



# Journal of Educational Sciences

Journal homepage: <https://jes.ejournal.unri.ac.id/index.php/JES>



P-ISSN  
2581-1657

E-ISSN  
2581-2203

## Efforts to Increase Students' Interest in Learning Islamic Education Subjects Through the Forum Group Discussion Strategy at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi

Maysriva Wahyu Leoninda\*, Zaenal Abidin

Islamic Education, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, Surakarta, 57169, Indonesia

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received: 24 April 2025

Revised: 25 April 2025

Accepted: 26 April 2025

Published online: 05 May 2025

#### Keywords:

Forum Group Discussion

Interest in Learning

Islamic Religious Education

#### \* Corresponding author:

E-mail: g000210058@student.ums.ac.id

#### Article Doi:

<https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.3.p.1207-1215>

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-  
SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) license.



### ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a form of learning provided by individuals or educational institutions to introduce and explore the teachings of Islam. Although it has great benefits in shaping students' morals and character, PAI is still often considered less interesting and not a priority for some students. Based on this, a learning strategy that can increase students' interest in Islamic Education is needed, one of which is the implementation of the Forum Group Discussion (FGD) strategy. This study aims to analyse the effectiveness of FGD strategy in increasing students' interest in learning at Muhammadiyah Purwodadi High School. This research uses descriptive analysis method with phenomenological approach. Data collection techniques were observation, interview, and documentation. The results showed that the implementation of FGD strategy was able to increase students' participation in PAI learning, especially in terms of courage to express opinions. However, the implementation of FGDs that have not been carried out routinely makes changes in students' interest in learning still limited. There are various challenges in its implementation, both from students and teachers themselves. Nevertheless, if this strategy is implemented more consistently with optimal assistance, FGD has the potential to be an effective method in increasing students' interest in learning.

## 1. Introduction

Education is an essential aspect of human life, as every individual needs to develop themselves according to the times. In schools, the learning process is part of education aimed at building competencies and shaping students' character. Learning can be understood as a process that provides opportunities for individuals to gain knowledge and skills to develop as lifelong learners (Hidayat, 2020). Among the subjects taught in schools is Islamic Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam, PAI), which serves as a means for students to learn and apply Islamic values in their daily lives.

PAI is a form of education provided by individuals or educational institutions to introduce and deepen Islamic teachings, both theoretically and practically (Syafirin, 2023). Islamic education itself is based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, which serve as fundamental guidelines in developing religious understanding (Somad, 2021). The PAI curriculum includes various learning components such as *aqidah* (creed), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *akhlak* (morals), SKI (Islamic cultural history), and the Qur'an and Hadith.

This subject is designed to shape students' personalities by modeling the morals of the Prophet Muhammad, which are included in the PAI material. Despite its significant benefits in shaping students' morals and character, PAI is often considered less attractive and not a priority for some students (Ainiyah, 2013). Many students only achieve scores at the minimum threshold of the Minimum Completeness Criteria (*Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal, KKM*), indicating challenges in the learning process (Muhyatun, 2019). One of the main reasons for the lack of student interest in PAI is the teaching methods, which tend to be monotonous, focus more on memorization, and do not present engaging challenges for students.

At the high school level, students generally prefer challenging learning experiences that help them improve their quality. When a subject is considered not challenging or uninteresting, students' motivation to learn it decreases. Consequently, PAI, which should impart essential Islamic values for daily life, becomes less appealing to students. This low interest in learning indirectly affects the effectiveness of PAI learning in schools. To address this issue, teachers need to introduce innovations in the learning process, such as implementing the Forum Group Discussion (FGD) strategy. Kitzinger and Barbour explain that FGD is a group discussion-based learning strategy where students interact to discuss a problem and reach a consensus. Through this method, students are encouraged to think critically, express their opinions, and actively participate in the learning process.

Research by Ramadhani and Inayati shows that applying the FGD strategy can significantly increase interest in PAI subjects at SMA Batik 2 Surakarta. Based on these findings, the author is interested in directly examining the FGD strategy to increase students' interest in learning PAI at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi. The purpose of this study is to analyze the efforts to enhance students' interest in learning Islamic Education subjects through the Forum Group Discussion (FGD) strategy at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi.

## **2. Methodology**

This study employs a descriptive analysis method aimed at analyzing and describing the collected data without making generalizations or drawing universal conclusions. The study uses a phenomenological approach, emphasizing a deep understanding of social phenomena or human behavior by presenting information

---

in a more detailed and complex descriptive form. This approach provides detailed information based on the informants' perspectives in their natural environment.

The data in this study consists of primary and secondary data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. The accuracy of the research heavily depends on the data collection methods used. Data analysis is conducted using a non-statistical approach, where the data analyzed includes interview transcripts, observation notes, and collected documentation. The data analysis process follows the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three main stages: data reduction as a process of filtering and selecting relevant information, data presentation in a more systematic form for easier understanding, and drawing conclusions and verification to interpret and formulate findings based on the analyzed data to obtain a more accurate understanding.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

#### ***Student Interest in Learning PAI***

Students' interest in learning PAI (Pendidikan Agama Islam/Islamic Religious Education) reflects their curiosity and enthusiasm in understanding and practicing Islamic teachings. According to an interview with a teacher, learning interest is defined as "the desire, curiosity, or enthusiasm of students to learn PAI at school." Another teacher added that students' interest in PAI is not only measured by theoretical understanding but also by "the implementation of Islamic values in their daily activities." In other words, students with high interest are more likely to practice Islamic teachings in their daily lives, such as maintaining worship, dressing according to Sharia, speaking politely, and demonstrating awareness of applying Islamic values in the school environment.

Students' enthusiasm in PAI learning can be observed through their engagement in the classroom. This engagement is evident from their activities during discussions, such as actively asking questions, challenging opinions, and participating in problem-solving activities provided by the teacher (Observation at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi). Students with a high interest in learning tend to be more confident in expressing opinions and more active in group discussions. Conversely, students with low interest tend to be passive, not responding during discussions, and prefer rote-based learning methods.

Furthermore, curiosity is a natural human emotion that drives individuals to explore and gain a deeper understanding of what they have learned. With curiosity, students continue to explore new things, acquire additional information and knowledge, and enrich their ideas (Ningrum, 2019). In PAI learning, students with high curiosity are more likely to seek additional references, ask in-depth questions, and try to connect the material with real-life situations. On the other hand, students with low curiosity tend to passively receive the material without further exploration (Observation at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi).

---

### ***Implementation of The Forum Group Discussion (FGD) strategy in PAI***

The Forum Group Discussion (FGD) strategy has been applied in PAI (Pendidikan Agama Islam/Islamic Religious Education) learning at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi, although not regularly. According to interviews with two PAI teachers, the implementation of FGD is based on the relevance of the material being taught. If the material supports discussion, FGD will be applied. The process begins with the formation of small groups of students, followed by providing each group with a problem to discuss. Students then engage in internal group discussions to find the best solution. Afterward, a group representative presents the discussion results in front of the class, and other groups provide feedback and opinions. The teacher concludes the session by summarizing the discussion and motivating students to participate actively in future discussions (Observation at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi).

Another PAI teacher mentioned that the teacher still maintains control over the discussion. The teacher provides an introduction to guide the discussion and monitors the process to ensure it aligns with the learning material. The implementation of FGD follows several principles, starting with the "Introduction and Simulation" phase, where the teacher introduces the concept of FGD through explanations, videos, or short simulations. This helps students understand basic discussion rules, such as expressing opinions, active listening, and respecting different perspectives.

In the "Group and Topic Selection" phase, students are divided into small groups (4-6 members) to ensure everyone has a chance to speak. The groups are formed with diverse members based on abilities and backgrounds to enrich the discussion. The teacher selects discussion topics relevant to lessons or students' daily lives and provides the topics and questions a few days in advance to allow students to gather supporting information. During the "Role of Facilitator" phase, the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than the main instructor, ensuring the discussion runs smoothly. Open-ended questions are provided to encourage deeper exploration of ideas, avoiding simple "yes" or "no" answers. The teacher emphasizes that FGD is not a debate but a platform for sharing thoughts without seeking right or wrong answers.

The "Active Participation Strategy" involves assigning each student a role in the discussion, such as moderator, note-taker, or presenter. If a student is less active, the facilitator (teacher or appointed student) can encourage participation with additional questions. In the "Providing Feedback - Expressions and Phrases" phase, the teacher gives feedback on students' speaking and listening skills and the structure of their arguments. The focus is more on speaking confidence and thought development rather than grammar or vocabulary (Hadi, 2020).

### ***Challenges in Implementing FGD***

The implementation of the Forum Group Discussion (FGD) method in the classroom presents several challenges. One of the main challenges comes from the

---

students themselves. A significant issue is the lack of courage among students to express their opinions (Hadi, 2020). This problem is particularly evident among 10th-grade students who are still adapting to expressing their thoughts in public. Some students have good ideas but feel hesitant or afraid to share them. Additionally, while some students are willing to speak, they struggle to present their opinions systematically and clearly. However, this challenge can be addressed through the right approach by teachers. Teachers can apply various active learning strategies, such as the think-pair-share method, small group discussions before presentations, or demonstrating good examples of expressing opinions to boost students' confidence. Furthermore, positive reinforcement from teachers and a supportive classroom environment can encourage students to speak up and participate actively in discussions.

Another challenge in FGD implementation is the lack of responses during discussions. Often, discussions become one-sided because not all students actively provide feedback or counterarguments to opinions presented by other groups. This indicates that some students are not yet accustomed to an interactive discussion pattern and tend to be passive in responding to others' ideas. According to observations at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi, the lack of strong argumentative skills also contributes to a less dynamic and underdeveloped discussion forum. To overcome this issue, the teacher's role in providing direction is crucial. During the FGD process, teachers need to monitor the discussion to ensure balanced participation from all students. They can also stimulate responses by posing thought-provoking questions or assigning specific tasks to certain groups, encouraging them to engage more actively with others' opinions.

The diverse characteristics of students also pose a challenge in applying FGD. Observations at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi show that classes typically consist of students with varying personalities, generally categorized as extroverted and introverted. Extroverted students tend to be more active in speaking, enthusiastic about sharing their opinions, and comfortable in group discussions. On the other hand, introverted students prefer to think before speaking, are more inclined to listen, and often favor individual learning methods, such as memorization. This difference in character can affect students' participation in open discussions. To address this, teachers need to adapt their strategies so that both extroverted and introverted students feel comfortable (Taher, 2023).

For example, before starting a discussion session, teachers can give introverted students time to write down their thoughts before speaking. Additionally, using methods like pair discussions or small group settings can help introverted students build confidence in expressing their ideas. This approach ensures that discussion-based learning remains effective without neglecting the diverse personalities of students. In addition to student-related challenges, there are also obstacles faced by teachers. One major challenge is the limited time available for classroom discussions. Given the constraints of a single lesson session, in-depth discussions are often difficult to achieve. Therefore, teachers need to provide clear instructions at the beginning and set strict time limits to ensure discussions

---

proceed efficiently and effectively. They must also actively remind students of the remaining time, helping them manage the discussion responsibly.

Another challenge for teachers is maintaining classroom focus during discussions. Sometimes, students are not fully engaged and are easily distracted, which can lead discussions off-topic. Teachers need specific strategies to maintain the discussion's dynamics and keep it aligned with the learning objectives. Selecting an appropriate moderator is also critical to maintaining discussion effectiveness. A good moderator, as noted by observations at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi, should not only have broad knowledge but also be able to control the discussion's flow, guide conversations, and correct misunderstandings related to the topic. A competent moderator can contribute to a more dynamic and productive FGD, ensuring that all students benefit from the discussion process.

### ***The Impact of FGD on Student Participation***

Based on observations and interviews, the implementation of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in Islamic Education (PAI) learning has a positive impact on student participation. Group discussions help increase students' courage to speak, as they feel more comfortable expressing their opinions in a smaller group setting compared to speaking directly in front of the class. Through group discussions, students learn how to present their opinions in a more structured and logical manner. They not only express ideas spontaneously but also construct appropriate and clear arguments that others can understand. Additionally, students learn to respect their peers' opinions by responding in a polite and constructive way. During the discussion process, students are also trained to analyze an issue before expressing their views. They must find solutions using a more systematic approach and a deeper understanding of the material being studied. According to a PAI teacher at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi, if FGD is consistently applied, students will become accustomed to this method and more active in learning. The habit of discussing from an early stage will help them develop academic and social skills that are beneficial in their daily lives.

However, every learning strategy has both positive and negative impacts, leading to its own advantages and disadvantages, including the FGD strategy. The advantages of FGD in learning include enhancing students' literacy as they are encouraged to read more sources to support their arguments in discussions, developing speaking skills as students practice presenting their opinions in front of groups and the class, increasing self-confidence and critical thinking because students must defend their arguments with logical reasoning and strong evidence, and promoting interaction and collaboration as students work in small groups, leading to more effective communication and teamwork.

On the other hand, the disadvantages of FGD in learning include limited participant numbers, as FGD is only effective in small groups and cannot involve the entire class directly, restriction to a single discussion topic, making it less flexible in connecting with other relevant topics, being time-consuming, as each participant needs the opportunity to express their opinions in-depth, difficulty in

---

analyzing discussion results, as the data collected must be carefully processed to produce accurate conclusions, and the risk of discussion domination, where more active participants tend to dominate the conversation while quieter ones participate less (Tamam, 2020).

### ***Changes in Learning Interest After Implementing FGD***

Although the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) strategy has been implemented in Islamic Education (PAI) learning, there has not been a significant change in students' learning interest. One reason for this is that the strategy is not used frequently in teaching, so its impact on students' learning interest has not been maximized. There are several contributing factors to this limitation. Firstly, students are still not accustomed to discussions. Many students lack confidence when expressing their opinions or struggle to articulate their thoughts well. Discussions often become one-sided, with minimal responses from other groups. Since students are used to passive learning methods, they need time to adjust to the FGD approach, can be seen in figure 1.



Figure 1. Forum group discussion among the student

Secondly, there are challenges in aligning FGD with students' characteristics. Each class has different dynamics; some students are active in discussions, while others feel more comfortable with memorization and theoretical methods. In more passive classes, FGD is less appealing as students are not used to critical thinking and active participation (Figure 1). Lastly, the change in learning interest remains limited. While FGD does enhance participation, it has not significantly boosted students' enthusiasm for learning. Many students can only express brief opinions without strong arguments. Most of them still prefer more structured teaching methods such as lectures and practice exercises. Since FGD is rarely applied, students need more practice for this strategy to become more effective.

## **4. Conclusion**

The implementation of Islamic Education (PAI) learning at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi through the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) strategy has had a positive impact on student participation, particularly in building the courage to express opinions. However, since FGD has not been applied regularly, changes in

---

students' learning interest remain limited. Some of the challenges encountered include a lack of student confidence in sharing opinions, minimal responses during discussions, and varying student characteristics that affect the strategy's effectiveness. From the teacher's perspective, limited time, difficulties in maintaining classroom focus, and selecting the right moderator are also obstacles in implementing FGD. Nevertheless, if this strategy is applied more consistently with optimal guidance, FGD has the potential to become an effective strategy in enhancing students' learning interest, encouraging them to be more active, and strengthening their understanding of Islamic Education material in a more interactive and applicable context.

## References

- Ainiyah, N. (2013). Pembentukan karakter melalui pendidikan agama Islam. *Al-Ulum*, 13(1), 25-38.
- AK, W. W., & ZA, T. (2015). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif & grounded theory*. FTK Ar-Raniry Press.
- Fadilah, M. I., & Sasmita, F. E. Analisis Kesulitan Pembelajaran PAI dan Upaya Guru PAI dalam Meningkatkan Minat Belajar Siswa di SMAN 3 Sidoarjo
- Hadi, MJ, & Junaidi, M. (2020). Prinsip dan Langkah-Langkah Penerapan Focus Group Discussion untuk Meningkatkan Keterampilan Berbicara dan Berpikir Kritis Mahasiswa. *Jurnalistrendi: Jurnal Linguistik, Sastra Dan Pendidikan* , 5 (2), 126-134.
- Hanif, A., & Fauzi, F. (2022). Pemanfaatan Media Pembelajaran Audio Visual Pada Mata Pelajaran Pai Di Smp It Mutiara Ilmu. *Jurnal Ilmiah Mandala Education*, 8(2).
- Haryani, E., Ahmad, S., & Aradea, R. (2021). Analisis faktor-faktor penyebab rendahnya daya serap siswa pada pelajaran akuntansi. *Journal of Education Research*, 2(2), 82-88.
- Hidayat, C., & Juniar, D. T. (2020). *Strategi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Jasmani*. Deepublish.
- Kuantitatif, P. P. (2016). Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D. *Alfabeta, Bandung*.
- Laili, N., Darmawan, D., & El Yunusi, M. Y. M. (2024). Pengaruh media pembelajaran, metode pembelajaran, dan dukungan orang tua terhadap minat belajar siswa SMP Buana Waru Sidoarjo. *Khazanah Pendidikan*, 18(2), 260-271.
- Muhyatun, M. (2019). Upaya Preventif Perilaku Menyontek Siswa Melalui Layanan Dukungan Sistem. *Belajea: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 4(2), 157-164.
- Nasution, H. A., & Suyadi, S. (2020). Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Humanistik dengan Pendekatan Active Learning di SDN Nugopuro Gowok. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 17(1), 31-42.
- Ningrum, C. H. C., Fajriyah, K., & Budiman, M. A. (2019). Pembentukan karakter rasa ingin tahu melalui kegiatan literasi. *Indonesian Values and Character Education Journal*, 2(2), 69-78.
- Ramadhani, Y. F., & Inayati, N. L. (2023). Focus Group Discussion (FGD) untuk
-

- Meningkatkan Minat Belajar Pendidikan Agama Islam. *Jurnal PAI Raden Fatah*, 5(3), 642-656.
- Somad, M. A. (2021). Pentingnya Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam membentuk karakter anak. *QALAMUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Agama*, 13(2), 171-186.
- Syafrin, Y., Kamal, M., Arifmiboy, A., & Husni, A. (2023). Pelaksanaan pembelajaran pendidikan agama Islam. *Educativo: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 2(1), 72-77.
- Taher, T. (2023). Analisis keterampilan komunikasi dan kolaborasi siswa introvert dengan pendekatan culturally responsive teaching. *Jambura Journal of Educational Chemistry*, 5(1), 21-27.
- Tamam, F. F., Masrichah, L., & Al Hasani, M. U. (2020, July). Belajar Bahasa Arab Aktif Berbasis Focus Group Discussion (Fgd. In *International Conference of Students on Arabic Language* (Vol. 4, pp. 75-87).
- Zaifullah, Z., Cikka, H., & Kahar, M. I. (2021). Strategi Guru Dalam Meningkatkan Interaksi Dan Minat Belajar Terhadap Keberhasilan Peserta Didik Dalam Menghadapi Pembelajaran Tatap Muka Di Masa Pandemi Covid 19. *Guru Tua: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 4(2), 9-18.

How to cite this article:

Leoninda, M. W., & Abidin, Z. (2025). Efforts to Increase Students' Interest in Learning Islamic Education Subjects Through the Forum Group Discussion Strategy at SMA Muhammadiyah Purwodadi. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 9(3), 1207-1215.

---