



Implementation of Experiential Learning Method in Islamic Religious Education Learning to Improve Students' Religious Attitudes at MTs Nurul Wathan Pungkat

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Abstract: Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has an important role in shaping students' religious attitudes. However, in practice, PAI learning is often still theoretical and does not provide direct experience to students, resulting in a lack of internalization of religious values in everyday life. To overcome this problem, the Experiential Learning method is applied in PAI learning to improve students' religious attitudes at MTs Nurul Wathan Pungkat. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the application of the Experiential Learning method in improving students' religious attitudes. The research method used is classroom action research (CAR) with a qualitative and quantitative approach. The subjects of this study were grade VIII students at MTs Nurul Wathan Pungkat. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. The data obtained were analyzed descriptively qualitatively and quantitatively using simple statistical analysis techniques. The results of the study showed that the application of the Experiential Learning method in PAI learning was able to significantly improve students' religious attitudes. This can be seen from the increase in students' understanding of the teaching material, active involvement in learning, and changes in attitudes that are more positive in carrying out worship and interacting socially. Experiential learning such as worship practices, simulations, reflective discussions, and visits to places of worship have proven to be more effective than conventional methods that tend to be lecture-based. In addition, this study also found that students are more motivated to learn when they are given the opportunity to directly experience the religious values taught. Teachers also feel the benefits of this method, because they can more easily instill Islamic values contextually and applicatively. Obstacles in implementing the Experiential Learning method include time constraints, inadequate facilities, and teacher readiness in designing experiential learning. However, these obstacles can be overcome with careful planning and collaboration between teachers, students, and schools. Thus, the Experiential Learning method can be used as an alternative in Islamic Religious Education learning to improve students' religious attitudes. The implications of this study indicate that experiential learning can have a broader positive impact in shaping the character of religious students. Therefore, it is recommended that this method be applied more often in the Islamic Religious Education learning process at various levels of education, with optimal support from schools and related stakeholders.

Keywords: Experiential learning, islamic religious education learning, religious attitudes.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the important aspects in the national education system that aims to shape the religious character of students. In the education curriculum, PAI not only functions as a subject that provides religious insight, but also as a means to instill moral and spiritual values in everyday life. However, in practice, PAI learning is often still carried out conventionally with lecture methods that tend to be one-way and less actively involve students. This causes students to have less real experience in applying the religious values that have been learned, resulting in low internalization of religious attitudes in their lives.

In the context of modern education, a more interactive and experience-based approach is an urgent need to ensure the effectiveness of learning. One method that can be used to overcome this challenge is Experiential Learning. This method prioritizes the active involvement of students in learning by giving them the opportunity to directly experience the concepts taught. In PAI learning, this approach allows students to experience worship practices, understand Islamic values through simulations, and reflect on their experiences to improve their understanding and religious attitudes.

The concept of Experiential Learning was first introduced by David A. Kolb who emphasized that direct experience is a major component in effective learning. According to Kolb, optimal learning occurs when students experience a learning cycle consisting of concrete experience, active reflection, abstract conceptualization, and application in real situations. By applying this concept in Islamic Religious Education learning, students not only understand the theory, but also have direct experience that helps them internalize religious values more deeply.

One of the main challenges in Islamic Religious Education learning at MTs Nurul Wathan Pungkat is the lack of student involvement in learning. Most students tend to be passive and only receive material without further exploration. This causes a lack of awareness and understanding of Islamic values in everyday life. Therefore, a method is needed that can increase student motivation and provide a more meaningful learning experience.

The application of Experiential Learning in Islamic Religious Education learning is expected to be able to answer these problems by providing real experiences to students. Through activities such as practicing congregational prayer, Islamic muamalah simulations, reflective discussions, and visits to places of worship, students can better understand and feel the benefits of Islamic teachings directly. Thus, they not only learn about Islam, but also internalize and apply it in their daily lives.

This study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the application of the Experiential Learning method in Islamic Religious Education learning at MTs Nurul Wathan Pungkat. The main focus of this study is to analyze the impact of this method on improving students' religious attitudes, both in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. This study also aims to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the application of this method so that it can be a reference for developing more effective Islamic Religious Education learning strategies.

Theoretically, this study is based on the theory of constructivism which states that effective learning occurs when students actively build their own understanding based on the experiences they have had. In the context of Islamic Religious Education learning, direct experiences such as worship practices and social interactions based on Islamic values can strengthen students' understanding and form stronger religious attitudes. Therefore, the Experiential Learning method is very relevant to be applied in Islamic Religious Education learning in order to achieve more holistic educational goals.

In its implementation, the Experiential Learning method can be applied through various learning strategies based on experience. Some of them are project-based learning, problem-based learning, simulations, case studies, and individual and group reflections.

Each strategy aims to provide students with an in-depth experience, so that they can better understand and internalize religious values.

However, the implementation of this method is certainly not without challenges. One of the main obstacles is the limited facilities and resources needed to support experiential learning. In addition, the readiness of teachers to manage interactive learning is also an important factor in the success of this method. Therefore, support is needed from various parties, including schools and parents, to ensure the success of the implementation of the Experiential Learning method in Islamic Religious Education learning.

This study was conducted using a qualitative and quantitative approach to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the impact of the Experiential Learning method on students' religious attitudes. Data were collected through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out descriptively to understand the dynamics of changes in students' attitudes after the implementation of this method in Islamic Religious Education learning.

Based on the results of previous studies, the Experiential Learning method has been proven effective in increasing students' motivation and understanding in various fields of study. However, in the context of Islamic Religious Education learning, research on the application of this method is still limited. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a significant contribution in developing a more innovative and effective Islamic Religious Education learning model.

In addition, this study also has practical implications for educators in developing more creative and student-centered teaching methods. By implementing the Experiential Learning method, teachers can create a more dynamic and interesting learning atmosphere, so that students can more easily understand and internalize Islamic teachings in everyday life. Thus, this study is expected to provide a solution to the problem of low religious attitudes of students at MTs Nurul Wathan Pungkat. In addition, this study can also be a reference for other schools that want to apply the Experiential Learning method in Islamic Religious Education learning.

Ultimately, education is not only aimed at improving students' academic knowledge, but also at shaping their character and attitudes in social life. Therefore, the application of the Experiential Learning method in Islamic Religious Education learning is a strategic step to create a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also has high spiritual awareness. This study is expected to provide new insights into the importance of experience in the learning process and how the Experiential Learning method can be a solution to improve students' religious attitudes. With the results of this study, it is hoped that schools can pay more attention to the experiential aspect in Islamic Religious Education learning in order to achieve more comprehensive and meaningful educational goals.

METHODS

Research Approach and Type

This study uses a qualitative and quantitative approach (mixed methods) to obtain comprehensive data related to the application of the Experiential Learning method in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning to improve students' religious attitudes at MTs Nurul Wathan Pungkat.

A qualitative approach is used to explore the experiences, understanding, and perceptions of students and teachers towards the application of the Experiential Learning method. This approach focuses on in-depth exploration of how students respond, experience, and internalize religious values through direct experience in learning.

Meanwhile, a quantitative approach is used to measure the effectiveness of the Experiential Learning method on improving students' religious attitudes. Through this approach, numerical data are collected and analyzed using simple statistical techniques to

see any significant changes before and after the application of this method. The type of research used is Classroom Action Research (CAR). CAR was chosen because this study aims to improve and enhance the quality of PAI learning in the classroom by implementing the Experiential Learning method in stages.

Subjects and Location of the Research

This research was conducted at MTs Nurul Wathan Pungkat, a junior high school located in a rural area. The selection of this school was based on the consideration that students in this school still show a low level of participation in Islamic Religious Education learning and a lack of internalization of religious values in everyday life.

The subjects of the research were grade VIII students who were selected based on the consideration that they were in a stage of moral and spiritual development that was mature enough to receive experiential learning. In addition to students, this research also involved Islamic Religious Education teachers who acted as facilitators in implementing the Experiential Learning method. The number of students in this study was 30 people, who were selected by purposive sampling, namely based on certain considerations, such as active involvement in class and their readiness to participate in experiential learning experiments.

Research Procedure

This research was conducted in four cycles following the PTK model, namely:

1. Planning
 - Analyzing problems in Islamic Religious Education learning and determining solutions through the Experiential Learning method.
 - Developing a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) based on Experiential Learning. Preparing media, tools, and experience-based learning scenarios.
 - Developing research instruments such as questionnaires, observation sheets, and interview guidelines.
2. Implementation (Action)
 - Implementing the Experiential Learning method in Islamic Religious Education learning in grade VIII.
 - Involving students in real learning experiences, such as worship practices, Islamic life simulations, reflective discussions, and visits to places of worship.
 - Monitoring student responses and involvement during the learning process.
3. Observation
 - Conducting observations of student activity in participating in experience-based learning.
 - Collecting data on changes in students' religious attitudes based on their interactions and participation in activities.
 - Analyzing the results of observations and interviews with students and teachers.
4. Reflection
 - Evaluating the effectiveness of the Experiential Learning method based on observation results and quantitative data.
 - Identifying obstacles in implementing the method and finding solutions to improve it for the next cycle.
 - Developing recommendations for the development of the Experiential Learning method in Islamic Religious Education learning in the future.

Data Collection Techniques

To obtain valid and reliable data, this study uses several data collection techniques as follows:

a. Observation

Observations were conducted to observe student behavior, involvement, and interaction in Islamic Religious Education learning based on Experiential Learning. Observations were conducted by researchers and teachers using observation sheets that included indicators of student involvement, activeness in discussions, and changes in religious attitudes during the learning process.

b. Interviews

Interviews were conducted with teachers and students to obtain more in-depth data related to their experiences in participating in Experiential Learning-based learning. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, where researchers prepared several main questions but still provided space for informants to explain their experiences more broadly.

c. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was given to students before and after the implementation of the Experiential Learning method to measure changes in their religious attitudes. This questionnaire contains statements related to cognitive (understanding of religion), affective (religious attitudes), and psychomotor (application of religious values in daily life) aspects.

d. Documentation

Documentation is used to collect visual and written evidence of the learning process, such as photos of activities, video recordings, and student reflection notes. This documentation serves as additional material in data analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study was carried out descriptively qualitatively and quantitatively.

1. Qualitative Analysis

- Data from observations, interviews, and documentation were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, in which researchers identified main patterns and themes related to student learning experiences and the effectiveness of the Experiential Learning method.
- The results of this analysis are presented in the form of descriptive narratives to provide an in-depth picture of the impact of experiential learning on students' religious attitudes.

2. Quantitative Analysis

- Data from the questionnaire were analyzed using simple statistical techniques, such as percentage calculations and comparisons of average values before and after the application of the method.
- Changes in questionnaire scores before and after learning were analyzed to determine whether there was a significant increase in students' religious attitudes.

Data Validity

To ensure the validity of the data, this study used source and method triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing data from various informants, such as students and teachers. Meanwhile, method triangulation is carried out

by combining various data collection techniques, such as observation, interviews, and questionnaires, so that the research results are more valid and reliable.

Research Ethics

This research was conducted by considering ethical aspects, such as:

- Informant Consent: All research participants were given an explanation of the purpose and procedures of the research before they participated.
- Data Confidentiality: The identities of students and teachers are kept confidential, and the data collected is used only for academic purposes.
- Objectivity: Researchers strive to maintain neutrality in analyzing data so that the research results remain objective and valid.

RESULTS

Research Results

This research was conducted in four cycles with the application of the Experiential Learning method in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in class VIII MTs Nurul Wathan Pungkat. The results of the study showed a significant increase in students' religious attitudes after the application of this method. Data were obtained through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation.

a. Observation Results

Observations were conducted during the learning process to see students' involvement in experience-based activities. Initially, many students appeared passive and less enthusiastic in participating in PAI learning which was still lecture-based. However, after the Experiential Learning method was applied, there was a significant increase in their participation and interaction.

In the first cycle, around 45% of students showed active involvement in learning, while others still tended to be passive. However, after the second and third cycles, the involvement rate increased to 78% and 92%, indicating that this method was successful in increasing students' activeness in learning. Some of the activities that attracted the most attention from students were direct worship practices, Islamic life simulations, and reflective discussions about their religious experiences.

b. Interview Results

Interviews were conducted with teachers and students to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences in Experiential Learning-based learning. From the results of interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers, it was conveyed that this method was very helpful in delivering material more easily and had a real impact on changing students' attitudes.

One of the teachers stated:

"Previously, many students considered Islamic Religious Education learning as mere theory. However, after they experienced firsthand how to apply Islamic values in everyday life, their understanding was much deeper. In fact, they became more aware of carrying out worship without having to be ordered."

Meanwhile, interviews with students showed that they enjoyed learning more when they were given the opportunity to experience firsthand what was being learned. One student said: "I find it easier to understand the importance of prayer after we practiced together and discussed our experiences. Now, I am more diligent in praying at home without having to be reminded by my parents."

c. Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire results showed a significant increase in students' religious attitudes after participating in experiential learning. The questionnaire was given before and after the implementation of the Experiential Learning method to measure changes in students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.

Religious Attitude	Indicators Before (%)	After (%)	Improvement (%)
Understanding of religious concepts	60%	85%	+25%
Motivation to carry out worship	65%	90%	+33%
Attitudes towards friends and teachers	65%	90%	+25%
Application of Islamic values	50%	86%	+36%

From the table above, it can be seen that there has been an increase in all indicators of students' religious attitudes, especially in the aspect of motivation to carry out worship and the application of Islamic values in everyday life.

d. Documentation Results

Documentation in the form of photos and video recordings during the learning process shows that students are more enthusiastic and active when they are involved in direct experiences. Some documentation also shows students' reflective moments when they discuss their spiritual experiences after participating in experience-based activities.

Effectiveness of the Experiential Learning Method in Islamic Religious Education Learning

The results of the study show that the Experiential Learning method has proven effective in improving students' religious attitudes. This is in line with Kolb's theory which states that experiential learning is more effective because students experience directly what they learn. In the context of Islamic Religious Education learning, students not only learn about religious concepts theoretically, but also experience and apply Islamic values in real life.

Some of the main factors that make this method effective in Islamic Religious Education learning are:

- Real Experience: Through worship practices, simulations, and reflections, students can understand Islamic teachings more deeply.
- Discussion and Reflection: Students not only do activities, but are also given the opportunity to reflect on their experiences, so that they are more aware of the importance of religious values.
- Motivation and Involvement: This method increases student motivation because they feel more involved in learning.

Improving Students' Religious Attitudes

One of the main objectives of this study is to improve students' religious attitudes. From the results obtained, it can be concluded that the Experiential Learning method has

succeeded in improving the understanding, motivation, and application of Islamic values in students' lives.

Some of the changes that can be seen after implementing this method are:

- Students are more diligent in carrying out worship, such as praying and reading the Qur'an.
- Students are more polite in interacting with friends and teachers.
- Students better understand Islamic concepts in the context of everyday life.

Challenges in Implementing the Experiential Learning Method

Although this method has proven to be effective, there are several obstacles faced in its implementation, including:

- Time Limitations: Experience-based learning takes longer than the lecture method.
- Facilities Limitations: Some activities require supporting facilities such as practice rooms or visit locations that may not always be available.
- Teacher Readiness: Teachers need to understand how to manage experience-based learning so that it can run effectively.
- To overcome these obstacles, more mature planning, support from the school, and increased teacher competence in implementing innovative learning methods are needed.

Research Implications

The results of this study have several important implications for the world of education, especially in the development of Islamic Religious Education learning strategies. Some of these implications include:

- The Experiential Learning method can be used as a more effective learning model in teaching Islamic Religious Education at various levels of education.
- Schools need to provide facilities and learning environments that support this method.
- Teachers need to receive further training in implementing experience-based learning.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the application of the *Experiential Learning* method in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has significantly improved students' religious attitudes at MTs Nurul Wathan Pungkat. To strengthen these findings, this discussion will compare them with previous studies that have examined similar themes.

1. The Effectiveness of *Experiential Learning* in Islamic Education

The findings of this study are in line with the research conducted by Kolb (1984), which introduced the *Experiential Learning Theory* (ELT), emphasizing that learning is most effective when individuals actively engage in concrete experiences, reflect on them, and apply the acquired knowledge. This study supports Kolb's argument, as students showed increased engagement and deeper religious understanding after participating in experience-based learning.

Furthermore, a study by Dewey (1938) emphasized the importance of experiential education in developing students' moral and ethical values. The results of this study also confirm Dewey's perspective, as students demonstrated an increase in religious behavior, such as regularly performing prayers and treating others with more respect.

2. Similar Studies on *Experiential Learning* in Religious Education

Several studies have examined the application of *Experiential Learning* in religious education and found similar results:

1. **Astuti & Mulyani (2019)** conducted research on the use of *Experiential Learning* in PAI at an Islamic high school in Yogyakarta. Their findings showed that students who actively participated in hands-on religious activities, such as prayer practice and charity work, developed a stronger commitment to Islamic values.
2. **Hidayat & Suryadi (2020)** examined how experiential learning affects students' understanding of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). Their research showed that students who engaged in role-playing and problem-based learning had better retention of religious knowledge than those who only received lectures.
3. **Rahman et al. (2021)** explored *Experiential Learning* in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and found that direct immersion in religious practices significantly enhanced students' emotional and spiritual intelligence.
4. **Nasir & Wahyuni (2022)** studied the impact of outdoor experiential learning in Islamic education. Their study found that students who engaged in community service projects developed a stronger sense of social responsibility, which aligns with the findings of this study regarding the increase in students' ethical behavior.

3. *Experiential Learning and Students' Religious Attitudes*

The study's findings regarding the improvement in students' religious attitudes align with various other research studies:

1. **Hamzah (2018)** investigated the role of reflective discussions in religious education. He found that when students shared their religious experiences, they became more conscious of their faith, similar to how reflective discussions in this study increased students' awareness of their religious responsibilities.
2. **Sari & Pratama (2020)** studied the impact of *Experiential Learning* on students' motivation in learning Islamic teachings. They found that hands-on religious experiences increased students' enthusiasm and intrinsic motivation to practice their faith.
3. **Yusuf et al. (2021)** conducted research on learning by doing in PAI and found that students who directly engaged in religious practices retained their learning better than those who only studied theory.
4. **Fauzan (2017)** emphasized the importance of real-life applications of Islamic teachings in learning. His research demonstrated that students who participated in daily prayer and moral education programs showed more consistent religious behaviors, mirroring this study's findings.

4. *Challenges in Implementing Experiential Learning*

Despite its effectiveness, several challenges were encountered in this study, which are also reflected in previous research:

1. **Rahim & Huda (2019)** found that time constraints in implementing *Experiential Learning* were a major challenge in religious education. This aligns with the findings of this study, where teachers needed additional time to conduct practical religious activities.
2. **Sulaiman & Karim (2020)** examined teachers' readiness to implement *Experiential Learning*. Their study found that many educators struggled with adapting to this student-centered approach, similar to the difficulties reported by PAI teachers in this study.
3. **Hasanah (2021)** explored the issue of limited resources in experiential-based religious education. Her study revealed that some schools lacked the facilities needed to conduct experience-based learning effectively, which was also one of the challenges identified in this study.
4. **Mahfud et al. (2022)** analyzed the need for institutional support in applying *Experiential Learning*. Their research emphasized that school administrators must actively support teachers in implementing innovative teaching methods, a factor that was also highlighted in this study.

5. Implications for Future Research and Education

The findings of this study, in conjunction with previous research, suggest that *Experiential Learning* is a powerful approach to religious education. Future studies could explore:

- How this method impacts different aspects of students' religious beliefs over a longer period.
- The role of parental involvement in reinforcing experiential religious learning at home.
- The integration of digital media and technology in enhancing experiential Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the implementation of the *Experiential Learning* method in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MTs Nurul Wathan Pungkat has proven effective in enhancing students' religious attitudes. This improvement is evident in aspects such as understanding religious concepts, motivation to perform religious practices, social attitudes towards peers and teachers, and the application of Islamic values in daily life.

The *Experiential Learning* method allows students to directly experience Islamic teachings in real-life contexts. Through prayer practice, Islamic life simulations, and reflective discussions, students do not only understand religious theories but also feel their direct benefits. This finding aligns with Kolb's (1984) *Experiential Learning Theory* (ELT), which states that learning is most effective when individuals actively engage in concrete experiences, reflect on them, conceptualize the gained knowledge, and actively experiment with it.

From the observations, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation conducted throughout this research, it was found that students who were previously less motivated in PAI classes began to show positive changes in attitude. They became more enthusiastic about learning, more active in discussions, and more aware of the importance of practicing religious teachings consistently. The questionnaire results showed a significant increase in various indicators of students' religious attitudes, such as their motivation to perform religious practices, which increased from **55% to 88%**, and the application of Islamic values in daily life, which improved from **50% to 86%**.

Additionally, this study found that the *Experiential Learning* method positively influenced the classroom environment. Students became more engaged, not only in academic aspects but also in their social interactions. They showed more respect for differing opinions, communicated more politely, and were better able to connect religious teachings with their real-life experiences. This indicates that the method enhances not only cognitive aspects but also students' affective and psychomotor skills.

However, some challenges were encountered during the implementation of this method. The primary challenge was **time constraints**, as teachers needed additional time to design and conduct experience-based religious learning activities. Furthermore, not all schools have adequate facilities to support experiential learning, such as dedicated prayer practice areas or spaces for Islamic life simulations. Another challenge was **teacher readiness**, as not all educators were accustomed to student-centered learning approaches like *Experiential Learning*.

To optimize the implementation of the *Experiential Learning* method in PAI education, several recommendations should be considered:

1. **Teacher Training and Professional Development**
Teachers should receive specialized training on *Experiential Learning* to effectively design and implement experience-based religious learning.
2. **Support from Schools**
Schools need to provide adequate facilities and learning resources to ensure

optimal implementation of this method. Additionally, flexible scheduling should be considered to allow deeper learning experiences.

3. **Collaboration with Parents and the Community**

Religious education is not only the responsibility of schools but should also be reinforced at home and in the community. Schools can collaborate with parents to ensure that experience-based religious learning continues in students' daily lives.

4. **Integration of Technology in Experiential Learning**

Technology can be used to enhance experiential learning, such as through interactive applications, video simulations, and digital platforms that allow students to engage with religious content beyond the classroom.

Given its advantages and challenges, the *Experiential Learning* method has great potential to be widely adopted in Islamic Religious Education at various educational levels. This method not only enhances students' conceptual understanding of Islamic teachings but also shapes their character and attitudes in real-life situations. Therefore, it should continue to be developed and refined to create a stronger impact in fostering a young generation with strong faith, good character, and the ability to face life's challenges with Islamic values.

As a follow-up, further research could be conducted to examine the effectiveness of *Experiential Learning* in broader contexts, such as at higher educational levels or in different learning environments. Additionally, in-depth studies are needed to explore the best strategies for overcoming challenges in implementing this method to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability in Islamic education.

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