



Innovative Strategies to Improve Learning Outcomes and Character Development in Elementary Students

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Abstract

Islamic Education plays a crucial role in shaping students' religious and moral character from an early age. However, the implementation and learning outcomes of Islamic Education at the elementary school level often fall short of expectations in terms of academic achievement and the application of religious values in daily life. This study aims to analyze the influence of teaching strategies on learning outcomes in Islamic education. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. The study participants consisted of fourth-grade students selected through purposive sampling based on criteria relevant to the research focus. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed thematically using NVivo 10 software. The findings reveal that student-centered learning strategies significantly contribute to improving learning outcomes. The Student Team Achievement Division strategy, which engages students in heterogeneous group learning, fostered collaboration, interaction, and deeper conceptual understanding. This strategy also accommodates diverse learning styles, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic preferences. These findings offer critical insights into developing innovative teaching strategies to enhance the quality of Islamic Education instruction. Furthermore, this study provides a foundation for future research in different contexts to enrich value-based and collaborative learning approaches.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education has an important role in shaping the character of students to become religious, noble, and aware of religious values. At the primary school level, the main focus is not limited to the delivery of religious knowledge, but also includes the fostering of moral and ethical principles. These values are intended to provide students with a solid foundation that can guide their actions and decisions in the future (Cahyani et al., 2023; Judrah et al., 2024).

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METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach (Ai, 2022; Baxter & Jack, 2015; Kächele, 2018). Research data was obtained from fourth grade students at elementary school, who were selected as informants using purposive sampling techniques. Informants were selected based on four main criteria: having a deep understanding of the problem being studied, being active in the relevant field, and being willing to take the time to provide information, and being able to provide factual data according to conditions in the field. With these criteria, all informants in this research were grade IV students at the school.

After the in-depth interview process was completed, the data collected was transcribed in detail. The author then identified relevant themes that were in accordance with the research objectives. The data analysis process was carried out using the qualitative analysis software NVivo 10. According to Amnda et al., (2020); Christou, (2022); Engkizar et al., (2024); Eriyanti et al., (2020); Herzog et al., (2019); Maputra et al., (2020); Syafril & Yaumas, (2017) thematic analysis assisted by NVivo software is an effective method for exploring interview results in detail and in depth, resulting in accurate and comprehensive findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that students taught using the Student Teams-Achievement Divisions learning strategy achieved better learning outcomes ($X = 29.98$) compared to those taught using the expository learning strategy ($X = 28.67$). These results indicate that the Student Teams-Achievement Divisions strategy is effective in enhancing student performance across diverse learning styles. The success of the Student Teams-Achievement Divisions strategy can be attributed to its collaborative approach, where students work in small groups with mixed ability levels. In this method, group assignments are completed through cooperation, and learning continues until all group members master the material. This contrasts with expository strategies, where individual learning predominates. The findings suggest that to teach Islamic education effectively, strategies like Student Teams-Achievement Divisions, which foster collaboration and peer support, are preferable over traditional expository approaches (Lahir et al., 2017; Yurisma et al., 2022).

The results of the research show that all research hypotheses were confirmed: (1) the learning outcomes of students taught with the Student Teams-Achievement Divisions learning strategy are higher than the learning outcomes of students taught with the expository learning strategy, (2) the learning outcomes of students with visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles are significantly different, and (3) there is an interaction between learning strategies and learning styles in influencing student learning outcomes.

The first hypothesis states that the learning outcomes of students taught using the Student Teams-Achievement Divisions learning strategy are higher than those of students taught using the expository learning strategy. This can be explained by the fact that the Student Teams-Achievement Divisions learning strategy encourages active student participation. Students can collaborate effectively within their groups, taking on roles such as good listeners. They are provided with activity sheets containing questions or tasks related to the material being taught. During group work, the task of each group member is to contribute to the group's overall success, which leads to improved learning outcomes. By studying in heterogeneous groups, students are able to influence and socialize with one another, which stimulates their learning activities. Additionally, students can better understand concepts that might be difficult to grasp when studied individually. Group study allows students to interact with one another, with the more advanced students explaining concepts to the slower ones, while the slower students can ask questions

and seek clarification. This mutual support helps foster collaboration and motivates students to improve their performance and contribute to the success of the group (Amelya et al., 2023; Bugaj et al., 2019). Therefore, in the Student Teams-Achievement Divisions learning model, the teacher's role is that of a facilitator who guides students in discovering and constructing their own knowledge.

Testing the second hypothesis shows that the learning outcomes of students with a tendency toward visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles have significant differences (Aniah et al., 2023; Supit et al., 2023; Wahsheh et al., 2024). These results prove that learning styles significantly differentiate learning outcomes. The overall results of the data analysis showed that the average learning outcomes of students with kinesthetic learning styles were higher than those of students with visual and auditory learning styles. This indicates that students with a kinesthetic learning style, on average, have better learning outcomes compared to students with visual and auditory learning styles.

The findings of this research support the research conducted by Adel et al., (2024); Wiratmuko et al., (2023), which found that the learning outcomes of Islamic Education for students with a tendency toward an auditory learning style are higher when taught with a community learning strategy compared to students taught with an inquiry learning strategy. There is an interaction between learning strategies and learning style tendencies on Islamic Education learning outcomes. Thus, there are differences in Islamic Education learning outcomes between students with a tendency toward visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles.

Testing the third hypothesis reveals that there is an interaction between learning strategies and learning styles in influencing students' Islamic Education learning outcomes. If we look at the average learning outcomes for students with visual and kinesthetic learning styles, it is better to teach them using the Student Teams-Achievement Divisions learning strategy compared to expository learning strategies. Then, the average learning outcomes for students with an auditory learning style are better when taught with expository learning strategies compared to Student Teams-Achievement Divisions learning strategies. Thus, it can be concluded that learning strategies and learning styles significantly influence learning outcomes (Asril et al., 2023; Hananta & Wibawa, 2020; Veradegita et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

This research has successfully revealed that updates to learning strategies are necessary to ensure that Islamic Education is better understood by students, as evidenced by the following findings; i) the Student Teams-Achievement Divisions learning strategy yields higher learning outcomes for students with a kinesthetic learning style compared to students with visual and auditory learning styles, and ii) the expository learning strategy results in higher learning outcomes for students with an auditory learning style compared to students with visual and kinesthetic learning styles. At the very least, this research can serve as a foundation and reference for future studies on this topic in different contexts and issues.

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