

Volume 5 No. 1, Tahun 2024 Halaman 40-47 ISSN (Online) : 2774-2776 Doi::

Available online :

Increasing Student Learning Activities in Social Studies through the Syndicate Group Method

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Diterima: 1 September 2024 Direvisi: 1 November 2024 Dipublikasikan: 30 November 2024

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menerapkan pendekatan diskusi kelompok *syndicate group* dalam meningkatkan keterlibatan belajar siswa kelas VII pada mata pelajaran Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial (IPS), khususnya materi tentang permasalahan sosial budaya, di MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian tindakan kelas (PTK) dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa catatan lapangan dan lembar observasi. Data yang dikumpulkan dianalisis menggunakan metode deskriptif untuk mengevaluasi perubahan yang terjadi dalam proses pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan diskusi kelompok *syndicate group* efektif dalam meningkatkan aktivitas dan hasil belajar siswa. Peningkatan ini terlihat dari rata-rata nilai siswa yang mengalami kenaikan signifikan dari siklus pertama ke siklus kedua, yaitu sebesar 23,61 poin. Pendekatan ini memberikan kesempatan bagi siswa untuk terlibat secara aktif dalam diskusi, meningkatkan kemampuan berpikir kritis, serta memperkuat pemahaman terhadap materi yang dipelajari. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, direkomendasikan agar guru lebih memperhatikan pengelolaan kelas, termasuk memanfaatkan analisis pembelajaran secara efektif dan mengontrol waktu diskusi agar proses pembelajaran berjalan lebih optimal. Selain itu, penting bagi guru untuk memastikan bahwa setiap anggota kelompok memiliki kesempatan untuk berkontribusi, sehingga keberhasilan pendekatan ini dapat merata di seluruh siswa.

Kata Kunci: Syndicate Group, Learning Activity, Hasil Belajar

Abstract

This study aims to implement the syndicate group discussion approach to enhance the learning engagement of seventhgrade students in Social Studies (IPS), specifically on the topic of socio-cultural issues, at MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari. The method employed is classroom action research (CAR), utilizing field notes and observation sheets for data collection. The data gathered were analyzed descriptively to evaluate the changes occurring in the learning process. The results of the study indicate that the syndicate group discussion approach is effective in improving students' activity and learning outcomes. This effectiveness is evidenced by a significant increase in the average student score, which rose by 23.61 points from the first cycle to the second. This approach enables students to actively engage in discussions, enhance critical thinking skills, and deepen their understanding of the material. Based on these findings, it is recommended that teachers focus more on classroom management, including effectively utilizing learning analysis and controlling discussion time to optimize the learning process. Additionally, it is crucial for teachers to ensure that every group member has an opportunity to contribute, ensuring the success of this approach is evenly distributed among all students. **Keywords**: Syndicate Group, Learning Activity, Learning Outcomes

How to Cite: Kurniawan, M.A., Amin, S., & Dewi, S. (2024). Increasing Student Learning Activities in Social Studies through the Syndicate Group Method. Social Science Educational Research, Vol 5 (No 1): halaman 40-47.

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INTRODUCTION

Student learning activity is one of the main indicators of success in the learning process. It not only reflects students' interest in the material being taught, but also shows the extent to which they are emotionally, cognitively and socially engaged in learning activities (Wang et al., 2019). Active students have a greater chance of understanding and mastering learning concepts, as their active engagement helps strengthen the connection between theory and practice (Wolverton & Hollier, 2022). Lismaya, (2019) evealed, activities such as asking questions, answering questions, giving opinions, and participating in discussions are real forms of student involvement that demonstrate mastery of the material as well as critical thinking skills.

Conversely, low student engagement can be a significant obstacle in the learning process. Student inactivity often leads to gaps in understanding, low analytical skills, and a decrease in overall learning outcomes (Susilowati, 2018; Widodo & Nursaptini, 2020). t can also affect classroom dynamics, where the learning atmosphere becomes less interactive and limits the creation of fun and meaningful learning experiences.

Teachers play a central role as facilitators who are able to design and implement effective learning strategies to encourage student engagement (Mea, 2024). Teachers are required to create a supportive, engaging and inclusive learning environment, where every student feels motivated to actively participate (Bashith & Amin, 2017; Hartadiyati et al., 2023). Damayanti (2024) mentioned that the application of innovative methods such as project-based learning, group discussions, or interactive simulations can be a solution to overcome low student activeness, so that learning objectives can be achieved optimally.

Based on the results of observations in class 7 MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari, only 30% of students are actively learning, and 70% of students are less active. Only a few students are active in learning activities, but other students do other things besides learning activities. There were 50% of the students who actively asked questions, mostly asking the teacher about the subject matter they did not understand. 20% of the students gave opinions, and only 30% of the students answered questions when the lesson was conducted according to the instructions that had been given. As a result, there were still students who felt difficulties during the discussion.

The results of a survey conducted on grade 7 students showed that 5 out of 10 students admitted that social studies subjects disliked them because the material taught was rote. About 60% of students do not have a good understanding of the social studies material, so they are not interested in learning. In addition, the lecture learning model that has been used in social studies reduces students' activities because students only listen to the teacher explaining the material and doing the worksheet assignments.

Sari et al. (2021) revealed that factors that indicate low student learning activity include the teacher's lack of a sense of responsibility for the tasks assigned; students rarely ask questions or have opinions in lessons; and the lack of cooperation between students in working on or understanding the subject matter. Although teachers have implemented the process skills approach in their learning, students still do not show significant levels of learning activeness (Wicaksono, 2019).

The results of supervision conducted by another class teacher to a teacher in class 7 of MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari showed that social studies learning in the class was still teacher-centred. As a result, there are not enough opportunities for students to build the intelligence of thinking and habits of action needed to produce knowledge, either independently or in groups. Teachers also tend to prioritise high-ability students.

To solve the above problems, classroom action research should be conducted using studentdominant learning methods such as Syndicate Group. This method gives teachers the opportunity for students to participate in scientific discussions to gather opinions, make conclusions, or create various alternative solutions to problems (Andriani et al., 2024; Armansyah et al., 2022). In this action research, the Syndicate Group discussion method was chosen because it can increase students' learning activeness and train them to communicate fluently (Daigavane et al., 2021). This means that students have the responsibility to understand the material and co-operate with their peers. In line with the research findings of Sujarwa & Sukoco (2017), who stated that the application of the Syndicate Group discussion method can increase the activeness of classroom student groups in learning. This learning method and steps are expected to increase students' learning activeness because it motivates them more to complete the task well.

RESEARCH METHOD

This Classroom Action Research was conducted in two cycles, with four stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Students in class VII E of MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari, Malang Regency, were the subjects of this study. The material used was socio-cultural problems. Observation sheets and field notes are research tools. The observation results can show the activeness of student learning in social studies learning. (1) engage in group discussions; (2) take turns and share tasks; (3) ask questions; and (4) appreciate or respond to the teacher are indicators used to determine the level of assessment of the success of the action.

Descriptive analysis was used to analyse the data in this study. The percentage of action success can be calculated by the following formula:

$$Percentage of successful = \frac{Number of indicator students}{Total number of students} X 100\%$$

Percentage of successful Presentation = $\frac{\sum Score achieved}{\sum Maximum score} X 100\%$

Source: (Arikunto et al., 2021)

The level of success of the action is determined by referring to the percentage of success of the action that has been calculated below.

Level of Success of Action	Level of Success Value	Value (Letter)	Value (Number)
80-100%	Very Good	А	5
60-79%	Good	В	4
40-59%	Fair	С	3
20-39%	Poor	D	2
0-19%	Very Poor	E	1

 Table 1. Table 1. Level of Success of Action Method

Table Source: (Susilo et al., 2022)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cycle 1

Data on student learning activeness in cycle I can be seen in the following table.

Observed Behaviour Indicators	Activeness Percentage (%)
Involved in group discussions	58,91
Taking turns and sharing tasks	46,76
Asking questions	47,03
Appreciating or responding to the teacher	75,46
Average	57,04

Table 2. Results of Student Learning Activity Data Cycle 1

Source: Data Processed

The following table shows the percentage results of student learning activeness, which consists of activeness indicators and data on the success rate of cycle I actions, during the syndicate group discussion method learning. Student learning and the success rate of the first cycle action: the indicator of activeness to appreciate or respond to the teacher was 75.46% with a good success rate, the indicator of activeness to engage in group discussions was 58.91% with a sufficient success rate, the indicator of activeness to ask questions was 47.03% with a sufficient success rate, and the indicator of activeness to take turns and share was 46.76% with a sufficient success rate.

Cycle 2

Data on student learning activeness in cycle II can be seen in the following table.

Observed Behaviour Indicators	Activeness Percentage (%)	
Involved in group discussions	81,50	
Taking turns and sharing tasks	70,65	
Asking questions	76,33	
Appreciating or responding to the teacher	94,10	
Average	80,65	

Table 3. Results of Student Learning Activity Data Cycle 2.

Source: Data Processed

Based on this table, the indicator of student learning activeness in cycle II has the highest percentage of success of 95.33% with a very good success rate; the indicator of involvement in group discussions is 82.50% with a very good success rate; and the indicator of respect or response to the teacher is 95.33% with a very good success rate.

Based on data on student learning activeness in cycle I and cycle II, it can be concluded that student learning activeness increased from 58.04% in cycle I to 81.71% in cycle II. This is an improvement compared to the results of cycle I because students in cycle II can meet the target of the average achievement of researchers and the achievement of classical learning activeness, which is at least 80% of student learning activeness.

Observed Behaviour Indicators	Activeness Percentage		Improvement	Description
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2		
Involved in group discussions	58,91	81,50	22,59	Increased
Taking turns and sharing tasks	46,76	70,65	23,89	Increased
Asking questions	47,03	76,33	29,30	Increased
Appreciating or responding to the teacher	75,46	94,10	18,64	Increased
Average	57,04	80,65	23,61	Increased

Table 4. Comparison of Student Learning Data Between Cycle I and Cycle II

Source: Data Processed

The table above shows that each indicator of student learning activeness shows an increase in the percentage of learning activeness. The percentage of student learning activeness increased from 59.81% in cycle I to 82.50% in cycle II; the indicator of asking questions increased from 48.01% in cycle I to 77.33% in cycle II; the indicator of taking turns and sharing tasks increased from 47.86% in cycle I to 71.67% in cycle II; and the indicator of appreciating or responding to the teacher increased from 76.47% in cycle I to 95.33% in cycle II.

Student Learning Activeness Has Increased

During the learning process in the classroom, students' learning activeness is assessed. If students are actively involved in the learning process, their activeness will increase. The results of the data analysis show an increase in the percentage of success of the action on each indicator of activeness, which shows how active students are in using the group syndicate discussion method. Based on these results, it can be concluded that there is a very significant increase in the percentage of success rate for student learning activeness. These results show that using the group syndicate discussion method can increase student learning activeness.

It has become a habit for students to learn alone and work together in groups, which results in an increase in their learning activeness. Students already dare to say what they think and engage in discussions. Due to the encouragement of students to interact both with the teacher and with other groups, student engagement is quite high in learning the syndicate group discussion method. Presentation activities also help students learn more actively. Students can become more active in the learning process with discussions conducted together in class. With this challenge, students feel motivated. In addition, students will be more courageous to ask questions and voice opinions.

Field notes show that of the 12 students who looked passive during cycle I, all students became active in cycle II. This is due to the fact that students were not yet familiar with the learning method used by the teacher during cycle I, so the percentage of students who were active in cycle II was greater than in cycle I. This is because the syndicate group discussion method allows students to have a more active learning process. Since the syndicate group discussion method allows students to interact and cooperate with their group members better, students who learn with this method have a higher level of learning activeness compared to students who learn with the usual method. To increase this level of learning activeness, students need a lot of practice or habituation.

Afifah (2017) mentioned that some of the advantages of using the Syndicate Group Discussion Method are as follows: (1) improve critical thinking skills and group cooperation, (2) create positive relationships among students, (3) get peer guidance, (4) create an environment that respects scientific values, (5) can solve and study aspects of the problem together, and (6) each group shares learning experiences with each other, so students can learn from each other.

Good learning activities improve learning outcomes (Bai et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Popenici & Millar, 2015). This is demonstrated by the positive interdependence that exists in groups as each member is encouraged to learn from each other and teach their members so that they can understand what they are learning. In addition, there is individual responsibility as each member is required to work together to contribute an activeness score or grade in each cycle for the syndicate group to achieve learning mastery.

The results of this study support previous research, reported by Sujarwa & Sukoco (2017) showing that teachers can help students think critically, express opinions, and instil mental courage in opinion by using group discussion methods in lessons. In accordance with Amin & Khotimah (2016), the results showed that the syndicate group discussion method can increase student learning activeness, with an increase in the average score from cycle I to cycle II of 23.67.

Low ability students feel more confident after learning the syndicate group discussion method because they are motivated to be better and help the teacher improve their skills. The next learning process should be improved because of these problems. Teachers should motivate students more to express their opinions through discussion and cooperate with their group in doing the task, and also should ensure good communication between students and teachers.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the application of the syndicate group discussion method significantly increases student learning activeness. In cycle I, the average student engagement was 57.04%, with the highest indicator being response to the teacher (75.46%) and the lowest being taking turns and sharing tasks (46.76%). However, in cycle II, the average activeness increased to 80.65%, with all indicators showing a significant increase, including involvement in group discussions (81.50%) and asking questions (76.33%).

This increase was due to students' familiarity with the new learning method, which encouraged them to more actively interact and cooperate in groups. Of the 12 students who were originally passive in cycle I, all of them became active in cycle II. This shows that syndicate group creates a conducive learning atmosphere, motivates students to participate, and encourages their courage in asking questions and expressing opinions.

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