

Improving Elementary School Students' Learning Outcomes in Islamic Religious Education Learning with Differentiated Learning Methods

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Abstract: This study aims to improve student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education learning by using differentiated learning methods. This study is a classroom action research that uses four steps, namely planning, action, observation and reflection. The subjects of this study were elementary school students. The data for this study were obtained by test and observation techniques. Tests are used to measure learning outcomes and observations are used to analyze teacher and student learning activities. The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive statistics. The results of the study indicate that the differentiated learning method can improve student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education learning. Thus, the use of differentiated learning methods can be used as an alternative to improve student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education learning.

Keywords: Learning outcome, differentiated learning, elementary school.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education and Ethics is one of the main pillars in the formation of students' character. This subject aims to equip students with religious knowledge, understanding of moral values, and the ability to apply them in daily life. The Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud, 2013) states that Islamic Religious Education does not only focus on the transfer of knowledge, but also forms a noble personality and morals in accordance with Islamic religious values. However, various studies show that the learning outcomes of students in this subject are still not optimal at various levels of education. The results of initial observations in grade V of SDN 02 Medan baik, South Pesisir Regency, show that the learning outcomes of students in the subject of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics tend to be low.

Islamic Religious Education is an important part in the formation of character and morals of students from an early age, especially in elementary school. At this stage, children are in a very decisive phase of development in forming their personality and mindset. Through learning Islamic Religious Education, students can understand the basic values of Islam that will be their guideline in living their lives. Religious education not only provides knowledge about Islamic teachings, but also helps students in developing attitudes, behaviors, and habits that are in accordance with Islamic values.

In addition to forming good character, Islamic Religious Education learning also teaches students to understand and carry out worship properly. Worship such as prayer, fasting, zakat, and reading the Qur'an are obligatory for every Muslim, and a good understanding of the procedures and meaning of these worships is very important for students. By learning religion from an early age, they can carry out religious obligations better and more consciously, so that they become accustomed to it in everyday life.

Islamic Religious Education also has an important role in instilling noble moral values in students. In Islam, good morals are highly emphasized, such as honesty, discipline, patience, and helping each other. If these values are taught from an early age through Islamic Religious Education learning, students will grow into individuals who have good personalities and can interact with their social environment more harmoniously.

In addition, Islamic Religious Education also helps students understand the concept of halal and haram in everyday life. Since childhood, they must be given an understanding of halal food, good behavior, and actions that are in accordance with Islamic teachings. With a strong understanding of this concept, students will be more careful in choosing and doing things, so that they are not easily influenced by negative things that are contrary to Islamic teachings.

Religious education also plays a role in shaping students' mental and spiritual resilience. In life, every individual will face various challenges and tests. Religious education provides an understanding that every problem faced is part of Allah's destiny, and with strong faith, they will be more steadfast in facing difficulties. By having good mental resilience, students can develop an optimistic attitude and not give up easily in facing various problems.

Islamic Religious Education is also a means to build good social relationships between individuals. In Islam, the concept of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (brotherhood among Muslims) is highly emphasized, as is tolerance towards fellow human beings. By learning religion from an early age, students will better understand the importance of mutual respect and appreciation of differences, both in the school environment and in society.

In addition, religious education helps students develop critical thinking skills in understanding Islamic teachings. They are taught to analyze and understand religious arguments from the Qur'an and hadith, and apply them in everyday life. This critical thinking ability will help them in dealing with various issues related to Islam, so that they are not easily influenced by wrong or deviant understandings.

Islamic Religious Education also contributes to building students' awareness of the importance of being good to parents and others. In Islam, being devoted to parents is one of the main commands. Through religious learning, students will understand their obligations in respecting and helping parents, teachers, and others around them. This awareness will form a generation that is more caring and responsible for their social environment.

Islamic Religious Education also plays a role in shaping students' discipline. Islam teaches the importance of discipline in carrying out worship, such as the five daily prayers which must be done on time. This habit, if taught from an early age, will form a disciplined lifestyle in various aspects of their lives, including in studying and working in the future.

Islamic Religious Education also helps students understand the history of Islam and the journey of the prophets and companions in spreading Islam. By knowing these inspiring stories, students will be more motivated to emulate their morals and struggles in upholding the truth. These stories also provide moral lessons that can be applied in everyday life.

In addition, religious education is also a fortress for students in facing the negative influences of socializing and the increasingly rapid development of technology. Currently, there is a lot of content on social media and the surrounding environment that can influence students' mindsets and behavior. With a strong understanding of religion, they can sort out good and bad information, and be more selective in following existing trends.

Islamic Religious Education also plays a role in building a sense of love and concern for others through the concepts of zakat, sedekah, and infaq. Islam teaches the importance of sharing with those in need, so that students can understand that in life, they must not only strive for themselves but also care for others.

Religious education also provides an understanding of the rights and obligations of a Muslim. Students will know what they must do as Muslims and how they should behave in carrying out their daily lives. With a good understanding of rights and obligations, they can become more responsible individuals in various aspects of life.

Islamic Religious Education also instills awareness of the importance of protecting the environment and the surrounding nature. Islam teaches that humans are caliphs on earth who have the responsibility to maintain the balance of nature. With this understanding, students will be more concerned about environmental cleanliness, be economical in using resources, and maintain the welfare of other living things. With the various benefits that have been mentioned, it is clear that Islamic Religious Education has a very important role for elementary school students. Religious learning is not just a theory, but also a guideline for life that shapes the character, morals, and behavior of students in everyday life. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education must be taught with interesting and fun methods so that students are more motivated to understand and practice Islamic teachings well.

Based on daily test data in the previous semester, only about 60% of students achieved the Minimum Completeness Criteria score. In addition, most students seem to be less active during the learning process. They tend to be passive in discussion, less involved in answering questions, and not enthusiastic about learning activities. This shows that there are problems in the learning approach applied. Research conducted by Sugiyono (2019) revealed that one of the causes of low student learning outcomes is monotonous learning methods and lack of active student involvement. The lecture method that is still dominant makes students feel bored and have difficulty relating the subject matter to their real experience. This condition is also strengthened by the view of Trianto (2020) which states that non-contextual and less innovative learning can hinder students' ability to understand and apply subject matter. To overcome this problem, a more responsive learning approach is needed. Differentiated learning model, The differentiated learning model was first introduced and developed in depth by Carol Ann Tomlinson in the 1990s. This concept was born from the need to handle the diversity of students in an increasingly heterogeneous classroom, both in terms of academic ability, interests, and learning needs. In 1995, Tomlinson began publishing various articles and research explaining the differentiation approach in learning. His works became increasingly known when he published the book "The Differentiated Classroom" Responding to the Needs of All Learners" in 1999. This book has become one of the main references in the differentiated learning approach and is still relevant today. Through this class action research, I intend to apply a differentiated learning model to the subject of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics in grade V of SDN 02 Medan baik.

This research aims to improve students' learning outcomes, both academically and in terms of character formation. By implementing more responsive learning, it is hoped that students can be more active in learning, understand the material in depth, and internalize religious values in their daily lives. In addition, this research is expected to make a real contribution to efforts to improve the quality of education at SDN 02 Medan Baik, South Pesisir Regency. By presenting innovations in the learning process, it is hoped that this research can be an inspiration for other teachers to continue to innovate in developing relevant and effective learning methods, in accordance with the needs of students in the 21st century education era.

METHODS

This research will be carried out using a classroom action research (PTK) approach. Classroom action research is a form of research conducted to improve the quality of learning in the classroom through reflection and improvement actions carried out systematically by teachers together with students. PTK aims to identify problems that occur in the learning process and try to find solutions with actions that are carried out directly in the classroom. This research will be carried out in class V of SDN 02 MEDAN BAIK with a focus on the application of a differentiated learning model to improve student learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education and Ethics subjects. This study also seeks to identify factors that can support or hinder the successful implementation of differentiated learning models in the classroom. In particular, this research will be carried out in four cycles which include the stages of planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection. Each cycle aims to improve and improve the learning process continuously, so that student learning outcomes can be improved by using a more effective Differentiation learning model. Research Variables In this study, there are two main variables that will be observed and analyzed, namely; 1) Independent Variable (X), Differentiation learning model.

This variable refers to the learning method applied in the learning process of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics. The application of the PBL model is expected to increase the active involvement of students in the learning process and improve their learning outcomes; 2) Dependent Variable (Y), student learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education and Ethics subjects. These variables include an increase in cognitive aspects (knowledge), affective (attitudes and values), and psychomotor (skills) of learners after the implementation of innovative learning models. This learning outcome will be measured through tests, observations, and assessments of the skills and attitudes shown by students in learning; 3) Population and Sample, the population in this study is all students of grade V elementary school at SDN 02 Medan Baik, South Pesisir Regency. This population includes all students enrolled in the 2024/2025 school year and taking Islamic Religious Education and Ethics subjects. Samples, samples of this study are students in grade V who will be selected by purposive sampling (samples with certain considerations), namely students who take the subject of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics in class V in the same school year. The selection of the sample is based on the criteria that they will accept the application of innovative learning models in learning and are expected to be actively involved in each research cycle; 4) Type, Source and Data Collection Technique, the type of data collected in this study is divided into two types; 1) Qualitative data, this data is related to the process and interaction in learning using a differentiated learning model.

Qualitative data includes observation of students' behavior, attitudes, and involvement in the learning process. In addition, this data also includes interviews or field notes regarding learning dynamics and students' responses to the implementation of PBL; 2) Quantitative Data, Quantitative data related to student learning outcomes, which is measured using test instruments. This data includes test scores given after the application of the differentiated learning model, which includes cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude), and psychomotor (skills) aspects. Quantitative data also includes observations about the improvement of students' skills and attitudes that can be quantified numerically. Data Source The data sources in this study include; 1) Students, as the main source of data, students of grade V of SDN 02 Medan Baik who are the research sample will provide data related to learning outcomes and their responses to the application of differentiated learning models. 2) Teachers, teachers who teach Islamic Religious Education and Ethics subjects in grade V are also sources of data, especially in providing information about the learning process, challenges faced, and results obtained during the implementation of differentiated learning; 3) Documentation, documents or learning materials used, including teaching modules, learning outcome tests, and field notes that record the

process and dynamics during the research, will also be used as data sources; 5) Data Collection Techniques The techniques used to collect data in this study are as follows; 1) Test (Written Exam), a test is used to measure the learning outcomes of students in Islamic Religious Education and Ethics subjects, both in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. This test is given after each cycle to see the improvement of learners' learning outcomes; 2) observation, observation is carried out to observe the involvement of students in the learning process, interaction between students, and the application of values taught during the implementation of the differentiated learning model. This observation was carried out during the learning activity using an observation sheet that had been prepared beforehand.

Interviews, interviews were conducted with teachers and several students to get more in-depth information about their experiences in learning using differentiated learning models, obstacles encountered, and their impressions of changes in learning; 5) Documentation, documentation is used to record all learning activities, including records about student development, teaching materials used, and evaluation results obtained from tests and observations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the findings of the research results to get improvements in learning Islamic Religious Education in grade V on the material on the meaning of faith to the last day using the differentiated learning method at SD Negeri 02 Medan baik in the 2024-2025 school year, it is divided into four cycles. The description of the research results is outlined in the following description; 1) Implementation of Cycle I. Planning, at this stage, the author prepares the teaching module used in the implementation on December 23, 2024 for 2 JP. The learning steps are in accordance with the syntax of differentiated learning methods based on the real environment of students.

The learning goal that will be achieved is that students can recognize the meaning of faith to the last day and be able to apply it in their daily lives. Implementation, in the implementation of cycle I learning, the researcher acts as a teacher by. The steps of learning activities in cycle I are; 1) Initial activities, greeting students, praying before starting learning, filling out the attendance list, motivating students, conveying learning objectives, perceptions; 2) Core Activities, teachers provide stimuli using media, teachers guide students to explore the images they observe, students reveal the results of exploration of learning materials (questions and answers), students find problems, students build an understanding of the material in their own language; 3) Closing activities, reflecting, concluding learning activities, further thinking in the form of giving homework, greetings and closing prayers

Differentiated learning is an approach that allows teachers to tailor learning strategies to suit the needs, interests, and abilities of each student. In elementary schools, this approach is especially relevant because students are at different stages of early development. By tailoring learning, students can gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter, thereby improving their learning outcomes. The differentiated approach begins with identifying students' learning needs. Teachers need to understand their learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic), ability levels, and interests. In this way, teachers can design learning activities that are relevant and engaging for each student. For example, students who prefer to learn visually can be given infographics or learning videos, while students who are more kinesthetic can learn through movement-based activities. One way that differentiated learning improves learning outcomes is through content customization. Teachers can divide the subject matter into levels according to the students' abilities. Students who need additional support can be given simpler material, while more advanced students can be given more complex challenges. This approach ensures that all students gain understanding that is appropriate to their level. In addition to content, the learning process can also be customized. Teachers can provide a variety of

learning methods, such as group discussions, individual projects, or hands-on experiments, so that students can learn in the ways that are most effective for them. These methods help students feel more engaged and motivated to learn, which ultimately increases their achievement. In differentiated learning, the learning outcomes or end products can also vary. Teachers can give students options for demonstrating their understanding, such as through presentations, writing, or artwork. These options not only help students express themselves to their strengths, but they also reduce the fear of failure due to tasks that are too difficult or irrelevant. This approach also supports inclusive learning, where students of all backgrounds and abilities feel valued. When students feel that learning is tailored to their needs, they are more confident and motivated to actively participate. This creates a learning environment that supports academic and social success.

The application of technology is one of the important elements in differentiated learning. Various digital learning platforms allow students to learn at their own pace. Technology also provides direct feedback, so students can immediately find out and correct their mistakes. This helps them better understand the material and improve learning outcomes gradually. Although effective, the implementation of differentiated learning requires thorough preparation from teachers. Teachers need to design flexible learning plans, use formative assessments to measure student development, and manage the class well so that each student gets enough attention. Thus, learning can run smoothly and learning objectives are achieved. Collaboration between teachers, students, and parents also plays an important role in the success of differentiated learning. Teachers can work together with parents to understand the needs of students at home, while students are involved in the learning process by providing input on the methods they prefer most. This creates a collaborative and supportive learning environment. Overall, differentiated learning in elementary schools provides opportunities for each student to learn according to their needs and potential. With a flexible approach, students not only understand the material better, but also develop skills such as cooperation, independence, and creativity. All this contributes to significant improvements in learning outcomes and supports the holistic development of students.

CONCLUSION

Differentiated learning is an approach designed to meet the diverse learning needs of students, especially at the elementary school level. By tailoring learning content, processes, and products based on students' abilities, interests, and learning styles, this approach helps create an inclusive learning environment that supports the success of each individual. This approach increases students' motivation to learn, engagement, and self-confidence, which ultimately have a positive impact on their learning outcomes. Through the use of technology, careful planning by teachers, and collaboration between teachers, students, and parents, differentiated learning can be implemented effectively. In addition to providing a better understanding of the subject matter, this approach also builds important skills such as collaboration, creativity, and independence. Thus, differentiated learning is one of the key strategies in improving the quality of education in elementary schools.

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