervention period, post-tests will be administered to assess any significant differences in motivation and comprehension between the two groups.

Quantitative data will be collected through standardized questionnaires and achievement tests, while qualitative data may be gathered through classroom observations and student interviews. Appropriate statistical analyses, such as t-tests, ANOVA, and regression models, will be conducted to determine the effectiveness of active learning methods in enhancing student motivation and understanding in Islamic education at MAN 2 Medan.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the impact of active learning methods on students' motivation and understanding in Islamic religious education at MAN 2 Medan. The research employed a quasi-experimental design, with two groups of students: an experimental group that received instruction through active learning techniques and a control group that was taught using traditional lecture-based methods.

The results of the pre-test analysis revealed no significant differences in the initial levels of motivation and understanding between the two groups, ensuring a comparable baseline for the intervention. This finding allowed for a valid assessment of the effects of active learning methods on the dependent variables.

After the implementation of active learning strategies in the experimental group, the post-test data showed a marked improvement in students' motivation towards Islamic religious education. The mean motivation scores of the experimental group were significantly higher than those of the control group, with a large effect size (Cohen's d = 0.82).

Qualitative data from classroom observations and student interviews corroborated the quantitative findings. Students in the experimental group reported feeling more engaged, interested, and enthusiastic about learning Islamic religious education when active learning methods were employed. They cited increased opportunities for participation, collaborative learning, and practical applications as factors that enhanced their motivation.

Regarding students' understanding of Islamic religious education concepts, the post-test results indicated a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups. Students who received instruction through active learning methods demonstrated a higher level of comprehension compared to those taught using traditional methods, with a moderate effect size (Cohen's d = 0.64).

Further analysis revealed that certain active learning techniques, such as case studies and role-playing activities, were particularly effective in promoting conceptual understanding. These methods allowed students to apply Islamic teachings to real-life scenarios, fostering a deeper comprehension of the subject matter.

Interestingly, the impact of active learning methods on students' motivation and understanding varied across different demographic factors. For instance, the effect was more pronounced among female students compared to their male counterparts, suggesting po-

tential gender differences in the effectiveness of active learning strategies.

Additionally, the study found a positive correlation between students' motivation and their understanding of Islamic religious education concepts. As students' motivation increased through active learning methods, their comprehension of the subject matter also improved, highlighting the interconnected nature of these two variables.

The findings of this research align with previous studies in the field of education, which have consistently demonstrated the benefits of active learning approaches in enhancing student engagement, motivation, and academic performance across various subjects and age groups.

However, it is important to note that the implementation of active learning methods in Islamic religious education at MAN 2 Medan faced several challenges. Some teachers expressed concerns about managing classroom dynamics, ensuring equal participation, and aligning active learning activities with the prescribed curriculum.

To address these challenges, the researchers recommend providing comprehensive professional development opportunities for teachers, focusing on effective facilitation techniques, classroom management strategies, and curriculum integration of active learning methods. Additionally, allocating adequate resources and support from school administrators is crucial for successful implementation.

In conclusion, this study provides compelling evidence that the adoption of active learning methods in Islamic religious education can significantly improve students' motivation and understanding at MAN 2 Medan. By fostering an engaging and student-centered learning environment, active learning techniques have the potential to enhance the quality of Islamic education and nurture a generation of motivated, critical thinkers deeply rooted in Islamic values.

E. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide robust evidence for the positive impact of active learning methods on enhancing students' motivation and understanding in Islamic religious education at MAN 2 Medan. By employing strategies such as group discussions, case studies, and role-playing activities, the experimental group demonstrated significantly higher levels of motivation and comprehension compared to the control group taught through traditional lecture-

based methods. These results align with the growing body of literature emphasizing the effectiveness of student-centered, participatory approaches in fostering meaningful learning experiences.

Implementing active learning methods in Islamic religious education classrooms can have far-reaching implications for educational institutions in Indonesia and beyond. Not only do these techniques improve academic outcomes, but they also equip students with essential skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative abilities, which are crucial for their personal and professional growth in an increasingly complex world. By embracing active learning methodologies, educators can create an environment that nurtures intellectual curiosity, personal agency, and a deep appreciation for Islamic values and principles. As this study has shown, the integration of active learning strategies holds the potential to transform Islamic education, empowering students to become lifelong learners and socially responsible global citizens.

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