



# Enhancing Student Engagement in Qur'anic Learning through Peer Tutoring: Evidence from Islamic Religious Education Classrooms

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## ABSTRACT

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This study is motivated by the low level of student participation in learning the Qur'an in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects in class VII at A MTs Daarul Ihsaan Cimahi. This condition is indicated by the lack of student activeness in reading, asking questions, and interacting during the learning process. This study aims to describe the implementation of the peer tutoring method and to determine the improvement of student participation in learning the Qur'an. The method used in this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR) with the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages conducted in two cycles. The subjects of this study were seventh-grade students of MTs Daarul Ihsaan Cimahi, totaling 28 students. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that the implementation of the peer tutoring method significantly improved student participation in learning the Qur'an, as indicated by increased student activeness in reading, asking questions, discussing, and engaging in group activities. In Cycle I, student participation reached 62%, and in Cycle II it increased to 85%, exceeding the predetermined success indicator of 75%. Therefore, the peer tutoring method can be an effective alternative in improving the quality of PAI learning, especially in Qur'anic learning.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Religious Education and Character Development (*Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti/PAI-BP*) plays a crucial role in shaping students' character, morality, and personality in accordance with Islamic values. Beyond the acquisition of religious knowledge, PAI-BP seeks to internalize Islamic teachings into students' daily lives, fostering the development of ethical behavior and noble character. One of the core components of PAI-BP is Qur'anic learning,

which encompasses the ability to read, understand, memorize, and implement the teachings of the Qur'an. These competencies are fundamental to the formation of students' religious character, as the Qur'an serves as the primary source of guidance for Muslims in their personal and social lives (Hamdi & Artikel, 2024). Despite its importance, the implementation of Qur'anic learning in schools continues to face various challenges. One of the most prominent issues is the low level of student participation during the learning process. Student participation is a key indicator of effective learning because it reflects students' physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement in classroom activities (Hamalik, 2014). Low participation is often manifested in students' reluctance to read the Qur'an aloud, limited involvement in classroom discussions, a lack of willingness to ask questions, and minimal engagement in collaborative learning activities. Such conditions can hinder the achievement of learning objectives, particularly in developing students' proficiency in reading the Qur'an accurately according to the principles of tajwid and proper pronunciation (makharij al-huruf).

The issue of low student participation is frequently associated with the continued dominance of teacher-centered instructional approaches. In such learning environments, teachers play the primary role in delivering information, while students act mainly as passive recipients of knowledge. This approach often limits opportunities for students to actively engage, interact, and construct their own understanding of learning materials, resulting in lower levels of confidence and classroom participation (Rusman, 2018). Therefore, innovative instructional strategies are needed to create more interactive, collaborative, and student-centered learning environments. One instructional strategy that has demonstrated considerable potential in promoting student engagement is the peer tutoring method. Peer tutoring is a collaborative learning approach in which students with higher levels of academic competence assist their peers who experience learning difficulties. Through this approach, learning occurs not only between teachers and students but also among students themselves. According to Slavin (2015), peer tutoring is a form of cooperative learning that enhances student engagement, strengthens conceptual understanding, and develops communication and social skills. Furthermore, students often feel more comfortable interacting with their peers, as explanations are delivered in language that is easier to understand and within a less intimidating social context (Sanjaya, 2016).

Previous studies have reported that peer tutoring contributes positively to students' academic achievement, learning motivation, and social interaction across various educational settings. However, research specifically examining the implementation of peer tutoring in enhancing student participation in Qur'anic learning within Islamic junior secondary schools remains limited. This gap is particularly significant because Qur'anic learning requires active practice, continuous interaction, and direct engagement with learning materials. Consequently, there is a need for empirical studies that explore the effectiveness of peer tutoring in fostering student participation within the context of Qur'anic

education. Preliminary observations conducted in Class VII A of MTs Daarul Ihsaan Cimahi revealed that student participation in Qur'anic learning was relatively low. Among the 28 students observed, only approximately 35–40% actively participated in reading the Qur'an, asking questions related to recitation rules, or engaging in group discussions. Most students tended to remain passive, lacked confidence, and relied heavily on teacher guidance during the learning process. These findings indicate the necessity of implementing innovative instructional methods capable of encouraging greater student involvement and participation.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the implementation of the peer tutoring method in Qur'anic learning in Class VII A of MTs Daarul Ihsaan Cimahi and to investigate its contribution to improving student participation during the learning process. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of instructional strategies in Islamic Religious Education and provide practical recommendations for teachers seeking to enhance the quality of Qur'anic learning in Islamic junior secondary schools. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the application of peer tutoring within the context of Qur'anic learning in Islamic Religious Education at the junior secondary school level, particularly in examining its effectiveness in enhancing student participation. While previous studies have primarily emphasized learning outcomes and academic achievement, this study highlights student participation as a critical dimension of successful Qur'anic learning, thereby offering new insights into student-centered instructional practices in Islamic education.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The research was conducted in two cycles involving 23 female students of Class VII A at MTs Daarul Ihsaan Cimahi who participated in Qur'anic learning within the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. The study aimed to enhance student participation through the implementation of the peer tutoring method. During the planning stage, lesson plans, observation sheets, interview guidelines, and peer tutor assignments were prepared. The action stage involved implementing peer tutoring activities in Qur'anic learning sessions, while observations were conducted simultaneously to monitor students' participation, including their engagement in reading the Qur'an, asking and answering questions, participating in group discussions, and interacting with peer tutors. Reflection was carried out at the end of each cycle to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention and determine necessary improvements for the subsequent cycle. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to assess student participation during the learning process, interviews were conducted with selected students and the Islamic Religious Education teacher to

explore their experiences and perceptions regarding peer tutoring, and documentation served as supporting evidence through photographs, attendance records, and learning-related documents. Data were analyzed using the qualitative analysis framework of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Sugiyono, 2019). The success criterion of the study was achieved when at least 75% of students actively participated in Qur'anic learning activities based on the observed participation indicators.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

#### **Implementation of the Peer Tutoring Method in Qur'anic Learning**

Prior to the implementation of the peer tutoring method, Qur'anic learning in Class VII A of MTs Daarul Ihsaan Cimahi was primarily conducted through teacher-centered instructional approaches, particularly lecture-based teaching and classical reading-listening activities. Preliminary observations revealed that student participation was relatively low. Only about 35% of students voluntarily participated in Qur'anic reading activities, 20% actively asked questions regarding recitation rules, and less than 30% engaged in classroom discussions. Most students tended to remain passive, engage in unrelated conversations, or wait for their turn without paying attention to their peers' recitation.

The implementation of peer tutoring began in Cycle I by dividing students into seven small groups consisting of four members each. One student in each group was assigned as a peer tutor based on their Qur'anic reading proficiency and communication skills. During the learning process, peer tutors guided group members in reading the Qur'an, correcting pronunciation errors, and facilitating discussions related to tajwid and recitation practices. Following the reflection stage of Cycle I, several improvements were introduced in Cycle II, including providing additional training for peer tutors, organizing a more structured reading schedule, and requiring each student to read at least two lines of the Qur'an during every learning session. These adjustments enhanced the effectiveness of peer tutoring and created a more interactive and collaborative learning environment.

#### **Improvement of Student Participation through Peer Tutoring**

The findings demonstrated a substantial increase in student participation following the implementation of the peer tutoring method. In Cycle I, student engagement improved considerably compared to the pre-cycle condition. The

proportion of students actively participating in Qur'anic reading increased to 60%, while active questioning reached 54%, and participation in group discussions rose to 64%. Overall, the average level of student participation in Cycle I reached 62%. Although this result indicated positive progress, it had not yet met the predetermined success criterion of 75%.

**Image 1 : student participation following the implementation of the peer tutoring method**



After implementing improvements based on the reflection results of Cycle I, student participation increased significantly in Cycle II. The percentage of students actively reading the Qur'an reached 89%, active questioning increased to 82%, participation in group discussions rose to 86%, and students who confidently corrected their peers' recitation reached 79%. Consequently, the overall average student participation rate increased to 85%, exceeding the established success criterion. These findings indicate that the peer tutoring method was effective in promoting active participation and engagement among students in Qur'anic learning activities. The progressive improvement from the pre-cycle stage to Cycle II suggests that peer tutoring can serve as an effective instructional strategy for fostering collaborative learning and increasing student involvement in Islamic Religious Education classes.

**Table 1. Student Participation Before and After the Implementation of Peer Tutoring**

Participation Indicator	Pre-Cycle (%)	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (%)
Active Qur'anic Reading	35	60	89
Asking Questions	20	54	82
Participation in Group Discussions	30	64	86
Correcting Peers' Recitation	-	-	79
Average Participation	28	62	85

## Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of the peer tutoring method in Qur'anic learning significantly enhanced student participation in Class VII A of MTs Daarul Ihsaan Cimahi. The increase in participation observed across the two action cycles indicates that peer tutoring is an effective instructional strategy for promoting active engagement in Islamic Religious Education. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the effectiveness of peer tutoring in improving student involvement, learning engagement, and classroom interaction (Slavin, 2015; Topping, 2005). The substantial increase in participation from the pre-cycle stage to Cycle II suggests that collaborative learning environments can foster greater student responsibility and engagement in the learning process.

Several factors may explain the effectiveness of peer tutoring in increasing student participation. First, students appeared to feel more comfortable interacting with their peers than with teachers. Many students were more willing to ask questions, seek clarification, and express learning difficulties when supported by peer tutors. This finding aligns with Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes that learners can achieve higher levels of understanding through guidance from more capable peers (Slavin, 2015). In the context of Qur'anic learning, peer tutors functioned as accessible learning partners who facilitated students' understanding of recitation rules, pronunciation, and reading practices. Consequently, students became more confident and actively involved in classroom activities.

Second, the small-group learning structure provided greater opportunities for students to participate directly in learning activities. Unlike traditional teacher-centered instruction, where only a limited number of students may actively contribute, peer tutoring encouraged all group members to engage in reading, discussion, questioning, and collaborative problem-solving. The increased frequency of interaction allowed students to practice Qur'anic reading more intensively and receive immediate feedback from their peers. This finding supports the view that active participation is more likely to occur in collaborative learning environments where students share responsibility for achieving learning goals. Another important factor contributing to the success of peer tutoring was the provision of immediate and personalized feedback. In large classroom settings, teachers often face difficulties in monitoring and assisting every student individually. Through peer tutoring, students received direct guidance and correction from their tutors, enabling them to identify and address mistakes more efficiently. This continuous feedback process helped students improve their reading skills while simultaneously increasing their motivation to participate in learning activities.

The classroom atmosphere also changed noticeably during the implementation of the intervention. By Cycle II, learning activities became more interactive and student-centered. Students who had previously remained passive began to participate more actively by reading the Qur'an aloud, asking questions,

and contributing to group discussions. Furthermore, cooperative interactions among students strengthened social relationships within the classroom. These findings are in line with the arguments of Johnson and Johnson (2009), who contend that cooperative learning approaches promote positive social interdependence, enhance interpersonal relationships, and contribute to improved academic outcomes.

The interview findings further support the quantitative results of this study. Most students expressed positive perceptions of the peer tutoring method, stating that they felt more comfortable learning with their peers and appreciated receiving immediate assistance when encountering difficulties. Students also reported that peer tutoring made Qur'anic learning more enjoyable and less intimidating. Similarly, the Islamic Religious Education teacher viewed the method positively, emphasizing that peer tutoring helped address time constraints and facilitated more individualized support for students within a large classroom setting. These perceptions suggest that peer tutoring not only improves participation but also enhances the overall quality of the learning experience. Overall, the findings indicate that peer tutoring is an effective strategy for increasing student participation in Qur'anic learning. The method encourages active engagement, promotes collaborative learning, provides timely feedback, and creates a supportive learning environment. Therefore, peer tutoring may serve as a valuable instructional alternative for Islamic Religious Education teachers seeking to improve student participation and engagement in Qur'anic learning activities. Future studies may further investigate the long-term effects of peer tutoring on students' Qur'anic reading proficiency, learning motivation, and academic achievement in different educational contexts.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this Classroom Action Research indicate that the implementation of the peer tutoring method significantly improved student participation in Qur'anic learning among Class VII A students at MTs Daarul Ihsaan Cimahi. Student participation increased consistently from 35% in the pre-cycle stage to 62% in Cycle I and 85% in Cycle II, exceeding the predetermined success criterion of 75%. The peer tutoring method encouraged students to become more active in reading, questioning, discussing, and collaborating during the learning process while also enhancing their confidence and engagement. Therefore, peer tutoring can be considered an effective instructional strategy for improving the quality of Qur'anic learning in Islamic Religious Education. It is recommended that teachers integrate peer tutoring into regular classroom practice, particularly for learning activities that require continuous practice and active student involvement.

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