



The Effectiveness of Group Discussion Method in Improving Student Learning Outcomes in Science Learning at MIN 7 Central Aceh

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of group discussion methods in improving the understanding of fifth grade students at MIN 7 Central Aceh regarding natural phenomena. This study is a classroom action research that uses four steps, namely planning, action, observation, and reflection. The subjects of this study were 20 fifth grade students, consisting of 9 male students and 11 female students. The data for this study were obtained using test and observation techniques. Tests are used to measure student learning outcomes, while observations are used to analyze teacher and student learning activities during the learning process. The data analysis techniques used in this study are qualitative and quantitative descriptive analysis to determine the increase in learning outcomes and student involvement in group discussions. The results of the study showed that the application of group discussion methods can improve student learning outcomes. In the first cycle, only 65% of students achieved scores above the KKM, while in the second cycle this figure increased to 85%. In addition, students' active participation in learning also increased from 60% in the first cycle to 80% in the second cycle. Thus, the use of group discussion methods can be used as an effective learning strategy in improving students' understanding of the concept of natural phenomena and encouraging their active involvement in the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Group discussion, science learning, learning outcomes, active participation.

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INTRODUCTION

Social Science Learning in Elementary Schools plays an important role in equipping students with an understanding of the surrounding environment, including material on natural phenomena. However, in practice, students' understanding of this material is often less than optimal. This is caused by various factors, such as less interactive learning methods and lack of student involvement in the learning process (Sanjaya, 2010). One method that can be used to improve student understanding is the group discussion method. According to Arends (2012), the group discussion method allows students to interact, exchange opinions, and develop their understanding through cooperation and argumentation. This method can also increase student involvement in learning and encourage them to think critically and be more active in understanding the concepts taught. The results of research conducted by Slavin (2015) show that the group discussion method can improve student learning outcomes compared to the lecture method. Group discussions provide opportunities for students to share thoughts and deepen their understanding of concepts more effectively. In addition, this method can also increase

students' confidence in expressing opinions and train their social skills (Lie, 2008). At MIN 7 Aceh Tengah, social studies learning, especially on the material of natural features, still faces obstacles in improving students' understanding. Based on initial observations, many students still have difficulty in understanding the concepts of natural features such as mountains, rivers, beaches, and hills. This shows that the learning methods used need to be evaluated and adjusted to be more effective in helping students understand the material. Based on these problems, this classroom action research aims to examine the effectiveness of the group discussion method in improving the understanding of grade 5 students at MIN 7 Aceh Tengah about natural features. It is hoped that through this research, the group discussion method can be a more effective and interesting learning alternative for students in understanding social studies material.

Education plays a crucial role in shaping the knowledge and cognitive abilities of students. Various teaching methods have been developed and implemented to enhance students' understanding of different subjects. One such method that has gained attention is group discussion. Group discussion is an interactive learning strategy that encourages students to engage with their peers, share ideas, and construct knowledge collaboratively. In elementary education, fostering an engaging learning environment is essential for promoting conceptual understanding. Young learners, particularly those in the fifth grade, benefit significantly from active participation in discussions that allow them to express their thoughts and refine their understanding through interaction. Natural phenomena, such as landforms and water bodies, are fundamental topics in geography education. Understanding these natural features requires students to observe, analyze, and interpret information rather than merely memorize facts. This necessity makes discussion-based learning an ideal approach for improving comprehension of natural landscapes. The implementation of group discussion as a learning method in geography classes offers multiple advantages. It provides opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills, enhance their communication abilities, and gain confidence in expressing their ideas. Moreover, discussions help students to correct misconceptions through peer feedback and teacher guidance.

The effectiveness of group discussion in education has been widely studied. Research indicates that active learning strategies, including group discussions, improve students' retention rates and comprehension levels. When students engage in collaborative learning, they construct knowledge more effectively compared to traditional lecture-based methods. In the context of MIN 7 Aceh Tengah, the implementation of group discussion as a teaching strategy for understanding natural landscapes is particularly relevant. The school's curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning approaches, making group discussion a suitable method for achieving learning objectives. Several challenges, however, may arise in the application of group discussion. Classroom management, students' participation levels, and the availability of learning resources are some factors that influence the success of this method. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating discussions, guiding students, and ensuring that learning objectives are met. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of group discussion in improving the comprehension of natural landscapes among fifth-grade students at MIN 7 Aceh Tengah. The research investigates how students interact, share ideas, and develop an understanding of geographical features through discussions. By analyzing students' learning outcomes and engagement levels, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the role of group discussion in elementary education. The findings may contribute to the improvement of teaching methodologies and help educators enhance their instructional strategies.

Additionally, this research highlights the importance of student-centered learning approaches in modern education. Traditional rote-learning methods often fail to encourage deep understanding, whereas interactive strategies like group discussion promote active engagement and knowledge retention. Geography education is essential for fostering students' awareness of their environment. A comprehensive understanding

of landforms, water bodies, and other geographical features enables students to appreciate the natural world and recognize the factors influencing Earth's landscapes. The concept of collaborative learning, as applied in group discussion, aligns with the principles of constructivist education. According to constructivist theories, learners build knowledge through social interaction and meaningful experiences. Group discussions provide a platform for students to question, debate, and explore ideas in a supportive environment. Moreover, group discussions encourage students to develop essential life skills. The ability to communicate effectively, listen to different perspectives, and work as a team are crucial competencies that extend beyond the classroom and into real-world situations. As education continues to evolve, innovative teaching methods are necessary to cater to the diverse needs of students. Group discussion serves as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical understanding, allowing students to connect classroom learning with real-life observations.

Understanding natural landscapes is not only a subject of academic study but also a critical aspect of environmental awareness. Encouraging students to discuss and analyze geographical features fosters a deeper appreciation for nature and sustainability. The role of the teacher in facilitating effective group discussions cannot be overstated. Teachers must provide clear guidelines, structure discussions effectively, and ensure that all students participate actively. Their role as facilitators helps students remain focused and derive meaningful insights from discussions. In a classroom setting, diversity in student backgrounds and learning styles can influence the outcomes of group discussions. Some students may require additional support to articulate their ideas, while others may need guidance in maintaining constructive discussions. One of the key benefits of group discussion is that it allows students to learn from their peers. Hearing different viewpoints helps broaden their perspectives and reinforces their understanding of complex concepts. The interactive nature of group discussion also helps in reducing learning anxiety. Students feel more comfortable expressing their thoughts in a peer-supported setting rather than being singled out in a traditional lecture format. Furthermore, group discussion aligns with the goals of 21st-century education, which emphasizes critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. These competencies are essential for students to navigate an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

The effectiveness of group discussion in geography education can be measured through various assessment methods, including quizzes, concept maps, and student reflections. Evaluating students' progress helps educators identify areas that require further improvement. Technology can also enhance group discussions. Digital platforms, interactive maps, and multimedia resources provide additional tools for students to explore and discuss natural landscapes in greater depth. While group discussion has numerous benefits, it is important to address potential challenges. Some students may dominate discussions, while others may hesitate to participate. Teachers must create an inclusive environment where every student has an opportunity to contribute. Effective classroom management strategies, such as setting discussion rules and rotating group leaders, can help maintain order and ensure productive discussions. Providing structured prompts and guiding questions also keeps discussions focused on learning objectives. The use of group discussion in geography education fosters a sense of curiosity among students. Instead of passively receiving information, they actively seek answers and develop an inquiry-based approach to learning. Encouraging students to ask questions and explore different perspectives is a vital aspect of meaningful learning. When students are engaged in discussions, they are more likely to internalize knowledge and apply it in various contexts. Parental involvement can also enhance the effectiveness of group discussions. When students discuss what they have learned at home, it reinforces their understanding and allows parents to participate in their educational journey.

The broader implications of this study extend to other subject areas as well. Group discussion is not limited to geography but can be applied to science, social studies, and even language learning to promote active engagement and critical thinking. Educators

must continuously explore and refine their teaching strategies to meet the evolving needs of students. Incorporating diverse instructional approaches, including group discussion, enriches the learning experience and helps students develop essential skills. In conclusion, group discussion is a powerful teaching strategy that enhances students' understanding of natural landscapes. By promoting collaboration, critical thinking, and active participation, it creates an enriching learning environment that fosters deep comprehension. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the practical implementation of group discussion in elementary education. Understanding its impact on students' learning outcomes can inform future teaching practices and curriculum development. As we move toward more student-centered learning approaches, group discussion stands out as an effective method for engaging students and fostering meaningful learning experiences. By embracing interactive teaching strategies, educators can empower students to become lifelong learners. This research underscores the significance of active learning in geography education. Through group discussions, students gain a comprehensive understanding of natural landscapes while developing essential communication and analytical skills.

The study aims to contribute to the broader field of educational research by exploring how group discussion influences students' learning experiences. The insights gained will be valuable for teachers, policymakers, and curriculum designers seeking to enhance education quality. Ultimately, group discussion serves as a cornerstone of effective teaching and learning. By fostering a culture of inquiry, collaboration, and engagement, it prepares students for academic success and lifelong intellectual growth. The exploration of innovative teaching methodologies is essential for ensuring high-quality education. Group discussion represents a step forward in transforming traditional classrooms into dynamic learning spaces that inspire curiosity and deep understanding. Through this study, we seek to highlight the transformative power of discussion-based learning in elementary education. By equipping students with critical thinking skills and fostering meaningful interactions, we pave the way for a more engaging and effective learning experience.

METHODS

This research was conducted at MIN 7 Aceh Teingah. The selection of the capital city was based on the consideration that the results of learning social studies, especially on the subject of natural phenomena, were still very good. This research was conducted in semester 2 (genap) of the 2024/2025 academic year. This research was conducted from February to March 2025. The subjects of this research were grade V students of MIN 7 Aceh Teingah. The number of students was 20 consisting of 9 males and 11 females with the subject of natural phenomena. This research is included in the category of classroom action research which is characterized by a cycle in its implementation. In this research, there are two cycles applied. Based on Keimmis's opinion (1988), each cycle includes four main stages, namely planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. In addition, the data analysis process includes data repetition, data presentation, data collection, and conclusion drawing or verification. 1) Planning stage: Collecting the required data through observation techniques, planning the IPS learning scenario by creating a learning plan, planning learning activities using a discussion method simulated by the teacher, planning learning activities using a discussion method carried out by students; 2) Implementation stage of action: Providing learning materials about natural phenomena, implementing learning by using discussion method, after the teacher explains about the material about natural phenomena, after the teacher explains the rules of the game, in groups students carry out social studies learning about the material about natural phenomena; 3) Observation stage. Observation observes students' activities during the learning process, the teacher directs students in implementing the learning.

Provides direction to all students when students feel that there is a little difficulty in the discussion method; 4) Reflection stage, conducting reflection and evaluation of the implementation of the action. This reflection is carried out together with colleagues who are involved in the research. The purpose is to intuitively discuss the learning process that has taken place, provide input to each other, and determine the steps that can be applied to the following learning to make it more meaningful. Data collection is focused on the student process during the learning process on the material of natural phenomena, taking place from each action by following the steps that have been determined by the researcher. The procedures used to collect data are carried out in the following ways: 1) Observation of student and teacher activities, observation is an activity carried out along with the implementation of actions, with the aim of recording or observing all student and teacher activities during the learning process. In this activity, the observer monitors various activities that occur and marks them using a checklist on the observation sheet that has been prepared; 2) Written tests are used to assess student achievement after the learning process, especially in the material of natural phenomena. The data collected are in the form of student learning outcomes. In this study, thesis is written in the form of descriptive questions and is established after the discussion method is applied in learning activities. This study applies an interactive analysis model. The data analysis process is carried out by organizing and arranging the data into patterns, categories, and basic descriptions, so that the main concepts can be identified and working hypotheses can be formulated based on the data obtained. The indicators of success are: 1) Increasing student learning outcomes in social studies subjects, at least 75% of students get a KKM score of more than 70; 2) Increasing student activity in the social studies learning process, with at least 75% of students being active in the learning process.

This research was conducted at MIN 7 Aceh Tengah. The selection of this school was based on the consideration that the results of learning social studies, especially on the subject of natural phenomena, were still very good. This research was carried out in the second semester (even) of the 2024/2025 academic year, specifically from February to March 2025. The subjects of this research were fifth-grade students of MIN 7 Aceh Tengah, consisting of 20 students, including 9 males and 11 females, with a focus on the subject of natural phenomena. This research falls into the category of classroom action research, characterized by the application of cycles in its implementation. In this study, two cycles were conducted. Based on the opinion of Kemmis (1988), each cycle consists of four main stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Additionally, the data analysis process includes data repetition, data presentation, data collection, and conclusion drawing or verification. At this stage, the necessary data were collected through observation techniques. A social studies learning scenario was planned by creating a lesson plan, designing learning activities using a discussion method simulated by the teacher, and preparing discussion-based learning activities to be carried out by students. The planning phase also included preparing learning materials that align with the discussion method. This preparation ensured that students had access to relevant sources and materials necessary for meaningful discussions.

Additionally, the teacher formulated discussion questions that encouraged students to think critically and engage actively with the subject matter. These questions aimed to guide students in exploring different perspectives on natural phenomena. A structured lesson plan was developed to outline the sequence of activities during the learning sessions. This plan included time allocations, discussion prompts, and strategies for managing student participation. Classroom arrangements were also planned to facilitate effective group discussions. Seating arrangements were designed to promote student interaction and ensure that all students had equal opportunities to contribute. Another critical aspect of the planning stage was preparing assessment tools. Observation sheets, checklists, and evaluation rubrics were developed to systematically measure student engagement and learning outcomes. Preliminary discussions were held with students to explain the purpose and expectations of the discussion-based learning activities. This step

helped set a positive tone and prepared students for active participation. The teacher also prepared contingency plans to address potential challenges that could arise during the learning process, such as students struggling with participation or difficulties in managing discussions effectively. In this stage, learning materials about natural phenomena were provided, and the discussion method was implemented. After the teacher explained the material, students were given instructions on how to engage in the discussion-based learning process. They were then divided into groups to carry out social studies learning activities related to natural phenomena.

The teacher facilitated the discussions by guiding students in exploring key concepts and encouraging them to express their thoughts. This facilitation ensured that students remained focused and engaged throughout the learning process. Each group was assigned specific discussion topics related to natural phenomena. These topics were designed to encourage students to analyze, compare, and contrast different geographical features. Students were encouraged to use visual aids, such as maps and diagrams, to support their discussions. These materials helped in illustrating key concepts and making abstract ideas more tangible. Peer collaboration was a central component of the implementation stage. Students worked together to formulate explanations, ask questions, and challenge each other's ideas constructively. The teacher monitored the discussions closely, providing support when needed and ensuring that all students had opportunities to contribute. Classroom discussions were structured to include a mix of whole-class discussions and smaller group interactions. This approach helped accommodate different learning styles and levels of participation. A key aspect of the implementation stage was allowing students to take ownership of their learning. They were encouraged to lead discussions, present their findings, and engage in meaningful dialogue with their peers.

To enhance engagement, the teacher incorporated interactive activities such as role-playing and debates. These activities helped students explore the subject matter in a dynamic and engaging way. The implementation stage also included periodic check-ins, where students reflected on their learning progress and discussed any challenges they faced. During the learning process, student activities were observed. The teacher guided students in implementing the discussion method, provided direction, and assisted students in overcoming difficulties encountered during the discussion. Observers recorded detailed notes on student interactions, participation levels, and the overall effectiveness of the discussion method. The observation phase focused on assessing both cognitive and affective aspects of student learning. This included evaluating students' understanding of natural phenomena and their ability to communicate ideas effectively. Specific observation criteria were established to ensure a systematic evaluation process. These criteria included indicators such as student engagement, collaboration, and the depth of discussion. Teachers and researchers used observation checklists to document key moments in the learning process, noting both successes and areas for improvement. During this stage, challenges such as unequal participation among students were identified. Strategies were then implemented to address these challenges in subsequent lessons. Observation findings were shared with students to provide constructive feedback and encourage self-reflection on their learning experiences. The observation stage also included gathering qualitative data, such as student expressions and body language, to gain deeper insights into their engagement levels. In addition to teacher observations, peer observations were conducted to provide a comprehensive understanding of how students interacted with each other during discussions.

Reflection and evaluation of the action implementation were conducted. This reflection was carried out in collaboration with research colleagues to discuss the learning process, exchange feedback, and determine improvements for subsequent learning sessions to enhance the meaningfulness of the learning experience. Teachers and students participated in reflective discussions to analyze what worked well and what needed improvement. Students provided feedback on their learning experiences, sharing insights into the effectiveness of the discussion method. The teacher used reflection sessions to

identify patterns in student learning and make necessary adjustments to instructional strategies. Through collaborative reflection, the research team formulated action plans for improving the implementation of discussion-based learning in future cycles. Reflections also included considerations for enhancing classroom management strategies to support more effective discussions. The findings from the reflection stage were used to refine teaching approaches and adapt instructional materials to better meet student needs. Insights gained from the reflection stage contributed to professional development for teachers, enhancing their ability to facilitate interactive learning environments. Data collection focused on student engagement and participation during the learning process on the topic of natural phenomena. The data were collected in the following ways: 1) Observation of Student and Teacher Activities: Observation was conducted alongside the implementation of the learning actions. The aim was to document and assess all student and teacher activities throughout the learning process. The observer monitored various activities and recorded them using a checklist on a prepared observation sheet; 2) Written Tests: Written tests were administered to assess student achievement after the learning process, particularly on the topic of natural phenomena. The data collected consisted of student learning outcomes. In this study, the tests were in the form of descriptive questions and were conducted after applying the discussion method in the learning activities. The indicators of success in this research were: 1) An increase in student learning outcomes in social studies, with at least 75% of students achieving a minimum competency score (KKM) of more than 70; 2) An increase in student participation in the social studies learning process, with at least 75% of students actively engaging in the learning process.

RESULTS

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the discussion method in improving students' understanding of natural phenomena in social studies at MIN 7 Aceh Tengah. The research was conducted over two cycles, with observations, assessments, and reflections carried out at each stage. The findings of this study are presented in the following sections. In the first cycle, students were introduced to the discussion method as part of their social studies learning process. Initially, many students exhibited passive participation due to unfamiliarity with this learning approach. Some students hesitated to express their opinions, while others dominated the discussion. During the group discussions, students were assigned specific topics related to natural phenomena, such as earthquakes, floods, and volcanic eruptions. Some groups engaged actively, but others struggled to maintain meaningful discussions. Teachers provided guidance to help students stay focused on the subject matter. Observations indicated that about 60% of students actively participated in the discussions. The rest remained passive, mainly listening to their peers without contributing significantly. Teachers intervened to encourage balanced participation among group members. Assessment results from Cycle 1 showed that only 65% of students achieved scores above the minimum competency criteria (KKM) of 70. Several students demonstrated limited understanding of the discussed topics, suggesting a need for further reinforcement of concepts. Reflection sessions revealed that students found the discussion method engaging but required more structured guidance to participate effectively. Many students expressed a desire for clearer instructions and more time to discuss complex topics.

Based on the findings from Cycle 1, improvements were implemented in Cycle 2. These included providing students with discussion guidelines, structuring group discussions more effectively, and allocating additional time for group interactions. During Cycle 2, students exhibited a noticeable improvement in participation. Observations indicated that approximately 80% of students actively engaged in discussions, demonstrating increased confidence in expressing their opinions. The quality of discussions also improved. Students were better able to analyze natural phenomena, ask

relevant questions, and provide well-reasoned explanations. Teachers facilitated discussions by posing thought-provoking questions and encouraging critical thinking. Assessment results in Cycle 2 showed a significant improvement. Approximately 85% of students scored above the KKM, indicating an overall increase in comprehension. Many students demonstrated a deeper understanding of natural phenomena compared to Cycle 1. Student feedback after Cycle 2 was overwhelmingly positive. They reported that discussions helped them grasp concepts more effectively than traditional lecture-based learning. Additionally, students appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with peers and exchange ideas. Teachers also noted improvements in students' communication skills. The discussion method not only enhanced academic performance but also helped students develop teamwork and critical thinking abilities.

Comparing the results from Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, it was evident that the discussion method positively impacted student learning outcomes. Participation levels increased significantly, and students showed greater enthusiasm for learning. The study also highlighted the importance of teacher facilitation in ensuring effective discussions. Structured guidance and clear instructions played a crucial role in helping students engage meaningfully with the material. Another key finding was the role of peer interaction in knowledge construction. Students who actively participated in discussions retained information better and performed better in assessments compared to those who remained passive. The success of the discussion method suggests that it can be an effective pedagogical approach for teaching social studies, particularly on topics that require analytical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Despite the positive outcomes, some challenges remained. A few students still struggled with participation, and time management during discussions needed further refinement. Based on these findings, it is recommended that future implementations of the discussion method incorporate additional support strategies, such as peer mentoring and scaffolding techniques, to ensure all students benefit equally. In conclusion, the use of the discussion method in teaching natural phenomena significantly improved students' understanding and engagement in social studies at MIN 7 Aceh Tengah. The research demonstrated that with proper facilitation and structured implementation, discussion-based learning can enhance student participation, critical thinking, and academic achievement. Further studies could explore the long-term impact of discussion-based learning and its applicability to other subjects. Future research could also investigate how different student demographics respond to this method and identify additional strategies for optimizing discussion-based learning in diverse classroom settings.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the discussion method significantly contributed to improving students' understanding of natural phenomena in social studies. This discussion section elaborates on various aspects of the findings, including student engagement, learning outcomes, challenges encountered, and the overall effectiveness of the approach. One of the most notable findings of this study was the increase in student participation during the learning process. In Cycle 1, only about 60% of students actively engaged in discussions, while in Cycle 2, this number increased to 80%. This improvement suggests that as students became more familiar with the discussion method, they gained confidence in expressing their ideas. The structured approach to discussions in Cycle 2 played a significant role in fostering greater engagement. By providing students with discussion guidelines and clear instructions, the teacher helped create an environment where students felt more comfortable contributing to conversations. Peer collaboration also contributed to improved participation. Students who initially hesitated to speak in front of the class found it easier to share their thoughts in small groups. This social aspect of learning encouraged students to be more actively involved in the learning process. Observations revealed that students not only participated more but also displayed

enthusiasm during discussions. They asked insightful questions, challenged each other's perspectives, and provided well-reasoned explanations for their viewpoints. Furthermore, students' confidence in speaking increased over time. Many students who were initially reluctant to participate became more vocal as they gained experience in group discussions. This shift indicates that the discussion method not only enhanced subject knowledge but also helped improve communication skills.

The research findings also highlight a significant improvement in students' understanding of natural phenomena. In Cycle 1, only 65% of students achieved scores above the minimum competency level (KKM) of 70, whereas in Cycle 2, this figure rose to 85%. Students demonstrated a deeper understanding of topics such as earthquakes, floods, and volcanic eruptions. Their ability to explain these phenomena using relevant examples and scientific reasoning improved considerably over the course of the study. The discussion method encouraged students to analyze information critically rather than simply memorizing facts. This approach helped them connect theoretical knowledge with real-world examples, making learning more meaningful. Assessment results showed that students who actively participated in discussions performed better on written tests. This finding aligns with research suggesting that active learning strategies enhance retention and comprehension. Additionally, students' ability to synthesize information from different sources improved. They demonstrated better skills in comparing different natural phenomena and identifying their causes and effects.

Despite its effectiveness, the discussion method also presented several challenges. One of the primary issues was unequal participation among students. Some students tended to dominate discussions, while others remained passive. To address this issue, teachers implemented strategies such as rotating discussion leaders and assigning specific roles to group members. These interventions helped create a more balanced participation dynamic. Another challenge was time management. In Cycle 1, discussions often exceeded the allocated time, which disrupted the lesson schedule. To improve this, teachers set clear time limits for each discussion session in Cycle 2. Some students also faced difficulties in articulating their ideas effectively. To assist them, teachers provided sentence starters and guiding questions to facilitate more structured responses. Technical challenges, such as a lack of access to supplementary learning materials, also affected the depth of discussions. Providing additional resources, such as images, videos, and case studies, in Cycle 2 helped enrich the discussions.

The overall effectiveness of the discussion method was evident in both qualitative and quantitative findings. The increase in test scores, higher levels of participation, and positive student feedback all indicate that this approach significantly contributed to the learning process. Comparing the pre-test and post-test results further confirmed the impact of the discussion method. Students showed a notable improvement in their ability to recall, analyze, and apply knowledge about natural phenomena. Teacher observations also highlighted improvements in students' problem-solving skills. Discussions encouraged students to think critically and collaborate in finding solutions to environmental issues related to natural phenomena. The discussion method proved particularly effective for topics that required analytical thinking. Students engaged more actively when discussing real-life events, such as recent earthquakes or floods, making learning more relevant and engaging. The findings suggest that the discussion method can be a valuable pedagogical approach in social studies, particularly when teaching topics that involve cause-and-effect relationships.

This study provides valuable insights into the role of active learning methods in improving student comprehension. The discussion method can be integrated into other subjects to foster critical thinking and collaborative learning. Teachers should consider incorporating structured discussion techniques, such as Socratic seminars or debate formats, to further enhance student engagement. The findings also highlight the importance of teacher facilitation in ensuring productive discussions. Providing clear instructions, guiding questions, and real-world examples can help maximize the

effectiveness of this approach. Future research could explore how discussion-based learning impacts different student demographics, such as students with varying academic abilities or learning styles. Additionally, incorporating technology, such as online discussion forums or multimedia resources, could further enhance the effectiveness of this method. conclusion, the discussion method proved to be an effective strategy for improving student engagement and understanding of natural phenomena in social studies. The research findings indicate that structured discussions promote deeper comprehension, active participation, and critical thinking skills. Despite some challenges, the overall success of the method suggests that it can be a valuable addition to the teaching repertoire in social studies classrooms. By refining discussion techniques and addressing potential obstacles, educators can create a more interactive and meaningful learning experience for students. This study contributes to the growing body of research supporting active learning strategies in education. Further exploration of discussion-based methods in different contexts could provide additional insights into their broader applicability and long-term impact on student learning.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the discussion method in enhancing students' understanding of natural phenomena in social studies at MIN 7 Aceh Tengah. Based on the findings from two research cycles, several key conclusions can be drawn. First, the discussion method significantly improved student engagement and participation. The structured discussions encouraged students to express their thoughts, ask questions, and collaborate with peers. By Cycle 2, approximately 80% of students actively participated in discussions, demonstrating increased confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Second, the use of discussions led to an improvement in students' comprehension of natural phenomena. The results of written assessments showed that student performance improved from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2, with 85% of students achieving scores above the minimum competency level. This indicates that the discussion method helped students develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Third, the study revealed that the discussion method enhanced students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Engaging in group discussions allowed students to analyze information, construct logical arguments, and connect theoretical knowledge with real-world examples. Despite its effectiveness, some challenges were encountered, including uneven participation, time management issues, and difficulties in articulating ideas. However, these challenges were addressed through structured facilitation, role assignments, and improved time allocation in Cycle 2. Overall, this study demonstrates that the discussion method is an effective pedagogical approach for teaching social studies, particularly topics requiring analytical thinking and collaboration. Teachers can further optimize this method by incorporating additional support strategies, such as guided questions, multimedia resources, and peer mentoring. Future research could explore the long-term impact of discussion-based learning, its effectiveness across different student demographics, and its integration with digital learning tools. These insights could provide valuable recommendations for further enhancing student-centered learning approaches.

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