

# IMPLEMENTATION OF GROUP ACTIVITY-BASED LEARNING STRATEGIES IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO ENHANCE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

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## Abstract

This study aims to describe the implementation of group activity-based Islamic Religious Education learning in enhancing student engagement, which includes active participation in discussions, collaboration among students, and students' involvement in expressing opinions during the learning process. Data were collected at SMA Negeri 1 Bangsri through observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The research subjects consisted of Islamic Religious Education teachers and tenth-grade students involved in group activity-based learning. The results indicate that the implementation of group activity-based Islamic Religious Education learning through discussions and presentations significantly increases student engagement, as reflected in higher levels of active participation, collaboration among students, and confidence in expressing opinions. Teachers play a role as facilitators who guide discussions and ensure the involvement of all group members. These findings imply that group activity-based learning strategies are able to create a more interactive and meaningful learning environment in Islamic Religious Education, although their implementation still faces challenges such as time limitations and unequal distribution of group tasks.

**Keywords:** *Islamic Religious Education (PAI), Group-Based Activities, Student Engagement*

## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penerapan pembelajaran PAI berbasis aktivitas kelompok dalam meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa, yang meliputi partisipasi aktif dalam diskusi, kerja sama antarsiswa, serta keterlibatan siswa dalam menyampaikan pendapat selama proses pembelajaran. Pengumpulan data dilakukan di SMA Negeri 1 Bangsri melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan telaah dokumen. Subjek penelitian terdiri atas guru Pendidikan Agama Islam dan siswa kelas X yang terlibat dalam pembelajaran PAI berbasis aktivitas kelompok. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan pembelajaran PAI berbasis aktivitas kelompok melalui diskusi dan presentasi secara nyata meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa, yang ditandai dengan meningkatnya partisipasi aktif dalam diskusi, kerja sama antarsiswa, serta keberanian menyampaikan pendapat. Guru berperan sebagai fasilitator yang mengarahkan jalannya diskusi dan memastikan keterlibatan seluruh anggota kelompok. Temuan ini mengimplikasikan bahwa strategi pembelajaran berbasis aktivitas kelompok mampu menciptakan lingkungan belajar PAI yang lebih interaktif dan bermakna, meskipun pelaksanaannya masih menghadapi kendala berupa keterbatasan waktu dan pembagian tugas kelompok yang belum merata.

**Kata Kunci:** *Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI), Aktivitas Kelompok, Keterlibatan Siswa*

## INTRODUCTION

Education has a strategic role in developing the quality and competence of human resources as the foundation of the nation's progress, especially in efforts to instill the nation's values, attitudes, and character (Triwiyanto, 2021). In the scope of national education, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is not only understood as a subject that emphasizes the aspect of knowledge alone, but also as a means of forming students' morals, spirituality, and personal integrity (Suwito et al., 2022). Effective religious education will help students develop moral sensitivity and social awareness, so that they are able to be wise in facing the challenges of the times (Aulia & Marlina, 2023). In the midst of globalization and technological advances, strengthening religious values in the school environment is becoming increasingly crucial. Therefore, the implementation of the PAI curriculum in schools needs to be strategically designed and carried out with a contextual approach in accordance with the development of students.

However, the implementation of the PAI curriculum at the secondary school level still leaves a number of problems that deserve attention. There are still many learning model approaches that tend to be dominated by educators, with the lack of active participation of students in the teaching and learning process in the learning process has not been fully developed (Kurniawati & Amalia, 2022). In addition, the use of learning media that is relevant to the world of students is also still limited, so Islamic values tend to only be conveyed as memorization materials (Munawir et al., 2024). Not a few schools have not been able to create a comprehensive religious culture in the learning environment, even though the PAI curriculum has been formally implemented. These various factors show that the implementation of the PAI curriculum has not been fully running optimally and needs to be reviewed from various aspects.

Based on these various considerations, this research was carried out at SMA Negeri 1 Bangsri as the location of the study. This school was chosen because it has the character of a public school that continuously integrates adaptive and innovative learning approaches with the strengthening of religious values in the implementation of Islamic Religious Education. In addition, SMA Negeri 1 Bangsri shows institutional seriousness in fostering a school culture with Islamic nuances through habituation programs and the development of varied learning practices. The XI IPS 2 class was designated as the subject of the research because it showed the diversity of students' conditions, both in terms of academic ability, character background, and level of activity in the learning process. This diversity is seen as able to provide a more complete and contextual picture in examining the application of PAI learning strategies based on group activities.

Several previous studies have contributed to the understanding of PAI implementation practices in schools. Subagio & Limbong (2023) revealed that the integration of digital media in the learning process of Religious Education has been

proven to be able to significantly increase the active involvement of students and the effectiveness of teaching. On the other hand, Ratu Langit (2024) emphasizing more on the importance of the spiritual relationship between teachers and students in shaping students' moral awareness. Both have similarities in assessing the effectiveness of PAI, but the approach is different, with one prioritizing the technological aspect, while the other highlighting the role of educators personally. Thus, the study room is still open to examine how all elements of the school involve all school components, including education unit leaders, teachers, and students to the overall school culture interacting in supporting the implementation of the PAI curriculum. This is a gap in the study that has not been touched in depth in the previous literature.

This research aims to fill this gap by raising the study of the implementation of the PAI curriculum as a whole at SMAN 1 Bangsri. This school is interesting to research because it carries a combination of traditional and modern approaches in the implementation of religious education, and has a distinctive character in forming a school culture with Islamic nuances. The novelty of this research lies in its approach that not only assesses the learning process in the classroom, but also pays attention to the managerial dimension, school community participation, and students' daily response to the religious values taught. Thus, this study offers a broader perspective in understanding the success and challenges of implementing the PAI curriculum in school reality.

The focus of the problems on which this research is based includes two main things, namely examining the application of Islamic Religious Education learning strategies based on group activities at SMA Negeri 1 Bangsri, by examining its implementation within the applicable curriculum framework and identifying supporting and inhibiting factors that affect student involvement. This question is a foothold to examine more deeply the dynamics of religious learning in schools factually and contextually. This study is important because student engagement in Islamic Religious Education learning remains a challenge in school practices. Learning processes that do not actively involve students may lead to lower levels of understanding, classroom participation, and internalization of religious values. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed to explore how group activity-based learning strategies in Islamic Religious Education can enhance student engagement in the learning process. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more participatory and student-centered Islamic Religious Education practices. In addition, this research may serve as a reference for teachers, schools, and policymakers in designing and implementing effective learning strategies to sustainably improve student engagement.

In general, this study aims to comprehensively describe the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at SMAN 1 Bangsri, including the planning, implementation, and evaluation process. This study also wants to identify internal and external factors that affect the success and obstacles in its implementation. Through the findings obtained, it is hoped that it can provide an

objective and reflective picture of the reality of religious learning in Islamic-based schools. In addition, the findings of this study are expected to be able to contribute useful thinking for practitioners in the field of education and policy makers in developing strategies to strengthen the implementation of PAI that are more relevant to the needs of the times. Therefore, this study not only enriches scientific insights, but also makes an important contribution to practical application in the field for the world of Education.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, with the aim of exploring in depth the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies based on group activities (Pivač et al., 2021). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon in a comprehensive contextual manner in the natural environment, as well as capture the meaning and experiences of the education actors as a whole (Adhi Kusumastuti & Ahmad Mustamil Khoiron, 2019). The focus of the research is directed at SMA Negeri 1 Bangsri as a material object, with a scope on PAI learning practices in class X. The group activity-based learning strategy was chosen because it is considered to be able to increase students' active participation during the learning process while developing their collaboration skills and sense of social responsibility. Therefore, this qualitative design allows a thorough exploration of the dynamics of the implementation of learning from various perspectives (R. P. Dewi & Hidayah, 2019).

In this study, data sources are divided into two main categories, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected using the interview method with PAI teachers and a number of students from grade X who were directly involved in group activities throughout the learning process, the researcher also carried out participatory observations to directly observe how student interaction and involvement were built in the group, as well as how teachers facilitated these learning activities (Saadah et al., 2022). Meanwhile, secondary data is collected through the study of various documents that are directly related to the implementation of learning, such as teaching modules, student learning outcome records, and evaluation sheets used by teachers to assess student achievement. All of these sources provide complementary information support, so that the data triangulation process can be carried out optimally.

The data analysis process is carried out by applying an interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which includes three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Samsudin et al., 2023). Data reduction is carried out through the process of selection and simplification of information that is considered important based on findings obtained through interviews, observations, and analysis of supporting documents, then the data has

been reduced and systematically compiled in the form of a descriptive narrative, so as to provide a complete picture of conditions in the field. Conclusions are then drawn with an inductive approach that refers to the patterns of findings that appear repeatedly during data collection, while still considering their theoretical relevance and factual context. With this approach, data analysis not only serves to clarify facts, but also interpret the meaning behind the ongoing learning process.

To ensure the authenticity of the data, this study applies a triangulation technique both in terms of sources. In addition, the source triangulation technique is applied by reviewing and comparing data obtained from various different sources and students, to see the suitability of experiences and perceptions between parties (Sufili et al., 2025). On the other hand, triangulation techniques are carried out by integrating findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis in order to obtain a more thorough and objective understanding. The application of this triangulation method is important in a qualitative approach so that the data collected truly represents real conditions in the field. With this method, researchers seek to answer research questions thoroughly and can be scientifically accounted for. Therefore, the approach used has been designed in such a way as to capture the complexity of the implementation of PAI learning based on group activities at SMA Negeri 1 Bangsri in depth and comprehensively.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Implementation of Group Activity-Based Learning Strategies in Islamic Religious Education**

Islamic Religious Education learning not only aims to master the material theoretically, but also to instill and internalize Islamic values in the lives of students. Therefore, a learning strategy that is able to actively involve students is needed so that these values can be understood, lived, and applied meaningfully. In this context, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education learning strategies based on group activities at SMA Negeri 1 Bangsri is one of the effective efforts to increase student involvement in the PAI learning process.

This strategy is applied to PAI learning in class XI IPS 2 with the material Sincerity in Worship and Charity, which is one of the important topics in the formation of students' religious attitudes. Sincere material was chosen because in addition to demanding conceptual understanding, it also emphasizes the appreciation of values and their application in daily life. Through group activities, students are encouraged to discuss, exchange opinions, and reflect on personal experiences related to sincerity, so that their understanding of the material becomes more in-depth and contextual. This approach is in line with the principle of active learning that emphasizes student involvement as the key to successful internalization of values and character formation, as affirmed by Rasyad (2024) that learning that encourages students to be active in constructing knowledge through social interaction and collaborative activities will improve the understanding of concepts as well as social skills and character of students.

The learning planning stage begins with the preparation of a teaching module for the material Sincere in Worship and Charity in class XI IPS 2. Before compiling the teaching module, the researcher consulted with the PAI teacher, to obtain directions regarding strategies, materials, and learning activities that were in accordance with the characteristics of the students. From the results of the consultation, Mr. Imron said:

*"Islamic Religious Education learning should be carried out using a group activity approach so that students are more actively involved, can exchange ideas with one another, and learn to respect their peers' opinions. Grouping should be heterogeneous so that all students have the opportunity to participate."*

From this, it was agreed that learning should use a group activity approach, with heterogeneous group divisions to increase cooperation, communication, and involvement of all students. Teachers also emphasized the need to include case studies that are directly related to students' daily lives, use reflective questions to foster self-awareness, and prepare assessment instruments that cover cognitive, affective, and skill aspects (Putra, 2023).

Based on this direction, the learning objectives are focused so that students are able to understand the concept of sincerity, the underlying postulates, and are able to show sincerity in daily activities. Learning activities are designed in the form of group discussions, case analysis, and presentation of discussion results. Group divisions are carried out in a heterogeneous manner to encourage balanced interaction between active and quieter students, so that all members of the group can participate in the learning process. The assessment instrument is systematically prepared to assess the achievement of student competencies in aspects of knowledge, attitudes, and skills, so that learning evaluation can be carried out thoroughly and measurably (Sholeh et al., 2025).

The learning stage begins with an opening to build a conducive classroom atmosphere and prepare students' mental readiness. The researcher entered class XI IPS 2 by greeting students using greetings and asking how they were doing to create a warm and fun initial interaction. Furthermore, perception is carried out by associating the material of Sincerity in Worship and Charity with students' daily experiences, such as helping friends, studying earnestly without expecting praise, or worshipping with sincere intentions. This perception is important to arouse students' interest and awareness of the relevance of the material to real life, while encouraging them to think critically about sincere attitudes. Study Joseph (2020) shows that associating material with students' experiences can increase motivation and learning engagement. The researcher then conveyed the learning objectives clearly so that students understood that the day's learning aimed to recognize the



concept of sincerity, understand the underlying evidence, and be able to implement sincerity in daily life.

The core stage of learning is carried out by dividing students into small, heterogeneous groups to ensure each member actively participates. Each group was given a worksheet containing triggering questions and case studies related to the application of sincerity in daily life. During the discussion, the researcher acts as a facilitator who guides the discussion, provides clarification, and answers students' questions so that they understand the material more deeply. Observations show that interactions in groups can improve students' communication, collaboration, and analytical skills. After the discussion was over, each group presented the results of the discussion, followed by a question and answer session and reinforcement of the material by the researcher. This approach helps students understand the concept of sincerity more contextually and is able to relate religious values to their personal experiences.

The closing stage is carried out to strengthen students' understanding and reflection on the material that has been discussed. The researcher asked students to write down personal conclusions about the meaning of sincerity and how they would implement it in their daily lives. Furthermore, the researcher provides feedback that emphasizes the main values of the material and motivation so that students continue to internalize sincerity. This reflection activity also facilitates the development of students' self-awareness, which is important in the formation of religious character and noble morals. Through the opening, core, and closing stages, group activity-based learning strategies have been proven to be able to increase student engagement, strengthen material understanding, and develop students' social skills and character as a whole (Anggraeni & Effane, 2022).

The application of Islamic Religious Education learning strategies based on group activities on the material Sincerity in Worship and Charity in grade X of SMA Negeri 1 Bangsri has been proven to be able to increase student participation and deepen their understanding of the concept of sincerity contextually. Learning begins with the opening stage through greetings, perceptions that relate the material to students' daily experiences, and clear delivery of learning objectives. In the core stage, students are divided into heterogeneous groups to discuss, analyze case studies, and present the results of discussions, while researchers act as facilitators who guide, provide clarification, and ensure that all students are actively engaged. The closing stage is carried out through individual reflection and researcher feedback to affirm the main values of the material and encourage the application of sincerity in daily life. The researcher's contribution includes the preparation of teaching modules, alignment of group activities with learning objectives, monitoring the learning process, and evaluating student competency achievements in aspects of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. This strategy is in line with the findings W. T. Dewi et al., (2022) which states that structured collaborative learning is effective in improving students' understanding of concepts, social skills, and the formation of religious character.

## **Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Group Activity-Based Islamic Religious Education Learning**

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning that emphasizes the active involvement of students is an important strategy to increase student understanding, motivation, and overall participation in the learning process. Learning activities through group work and discussions have been proven to encourage students to play an active role, so that the understanding of the subject matter is deeper than the passive learning method (Chamidah et al., 2022). Research Firdaus et al., (2025) shows that the use of group activities in PAI learning can increase students' motivation to learn, students' activeness in discussing, and their ability to convey ideas systematically. Thus, the success of the implementation of group activity-based learning does not only depend on the design of the activity itself, but is also influenced by supporting factors such as the commitment and support of the school, teacher competence, the quality of student participation, and the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure (Hafiz et al., 2024).

The first supporting factor is the commitment and support of the school. The Principal, plays an important role in creating a learning environment that supports the implementation of group activities in PAI learning. In an interview, he said:

*"We always encourage teachers to innovate in their teaching methods and provide regular guidance so that every teacher feels supported in carrying out the teaching and learning process."*

This is strengthened by the role of the principal who actively provides guidance and direction to teachers, so that teachers feel more confident and motivated in carrying out learning based on group activities. Findings Ardeani & Farhan (2024) Affirming that supportive leadership in schools contributes significantly to improving teacher professionalism while encouraging innovation in learning strategies.

In addition, the seriousness of the school principal can be seen from the implementation of continuous learning monitoring. The development actively follows the development of the teaching and learning process in the classroom and provides constructive input to teachers. The directions conveyed encourage teachers to be more courageous in implementing learning strategies that are tailored to the character and needs of students. This support is not only technical, but also provides moral reinforcement, so that teachers feel more confident in implementing learning methods that require student activeness. This supportive work environment is an important foundation for the growth of learning innovations in schools.

The results of the observation show that teachers who receive full assistance and support from the principal are able to manage group activity-based learning more systematically. The learning process takes place more directed, starting from



planning activities, organizing groups, to managing discussions in the classroom. This condition has a positive impact on student engagement, which can be seen from the increase in participation and interaction between group members. The role of the principal in providing real support contributes directly to the creation of effective and meaningful learning. Therefore, the commitment of school principals can be seen as one of the determining factors for the success of the implementation of group activity-based learning.

The second supporting factor is the competence and motivation of PAI teachers. Teachers have a central role in the success of group activity-based learning because of their ability to determine the smoothness and quality of the learning process. Teacher competencies include the ability to design group activities in accordance with PAI materials, guide discussions, manage interactions between members, and provide constructive feedback (Ismunandar, 2022). High motivation encourages teachers to create an interesting, relevant, and able to encourage students' active participation. Competent and motivated teachers can also adjust learning strategies to different students' abilities, so that each group member can play an active role optimally (Rasam et al., 2019).

Field evidence reinforces this, where before the researcher carried out the learning, Mr. Imran gave direct direction related to classroom management strategies, division of roles in groups, and how to guide students so that discussions run effectively. This directive increases the readiness of researchers while strengthening teachers' motivation in carrying out group activity-based learning (Syafi'i & Solichah, 2022). Observations show that teachers who receive direction and guidance from mentors or heads of study are better able to apply active learning methods in a systematic and structured manner. Teachers' expertise in facilitating group discussions also has a direct effect on the level of student participation and involvement in learning. Thus, teacher competence and motivation are crucial factors that support the successful implementation of group activity-based learning (Pradnyana & Amanda, 2023).

The third supporting factor is student participation and characteristics. Students hold a central role in the success of group activity-based learning because their level of involvement determines the effectiveness of the learning process. Aspects such as communication skills, social skills, confidence, and motivation to learn greatly influence how actively students participate in each group activity (Maharani et al., 2025). Students who actively interact, dare to express their opinions, and are willing to cooperate with their peers will make it easier to achieve learning goals. The positive character of students, including discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect, contributes to the quality of group interaction and the creation of a conducive learning environment (Saragih & Marpaung, 2024).

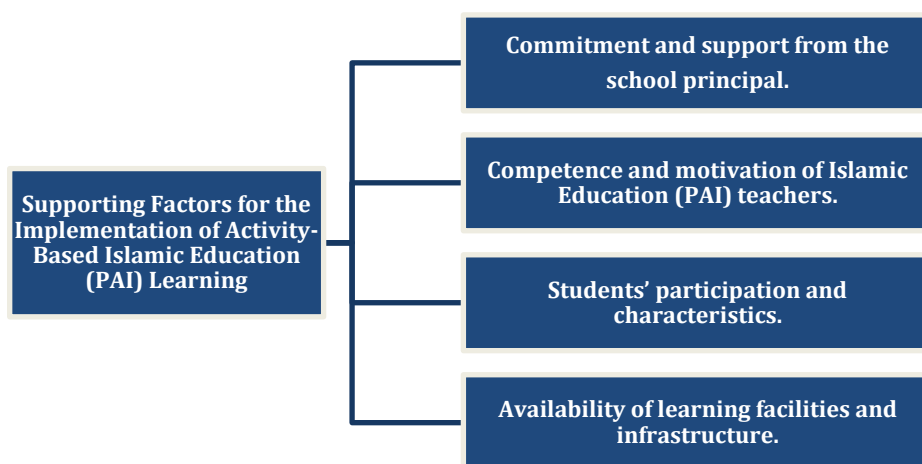
In addition, one of the students, stated that:

*"I feel more motivated to actively participate in discussions and help my group members because each member is given the opportunity to express their opinions, allowing us to learn from one another."*

This is in line with the findings (Kamalia & El-Yunusi, 2024), which shows that students with high motivation and good social skills contribute more to group discussions, improve material understanding, and strengthen interactions between members. Thus, active involvement and positive character of students are the main factors that support the successful implementation of group activity-based learning.

The fourth supporting factor is learning facilities and infrastructure. The availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure is an important aspect so that group activity-based learning can run effectively. Learning media, such as group modules, reference books, discussion boards, and interactive technology devices, make it easier for teachers to deliver material in a creative and interesting way (Nisa Nurrohmah et al., 2025). In addition, the physical condition of the classroom, including comfort, adequate lighting, and table arrangement that supports interaction between group members, also affects the quality of the learning process. Comprehensive facilities not only make it easier for teachers and students, but also increase students' interest, concentration, and active participation in each group activity (Heriyanto & Handri Santoso, 2025).

Observations at SMAN 1 Bangsri show that the classroom has a flexible table arrangement that makes it easier for students to form groups and discuss. Group modules and discussion boards are adequately available so that each group can access the material at the same time. Interactive technology devices such as projectors and digital whiteboards are used to display the material visually, which makes it easier for students to understand the concepts being taught. The availability of these facilities and infrastructure has been proven to increase student involvement and facilitate interaction between group members. These findings are in line with research Subagio & Tricks (2023) which states that the support of complete learning facilities has a positive effect on motivation, participation, and effectiveness of group-based learning.



**Figure 1. Supporting Factors**

The implementation of group activity-based learning does have many advantages, but in practice there are often various obstacles that can affect the effectiveness of the learning process. These obstacles arise in the interaction between group members and in the management of learning activities, so they require special attention from teachers. Understanding these obstacles is important so that teachers can take strategic steps to maintain the smooth and quality of learning. Thus, while this method has great potential to increase student participation and understanding, its success depends heavily on the teacher's ability to overcome existing obstacles. The following paragraphs will discuss these constraints in more detail.

First, time constraints are the main obstacle in the implementation of group activity-based learning. A busy learning schedule makes it difficult for teachers to provide enough time for each group to discuss, complete assignments, and present results. As a result, some group activities are forced to be shortened so that the learning process does not run optimally and students' understanding becomes uneven (Arifin, 2019). This is reinforced by the statement of a PAI teacher, who said:

*"Time becomes the main constraint in group-based learning because each group requires sufficient duration to conduct discussions, complete tasks, and thoroughly review their results."*

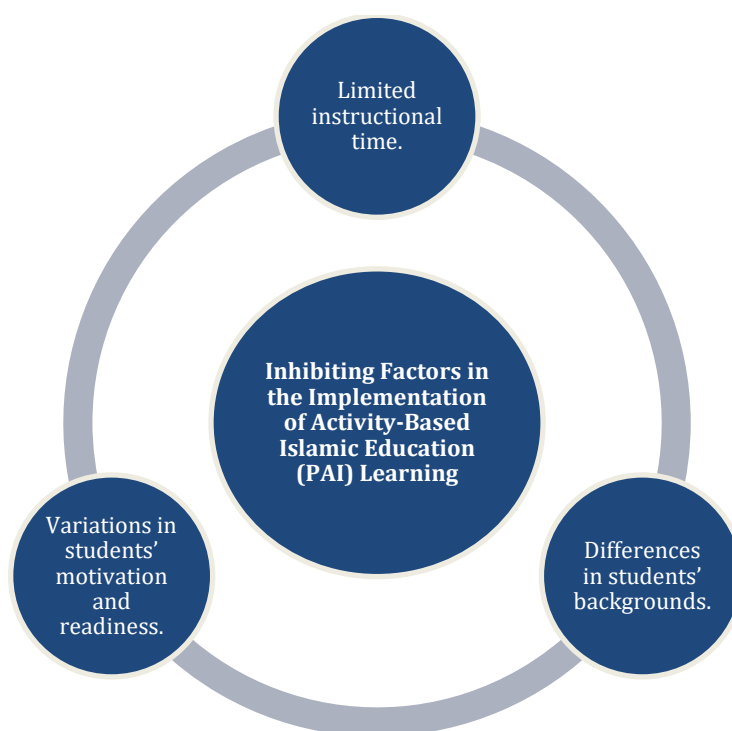
In addition, the results of observations at SMAN 1 Bangsri showed that some of the group discussion sessions only lasted about 10-15 minutes, even though the material discussed took longer so that all group members could participate optimally. This condition makes some students less likely to express their opinions and discuss in more depth. Research findings Lubis (2024) It also shows that time constraints are one of the main factors that hinder the implementation of active learning methods, because teachers cannot manage each stage of activities optimally. Therefore, more flexible schedule planning and good time management are essential to support the success of group activity-based learning.

Second, differences in students' backgrounds are one of the obstacles that affect the effectiveness of group activity-based learning. Variations in academic abilities, personal characters, and learning experiences cause group dynamics to not always run in balance (Shobri, 2024). In practice, students who have better communication skills and understanding of the material tend to dominate the course of the discussion, while other students choose to be passive and less confident in expressing their opinions. This inequality has an impact on unequal distribution of roles and has the potential to hinder the process of mutual learning between group members.

The results of observations at SMAN 1 Bangsri show that in some groups, only some students actively put forward ideas and direct discussions, while other members are more listeners without significant contributions. This condition affects the imbalance of material understanding among students, because not all members are optimally involved in the process of thinking and discussion. These findings are

in line with research Syarif Muhamad Abid Maulana & Basri Wahyudi (2024) which states that differences in students' abilities and backgrounds are often an obstacle in group learning. Therefore, appropriate teacher strategies, such as clear division of roles and individual encouragement, are needed so that every student has an equal opportunity to participate and learning goals can be achieved to the fullest.

Third, the different motivations and readiness of students also affect the smooth running of group activities. Some students still lack confidence or hesitation to express their opinions, while other students are less motivated to actively participate in discussions. This can be seen when researchers make observations at SMAN 1 Bangsri, where some group members seem reluctant to talk or just follow the direction of friends without making meaningful contributions. This condition causes contributions between group members to be uneven, so that group discussions do not run optimally and some students do not understand the material thoroughly. Research Swandewi (2021) shows that low motivation and readiness of students is one of the factors that hinder the effectiveness of group-based learning. Therefore, teachers need to provide individual and group coaching, including systematic encouragement and guidance, so that each student is encouraged to participate actively and the learning process can take place more effectively and evenly.



**Figure 2. Inhibiting Factors**

Overall, the success of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning based on group activities is influenced by various supporting factors while facing several obstacles. The principal's commitment, teacher competence and motivation, student

participation and characteristics, and the availability of facilities and infrastructure have proven to be important to increase the effectiveness of learning, engagement, and material understanding. Meanwhile, time constraints, differences in backgrounds, and variations in student motivation are challenges that need to be anticipated so that each group can function optimally. In this study, researchers play an active role by observing, facilitating, and analyzing student interactions during learning, thus making a real contribution to understanding group dynamics and effective classroom management strategies. With the right approach, the group activity method has proven to be an effective strategy to increase student participation, motivation, and overall understanding.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that group activity-based learning strategies in Islamic Religious Education effectively enhance student engagement, particularly in terms of active participation, collaborative interaction, and the ability to connect learning materials with everyday experiences. The findings indicate that discussion-based and presentation-oriented activities enable students to better understand and internalize Islamic values, such as sincerity in worship and charity, through meaningful social interaction and reflection.

The effectiveness of this strategy is primarily influenced by the role of teachers as facilitators who manage group dynamics and encourage equal participation, as well as the support of school leadership in creating a conducive learning environment. Although challenges related to time limitations and differences in student readiness remain, the study demonstrates that group activity-based learning has significant potential to improve student involvement while simultaneously supporting the development of religious character and social skills. These findings affirm that well-managed collaborative learning can serve as an effective approach in Islamic Religious Education.

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