

ROLE-PLAY AND SIMULATION METHODS IN STRENGTHENING EMPATHY AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: A CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS' MORALS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This research is based on the phenomenon of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning carried out by teachers who still often use one-way methods: lectures and questions and answers. The application of this method can only improve cognitive aspects of abilities, but in terms of students' affective abilities, they have not been achieved optimally. In fact, apart from cognitive abilities, the measure of student achievement in Islamic Religious Education learning is also assessed from the affective and psychomotor aspects, especially in teaching moral material. One of the impacts of the implementation of less meaningful Islamic Religious Education learning is the weak sense of empathy possessed by students and low Islamic Religious Education learning outcomes in moral material. This is reflected in several behavioral deviations that still frequently occur, such as bullying, discrimination, and intolerant attitudes. Therefore, efforts are needed to strengthen empathy and student learning outcomes through the application of role-play and simulation methods in Islamic Religious Education learning in sixth grade of SDN 1 Slorok. The main objective of this study is to determine to what extent the role-play method can strengthen empathy and student learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education learning, especially in the moral sub-material. The benefit of this research is to provide a contribution to schools regarding the implementation of effective learning methods that can be implemented to improve student learning outcomes and noble character. This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. The subjects in this study were 25 students with data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation. The results of the study showed that by implementing the role-play and simulation methods in the Islamic Religious Education subject on morals, there was an increase in learning outcomes, where previously student completion only reached 52% with an average score of 74, now it is 84% with an average score of 80.6. With the role-play method, students can be directly involved in learning activities and simulate moral learning to strengthen students' empathy in solving social problems encountered in their lives. So that Islamic Religious Education learning becomes more active and innovative and has an impact on improving the quality of morals and better learning outcomes.

Keywords: Role-Play Method – Simulation, Empathy, Learning Outcomes

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is understood as an effort to provide educational experiences to encourage the development of students as a whole and changes in behavior according to the established educational goals. (Muhaimin, 2005; p. 3). The essence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as a subject that instills the values of faith and worship according to the provisions of Islamic law, directs towards the formation of noble morals, and creates pious people.

The dynamism of current curriculum development requires students to be actively involved in learning activities. The success and meaningfulness of learning is not only oriented towards results, but also on the learning process carried out. Therefore, in addition to mastering the material, teachers are also required to be skilled in selecting and using appropriate learning methods to support the activeness and success of learning activities.

Islam as a religion that teaches morals in all aspects of life is very important for humans. How could it not be, without morals, humans are like livestock, or even worse. This is in accordance with the word of Allah SWT in QS. Al Furqan (25) :44. In national education, moral education is one of the most important aspects in the nation's moral education, so it is a compulsory subject taught in schools. With religious education, it is hoped that an individual can live his life according to the guidance and teachings of his religion, because all aspects of life have been regulated in it. M. Arifin in his book states that Islamic education is a process that directs humans to a better life and elevates their human status, in accordance with basic abilities (nature) and the ability of its teachings (external influences). (Arifin, 1994; p. 14).

The development of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum that is centered on students is expected to help students internalize Islamic religious concepts and values. So that PAI is not only understood in theory, but can be applied to behavior and attitudes in daily life. (Nurhadiningtyas, 2024; p. 402). As a form of anticipation of student behavior that is contrary to the theory being studied, it is necessary to develop an integrative teaching pattern. Namely, which displays religious values at the theoretical (cognitive) level to the implementative (affective) level. (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022; p. 20).

However, each student has a different learning style and absorption capacity. The speed at which students accept the teaching materials provided requires varying amounts of time. Likewise, the selection of strategies so that students can learn more effectively and efficiently in achieving the expected learning goals. This strategy is then realized in the teaching methods applied by the teacher. (Saiful, 2006; p. 74).

The use of conventional methods results in students becoming passive, bored and less enthusiastic about paying attention to the teacher who is teaching. Poor classroom management can also result in an uncondusive classroom situation. Learning media that is only focused on

one book source makes it difficult for students to understand the material because the description of the object is not clear. In addition, the principles in delivering learning are not given much attention.

Basically, teachers can apply various methods to involve students in learning. This will also make students more active and easier to understand the desired learning objectives. Therefore, teachers must be able to identify learning methods according to the content of the material to be taught.

The decline in the quality of morals and the moral degradation of today's students is a major complaint that occurs almost evenly in all educational institutions. They need role models as a reference in implementing the expected attitudes or behavior in accordance with learning objectives related to morals. In the research of Ahmad Muhaimin, et al. (2024), it is stated regarding the formation of good morals and character as follows,

Good character is not formed automatically; it is developed over time through a sustained process of teaching, example, learning and practice. It is developed through character education. (Muhaimin, et al., 2024, p. 5).

In this case, the researcher used role-play and simulation methods to change the Islamic Religious Education learning atmosphere to be more active and independent, which was originally only centered on the teacher as the main source of knowledge. By implementing the role play and simulation methods, students can directly and truly see the implementation of contextual moral learning.

The role-play and simulation methods in moral learning provide students with the opportunity to strengthen their empathy through roles expressed and simulated with their groups. The sub-material of this research is living in peace by forgiving each other. Thus, in this study, the researcher wants to know to what extent the selection of role-play and simulation methods strengthens empathy and student learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education learning. From this general question, the researcher will investigate how the role-play concept is applied by teachers in Islamic Religious Education learning, how the application process is in strengthening empathy and student learning outcomes, and what advantages and obstacles are faced in implementing the role-play method in sixth grade of SDN 1 Slorok. So that through the role-play and simulation methods, students are able to actualize their cognitive understanding into behavior demonstrated through the roles they play. .

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is qualitative research, namely by examining the condition of natural objects to construct a phenomenon and find a hypothesis. (Sugiyono, 2017; p. 19). Therefore, the researcher chose a case study research approach to observe directly and communicate with the parties being researched. Through the case study approach, researchers identify phenomena in depth in a natural context through various sources of information. (Dawson, 2006; p. 16).

The location where this research was conducted was at Slorok 1 Public Elementary School, located in Slorok Village, Kromengan District, Malang Regency. The research subjects were 25 sixth grade students of SDN 1 Slorok. This research was conducted in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning activities with morality sub-material.

Data collection in this qualitative research is done in 3 ways, namely: 1) in-depth and open interviews; 2) direct observation; and 3) documentation. (Michael, 2002; p. 4). The steps taken in data analysis are: 1) condensing data; 2) presenting data; and 3) concluding and verifying data. (Miles and Huberman, 2014; p. 31).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Role Play and Simulation Methods

The results of initial observations in Islamic Religious Education learning for sixth grade I at SDN 1 Slorok showed low student learning outcomes in the morals sub-material. This is influenced by weak reading interest and literacy competency and learning activities tend to be teacher-centered, so that the learning atmosphere still appears passive due to the lack of student involvement. On the other hand, social relations between grade VI students reflect discriminatory and intolerant behavior. So that the moral values integrated in Islamic Religious Education learning have not been able to be internalized in daily behavior.

The application of the role-play method carried out in Islamic Religious Education learning for sixth grade at SDN 1 Slorok is focused on the theme of "forgiving each other". Students are given the role of the person who made the mistake and the person who forgives the mistakes of others. There are also those who play the antagonist role as people who do not want to admit mistakes and are reluctant to forgive others for their mistakes. From each of these roles, students then receive treatment in return for their actions. Another example, there was a fight between friends in class. They have to think about finding a middle ground in the problem by sitting down together, telling the chronology of the problem and reducing each other's egoism, then looking for a way out and ending it with a sense of peace and mutual forgiveness. From there, students will be able to classify commendable and reprehensible actions and will have considerations before doing something by thinking about the risks they will receive.

The application of the role-play method by simulating the commendable morality of forgiving each other will provide students with insight to train themselves to solve problems encountered in their daily lives. The results of interviews with a group of students stated that they

gained new experiences in learning, they learned to solve problems wisely and develop a sense of empathy.

"It just so happened that Risma and I got the protagonist roles, ma'am. Fajar and Fadil were evil, angry people who didn't want to forgive their friends. Then a conflict occurred until Fajar became emotionally aroused. Luckily, Keysa came to mediate, calming down the atmosphere between us who were arguing. Until finally Fajar was willing to forgive the unintentional mistake." (Dock. Interview with Fatih, Risma, Fajar, Fadil, Keysa, sixth grade students of Slorok 1 Public Elementary School)

Indirectly, students will learn to manage their emotions to be more stable and learn to respond to other people's actions wisely and have empathy for others.

Implementation of Role-Play and Simulation Methods in Islamic Religious Education Subjects, Moral Material

In the application of role-play and simulation methods, the emphasis lies on emotional involvement and sensory observation into real problem situations faced. Students as learning subjects who actively carry out practices with their friends in certain situations. Role-play and simulation strategies are also organized around heterogeneous student groups. Each group demonstrates or displays a scenario that the teacher has prepared. Students are given the freedom to improvise, but still within the limits of the teacher's scenario.

Before implementing the role-play method, there are several things that teachers need to prepare, including: (1) presenting or helping students choose the right role-play situation, (2) building an atmosphere that supports and encourages students to act "as if" without feeling embarrassed, (3) managing the role-play situation in the best possible way to encourage spontaneity and learning, (4) teaching the skills of observing and listening effectively and then interpreting correctly what they see and hear.

From the results of the researcher's interview with the sixth grade Islamic Religious Education teacher, it was stated that the selection of material to be applied in Islamic Religious Education learning is based on moral elements, because moral learning is not only limited to delivering theory but also requires real examples. This is based on prominent problems that are often found in schools, namely in the aspect of character, such as *bullyin*, intolerance, and reluctance to forgive each other. This is due to the influence of excessive gaming and gadget use, so that students lack empathy for others. This can be addressed by implementing role-play and simulation in learning moral material so that they can understand in detail the existence of diversity that must be upheld for the sake of harmony and national integrity.

The syntax of the role-play method can be seen in its stages, namely: (1) the teacher compiles and prepares the scenario to be displayed. (2) the teacher appoints several students to study the scenario several days before the implementation of the teaching and learning activities, (3) the teacher forms groups of students each consisting of 5 people, (4) the teacher provides an explanation of the competencies to be achieved, (5) the teacher calls the students who have been appointed to act out the prepared scenario, (6) each student is in their group while observing the scenario being demonstrated, (7) after the performance is complete, each student is given a worksheet to discuss/assess the performance of each group, (8) each group presents the results of its conclusions, (9) the teacher provides a conclusion and general evaluation.

In the preparation stage, the teacher selects appropriate material for role-play with a theme related to morals. The core theme in this material is "Living in Peace by Forgiving Each Other". From the results of interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers and grade VI teachers, after implementing this role-play method, data was found that there was a significant change in attitudes among students at the school.

"Alhamdulillah, Mrs. Itsna, the sixth grade students are now showing better empathy, Mrs. Alvina. They become forgiving individuals, able to accept the differences and shortcomings of others, those who are usually reluctant to forgive or are embarrassed and put their ego first, now become forgiving individuals. And the most surprising thing is that they are able to control their emotions if their friends are being naughty." (Dock. Interview with Mrs. Heny)

During the learning process using the role-play method, the majority of students showed their roles very creatively and with high enthusiasm. Among them, there are those who bring attribute equipment, wear costumes according to their roles, and display very expressive facial expressions accompanied by articulation of the tone of voice according to the character being played.

The researcher also interviewed several sixth grade students after the lesson ended and asked about their mood.

"Today's PAI lesson was very interesting, ma'am. Before we knew it, three hours of lessons had passed. Usually we just listen to Mrs. Alvina explaining the material until we get bored, sometimes we don't even understand but say we do. But today we can learn while acting, our friends' roles are also very funny. It was a fun day today!" (Doc. Interview with Afifa, sixth grade student)

Apart from the results of observations and interviews, data processing was also carried out from the assessment results before and after the application of the role-play and simulation methods.

Table 1.1 Results of Improving PAI Learning Outcomes

No	Test Result Description	Number of Students	Average Value (overall)	Percentage
1	Incomplete values (before applying role-play and simulation methods)	12	74	48%
2	Completed value (before applying role-play and simulation methods)	13		52%
3	Incomplete values (after applying role-play and simulation methods)	4	80,6	16%
4	Completed value (before applying role-play and simulation methods)	21		84%

Source: Document of cognitive assessment results of PAI learning for sixth grade of SDN 1 Slorok

Advantages and disadvantages of the role-play method

Of course, each learning method has its own advantages and disadvantages when applied. However, based on observations in Islamic Religious Education learning in sixth grade of SDN 1 Slorok, the learning atmosphere using role-play and simulation methods became more active, enjoyable and had an impact on improving student learning outcomes.

The advantage of implementing the role-play and simulation methods is that it encourages students to become accustomed to thinking critically, creatively, and innovatively and to be responsible for delivering important messages from the simulated roles. Islamic Religious Education learning becomes more meaningful and applicable, thus impacting students' motivation and learning outcomes.

In the process of implementing the role-play and simulation methods, of course there are still some shortcomings that hinder learning activities, such as changes to the learning place that are not neat due to student preparation, an uncontrolled learning atmosphere with

encouragement for the group of students who perform, and some shy students who tend to be less than optimal in displaying their roles.

Discussion

The benefit of applying the role-play method is that students are able to identify real-world situations directly. This identification allows a way to change students' behavior and attitudes as students accept each character they play. (Hamalik, 2001; p. 214).

Through the role-play method, students can improve their communication skills, critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to analyze various events. In addition, it will create good cooperation, be responsible for their roles, and create good *teamwork*. (Nurhasanah, 2016; p. 612).

As expressed by Aries Musnandar (2016) regarding the concept of empathy and its forms in the following quote:

Empathy is well recognized when someone attempts to conduct social contact and interactive deals. Since an operational period, as stated by an expert, Piaget that a baby is initially aware when there is a set of objects surrounding him/her and treated as tools of interaction. Children show their mastery of empathy in relations with such objects. Empathy is a capacity to feel what another person is experiencing from and within their "frame of reference, that is, the capacity to place oneself in another's position.

The application of the role-play method can develop students' empathy through several stages, namely:

1. Ta'aruf (getting to know other people), in Islamic Religious Education learning students are taught to get to know each other, including their names, characters and personalities;
2. Tafahum (understanding others), increasing understanding of differences in learning abilities, social and economic status;
3. Tadhamun (solidarity), trying to help each other and lighten the burden experienced by friends as a form of concern;
4. Tarahum (mutual love), packaged role playing in the form of emphasizing empathy towards others, mutual love and affection;
5. Ta'awun (helping each other), helping each other in explaining material that other friends find difficult;
6. Tasamuh (tolerance), an attitude of respect for others without regard to differences and getting used to serving and prioritizing common interests above personal interests;
7. Ta'ayus al silmi (living together peacefully). (Mugnandar, 2022, page 71).

This is a great hope for teachers that students have high empathy for others and can improve the quality of student behavior for the better.

Based on the percentage of increase in student learning outcomes, which previously was only 52%, it increased to 84%, indicating that students' understanding through role-play and simulation methods of moral material is good, resulting in better changes in grades and significant progress.

The role-play method is part of the simulation method, which is considered capable of fostering students' enthusiasm for learning and enlivening an active and collaborative learning atmosphere. (Hulaimi and Khairuddin, 2020; p. 8). As the research results show, PAI learning for sixth grade at SDN 1 Slorok appears more active and enjoyable. The students' togetherness in learning makes the solidarity between them stronger.

According to Rahim, who was quoted in his study, there are several advantages of this role-play method, including: 1) training students to take the initiative and be creative, 2) training students to try new things, 3) fostering students' talents in the field of theater arts through their roles, 4) fostering cooperation between friends, and 5) making students feel happy because they can entertain and be entertained by their friends. (Rahim and Risky, 2020; p. 213). In addition, each student will have direct experience and the knowledge they receive will be stronger and more meaningful. (Nuridah and Partaya, 2019, p. 364).

However, it cannot be denied that every learning method applied also has weaknesses which often become obstacles in learning. According to Jumanta in Nia's research, et al., several weaknesses of the role-play method were mentioned, including: 1) some students who did not play a role became less active, 2) it took up a lot of time, and 3) it often disrupted other classes' learning by applause from the audience or observers. (Nia Karnia, et al., 2023, 122). Role play is a social learning model that assigns students to play a character. The role play method can foster enthusiasm and a sense of togetherness.

Simulations are a form of role-playing, but more structured. In simulations, scenarios are much more complex and more set in real life. Additionally, students can play the role of another character, or play themselves. In simulations there are more formal "rules of the game" to follow and fewer decisions to make. (Aries Musnandar: 2020, p.125)

Simulations and role-plays can help change behavior in various ways, including: 1) helping to overcome problems of social interaction with others, 2) developing students' skills in a useful way, 3) getting used to understanding social problems which are the implementation of contextual learning, 4) fostering a sense of togetherness and a spirit of optimism.

Behavioral changes through simulation can occur because simulation methods can help students feel involved in the material they are studying. Simulation is the process of imitating something real and its surroundings. Here are some of the benefits of the simulation method, namely: 1) increasing students' interest in learning, 2) training certain skills, 3) gaining an understanding of a concept or principle, 4) training problem solving, 5) increasing learning activity, 6) reducing fear, and 7) bringing its existence to life.

In the learning process in this study, it is not only seen to what extent the role-play and simulation methods can be applied, but in general it can be said that Islamic Religious Education learning through this method is able to strengthen students' empathy and learning outcomes that can be observed from students' grades at the end of learning. What is more important than that is the students' ability to apply the morals they have learned in their daily lives, namely by apologizing when they are wrong, forgiving other people's mistakes, helping others without differentiating social status, and showing strong empathy towards others.

CONCLUSION

The role-play method implemented in Islamic Religious Education learning for sixth grade at SDN 1 Slorok focuses on the theme of "forgiving each other". Students are given roles to simulate with their group members. The essence of this role is to integrate the moral values of mutual forgiveness into everyday life. So indirectly, students will learn to manage their emotions to be more stable and learn to respond to other people's actions wisely and have empathy for others.

The implementation of the role-play and simulation methods is carried out through systematic stages by the teacher, including: (1) preparing a scenario, (2) appointing several students, (3) forming student groups, (4) providing an explanation of the competencies to be achieved, (5) calling students to carry out the scenario, (6) asking students to observe the scenario being demonstrated by other groups, (7) providing worksheets to review other groups, (8) asking students to conclude the role, and (9) providing reinforcement and general evaluation. From the results of this series of role-play and simulation methods, it was able to improve empathy and Islamic Religious Education learning outcomes of sixth grade students at SDN 1 Slorok. This can be seen from the high enthusiasm of students to learn accompanied by changes in behavior that can be directly observed by Islamic Religious Education teachers and grade VI teachers. The improvement in PAI learning outcomes can also be

observed from the percentage of completion which was initially only 52% to 84%. Simulations and role-play help address social interaction issues. Developing students' skills, fostering a sense of togetherness and a spirit of optimism.

After the role-play and simulation methods were applied in Islamic Religious Education learning, there were several advantages of these methods, such as changing the learning atmosphere to be active, increasing student creativity, and producing meaningful learning. However, this does not mean that there are no drawbacks to this method. Some of the obstacles that occur include a noisy classroom atmosphere that disrupts the effectiveness of learning in other classes and requires a lot of time for learning. However, based on observation and interview data, it shows the success of the role-play and simulation methods in strengthening empathy and student learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education learning.

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