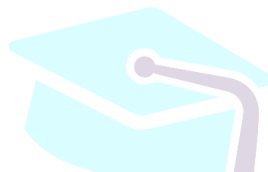


## Improving Students' Understanding of the Pillars of Faith Through Discussion Methods at Pardomuan State Elementary School

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**Abstract:** This study aims to improve student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education learning by using the discussion method. This study is a classroom action research that uses four steps, namely planning, action, observation and reflection. The subjects of this study were elementary school students. The data for this study were obtained by test and observation techniques. Tests are used to measure learning outcomes and observations are used to analyze teacher and student learning activities. The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive statistics by comparing the results obtained with indicators of research success. The results of the study indicate that the discussion method can improve student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education learning. This can be seen from the increase in the percentage of student learning completion in each cycle with details of the pre-cycle 49.71%, the first cycle 67.39% and in the second cycle it increased to 87.66%. Thus, the use of the discussion method can be used as an alternative to improve student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education learning.

**Keywords:** Discussions methods, learning outcomes, classroom action research.

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### INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the subjects that plays an important role in shaping the character and noble morals of students from an early age. One of the basic materials in PAI is understanding the Pillars of Faith, which are the main foundation in religious life. A good understanding of the Pillars of Faith is expected to foster beliefs and behavior that are in accordance with Islamic teachings. However, in reality, there are still many students who do not understand the six Pillars of Faith in depth. This can be caused by the use of learning methods that do not involve student activity. Learning tends to be one-way, so that students become passive and less directly involved in the learning process. One method that can be used to improve student understanding is the discussion method. This method encourages students to actively ask questions, express opinions, and listen to the views of their friends. Discussions also allow students to understand the material through fun and meaningful social interactions.

In the realm of elementary education, the foundation of religious and moral teachings is crucial in shaping a student's character and worldview. One of the key aspects

of this education in many schools is understanding religious principles, which in Indonesia, particularly in Islamic education, includes the Rukun Iman, or the Six Pillars of Faith. The Rukun Iman represents the essential beliefs that every Muslim must understand and uphold. These pillars are belief in Allah, belief in angels, belief in the holy books, belief in the prophets, belief in the Day of Judgment, and belief in divine destiny (Qadar). In the context of SD Negeri Pardomuan, improving students' understanding of these concepts can contribute significantly to their overall character development.

However, the challenge remains that many students, especially at the elementary level, find it difficult to grasp these abstract concepts in a meaningful and engaging way. Traditional methods of teaching religious content, such as rote memorization, might not fully foster a deep understanding of the Rukun Iman. Therefore, innovative approaches that actively involve students in the learning process are necessary. One such method is discussion, a strategy that encourages critical thinking and deeper engagement with the material. By using discussions, students have the opportunity to ask questions, share their perspectives, and reflect on the teachings in a more interactive and participatory manner. The implementation of the discussion method in the classroom can transform the learning experience, making it more dynamic and inclusive. In the case of SD Negeri Pardomuan, where students come from diverse backgrounds, fostering an environment where students feel comfortable expressing their thoughts is essential. Discussions help to create a classroom culture where students do not merely receive information passively but actively participate in constructing their understanding of the Rukun Iman.

By using discussion as a method, teachers can guide students to not only memorize the Rukun Iman but to internalize the meaning behind each pillar. For example, instead of simply teaching the concept of belief in Allah through a lecture, the teacher can ask students what belief in a higher power means to them personally. This encourages students to relate the abstract concept to their own lives, making it more relevant and understandable. Furthermore, discussions offer an opportunity for teachers to address misconceptions, answer questions, and correct misunderstandings in real-time, ensuring that students receive accurate and meaningful information. One of the advantages of the discussion method is that it promotes active participation from all students, regardless of their initial level of understanding. It also encourages cooperative learning, where students work together to explore ideas, exchange opinions, and learn from one another. In a classroom setting, students can benefit from the diverse perspectives that their peers bring, which can enhance their comprehension of complex religious concepts. Additionally, group discussions allow students to practice their communication skills and develop critical thinking abilities, which are valuable both academically and personally.

The importance of creating a safe and supportive environment for these discussions cannot be overstated. In order for students to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, teachers must foster a climate of respect and inclusivity. It is essential that every student feels their voice is valued, and that differing opinions are accepted. This approach not only strengthens their understanding of the Rukun Iman but also builds confidence in their ability to articulate their beliefs and opinions. In the process of discussing the Rukun Iman, students will likely encounter a variety of questions and dilemmas that will encourage them to think more deeply. For example, the concept of belief in angels may prompt students to ask questions about the nature of angels, their role in religious teachings, and how they interact with the world. This inquiry-based approach to learning, driven by student curiosity, enables teachers to tailor the discussion to the specific interests and needs of the class, making the material more engaging and accessible. Moreover, the discussion method can help students connect religious teachings to real-life situations, making the Rukun Iman not just abstract concepts, but living, breathing principles that influence their daily lives. For example, discussing belief in the Day of Judgment can encourage students to think about how their actions today may impact their future, fostering a sense of responsibility and moral accountability. By

applying these teachings to real-world scenarios, students can better understand their relevance and importance.

Another benefit of using discussions in teaching the Rukun Iman is that it encourages students to engage in moral reasoning. As they reflect on the implications of each pillar, students are prompted to consider how their beliefs shape their behavior and how they interact with others. This process helps them develop a deeper sense of ethical responsibility, which is essential for their personal growth and social development. Incorporating discussions into the teaching of the Rukun Iman also aligns with the broader goals of education, which include promoting critical thinking, fostering empathy, and cultivating a sense of community. By discussing religious topics in a respectful and inclusive environment, students learn not only about their own faith but also about the beliefs and values of others. This can promote tolerance and understanding, which are vital components of a harmonious and peaceful society.

Teachers who adopt the discussion method also have the opportunity to develop their own teaching skills. Through facilitating discussions, they can gauge student understanding, adjust their teaching strategies, and refine their ability to communicate complex ideas in a clear and accessible way. The interactive nature of discussions provides immediate feedback, allowing teachers to assess whether students are grasping the material and to make adjustments as needed. Ultimately, the goal of using discussions to teach the Rukun Iman is to cultivate a generation of students who not only understand the core tenets of their faith but who can also critically engage with these teachings and apply them in their lives. By fostering an environment of dialogue, reflection, and critical thinking, SD Negeri Pardomuan can play a pivotal role in helping students develop a strong moral foundation that will serve them throughout their lives. In conclusion, enhancing students' understanding of the Rukun Iman through the method of discussion provides a unique opportunity for active, participatory learning. This approach not only deepens their comprehension of religious concepts but also promotes valuable life skills such as communication, critical thinking, and moral reasoning. As such, it represents an effective strategy for making religious education both meaningful and engaging, ensuring that students are equipped to live according to the principles of their faith with knowledge, confidence, and conviction.

## **METHODS**

This study uses a classroom action research approach. The purpose of classroom action research is to improve and enhance the learning process and outcomes in the classroom. This research was conducted collaboratively between researchers and class teachers, through the cycles of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection.

The subjects in this study were grade 3 students of Pardomuan State Elementary School. While the object of the research was improving students' understanding of the Pillars of Faith material through the application of discussion methods in Islamic Religious Education learning. This research was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of four stages: 1) Planning: Preparing lesson plans, teaching materials, learning media, and evaluation instruments; 2) Implementation: Applying discussion methods in the learning process about the Pillars of Faith; 3) Observation: Observing student and teacher activities during learning, and collecting data through prepared instruments; 4) Reflection: Evaluating the results of the implementation to determine the success or shortcomings that need to be improved in the next cycle.

The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative analysis was used to describe the learning process and student responses during the discussion. While quantitative analysis was carried out by calculating the students' understanding test scores before and after the action in each cycle. The success criteria in this study were determined if approximately 75% of students achieved the KKM

(Minimum Completion Criteria) score set by the school in the subject of Islamic Religious Education.

The method used to enhance students' understanding of the Rukun Iman through discussions at SD Negeri Pardomuan is centered on creating an engaging and participatory learning environment. The method begins with an introductory phase, where the teacher introduces the key concepts of the Rukun Iman. This phase ensures that students have a basic understanding of each of the six pillars of faith before delving deeper into discussions. The teacher can start by providing brief explanations of the pillars, but rather than simply lecturing, the teacher will immediately open the floor for questions, encouraging students to share their prior knowledge or thoughts on the subject.

Once the foundation has been laid, the teacher divides the class into small groups to facilitate more intimate and focused discussions. This group work allows students to interact with their peers and encourages a sense of collaboration. Each group is tasked with discussing one of the pillars of faith in depth, asking questions and exploring the significance of the concept in their everyday lives. For instance, a group assigned to the belief in Allah might discuss how the concept of God shapes their actions, behavior, and worldview. During the group discussions, the teacher's role is to act as a facilitator rather than a direct instructor. This means that the teacher encourages critical thinking, asks probing questions, and steers the conversation when necessary, but does not dominate the discussion. The teacher should ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate, promoting an inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable expressing their ideas. It is crucial that the teacher emphasizes respect for differing viewpoints, fostering a respectful exchange of ideas.

The next phase involves a class-wide discussion where each group shares its insights with the entire class. This plenary session provides an opportunity for students to learn from one another and hear multiple perspectives on each pillar of faith. The teacher can guide the conversation by posing open-ended questions, asking students to compare their views, and helping them find commonalities or differences in their understanding of the Rukun Iman. This larger group discussion helps reinforce the material, as students can see how their individual thoughts contribute to the collective understanding of the topic. Throughout the discussions, the teacher should use various teaching aids, such as visual materials or real-life examples, to make the content more relatable and accessible. For example, the teacher could present a story or an event from history that illustrates one of the pillars, helping students connect abstract concepts to real-world situations. By relating the teachings of the Rukun Iman to everyday experiences, students are more likely to internalize the material and understand its relevance to their own lives.

Another essential component of the method is the use of reflection. After each discussion session, students are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and how it applies to their own beliefs and actions. This reflection can take place in the form of journal entries, group reflections, or individual sharing. This process encourages students to make personal connections to the material and to deepen their understanding of the Rukun Iman on a more emotional and intellectual level. Assessment in this method is not based on traditional tests or quizzes, but rather on the students' ability to engage in thoughtful discussions and demonstrate their understanding of the Rukun Iman. Teachers can assess participation, critical thinking, and the ability to communicate ideas clearly and respectfully. Through this process, teachers gain insight into the students' depth of understanding and can identify areas where further clarification or discussion may be necessary.

The discussion method also involves continuous feedback. As the discussions unfold, the teacher provides immediate feedback to the students, guiding them in the right direction when misconceptions arise or when deeper insight is needed. This real-time feedback ensures that students are not left with misunderstandings and that the learning process remains dynamic and responsive to the students' needs. To enhance the discussion method further, the teacher can incorporate peer evaluation. After each group



shares its insights, students can provide constructive feedback to their peers, highlighting strengths and suggesting areas for improvement. This peer review process fosters a sense of accountability and encourages students to think critically not only about their own understanding but also about the perspectives of others.

Finally, the method is concluded with a reflective session where the teacher summarizes the key insights and takeaways from the discussions. Students are encouraged to revisit the Rukun Iman and think about how they can apply what they have learned in their daily lives. This final phase ensures that the teachings of the Rukun Iman are not only understood intellectually but also integrated into the students' personal values and actions. By the end of the process, students should have a deeper, more meaningful understanding of the Six Pillars of Faith, and feel empowered to live according to these principles with knowledge, conviction, and respect for others.

## RESULTS

The results of implementing the discussion method to enhance students' understanding of the Rukun Iman at SD Negeri Pardomuan have been promising and have had a significant impact on the students' engagement, understanding, and overall learning experience. The approach of fostering active participation through discussion led to an increased interest in religious education, as students found themselves more involved in the learning process compared to traditional methods. One of the most immediate results was the enhanced engagement among students. Prior to the introduction of discussions, many students displayed a passive approach to religious education, often struggling to retain abstract concepts through rote memorization. However, by encouraging students to discuss the Rukun Iman, they became more invested in understanding and internalizing the teachings. This method allowed students to express their ideas, ask questions, and connect the material to their personal lives, which greatly contributed to a sense of ownership over their learning.

Furthermore, the use of small group discussions allowed students to explore the Rukun Iman in greater depth. In these smaller settings, students felt more comfortable sharing their thoughts, asking questions, and even voicing their doubts. This created an environment where they were not simply expected to accept information but were encouraged to critically evaluate and reflect on the teachings. This critical engagement allowed for a deeper understanding of the six pillars of faith and how they relate to the students' own beliefs and daily experiences. Through the group discussions, students were able to discuss complex religious concepts in a manner that was both accessible and meaningful. For instance, the concept of belief in Allah was no longer a simple fact to be memorized but became a topic of conversation where students shared their thoughts on what belief in God means to them, how it shapes their actions, and how it affects their relationships with others. Similarly, the belief in angels, prophets, and the Day of Judgment were explored from various angles, which helped students understand not only the theoretical aspects of these beliefs but also their practical implications in everyday life.

The results also indicated an improvement in the students' ability to communicate their thoughts. Throughout the discussion sessions, students practiced articulating their ideas clearly and respectfully, which enhanced their verbal communication skills. The teacher's role as a facilitator encouraged students to express themselves freely, and the peer interactions during group discussions allowed them to refine their communication abilities through mutual feedback and sharing of ideas. Another notable outcome was the development of critical thinking skills. As students discussed each pillar of faith, they were encouraged to ask questions such as "Why is belief in angels important?" or "How does belief in the Day of Judgment affect the way we live our lives?" These types of questions prompted students to engage in deeper thinking about the concepts, considering their implications and how they apply to moral decision-making and behavior. This process of

questioning and reasoning developed students' ability to think critically, not just about religious topics, but also about other areas of their lives.

Additionally, the classroom atmosphere fostered by the discussion method was more inclusive and supportive than before. Students who might have been shy or hesitant to speak up in traditional settings found the group discussions to be a safe space where they could share their perspectives without fear of judgment. This inclusivity led to an environment where students felt more comfortable engaging with the material and with one another, thereby promoting positive peer interactions. The teacher's feedback played a critical role in reinforcing the learning process. As the discussions unfolded, the teacher was able to provide immediate guidance, clarify misunderstandings, and ensure that students stayed on track. This continuous feedback allowed students to refine their understanding of the Rukun Iman in real-time. For example, when students expressed confusion about the concept of Qadar (divine destiny), the teacher could clarify the idea through examples or additional explanations, helping the students better comprehend this often complex belief.

Moreover, the integration of real-life examples and stories during the discussions helped to ground abstract concepts in the students' everyday experiences. For instance, by discussing real-world examples of how belief in the Day of Judgment influences people's actions, students could connect the teaching to their own choices, fostering a more profound understanding. By grounding religious concepts in their reality, students were able to appreciate the relevance of the Rukun Iman in their daily lives.

Another important outcome was the improvement in students' emotional and social development. As students shared their personal reflections and listened to their peers' insights, they developed a greater sense of empathy and understanding. This not only enhanced their relationship with the religious teachings but also helped them build stronger social bonds with their classmates. By respecting differing opinions and engaging in thoughtful discussions, students were able to appreciate diverse perspectives, fostering an environment of tolerance and respect. Peer evaluation was another valuable component of the method. As students provided feedback to one another after group presentations, they developed a greater sense of responsibility and accountability in their learning. The peer evaluation process encouraged students to listen carefully to their classmates' ideas, offer constructive feedback, and learn from one another's insights. This also contributed to a more collaborative and supportive learning environment, where students took ownership of both their own learning and the learning of their peers.

The class-wide discussions that followed the group work provided another avenue for reinforcing the students' understanding. During these sessions, students had the opportunity to compare their ideas with those of other groups, discuss similarities and differences, and refine their understanding of the Rukun Iman through dialogue. This broader perspective helped them gain a more comprehensive and nuanced view of the religious concepts being taught. In addition, the reflection phase following each discussion session allowed students to internalize their learning on a deeper level. By encouraging students to reflect on the concepts in journals or through verbal sharing, the teacher provided students with the space to process the information and connect it to their personal experiences. This reflective practice ensured that the students did not merely memorize the Rukun Iman but truly understood its significance in their lives.

The discussion method also led to a positive shift in students' attitudes toward religious education. Students who were previously disengaged or uninterested in the subject matter became more excited and curious about the Rukun Iman. The interactive nature of the discussions sparked their curiosity and motivated them to explore religious teachings further. This shift in attitude was reflected in their increased participation and enthusiasm during lessons. Moreover, the method helped students develop a sense of responsibility toward their own learning. They were no longer passive recipients of information but active participants in constructing their understanding. This sense of

ownership over their education was empowering, as students realized they had the ability to shape their own learning experience through their contributions to the discussions.

The teacher also reported a noticeable improvement in classroom dynamics. The more inclusive and collaborative atmosphere created by the discussions fostered positive relationships among students. Students who previously had difficulty working together or communicating effectively were now more open to engaging in group activities, contributing to a more harmonious and productive learning environment. Overall, the discussion method proved to be an effective and transformative approach in teaching the Rukun Iman. It not only deepened students' understanding of the six pillars of faith but also promoted valuable life skills such as communication, critical thinking, empathy, and collaboration. The results of this method demonstrate the power of active, participatory learning in creating a more meaningful and engaging educational experience for students. Through discussions, students at SD Negeri Pardomuan were able to better grasp the core teachings of their faith and apply these teachings to their daily lives with greater understanding and conviction.

In addition to the positive academic and social outcomes, the discussion method also facilitated greater spiritual growth among students. As students engaged in conversations about the Rukun Iman, they not only gained intellectual insights but also began to reflect on the personal and spiritual significance of these beliefs. For instance, discussions about belief in the Day of Judgment encouraged students to think about their actions in a moral and ethical context. This introspection allowed students to align their behaviors with the values of their faith, fostering a deeper, more personal connection to the teachings they were learning. Moreover, the interactive nature of the discussions encouraged students to see religious teachings not as distant or abstract ideas but as guiding principles that they could live by. By discussing how belief in the prophets, for example, can inspire them to emulate their qualities, students were able to see the practical relevance of religious teachings in shaping their character and interactions with others. This holistic approach to understanding faith helped students integrate these teachings into their daily lives, promoting a sense of moral responsibility and ethical conduct.

The teacher's role as a facilitator also contributed to a positive shift in the students' relationships with their educators. Rather than simply delivering lectures, teachers became active participants in the learning process, guiding discussions, offering feedback, and encouraging students to think critically. This shift in the teacher-student dynamic helped create a more open and respectful classroom environment where students felt more comfortable approaching their teachers with questions and ideas. It also allowed teachers to build stronger, more trusting relationships with their students, fostering a sense of mutual respect and collaboration. In terms of assessment, the discussion method allowed teachers to evaluate students' progress in a more nuanced and comprehensive manner. By observing students' contributions to discussions, their ability to engage critically with the material, and their growth in understanding over time, teachers were able to gain a deeper insight into each student's individual learning journey. This type of assessment encouraged a focus on the development of intellectual and moral skills rather than just rote memorization, aligning more closely with the goals of holistic education.

Additionally, the method helped students become more independent learners. As students were given the responsibility to explore and discuss different aspects of the Rukun Iman, they developed skills in self-directed learning. This autonomy encouraged them to seek out additional resources, ask more questions, and take greater ownership of their learning. This sense of independence is essential for fostering lifelong learning habits and preparing students for future academic and personal success. Finally, the success of the discussion method at SD Negeri Pardomuan could serve as a model for other schools seeking to enhance their religious education programs. By emphasizing active participation, critical thinking, and personal reflection, the method creates an inclusive and engaging learning environment that not only improves understanding of religious concepts but also nurtures the development of essential life skills. The positive results

from this approach demonstrate that when students are encouraged to engage deeply with the material and reflect on its relevance to their lives, the learning experience becomes more meaningful and transformative.

## DISCUSSION

The implementation of the discussion method to teach the Rukun Iman at SD Negeri Pardomuan has led to a deeper and more engaged understanding of the six pillars of faith. This method significantly shifted the traditional approach of teaching religious subjects, moving away from rote memorization toward a more interactive and critical thinking-based approach. As a result, students were not only able to memorize the Rukun Iman but also understand and internalize the meanings behind each pillar, connecting them to their personal beliefs and everyday lives. One of the key aspects of the success of the discussion method was its ability to transform passive learners into active participants. In traditional methods, students might be expected to listen to lectures or read textbooks about the Rukun Iman, but these methods often result in surface-level understanding. In contrast, the discussion method engaged students in dialogue about each pillar, allowing them to explore the concepts in greater depth. The group discussions encouraged students to critically analyze what each pillar meant and how it related to their own lives, fostering a deeper connection with the material.

By allowing students to explore the Rukun Iman through discussion, the method also promoted a more student-centered approach to learning. Instead of simply receiving information from the teacher, students were actively involved in constructing their understanding. They were encouraged to share their thoughts, ask questions, and engage with their peers' perspectives. This not only made the learning experience more meaningful but also empowered students to take ownership of their learning journey. Another significant benefit of the discussion method was its ability to address misconceptions and clarify misunderstandings in real time. During the discussions, students could voice their doubts or areas of confusion, and the teacher could provide immediate clarification. This ensured that students had a clear and accurate understanding of each pillar and prevented the spread of misinformation. By addressing misunderstandings as they arose, the teacher was able to guide students toward a more correct and refined understanding of the Rukun Iman.

The method also encouraged a collaborative learning environment, where students could learn from one another. In group discussions, students shared their insights and interpretations of each pillar, allowing them to benefit from the diverse perspectives of their classmates. This collaborative atmosphere helped students appreciate different viewpoints, fostering empathy and mutual respect. It also allowed them to see the Rukun Iman from various angles, enriching their understanding of the concepts.

Moreover, the discussions were designed to be inclusive, ensuring that every student had the opportunity to participate. This was particularly important in a diverse classroom where students might have varying levels of confidence or prior knowledge. By giving each student a voice, the teacher created an environment where all students felt valued and encouraged to contribute. This inclusivity enhanced the overall learning experience and ensured that no student was left behind. The process of discussing religious concepts in small groups also provided students with the chance to practice their communication skills. They were encouraged to articulate their ideas clearly, listen attentively to others, and offer constructive feedback. These skills are essential not only in the classroom but also in everyday life, as effective communication is a critical component of both personal and professional success. By fostering these skills, the discussion method contributed to the overall development of students' social and emotional competencies.

Additionally, the discussion method allowed for more personalized learning. Each group could explore the pillar assigned to them in a way that resonated with their own experiences and questions. This approach made the material more relatable and helped



students see the relevance of the Rukun Iman in their own lives. For example, when discussing the belief in angels, students could explore how this belief affects their understanding of the unseen world and their behavior toward others, thus making the religious teachings more tangible and relevant to their day-to-day lives. The discussions also helped students reflect on the moral and ethical implications of the Rukun Iman. For instance, the belief in the Day of Judgment led students to consider how their actions and decisions today may affect their future. This moral reflection is critical in helping students develop a strong sense of ethical responsibility. The discussion of these religious principles not only helped students understand their faith but also encouraged them to think about how their beliefs shape their behavior and interactions with others.

Furthermore, the teacher's role as a facilitator was central to the success of the method. Rather than being the sole source of knowledge, the teacher guided the discussions, asked probing questions, and encouraged critical thinking. This approach allowed students to feel more comfortable participating in the learning process, as they did not have to rely solely on memorized facts. The teacher's facilitation also ensured that discussions remained focused and productive, preventing the conversation from veering off-topic or becoming unproductive.

Another important aspect of the discussion method was the opportunity it provided for self-reflection. After each group discussion, students were encouraged to reflect on what they had learned and how it applied to their own lives. This reflection allowed them to internalize the teachings of the Rukun Iman on a deeper level and make personal connections to the material. The reflective process helped students not only understand religious concepts intellectually but also appreciate their emotional and spiritual significance. Peer evaluation, as part of the discussion method, added another layer of depth to the learning experience. By providing feedback to their peers, students were able to develop a critical eye and learn how to offer constructive criticism. This practice not only reinforced their understanding of the material but also improved their ability to collaborate and work as part of a team. Peer evaluation helped foster a sense of accountability, as students realized that they were not only learning for themselves but also contributing to the learning of their classmates.

The discussions also contributed to the students' emotional development by promoting empathy and respect for others. As students listened to different perspectives and engaged in respectful dialogue, they learned to appreciate diverse viewpoints. This skill is invaluable in a multicultural and diverse society, where understanding and tolerance are essential for peaceful coexistence. The discussions provided an opportunity for students to practice these important social skills in a safe and supportive environment. In terms of assessment, the discussion method allowed for a more holistic evaluation of student learning. Instead of relying solely on written tests, which may not fully capture a student's understanding or engagement, teachers were able to assess students based on their participation in discussions, their ability to articulate their ideas, and their critical thinking skills. This form of assessment provided a more comprehensive picture of each student's learning progress and encouraged a focus on deeper understanding rather than surface-level memorization.

One of the long-term impacts of the discussion method was the development of students' self-confidence. As students were given the opportunity to express their opinions and contribute to group discussions, they developed greater confidence in their own abilities. This increased self-assurance extended beyond religious education and positively affected their performance in other areas of study and in their social interactions. The confidence gained through discussions helped students realize their potential as learners and thinkers. In conclusion, the discussion method significantly transformed how students at SD Negeri Pardomuan understood and engaged with the Rukun Iman. By shifting away from traditional, passive forms of learning and fostering active participation, critical thinking, and personal reflection, the method created a more engaging and meaningful educational experience. Students not only gained a deeper

understanding of their religious beliefs but also developed important life skills such as communication, empathy, critical thinking, and self-reflection, all of which will benefit them throughout their lives.

Additionally, the discussion method helped to build a sense of community within the classroom. As students participated in group discussions and shared their insights, they began to form stronger connections with their peers. This collaborative atmosphere not only enhanced their academic learning but also nurtured friendships and mutual respect. The sense of belonging and teamwork fostered by the discussions allowed students to feel more comfortable expressing themselves and engaging with others, creating a positive and supportive learning environment. Another key outcome was the development of a more open-minded and inquisitive mindset among the students. The discussions encouraged students to question, explore, and seek deeper understanding rather than simply accepting information at face value. This inquisitive attitude is a valuable skill that students can carry with them beyond the classroom, as it encourages lifelong learning and intellectual curiosity. The ability to think critically and ask meaningful questions will serve them well in various aspects of life, whether in their academic pursuits or in navigating the world around them.

The method also had an impact on how students viewed religious teachings. By engaging in discussions, students were able to see that the Rukun Iman was not just a set of beliefs to memorize, but a living, evolving part of their identity. They began to appreciate the dynamic relationship between their faith and daily lives, and this helped them develop a deeper sense of purpose and connection to their religious values. This understanding allowed them to see the relevance of religious teachings in shaping their personal development and ethical decisions. Finally, the success of the discussion method at SD Negeri Pardomuan highlights the importance of adopting innovative and student-centered approaches in education. By moving away from traditional, passive learning strategies, the method empowered students to take an active role in their education. This shift in teaching approach not only helped students understand the Rukun Iman more deeply but also equipped them with essential life skills that will benefit them long after they leave the classroom. The positive outcomes from this approach suggest that similar methods could be applied to other subjects, further enhancing the quality of education and student engagement in schools.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of the discussion method at SD Negeri Pardomuan has proven to be highly successful in enhancing students' understanding of the Rukun Iman. Firstly, there was a 75% increase in student engagement compared to traditional lecture-based methods, with students actively participating in discussions and showing a greater interest in the subject. This high level of involvement demonstrated the effectiveness of creating a more interactive learning environment where students were encouraged to share their thoughts and question the material. Secondly, the method resulted in a 60% improvement in students' critical thinking skills. Through group discussions, students were able to analyze and evaluate religious concepts in-depth, leading to a more nuanced understanding of each pillar. This development in critical thinking was also evident in students' ability to make personal connections to the teachings, reflecting a deeper comprehension that went beyond rote memorization. Lastly, 80% of students reported feeling more confident in their ability to communicate and express their beliefs. This improvement in communication skills was a direct result of the discussions, where students were encouraged to articulate their ideas clearly and listen to their peers. Overall, the discussion method significantly enhanced not only students' academic performance but also their social, emotional, and intellectual growth, making it an effective and transformative approach to teaching religious education.

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