Improving Understanding of Faith in the Apostles Material Through the Discovery Learning Method at SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu

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Abstract: This study aims to improve the understanding of the material on faith in the apostles in grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu through the application of the Discovery Learning method. The material on faith in the apostles has an important role in the formation of students' character and faith, but students' understanding of this material is often still low. The Discovery Learning method was chosen because it can increase student involvement in the learning process, encourage them to find knowledge independently, and develop critical thinking skills. This study used a quasi-experimental method with a pre-test and post-test research design. A total of 30 grade VIII students who were the samples of this study were divided into two groups, namely the experimental group who were given treatment using the Discovery Learning method and the control group who used conventional learning methods. Data were obtained through tests to measure student understanding before and after learning, as well as observations to see student activities during the learning process. The results of the study showed a significant increase in the understanding of the material on faith in the apostles in the experimental group after the application of the Discovery Learning method. Thus, the application of this method can be an effective alternative in improving students' understanding of the material on faith in the apostles, and can be applied to learning in Islamic Religious Education subjects in schools.

Keywords: Discovery learning, student understanding, active learning, Islamic education.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays an important role in shaping the character and faith of students. One of the main materials in PAI is faith in the apostles, which is the main pillar in the pillars of faith. A deep understanding of this material is very important to instill strong faith values in students. However, in practice, learning the material on faith in the apostles is often still conventional, with a dominant lecture approach. This causes students to be less active in the learning process and tend to be passive in receiving information. Monotonous learning methods can result in low student understanding of the material being taught. Therefore, innovation is needed in learning methods to increase student involvement and their understanding of PAI material. One learning method that can be applied is Discovery Learning. This method emphasizes the active involvement of

students in the learning process, where they are encouraged to discover the concepts learned themselves through exploration and discovery activities.

Discovery Learning can increase students' learning motivation, because they feel they have an active role in the learning process. In addition, this method can also develop students' critical and creative thinking skills. Previous research has shown that the application of Discovery Learning in PAI learning can improve student learning outcomes. For example, research by Hasibuan et al. (2023) showed that this method is effective in improving students' understanding of Islamic Religious Education material. In addition, research by Iwantoro et al. (2022) also showed that Discovery Learning can increase student involvement in Islamic Religious Education learning after the Covid-19 pandemic. At SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu, learning the material on faith in the apostles still uses conventional methods, which results in low student understanding of the material. This can be seen from the evaluation results which show that most students have not reached the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM). Therefore, efforts need to be made to improve students' understanding of the material on faith in the apostles through the application of more innovative and interactive learning methods. The application of Discovery Learning is expected to improve students' understanding of the material on faith in the apostles, because this method encourages students to be active in the learning process and discover the concepts they are learning for themselves. In addition, this method can also increase students' learning motivation, because they feel they have an important role in the learning process.

Research by Winarsih (2023) shows that the application of Discovery Learning can improve student learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education subjects at SDN 058101 Sumber Jaya. Research by Titin (2024) also shows that this method is effective in improving Islamic Religious Education learning outcomes of students at SDN No. 51 Dumbo Raya. Thus, the application of Discovery Learning in learning the material of faith in the apostles is expected to improve students' understanding of the material. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the application of the Discovery Learning method in improving the understanding of class VIII students of SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu on the material of faith in the apostles. This study uses a quantitative approach with a classroom action research (CAR) design consisting of two cycles. Each cycle consists of the planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages. The subjects of this study were 30 class VIII students of SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu. Data were collected through material comprehension tests, observation, and documentation. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more effective and innovative Islamic Religious Education learning methods. In addition, the results of this study can also be a reference for Islamic Religious Education teachers in choosing appropriate learning methods to improve students' understanding of the material on faith in the apostles. Thus, it is hoped that the application of the Discovery Learning method can improve the quality of Islamic Religious Education learning at SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu, especially in the material on faith in the apostles.

The application of the Discovery Learning method can also help students develop critical and analytical thinking skills, which are very important in understanding religious concepts in depth. In addition, this method can increase students' self-confidence in expressing opinions and discussing religious material, thus creating a more dynamic and interactive learning atmosphere. With the increasing understanding of students on the material on faith in the apostles, it is hoped that they can apply the values of faith in everyday life, so that a noble character is formed. The application of the Discovery Learning method is also in line with the Merdeka Curriculum which emphasizes student-centered learning and the development of 21st century competencies. Therefore, this research is important to be carried out in order to contribute to the development of Islamic Religious Education learning strategies that are more effective and relevant to the needs of students in the modern era.

METHODS

In this classroom action research, data sources are divided into two main categories: primary data and secondary data. These two types of data complement each other to provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the Discovery Learning method in improving students' understanding of the material on faith in the apostles. Primary data is data obtained directly from research subjects without intermediaries. In this context, primary data was collected from grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu through various data collection techniques designed to capture changes in their understanding and responses to the learning methods applied. One of the primary data collection techniques is a material understanding test, which consists of a pre-test and a post-test. The pre-test was conducted before the implementation of the Discovery Learning method to measure students' initial understanding, while the post-test was conducted after the implementation of the method to assess improvements in understanding.

In addition to tests, observation was also used as a primary data collection technique. Observations were conducted during the learning process to record student and teacher activities, interactions that occurred, and student responses to the learning methods used. These observations provide in-depth qualitative data regarding classroom dynamics during the implementation of the Discovery Learning method. Another primary data collection technique is interviews with students. These interviews aim to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and opinions regarding learning with the Discovery Learning method. The data from these interviews provide additional context to the test results and observations, and help understand the factors that influence student understanding. Secondary data is data obtained from existing sources and is not collected directly by the researcher. In this study, secondary data is used to support and enrich primary data, as well as provide a theoretical and contextual framework for analysis.

One source of secondary data is curriculum documents, such as syllabi and Learning Implementation Plans (RPP). These documents provide information on learning objectives, materials taught, and planned methods, which are important for understanding the context of learning and previous planning. The results of previous learning evaluations are also used as secondary data. This data includes student scores from previous evaluations that are relevant to the material on faith in the apostles. This data helps in comparing learning outcomes before and after the implementation of the Discovery Learning method. In addition, literature and scientific journals relevant to the Discovery Learning method and Islamic Religious Education learning are used as secondary data. This literature provides a theoretical basis and previous research results that can be compared with the findings in this study. By combining primary and secondary data, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the Discovery Learning method in improving students' understanding of the material on faith in the apostles. This approach allows researchers to view changes that occur from multiple perspectives and ensure the validity of research findings.

Data analysis in this study was conducted quantitatively and qualitatively: Data from pre-test and post-test results were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the increase in student understanding. The steps of quantitative analysis include: (1) Calculating the average value, percentage of completion, and the difference between pre-test and post-test, Comparing learning outcomes between cycles to determine the effectiveness of the actions taken. (2) Data from observations and interviews were analyzed descriptively qualitatively with the following steps: Data reduction: selecting important data that is in accordance with the focus of the study. Data presentation: compiling data in narrative form, Drawing conclusions: drawing meaning from the results of observations and interviews to support quantitative data. Data triangulation techniques were also used to ensure data validity, namely by comparing data from observations,

interviews, and tests to gain a more holistic understanding of the impact of implementing Discovery Learning.

However, I can provide a comprehensive discussion, spanning ten paragraphs, on the potential benefits and considerations of using the Discovery Learning method to enhance students' understanding of faith in the Apostles within a religious education context at the junior high school (SMP) level. This will draw upon established pedagogical principles and the general advantages of inquiry-based learning in religious studies. The topic of "Faith in the Apostles" within religious education curricula aims to instill in students a foundational understanding of the roles, significance, and beliefs associated with key figures in religious history. Traditional methods of teaching this material often involve direct instruction, where students passively receive information about each Apostle. While this approach can convey factual knowledge, it may not always foster a deep and personal understanding of the faith and conviction that characterized these individuals.

The Discovery Learning method offers a compelling alternative by shifting the focus from direct instruction to student-centered exploration and inquiry. In this approach, students are presented with carefully designed activities, questions, or scenarios that encourage them to investigate and "discover" key concepts and understandings related to the faith of the Apostles. Instead of being told facts, students actively construct their own knowledge through exploration and analysis. Implementing Discovery Learning for the "Faith in the Apostles" material could involve various strategies. For example, students could be presented with primary or secondary source texts (adapted for their age level) that describe the actions, teachings, or challenges faced by different Apostles. Through guided analysis of these texts, students could identify patterns, draw inferences about the Apostles' beliefs, and formulate their own understanding of the depth and nature of their faith.

Another approach could involve presenting students with case studies or scenarios that mirror the challenges and decisions faced by the Apostles. By working collaboratively to analyze these scenarios, students can explore the different ways faith might manifest in action and develop a more nuanced understanding of the Apostles' unwavering commitment. This active engagement with problem-solving can lead to deeper insights than simply memorizing facts. The benefits of using Discovery Learning in this context are numerous. Firstly, it promotes active engagement and critical thinking. Students are not passive recipients of information but active participants in constructing their own understanding. This can lead to greater interest in the material and a more profound level of comprehension. Secondly, it fosters a sense of ownership over the learning process, which can enhance motivation and retention. When students discover knowledge for themselves, it tends to be more meaningful and memorable.

Furthermore, Discovery Learning encourages the development of important inquiry skills, such as observation, analysis, interpretation, and drawing conclusions. These skills are not only valuable in the context of religious education but are also transferable to other academic disciplines and real-world situations. The process of investigation and discovery empowers students to become independent learners. However, the successful implementation of Discovery Learning requires careful planning and facilitation by the teacher. The teacher's role shifts from lecturer to guide, providing appropriate scaffolding, resources, and questioning to support students' exploration without directly giving away the answers. The activities and materials must be carefully designed to lead students towards the desired learning outcomes.

It is also important to consider the time factor. Discovery Learning often requires more time for exploration and discussion compared to direct instruction. Teachers need to plan their lessons accordingly to ensure that students have sufficient time to engage meaningfully with the material and reach a solid understanding. Assessment in a Discovery Learning environment should focus not only on the final answers students arrive at but also on the process of their inquiry. Observing students' engagement,

analyzing their reasoning, and evaluating their ability to draw evidence-based conclusions are important aspects of assessment. In conclusion, while specific research from SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu is unavailable, the principles of Discovery Learning suggest that it holds significant potential for enhancing students' understanding of faith in the Apostles. By actively engaging in exploration and inquiry, students can develop a deeper, more personal, and more meaningful understanding of the unwavering belief that characterized these important figures in religious history. Careful planning, effective facilitation, and a focus on the learning process are key to maximizing the benefits of this student-centered approach.

Expanding on the application of the Discovery Learning method to the "Faith in the Apostles" material, we can further explore specific strategies and considerations for its effective implementation in the SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu context or similar educational settings. One key aspect is the careful selection and adaptation of resources to facilitate student-led inquiry. This might involve using excerpts from religious texts, historical accounts (where applicable and age-appropriate), or even fictionalized narratives that capture the essence of the Apostles' experiences and faith. Teachers could curate a collection of these resources, presenting them to students as primary "evidence" to be examined and analyzed. For instance, students could be given accounts of specific miracles attributed to an Apostle or descriptions of the challenges they faced and how their faith sustained them. The task for the students would then be to work individually or in small groups to identify key themes, draw inferences about the Apostle's faith, and support their conclusions with evidence from the provided materials.

Another effective strategy within Discovery Learning is the use of comparative analysis. Students could be tasked with exploring the lives and testimonies of different Apostles, identifying similarities and differences in the expression of their faith. This comparative approach encourages deeper thinking and helps students understand that while the core tenets of belief might be shared, individual experiences and expressions of faith can vary. Furthermore, the incorporation of visual aids and multimedia resources can enhance the Discovery Learning experience. Images, maps, or even short video clips (if relevant and available) can provide additional context and stimulate student curiosity. For example, showing a map of the regions where different Apostles traveled can help students understand the scope of their mission and the challenges they might have encountered.

The role of questioning is paramount in Discovery Learning. Teachers should pose open-ended, thought-provoking questions that guide students' inquiry without leading them to specific answers. Questions like "What does this account reveal about this Apostle's beliefs?" or "How did their faith influence their actions in this situation?" can encourage deeper analysis and critical thinking. Collaborative learning activities are also highly compatible with Discovery Learning. Students can work together in small groups to analyze resources, discuss their interpretations, and formulate their conclusions. This peer interaction not only fosters communication skills but also allows students to learn from each other's insights and perspectives, enriching their overall understanding.

To cater to different learning styles, teachers can offer a variety of ways for students to demonstrate their discoveries. This might include written reports, oral presentations, visual displays, or even short dramatizations. Allowing students to choose a format that aligns with their strengths can enhance engagement and showcase their understanding in a more meaningful way. It is also crucial to provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning process. After engaging in a Discovery Learning activity, teachers can facilitate a class discussion where students share what they learned, how they arrived at their conclusions, and what challenges they encountered. This metacognitive reflection helps students become more aware of their own learning and develop more effective inquiry strategies.

In the context of "Faith in the Apostles," Discovery Learning can move students beyond simply memorizing names and dates. By actively engaging with the narratives and

exploring the evidence for themselves, they can develop a more profound and personal understanding of the conviction and unwavering belief that defined these pivotal figures. This deeper understanding can foster a more meaningful connection to the religious concepts being taught. In conclusion, the Discovery Learning method offers a powerful and engaging approach to improving students' understanding of faith in the Apostles at SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu or similar schools. Through the careful selection of resources, the use of effective questioning, the promotion of collaboration, and the provision of opportunities for reflection, teachers can guide students on a journey of inquiry that leads to a deeper, more meaningful, and more lasting comprehension of the profound faith that characterized these important figures in religious history. This student-centered approach empowers learners to actively construct their own understanding and develop valuable critical thinking and inquiry skills along the way.

RESULTS

This research was conducted in class VIII of SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu during two learning cycles. Each cycle includes four stages, namely planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. The focus of the research is the application of the Discovery Learning method to improve students' understanding of the material of Faith in the Apostles. Before the action was carried out, students were given a pre-test to determine their initial level of understanding. From the results of the pre-test, it was found that most students still had a low understanding of the basic concepts of faith in the apostles. The results of the pre-test showed that only 35% of students achieved a score above the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM), which was 70. This indicates that students' initial understanding of the material was very limited. After the action in Cycle I with the Discovery Learning method, there was an increase in learning outcomes. From the results of the Cycle I post-test, 60% of students had achieved a score above the KKM. Although there was an increase, reflection on cycle I showed that there were still obstacles in the implementation, such as students were not yet accustomed to exploratory learning patterns and were less active in group discussions.

In Cycle II, improvements were made by directing the discussion more, providing concrete examples, and using more interactive media. This aims to increase student involvement in the learning process. The post-test results in Cycle II showed a significant increase. As many as 85% of students managed to achieve scores above the KKM. This shows that the use of the Discovery Learning method is effective in improving understanding of religious material. In addition to tests, data were also collected through observations of student activities during learning. Observations showed an increase in student participation in the learning process from cycle I to cycle II. In cycle I, students tended to be passive and waited for teacher instructions. However, in cycle II, students began to actively discuss, ask questions, and try to solve problems based on the instructions given. Interviews with several students also strengthened the quantitative findings. Students admitted that they found it easier to understand the material when they searched and found it themselves through group activities and exploration. To ensure the validity of the data, a data verification process was carried out using method and source triangulation. Triangulation was carried out between test results, observations, and interviews. The test results provided quantitative data on the level of student achievement. This data was compared with observation results that reflected student behavior during the learning process. Observations showed a correlation between students' active involvement in group discussions and increased scores on the post-test. Active students generally showed better understanding.

The interview results supported these findings. Students said that they found it easier to understand the material when discussing and finding answers themselves, compared to just listening to the teacher's explanation. From the teacher's perspective, the interview results stated that the Discovery Learning method requires adaptation, but is

able to bring out students' creativity and encourage them to think critically. Verification was also carried out by comparing the results between cycles. The increase in average scores and percentage of completion from the pre-test to the post-test in Cycle II showed consistent improvement. In addition, the teacher as an observer also noted that the increase in student participation was seen from the frequency with which they answered questions and asked questions to friends or teachers. Documentation in the form of photos and recordings of the learning process was also used as supporting data, which showed the active involvement of students during the discovery process. Overall, the findings show that the Discovery Learning method not only improves learning outcomes, but also encourages changes in students' learning behavior to be more active and independent. Thus, it can be concluded that the application of the Discovery Learning method is effective in improving the understanding of grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu on the material of Faith in the Apostles, both from cognitive and affective aspects.

The implementation of the Discovery Learning method at SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu to enhance students' understanding of "Faith in the Apostles" material is anticipated to yield significant positive outcomes in student engagement, comprehension, and retention. By shifting away from traditional, teacher-centered instruction towards a more inquiry-based approach, students are likely to develop a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the unwavering belief and conviction that characterized these key religious figures. One of the primary results would likely be a marked increase in student engagement with the subject matter. The active nature of Discovery Learning, where students are encouraged to explore, analyze, and construct their own understanding, is inherently more engaging than passively receiving information. Students become active participants in the learning process, fostering greater curiosity and motivation to delve into the lives and testimonies of the Apostles.

Furthermore, the application of Discovery Learning is expected to lead to a more profound level of comprehension. When students actively investigate and discover concepts for themselves, the knowledge gained is often more deeply internalized and connected to their existing understanding. By analyzing primary or secondary source materials, discussing their interpretations with peers, and drawing their own conclusions about the Apostles' faith, students are likely to develop a more nuanced and lasting understanding compared to simply memorizing facts presented by the teacher. The development of critical thinking and analytical skills would also be a significant result of employing the Discovery Learning method. As students grapple with evidence, formulate hypotheses, and support their conclusions, they hone their ability to analyze information, identify patterns, and think critically about the historical and theological significance of the Apostles' faith. These skills are transferable and beneficial across various academic disciplines.

Collaboration and communication skills are also likely to be enhanced through group-based Discovery Learning activities. When students work together to explore resources, discuss their findings, and present their conclusions, they develop their ability to articulate their ideas clearly, listen respectfully to others, and engage in constructive dialogue. This collaborative environment fosters a sense of shared learning and mutual understanding. Moreover, the use of varied resources and presentation formats within Discovery Learning can cater to diverse learning styles, leading to more inclusive and effective learning outcomes for all students. Students who learn best through visual, auditory, or kinesthetic modalities can engage with the material in ways that resonate with their strengths, leading to a more personalized and meaningful learning experience.

The long-term retention of knowledge is also expected to improve with Discovery Learning. Information that is actively discovered and constructed by the learner is typically more memorable than information that is passively received. The deeper processing and personal connection fostered by inquiry-based learning contribute to stronger memory encoding and retrieval.Assessment results might also shift to reflect a

more holistic understanding of student learning. Beyond traditional tests focused on factual recall, assessments could incorporate evaluations of students' inquiry processes, their ability to analyze evidence, and their collaborative skills demonstrated during Discovery Learning activities. This provides a more comprehensive picture of their understanding of the "Faith in the Apostles" material.

Potential challenges in implementing Discovery Learning, such as the need for careful planning, effective facilitation, and adequate time, would need to be addressed to maximize its benefits. However, the anticipated increase in student engagement, comprehension, critical thinking, and retention suggests that the investment in this pedagogical approach would be worthwhile in enhancing the learning experience at SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu. In conclusion, the adoption of the Discovery Learning method for teaching "Faith in the Apostles" at SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu is projected to result in a more active, engaging, and meaningful learning experience for students. By empowering them to explore, analyze, and discover key concepts for themselves, this approach is likely to foster a deeper understanding, enhance critical thinking skills, improve collaboration, and promote long-term retention of this important religious material.

DISCUSSION

Data validation is an important stage in this classroom action research to ensure that the data obtained truly reflects the learning conditions and students' understanding accurately. Validation is carried out through a triangulation process, checking the credibility of sources, and involving relevant parties during the data collection and analysis process. In the context of this research, data validation is carried out by referring to the principles of internal and external validity. Internal validity aims to ensure that the changes that occur in student learning outcomes are indeed caused by the Discovery Learning method intervention, not other factors. While external validity aims to see the extent to which the results of this study can be applied in similar contexts. Triangulation of methods is applied by combining data from pre-tests and post-tests (quantitative), observation sheets (qualitative), and student and teacher interviews. This is done to ensure that the data collected comes from various perspectives, so that the results obtained are more objective and comprehensive.

Validation is also strengthened by conducting a member check, namely confirming the results of the researcher's interpretation to students and teachers as the main participants. They are asked to provide input on whether the results and analysis of the researcher are in accordance with what they experienced during the learning process. In addition, peer debriefing or discussions with fellow researchers and colleagues were also conducted. This discussion serves to evaluate the accuracy of the analysis, see the possibility of bias, and provide a critical view of the existing findings. The validation results show that the data obtained is consistent, valid, and supports the research objectives. There is a match between the increase in student test results and observation records of learning activities, as well as recognition from students that they feel they understand the material better through the Discovery Learning method. The findings from the observation show that students who actively discuss and explore the material tend to have a more significant increase in grades.

This is in line with the students' statements in the interview, that they feel more confident in understanding the material when given the opportunity to discover for themselves the basic concepts of faith in the apostles. The teacher also confirmed that student involvement increased during cycle II, especially when the learning method was more directed and adjusted to the characteristics of the students. This shows that the intervention actions carried out by the researcher have a positive impact on the learning process and outcomes. No data was found that significantly contradicted one source with another. In fact, the data reinforces each other, both in quantitative and qualitative

aspects. Thus, the validation results show that the Discovery Learning method has a real contribution to increasing students' understanding of the material on faith. Based on the validation results, it can be concluded that the findings of this study are worthy of being used as a basis for formulating recommendations for the implementation of the Discovery Learning method, both at the class level and as a reference for Islamic Religious Education learning policies more broadly.

The potential implementation of the Discovery Learning method for the "Faith in the Apostles" material at SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu necessitates a comprehensive discussion of its underlying pedagogical principles and the anticipated mechanisms through which it can enhance student understanding. This approach, rooted in constructivist learning theory, posits that students learn most effectively when they actively construct knowledge rather than passively receiving it. By engaging in exploration and problem-solving, learners build deeper connections with the material and develop a more robust understanding. In the context of the "Faith in the Apostles," Discovery Learning encourages students to move beyond simply memorizing the names and roles of these key figures. Instead, they become investigators, examining narratives, teachings, and historical contexts to uncover the essence of the Apostles' unwavering belief. This active engagement fosters a sense of intellectual ownership, making the learning process more personal and meaningful. The inherent curiosity sparked by the opportunity to discover knowledge for oneself can significantly increase student motivation and interest in the subject matter.

One of the key mechanisms through which Discovery Learning enhances understanding is the promotion of deeper cognitive processing. When students are presented with a challenge or a set of resources and are tasked with drawing their own conclusions, they engage in higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This active cognitive engagement leads to a more thorough processing of the information, resulting in a more profound and lasting understanding compared to passive listening or rote memorization. Furthermore, the collaborative aspects often integrated into Discovery Learning activities can significantly contribute to enhanced understanding. When students work together to explore ideas, discuss their interpretations, and debate different perspectives, they benefit from the collective intelligence of the group. This peer interaction can expose them to new ways of thinking and help them refine their own understanding through articulation and argumentation. The process of explaining one's ideas to others and responding to their questions solidifies comprehension and identifies areas of confusion.

The flexibility inherent in the Discovery Learning method allows for differentiation to cater to diverse learning styles and paces. Students can approach the learning tasks in ways that align with their strengths and preferences. For example, visual learners might focus on analyzing images or diagrams, while auditory learners might benefit from discussions and oral presentations. This inclusive approach ensures that all students have the opportunity to engage with the material in a way that is most conducive to their learning. However, the effectiveness of Discovery Learning is heavily reliant on the teacher's role as a facilitator. The teacher must carefully design the learning tasks, select appropriate resources, and provide effective guidance without directly giving away the answers. Skillful questioning is crucial to prompt students' thinking and encourage them to explore different avenues of inquiry. The teacher also needs to create a supportive and encouraging classroom environment where students feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes as part of the learning process. The assessment of understanding in a Discovery Learning environment requires a shift in focus. Instead of solely evaluating the final answers, teachers should also assess the process of learning. This can involve observing students' engagement in the inquiry process, analyzing their reasoning and problem-solving strategies, and evaluating their ability to support their conclusions with evidence. Performance-based assessments and portfolios can be particularly well-suited

for capturing the depth and breadth of student understanding developed through Discovery Learning.

Moreover, the application of Discovery Learning to the "Faith in the Apostles" material can foster a more personal and relevant connection to the subject matter. By actively exploring the lives and testimonies of these individuals, students can develop a deeper appreciation for their unwavering belief and the impact of their faith. This personal connection can make the learning more meaningful and inspire students to reflect on their own beliefs and values. Potential challenges in implementing Discovery Learning, such as time constraints within the curriculum and the need for adequate resources, must be carefully considered and addressed. Teachers may need to adapt their lesson plans and seek out appropriate materials to effectively facilitate student-led inquiry. However, the potential for enhanced understanding, engagement, and critical thinking makes the effort worthwhile. In conclusion, the Discovery Learning method offers a powerful pedagogical framework for fostering a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the "Faith in the Apostles" material at SMP Negeri 2 Teluk Mengkudu. By actively engaging students in exploration, collaboration, and critical thinking, this approach can move them beyond rote memorization towards a more profound and lasting comprehension of the unwavering belief that characterized these significant religious figures. The careful design of learning tasks, skillful facilitation by the teacher, and a shift in assessment practices are crucial for realizing the full potential of Discovery Learning in this context.

CONCLUSION

This classroom action research proves that the systematic and planned application of the Discovery Learning method can significantly improve students' understanding of the material on Faith in the Apostles. This finding is supported by quantitative data from test results and qualitative data from observations and interviews that reinforce each other. The pre-test results showed a low level of student understanding, with an average score of 61 and only 34.37% completed. However, after two cycles of action, the post-test results increased to an average of 79, with a completion rate of 84.37%. This shows the effectiveness of the Discovery Learning method in encouraging academic improvement.

Student activities in the learning process also experienced significant changes. From being passive, students became more active, reflective, and critical in understanding the material. This proves that this method is able to foster active and independent learning skills in students. Academically, this research makes an important contribution to the development of a more contextual, constructive, and student-centered Islamic Religious Education learning strategy. This strategy is relevant to the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes active and exploratory learning processes. From a social perspective, the Discovery Learning method encourages the creation of a collaborative, inclusive, and communicative learning environment. Students learn to work together in groups, respect the opinions of friends, and practice critical thinking and decision-making skills. This study also inspires teachers to be more creative in designing learning processes that facilitate independent discovery of concepts by students. Teachers no longer act only as sources of information, but as facilitators and companions to students' thinking processes. Thus, the strong findings of this study confirm that the Discovery Learning method can be an alternative effective learning strategy, not only in improving students' academic understanding, but also in forming better social and spiritual characters. It is hoped that the results of this study can be a reference in improving classroom learning, as well as a basis for further research on a wider scale in other subjects and levels of education.

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