

IMPLEMENTATION OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis penerapan teknik pembelajaran kolaboratif dalam meningkatkan prestasi belajar peserta didik pada pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif melalui observasi kelas, wawancara, dokumentasi, dan tes formatif yang dilaksanakan dalam tiga siklus pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan prestasi belajar peserta didik secara bertahap setelah penerapan pembelajaran kolaboratif. Pada Siklus I, ketuntasan belajar secara klasikal mencapai 68,18%, meningkat menjadi 79,01% pada Siklus II, dan mencapai 86,36% pada Siklus III. Pencapaian pada Siklus III telah melampaui kriteria ketuntasan klasikal sebesar 85%. Peningkatan tersebut didukung oleh kemampuan guru yang semakin baik dalam memberikan motivasi, mengelola waktu pembelajaran, memberikan bimbingan, memfasilitasi diskusi, dan menyampaikan tujuan pembelajaran. Aktivitas peserta didik juga meningkat melalui keterlibatan dalam diskusi, pertukaran gagasan, kerja sama, serta interaksi dengan guru dan teman sebaya. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran kolaboratif mampu menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang lebih partisipatif dan interaktif sekaligus meningkatkan prestasi belajar. Dengan demikian, teknik pembelajaran kolaboratif relevan digunakan sebagai strategi pedagogis untuk meningkatkan efektivitas pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran Kolaboratif, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Prestasi Belajar

Abstract

This study examines the implementation of collaborative learning techniques to improve students' learning achievement in Islamic Religious Education. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using classroom observations, interviews, documentation, and formative assessments conducted across three learning cycles. The findings indicate a progressive improvement in students' learning achievement following the implementation of collaborative learning. In Cycle I, the reported classical learning mastery reached 68.18%, increasing to 79.01% in Cycle II and 86.36% in Cycle III. The achievement in Cycle III exceeded the predetermined classical mastery criterion of 85%. The improvement was supported by enhanced teacher performance in motivating students, managing instructional time, providing guidance, facilitating discussions, and communicating learning objectives. Students also demonstrated increasing engagement through active participation, peer discussion, exchange of ideas, and interaction with the teacher. The findings indicate that collaborative learning can create a more participatory and interactive learning environment while supporting students' academic achievement. Collaborative learning is therefore relevant as a pedagogical strategy for strengthening the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education by integrating academic achievement with active student engagement, communication, cooperation, and meaningful classroom interaction.

Keywords: Collaborative Learning, Islamic Religious Education, Learning Achievement

INTRODUCTION

Learning is essentially an educational interaction process aimed at achieving changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behavior. Such interaction does not merely bring teachers and students together in the classroom but also creates a learning environment that enables meaningful communication, participation, experience, and knowledge construction. Teachers have a strategic position in creating learning conditions that allow students to develop according to their characteristics and needs. Therefore, learning success is determined not only by teachers' mastery of subject matter but also by their ability to select approaches, methods, media, and interaction patterns that correspond to students' characteristics. Shochib (1998) emphasizes the importance of understanding students as individuals with different characteristics, requiring educational approaches to be adapted to their respective needs and conditions.

In the context of Islamic Religious Education, the need for learning that actively engages students has become increasingly important. Islamic Religious Education is not merely intended to provide students with knowledge of religious teachings but also to develop attitudes, values, skills, and behaviors that reflect Islamic principles. Accordingly, successful Islamic Religious Education should not be measured solely by students' ability to memorize subject matter but also by their ability to understand, communicate, apply, and internalize the values being studied. Learning that is excessively teacher-centered may position students merely as passive recipients of information, thereby limiting opportunities to develop their thinking, communication, collaboration, and knowledge-construction skills through meaningful learning experiences. Such conditions may ultimately affect students' learning achievement. From the perspective of contemporary education, student engagement constitutes an important mechanism connecting learning activities with academic outcomes. A systematic review of student engagement indicates that academic, behavioral, cognitive, and affective engagement are associated with the quality of learning experiences and learning outcomes (Furenes Klippen et al., 2025).

Learning quality is essentially the result of the integration of various components within the learning system. Learning objectives, instructional materials, students, facilities, media, methods, school environment, stakeholder participation, and assessment are interconnected components that determine the quality of both learning processes and outcomes (Shochib, 1998). Therefore, efforts to improve learning achievement cannot be undertaken merely by providing additional materials or increasing assessment intensity but require comprehensive improvements in the learning process. Teachers need to synchronize learning objectives, the characteristics of instructional materials, students' conditions, and the learning strategies employed in order to create relevant and effective learning experiences. From this perspective, the selection of learning techniques represents an important aspect because learning techniques determine how students interact with subject matter, teachers, and their peers.

The learning process is also a communication process involving the transmission of messages from a source to a recipient through particular channels. Sadiman et al. (1996) explain that teaching and learning is essentially an interaction and communication process involving the delivery of instructional messages through media, techniques, or methods to learners. This perspective indicates

that effective learning requires communication patterns that go beyond one-way information delivery. Students need opportunities to ask questions, express opinions, discuss issues, provide responses, and construct understanding through interaction with their learning environment. International research has also demonstrated that social interaction in collaborative learning is associated with academic achievement. Saqr et al. (2022), through a systematic review and meta-analysis of computer-supported collaborative learning, demonstrated the importance of interaction patterns and students' positions within learning networks in understanding learning achievement.

One approach that is relevant to these needs is collaborative learning. Collaborative learning techniques provide students with opportunities to learn through interaction and joint efforts to complete tasks or understand learning problems. Through collaboration, students acquire knowledge not only from teachers but also from the experiences, ideas, and perspectives of their peers. Such processes can create a more participatory learning environment while encouraging individual and group responsibility for achieving learning objectives. Puzio and Colby (2013), through a meta-analysis of cooperative learning and literacy, demonstrated that cooperative learning contributes to students' academic achievement in literacy-related learning. Similarly, Tuncer and Dikmen (2017) found through a meta-analysis that cooperative learning has a positive effect on academic achievement, with the magnitude of the effect being related to characteristics of the learning group.

Empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of collaborative learning has also continued to develop within technology-supported learning environments. Talan (2021), through a meta-analysis of 40 studies involving 3,474 students, demonstrated that computer-supported collaborative learning has an effect on academic achievement. These findings indicate that the principles of collaboration remain relevant as learning environments increasingly develop toward digital contexts. Rather than diminishing the importance of collaboration, technology can expand opportunities for interaction and enable students to construct knowledge collectively. More specifically, Saqr et al. (2022) demonstrated that patterns of student interaction in computer-supported collaborative learning environments can be used to understand and predict academic achievement.

The effectiveness of collaborative learning has also been demonstrated across various educational levels and fields of study. Research by Mulawarman and Valiantien (2022), for example, demonstrated that collaborative learning can improve students' academic achievement in online English grammar learning. Meanwhile, a meta-analysis of cooperative learning in physical education demonstrated that such strategies have positive effects on various student learning outcomes (Boke et al., 2025). These international findings indicate that collaborative learning is not merely a strategy for improving social interaction but can also function as a pedagogical mechanism for supporting academic achievement.

Recent findings further strengthen this argument. Güngör et al. (2026), through a second-order meta-analysis published in *Current Psychology*, analyzed evidence from multiple meta-analyses concerning cooperative learning and found effects on students' academic achievement, higher-order thinking skills, and affective behaviors. This finding is important because it demonstrates that the effectiveness of collaborative learning extends beyond cognitive achievement to include thinking

abilities and affective dimensions. Accordingly, collaborative learning is conceptually compatible with the characteristics of Islamic Religious Education, which positions knowledge, attitudes, values, and behavior as integral components of educational objectives.

Nevertheless, collaborative learning should not be understood merely as learning activities conducted in groups. The essence of collaboration lies in meaningful interaction, shared responsibility, exchange of ideas, active engagement, and the collective achievement of learning objectives. Teachers continue to play an important role as designers, facilitators, guides, and evaluators of the learning process. A meta-analysis of various collaborative instructional models demonstrates that the success of such strategies is influenced by how collaborative activities are designed and facilitated rather than merely by the existence of learning groups. Vembye et al. (2024), for instance, through a systematic review and meta-analysis of collaborative instructional models, emphasized the importance of the design and implementation of collaboration in influencing students' academic outcomes. Therefore, collaborative techniques need to be systematically designed so that interactions among students genuinely contribute to knowledge construction.

In Islamic Religious Education, this principle has strong relevance because religious subject matter often requires dialogue, interpretation, argumentation, and connections between concepts and everyday life. Research in the context of Islamic Religious Education has also demonstrated that collaborative learning can improve learning outcomes while developing students' social skills (Imami et al., n.d.). Sudadi et al. (2024) found that the implementation of an online collaborative learning platform in Islamic Religious Education contributed to students' academic achievement and learning motivation. Hadi et al. (2025) further demonstrated that collaborative learning in Islamic Religious Education can be utilized to foster tolerance through interaction and dialogue among students. Thus, collaborative learning has the potential to bridge the need to improve academic achievement with the development of social competencies and character, which constitute important dimensions of Islamic education.

Nevertheless, most international studies on collaborative learning have focused on general fields such as science, mathematics, literacy, physical education, or digital learning environments. Empirical evidence specifically examining the implementation of collaborative learning techniques in Islamic Religious Education within particular classroom contexts remains relatively limited. This gap highlights the importance of research that not only examines the general effectiveness of collaboration but also investigates how collaborative techniques can be implemented within the distinctive characteristics of Islamic Religious Education, which encompasses knowledge, values, attitudes, and religious practices. Therefore, this study occupies an important position in extending empirical evidence regarding the implementation of collaborative learning in Islamic education while providing an understanding of its contribution to improving students' learning achievement.

Based on the foregoing discussion, improving learning achievement in Islamic Religious Education cannot be separated from the quality of interaction established during the learning process. Learning that provides opportunities for participation, communication, collaboration, and exchange of ideas has the potential to create more active and meaningful learning experiences. Therefore, the implementation of collaborative learning techniques represents a strategic alternative

for improving the learning process while enhancing students' learning achievement. The novelty of this study lies in examining the contextual implementation of collaborative learning techniques in Islamic Religious Education by positioning educational interaction and student engagement as important mechanisms for improving learning achievement. This study is expected to provide empirical contributions to the development of Islamic Religious Education that is more participatory, interactive, and oriented toward achieving optimal learning outcomes.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the implementation of collaborative learning techniques in improving students' learning achievement in Islamic Religious Education. The qualitative approach was selected because the study focused not only on students' learning outcomes but also on the learning process, classroom interactions, teacher strategies, student participation, and the dynamics that emerged during the implementation of collaborative learning. This approach enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how collaborative learning techniques were implemented and how they contributed to the development of a more active, participatory, and meaningful Islamic Religious Education learning environment.

The research was conducted in an educational setting where Islamic Religious Education was taught as part of the formal curriculum. The research subjects consisted of Islamic Religious Education teachers and students who participated directly in the learning process. The selection of participants was based on their direct involvement in the implementation of collaborative learning techniques. The teacher was positioned as the primary informant regarding instructional planning, learning implementation, classroom management, and evaluation, while students served as important sources of information concerning their learning experiences, participation, interaction, and perceptions of collaborative activities.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted during the implementation of Islamic Religious Education learning to identify patterns of interaction between teachers and students as well as among students. Particular attention was given to students' participation, cooperation, communication, exchange of ideas, responsibility for group tasks, and involvement in solving learning problems. Observation also examined the teacher's role as facilitator, including how the teacher organized groups, presented learning tasks, guided discussions, provided feedback, and evaluated students' learning activities. Interviews were conducted with Islamic Religious Education teachers and selected students to obtain deeper information about the implementation of collaborative learning, the difficulties encountered, students' responses, and perceived changes in learning achievement. Documentation was used to complement observational and interview data, including lesson plans, learning materials, student assignments, assessment records, photographs of learning activities, and other relevant documents.

The data analysis followed an interactive process consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation were first organized and selected according to their relevance to the research objectives. The researcher then

categorized the data into several analytical themes, including collaborative learning implementation, student engagement, teacher facilitation, peer interaction, learning difficulties, and learning achievement. The categorized data were presented descriptively to identify patterns and relationships among the findings. Conclusions were subsequently drawn by interpreting these patterns in relation to the research focus and the theoretical perspective of collaborative learning.

To ensure data credibility, the study applied source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from teachers and students, while technique triangulation involved comparing observation, interview, and documentation data. The researcher also conducted repeated observations and verified important information with relevant participants. Through these procedures, the study sought to ensure that the findings accurately represented the implementation of collaborative learning techniques and their contribution to improving students' learning achievement in Islamic Religious Education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Improvement of Students' Learning Achievement through Collaborative Learning

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of collaborative learning techniques contributed positively to the improvement of students' learning achievement in Islamic Religious Education. The improvement was observed progressively across three instructional cycles, indicating that the effectiveness of collaborative learning became more evident as both the teacher and students became increasingly familiar with the learning procedures. In the first cycle, the average formative test score reached 70.00, with a reported learning mastery of 68.18%. This percentage remained below the predetermined classical mastery criterion of 85%. The initial condition indicates that the implementation of collaborative learning had not yet produced optimal results because students were still adapting to a learning model that required active participation, interaction, discussion, and shared responsibility. Students who were accustomed to conventional teacher-centered learning needed time to understand their roles within collaborative activities.

The condition in the first cycle is pedagogically understandable because collaborative learning requires students to adjust not only to new instructional procedures but also to new patterns of classroom interaction. Unlike conventional learning, collaborative learning places students in a more active position in constructing knowledge through interaction with peers and teachers. Talan (2021), through a meta-analysis of computer-supported collaborative learning, demonstrated that collaborative learning can positively influence academic achievement, although its effectiveness depends substantially on how the learning activities and interaction processes are organized. Similarly, Saqr et al. (2022) emphasized that interaction patterns among students are important elements in explaining learning achievement in collaborative learning environments. Therefore, the relatively low mastery level in the first cycle does not necessarily indicate that collaborative learning is ineffective; rather, it reflects the adaptation process required before students can participate effectively in collaborative learning.

Following the reflection conducted after the first cycle, several improvements were introduced. The teacher was encouraged to provide clearer learning objectives, increase student

motivation, improve time management, and involve students more directly in each learning activity. These improvements were reflected in the second cycle, in which the average formative test score increased to 77.73 and the reported learning mastery increased to 79.01%. Although the achievement remained below the 85% classical mastery criterion, the improvement indicates that students had begun to understand the collaborative learning procedures and became more responsive to the teacher's instructional expectations. The repeated implementation of collaborative activities appears to have reduced students' uncertainty and increased their readiness to participate.

The improvement continued in the third cycle. The average formative test score increased to 82.73, while the reported classical learning mastery reached 86.36%, exceeding the predetermined criterion of 85%. This achievement indicates that the learning process had reached the expected level of classical mastery. The improvement across the three cycles can therefore be interpreted as a gradual process in which changes in instructional management, student familiarity, and interaction patterns collectively contributed to better learning outcomes. International evidence supports this finding. Tuncer and Dikmen (2017) reported through a meta-analysis that cooperative learning has a positive effect on academic achievement. More recently, Güngör et al. (2026) found through a second-order meta-analysis that cooperative learning contributes not only to academic achievement but also to higher-order thinking and affective outcomes.

The findings are also consistent with research in Islamic Religious Education. Sudadi et al. (2024) reported that the implementation of an online collaborative learning platform in Islamic Religious Education contributed positively to students' academic achievement and learning motivation. Imami et al. likewise found that collaborative learning in Islamic Religious Education could improve learning outcomes while encouraging social interaction among students. These findings suggest that the improvement observed in the present study is not an isolated phenomenon but is consistent with broader evidence regarding the effectiveness of collaborative learning.

The progression from 68.18% in Cycle I to 79.01% in Cycle II and 86.36% in Cycle III demonstrates that collaborative learning becomes more effective when implemented continuously and accompanied by systematic reflection. The results indicate that learning achievement is influenced not only by the instructional model itself but also by the quality of its implementation. Students require clear instructions, sufficient guidance, opportunities to interact, and repeated experiences to develop productive collaborative behaviors. Thus, the findings reinforce the argument that collaborative learning can serve as an effective pedagogical strategy for improving students' achievement in Islamic Religious Education when implemented systematically, responsively, and consistently.

Teacher's Ability to Manage Collaborative Learning

The second important finding concerns the teacher's ability to manage the learning process. The results indicate that improvement in students' learning achievement was accompanied by gradual improvement in the teacher's ability to implement collaborative learning. In Cycle I, several weaknesses were identified through observation and reflection. The teacher was considered less

effective in motivating students, communicating learning objectives, and managing instructional time. These limitations affected the effectiveness of classroom interaction because students had not yet fully understood what was expected of them during collaborative activities. In addition, the teacher's limited experience in managing the new learning model resulted in some students remaining passive during the learning process.

The findings demonstrate that the teacher's role remains fundamental even though collaborative learning shifts a substantial part of classroom activity toward students. Collaborative learning should not be interpreted as transferring responsibility for learning entirely to students. Instead, the teacher functions as a facilitator who designs learning experiences, establishes group structures, provides guidance, monitors interaction, and offers feedback. Vembye et al. (2024), through a systematic review and meta-analysis of collaborative instructional models, emphasized that the effectiveness of collaborative instruction depends strongly on the way collaborative activities are designed and facilitated. Consequently, the quality of teacher management becomes an important determinant of whether group learning produces meaningful learning outcomes or merely creates physical group arrangements without substantive collaboration.

The reflection conducted after Cycle I resulted in several instructional revisions. The teacher was directed to provide clearer explanations, motivate students more intensively, organize time more effectively, and involve students directly in learning activities. In Cycle II, the teacher's instructional management improved, although several challenges remained. The teacher still needed to strengthen student motivation, provide closer guidance, assist students in formulating conclusions, and manage instructional time more effectively. These findings demonstrate that instructional competence develops through reflective practice. The teacher did not simply repeat the same instructional procedure but used evidence from classroom observations to modify subsequent learning activities.

This process of continuous adjustment is important because collaborative learning requires a different classroom management orientation from conventional teacher-centered instruction. The teacher needs to monitor not only whether students understand the material but also whether they communicate, share responsibilities, listen to one another, contribute ideas, and remain engaged in group tasks. Furenes Klippen et al. (2025), in their systematic review of collaborative learning and student engagement, emphasized the importance of learning environments that facilitate active student engagement. Thus, teacher management should focus not merely on classroom order but on creating conditions that support meaningful participation.

The improvement became more apparent in Cycle III. The teacher was reported to have implemented the collaborative learning procedures more effectively, while the weaknesses identified in previous cycles had largely been addressed. Students became more accustomed to the learning model, and the teacher was increasingly capable of guiding students toward understanding concepts and formulating conclusions. The increased average score and classical mastery in Cycle III provide evidence that improvement in instructional management was accompanied by improvement in student learning outcomes. This relationship is theoretically reasonable because effective facilitation can reduce confusion, increase participation, and direct students toward the learning objectives.

The international literature further strengthens this interpretation. Puzio and Colby (2013) found that cooperative learning can positively affect academic outcomes, while Tuncer and Dikmen (2017) demonstrated that cooperative learning has a positive effect on academic achievement across different group conditions. Güngör et al. (2026) further reported that cooperative learning contributes to academic achievement, higher-order thinking, and affective development. These findings imply that the teacher's role in collaborative learning is not diminished but transformed. The teacher becomes a learning designer and facilitator who ensures that collaboration produces cognitive and social benefits.

In the context of Islamic Religious Education, this role is particularly significant because learning objectives encompass not only cognitive mastery but also values, attitudes, and behaviors. Teachers therefore need to create learning situations in which students can discuss religious concepts, listen to different perspectives, formulate conclusions, and relate Islamic teachings to everyday life. The present findings indicate that when teachers improve their ability to motivate, guide, manage time, provide feedback, and facilitate interaction, collaborative learning becomes increasingly effective. Thus, teacher competence in managing collaborative learning represents an essential factor in transforming collaboration from a simple group-learning arrangement into a meaningful pedagogical process capable of improving students' learning achievement.

Student Activity and Interaction in Islamic Religious Education Learning

The third major finding concerns students' activity and interaction during the implementation of collaborative learning in Islamic Religious Education. The observation results indicate that students' participation increased progressively across the three cycles. In the initial cycle, students were relatively passive because they were unfamiliar with collaborative learning procedures. Some students were hesitant to express opinions, ask questions, or actively participate in group discussions. This condition was consistent with the observation that students were still adjusting to the expectations of the new learning model. However, subsequent cycles demonstrated gradual improvement as students became more familiar with collaborative learning and received more intensive guidance from the teacher.

The dominant student activities included listening to and paying attention to the teacher's explanations as well as engaging in discussions with peers and between students and the teacher. These activities indicate that the learning process gradually moved beyond one-way communication toward more interactive learning. Discussion provided opportunities for students to exchange ideas, clarify concepts, respond to different opinions, and collectively formulate understanding. Such interaction is consistent with the fundamental principles of collaborative learning, in which knowledge is constructed through social interaction and shared engagement.

The findings are consistent with Saqr et al. (2022), who demonstrated that interaction patterns within computer-supported collaborative learning environments are significantly

relevant to student achievement. Their findings emphasize that collaboration should be understood not merely in terms of students being placed into groups but in terms of the quality and structure of their interactions. In the present study, the increasing involvement of students in discussions suggests that collaborative learning gradually created an environment in which students were able to participate more actively in the learning process. The improvement in participation was accompanied by an increase in learning achievement, suggesting a positive relationship between student engagement and academic outcomes.

Furenes Klippen et al. (2025) similarly emphasize that student engagement is a multidimensional construct involving behavioral, cognitive, and affective dimensions. In the present research, behavioral engagement was reflected in students' participation in discussions and learning activities, cognitive engagement appeared through efforts to understand concepts and formulate conclusions, while affective engagement was reflected in increasing enthusiasm and willingness to participate. These dimensions appear to have developed gradually as students became accustomed to collaborative learning. Therefore, the improvement in students' learning achievement may be partly explained by the increased quality of their engagement during classroom activities.

The findings are also consistent with the results of Talan (2021), who found that collaborative learning can produce positive effects on academic achievement. The collaborative process encourages students to become active participants rather than passive recipients of information. Students are required to process information, communicate their understanding, compare ideas, and work toward a shared conclusion. This process can promote deeper learning because students are exposed to multiple perspectives and are required to articulate their own understanding. Puzio and Colby (2013) similarly demonstrated positive academic effects of cooperative learning, reinforcing the argument that peer interaction can support students' academic development.

Within Islamic Religious Education, collaborative interaction has additional pedagogical significance. Religious learning often involves concepts that require interpretation, reflection, and connection with real-life situations. Through discussion, students can explore the meaning of religious values and relate them to interpersonal relationships. The topic of *Indahnya Saling Menghargai*, for example, naturally requires students to understand the importance of respect, cooperation, tolerance, and appreciation of differences. Collaborative learning provides an appropriate environment for these values to be practiced through classroom interaction rather than merely explained theoretically. Hadi et al. (2025) found that collaborative learning in Islamic Religious Education can support the development of tolerance through dialogue and interaction among students. This strengthens the argument that collaborative learning is particularly relevant for Islamic Religious Education because its benefits extend beyond academic achievement.

The third cycle showed that student activity had reached a more desirable level. Students were reported to be actively involved in the learning process, while weaknesses identified in previous cycles had been substantially improved. The teacher's increased ability to guide students also contributed to the development of more productive interactions. This indicates that student

activity and teacher facilitation are mutually reinforcing. Effective teacher guidance encourages students to participate, while active student participation enables the teacher to facilitate learning more effectively.

The findings therefore indicate that collaborative learning created a more participatory learning environment in Islamic Religious Education. The increase in student activity was accompanied by increasing learning achievement, culminating in the attainment of the reported classical mastery level of 86.36% in Cycle III. This finding reinforces the view that meaningful interaction, active engagement, peer discussion, and teacher facilitation are important mechanisms through which collaborative learning can improve academic achievement. Accordingly, collaborative learning should be positioned not merely as a classroom technique but as a pedagogical approach that integrates cognitive development, social interaction, and value formation within Islamic Religious Education.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of collaborative learning techniques can improve students' learning achievement in Islamic Religious Education. The improvement occurred progressively across three learning cycles, indicating that the effectiveness of collaborative learning developed alongside students' familiarity with the learning procedures and the teacher's ability to manage the instructional process. In Cycle I, the reported learning mastery reached 68.18%, increasing to 79.01% in Cycle II and 86.36% in Cycle III. The achievement in the third cycle exceeded the predetermined classical mastery criterion of 85%, indicating that the implementation of collaborative learning had successfully achieved the expected learning outcomes. The improvement was supported by changes in teacher performance and student engagement. Teachers became more effective in providing motivation, explaining learning objectives, managing instructional time, facilitating discussions, and guiding students in formulating conclusions. At the same time, students demonstrated increasing participation through paying attention to explanations, engaging in peer discussions, exchanging ideas, asking questions, and participating in learning activities. These findings indicate that collaborative learning is not merely a group-based instructional technique but a pedagogical approach that strengthens interaction, participation, and shared responsibility in the learning process. Therefore, collaborative learning can be considered an effective strategy for improving learning achievement while simultaneously fostering active participation and meaningful interaction in Islamic Religious Education.

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