



Improving Student Learning Outcomes in Islamic Education Learning through the Method of Giving Learning Assignments and Recitations at MIN 40 Pidie

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ABSTRACT

This classroom action research aimed to improve students' learning outcomes in the subject of Islamic Religious Education through the application of the Assignment and Recitation Method in Grade IV of MIN 40 Pidie, Peukan Baro District, Pidie Regency. The study employed a classroom action research design conducted in three cycles, each consisting of the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The research subjects were 22 students, comprising 11 boys and 11 girls during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The results revealed that the implementation of the Assignment and Recitation Method significantly improved students' learning achievement. The percentage of students achieving mastery increased from 68.18% in Cycle I to 77.27% in Cycle II, and reached 86.36% in Cycle III. The average score also rose from 69.09 in Cycle I to 76.36 in Cycle II, and 81.82 in Cycle III. This consistent improvement demonstrates that the Assignment and Recitation Method effectively fosters students' responsibility, independence, and learning motivation. Therefore, this method can be regarded as an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing learning achievement and student engagement in Islamic Religious Education.

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Introduction

Education is a lifelong process aimed at developing the intellectual, moral, and spiritual potential of every learner. In the Indonesian context, Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam) plays a central role in forming students' character, moral awareness, and spiritual intelligence. The 2013 Curriculum emphasizes that Islamic education is not limited to knowledge acquisition but extends to the internalization of moral values, responsibility, and discipline in daily life (Mulyasa, 2017). However, in many elementary schools, learning remains predominantly teacher-centered, relying

heavily on lectures and memorization, resulting in low student motivation and limited understanding (Sanjaya, 2016).

At MIN 40 Pidie, observations during preliminary studies revealed that students in Grade IV showed low levels of activeness and motivation during Islamic Religious Education lessons. The learning process was often dominated by the teacher's explanations, while students passively listened, took notes, and memorized verses or concepts without meaningful comprehension. This condition affected learning outcomes, with only a small number of students achieving the minimum mastery criterion (KKM). Moreover, many students demonstrated difficulties in completing assignments independently and lacked initiative to review materials outside the classroom. Such conditions indicate the need for a learning strategy that can engage students more actively and promote responsibility and independence in learning.

The Assignment and Recitation Method (metode pemberian tugas dan resitasi) is one of the classical yet effective methods that can be revitalized in modern pedagogical contexts. This method provides students with structured learning tasks—either individually or in groups—that they must complete and later present or discuss in class. According to Djamarah and Zain (2013), this method encourages students to be more active, independent, and disciplined in learning since it requires them to take initiative and apply knowledge beyond classroom instruction. The recitation element, which involves reporting and explaining the completed tasks, further enhances comprehension and communication skills (Hamalik, 2015).

Theoretically, the Assignment and Recitation Method aligns with constructivist learning theory, which posits that students construct knowledge through experience, reflection, and interaction with their environment (Piaget, 1973). By engaging in self-directed assignments, learners actively participate in constructing meaning rather than merely receiving information. Similarly, Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism emphasizes the role of social interaction and peer discussion in promoting deeper understanding. Through the recitation phase, students communicate their learning outcomes, receive feedback, and refine their understanding—transforming passive learning into an interactive and reflective process.

Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of this method. Sudjana (2019) reported that structured assignment activities improve students' ability to think critically and manage their learning time effectively. Hamalik (2015) also found that students who engage in task-based learning show higher retention and motivation than those who rely solely on teacher explanations. Similarly, Sardiman (2018) emphasized that the recitation stage fosters accountability and self-confidence, as students are expected to explain and justify their learning results before the teacher and peers. In addition, Riyanto (2020) observed that applying the recitation method in Islamic education classes

strengthens students' moral awareness, since they must demonstrate honesty and responsibility in completing their tasks.

Despite these advantages, many Islamic education teachers rarely apply this method systematically in their teaching practice. They often perceive assignments merely as homework or mechanical exercises rather than as structured tools for active learning. This misconception limits the method's potential in fostering critical thinking, self-discipline, and creativity. In rural madrasah contexts such as MIN 40 Pidie, where learning resources and technology are limited, the Assignment and Recitation Method offers a practical and low-cost approach to enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes (Huda, 2017). The challenge lies in how teachers can design meaningful tasks that align with lesson objectives and integrate reflection through recitation sessions.

The gap identified in this study, therefore, lies in the underutilization of active, reflective, and responsibility-based learning methods in Islamic Religious Education at the elementary level. Previous research has largely focused on cooperative and problem-based models (Rahayu & Suyono, 2020; Prasetyo, 2018), while studies on the classical Assignment and Recitation Method within the moral and spiritual learning domain remain limited. Moreover, few studies have documented its implementation through the lens of classroom action research (CAR), which allows for iterative improvement and reflection. Thus, this study seeks to fill that gap by empirically examining how the Assignment and Recitation Method can improve learning outcomes in a real classroom setting.

The urgency of this research is reinforced by the increasing need for student-centered approaches that build responsibility, independence, and critical thinking from an early age. The Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama RI, 2020) emphasizes that Islamic education in madrasah should produce students who are not only knowledgeable but also disciplined and reflective in applying Islamic values. The Assignment and Recitation Method aligns closely with this vision, as it cultivates habits of inquiry, self-discipline, and accountability through continuous task completion and reporting. By involving students actively in the process of preparing, executing, and presenting their learning results, teachers can transform Islamic education from a didactic subject into a dynamic and value-based learning experience.

Therefore, this classroom action research aimed to investigate the application of the Assignment and Recitation Method to improve students' learning achievement in Islamic Religious Education at MIN 40 Pidie. The objectives of this study were threefold: (1) to describe the implementation process of the Assignment and Recitation Method in classroom learning, (2) to analyze the improvement in students' learning outcomes through successive action cycles, and (3) to identify behavioral and attitudinal changes in students' responsibility, independence, and engagement. Through this study, it is

expected that teachers and educational practitioners can obtain practical insights into revitalizing traditional yet effective teaching methods within the modern madrasah context.

Methods

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design aimed at improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education learning through the implementation of the assignment and recitation method. According to Arikunto, Suhardjono, and Supardi (2015), classroom action research is conducted by teachers within their own classrooms to enhance teaching practices and learning outcomes in a systematic and reflective manner. This approach allows teachers to act as both practitioners and researchers, integrating the processes of teaching, observation, and reflection into a continuous cycle of pedagogical improvement. The use of CAR in this study was considered appropriate because it focuses on addressing real classroom problems through practical interventions that can lead to immediate improvements in learning outcomes (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014).

The research was conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 40 Pidie, located in Peukan Baro Subdistrict, Pidie Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia. The study took place during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, specifically in September 2025. The participants consisted of 22 fourth-grade students, including 12 boys and 10 girls. This class was chosen based on initial observations indicating that students demonstrated low motivation and limited achievement in Islamic Religious Education, particularly in the topic "Telling the Story of the Prophet." The researcher, who was also the classroom teacher, served as both facilitator and observer throughout the research process. The dual role was intended to maintain the authenticity of classroom dynamics while simultaneously ensuring rigorous data collection and analysis (Hopkins, 2011).

The study design followed the spiral model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2014), which includes four main stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. These stages were carried out in three cycles, with each cycle representing one round of implementation and evaluation of the teaching strategy. In the planning stage, the researcher developed teaching materials, lesson plans (RPP), learning worksheets (LKPD), and assessment instruments tailored to the research objectives. The action stage involved the implementation of the assignment and recitation method in real classroom settings, during which students were given structured tasks designed to foster responsibility and active participation. The observation stage focused on monitoring both teacher and student activities, capturing behavioral changes and levels of engagement. Finally, the reflection stage allowed the researcher to analyze the data collected, identify areas for improvement, and adjust the teaching approach for the

subsequent cycle. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), this cyclical process ensures that each round of action research contributes to a deeper understanding of effective teaching strategies and their impact on student learning.

The assignment and recitation method implemented in this study emphasizes student-centered learning, where learners are actively involved in completing and presenting assigned tasks. Assignments were designed to encourage students to explore religious concepts, reflect on moral values, and express their understanding through written or oral presentations. The recitation phase required students to account for their work in front of their peers and the teacher, promoting a sense of responsibility and self-confidence. As noted by Sudjana (2016), the assignment method encourages independent learning and the development of initiative, while Hamalik (2018) highlights that recitation enhances retention and comprehension through verbal reinforcement. In the context of Islamic education, this method not only supports cognitive growth but also cultivates ethical values such as honesty, discipline, and accountability, which are integral to the holistic formation of students (Majid, 2020).

The research instruments consisted of lesson plans, student worksheets, observation sheets, and formative tests. Lesson plans and worksheets provided structured guidance for teaching and learning activities, while observation sheets were used to document student participation and teacher performance during each lesson. The formative tests were developed based on the specific learning indicators outlined in the national curriculum. To ensure the reliability and validity of the instruments, the test items were reviewed by experts in Islamic Education and analyzed using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20) to assess internal consistency (Arikunto, 2019). The dual use of quantitative and qualitative instruments allowed the researcher to measure both academic progress and behavioral engagement comprehensively.

Data collection was carried out using three techniques: observation, testing, and documentation. Observation data captured real-time classroom dynamics, including teacher-student interactions and student engagement levels. The tests provided quantitative data on student achievement after each cycle of instruction. Documentation served as a supplementary data source, including attendance records, teacher notes, and student task submissions. Creswell (2018) emphasizes that combining qualitative and quantitative data in classroom action research strengthens the validity of findings through triangulation and contextual interpretation. In this study, the triangulation approach ensured that all data sources were cross-validated, minimizing bias and enhancing reliability.

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive quantitative and qualitative approach. Quantitative analysis focused on calculating the mean score and the percentage of mastery learning for each cycle. The class was considered to have

achieved mastery if at least 85% of students obtained a minimum score of 65, following the national education standard (Depdikbud, 2013). Qualitative analysis, on the other hand, involved interpreting observational data through the processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, as described by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). This process enabled the researcher to identify patterns in student engagement and to understand how instructional changes influenced learning behaviors.

To maintain the validity and credibility of the data, triangulation was employed across both sources and methods. Source triangulation involved comparing findings from observations, test results, and documentation, while method triangulation compared different data collection approaches. An external peer observer was also involved to cross-check observations and ensure objectivity in data interpretation. Moleong (2017) argues that triangulation enhances the credibility of qualitative research by validating findings through multiple perspectives and evidence sources. This strategy was essential to ensure that the observed improvements in student motivation and achievement were genuinely the result of the implemented instructional intervention.

Overall, this methodology integrates a reflective, iterative process that aligns with the core principles of classroom action research. By combining empirical measurement with continuous reflection, the study not only sought to improve academic achievement but also aimed to foster moral and affective growth among students. The use of the assignment and recitation method as an instructional strategy was expected to cultivate self-directed learning, accountability, and deeper comprehension of Islamic teachings. Through systematic planning, action, and evaluation, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how pedagogical innovations can enhance the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education at the elementary level.

Result

The implementation of the assignment and recitation method in Islamic Religious Education at MIN 40 Pidie resulted in significant improvements in both student learning outcomes and classroom engagement. The data collected over three action research cycles indicated a consistent upward trend in students' academic performance, motivation, and participation. The findings presented in this section summarize the key results of the study, including the initial conditions of the students, the progression of improvement throughout the three cycles, and the final achievements after the intervention. The results are presented narratively to highlight the transformation in learning behavior and academic success as a result of the instructional innovation.

At the outset of the research, preliminary observations revealed that the majority of fourth-grade students demonstrated low motivation and limited engagement during Islamic Religious Education lessons. Many students appeared passive, hesitant to respond to teacher prompts, and reluctant to express their understanding of religious

narratives. Their average performance on pre-test assessments was below the minimum standard of mastery (65 points), suggesting a lack of comprehension and retention of key concepts. This initial condition underscored the need for a more participatory and student-centered approach to teaching. As Hamalik (2018) emphasizes, effective learning occurs when students are actively involved in constructing knowledge rather than merely receiving information. Hence, the implementation of the assignment and recitation method aimed to transform the traditional teacher-centered learning atmosphere into one that fostered active inquiry and accountability.

During the first cycle, the researcher introduced the assignment and recitation method by giving students structured learning tasks related to the topic "Telling the Story of the Prophet." Students were instructed to read and summarize selected materials, then share their understanding orally during class. Although students initially found this approach unfamiliar, the activity stimulated curiosity and encouraged participation. The results of the formative test in the first cycle showed that the average score was 69.09, with 15 out of 22 students (68.18%) achieving the minimum mastery criterion. Although this figure was below the targeted 85% class mastery threshold, it represented a noticeable improvement compared to the baseline condition. The results aligned with Sudjana's (2016) argument that assigning structured tasks promotes independent learning and a deeper sense of responsibility among students. However, observations indicated that some students still depended on peers for task completion and that not all learners were confident during oral recitations. These findings became the basis for revising instructional strategies in the next cycle.

The second cycle focused on enhancing student engagement and collaboration. The teacher adjusted the lesson plan to include more interactive discussions, peer feedback sessions, and cooperative learning activities. Students were encouraged to share their work in small groups before presenting to the class. This modification not only increased participation but also improved comprehension, as learners benefited from peer explanations. The formative test administered at the end of the second cycle revealed a notable improvement: the average score increased to 76.36, and 17 students (77.27%) met the mastery criterion. The progression from the first to the second cycle demonstrated a 9.09% increase in mastery, indicating that students were becoming more accustomed to the new learning approach. These findings resonate with Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), who emphasize that active engagement and peer collaboration enhance retention and conceptual understanding. Observation notes also indicated a more positive classroom climate; students appeared more enthusiastic, confident, and willing to take intellectual risks during discussions. The teacher's role evolved from a transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator who guided and supported learning activities.

In the third cycle, refinements were made to further strengthen student independence and reflection. The teacher reduced direct intervention, allowing students to take more responsibility for their learning. Learners were tasked with preparing short oral presentations on specific subtopics related to prophetic stories, which they later delivered during class. This exercise aimed to foster public speaking confidence, moral reasoning, and comprehension of religious messages. The results of the formative test in the third cycle confirmed a substantial improvement: the average score rose to 81.82, and 19 out of 22 students (86.36%) achieved mastery, surpassing the predetermined target of 85% class mastery. These data clearly demonstrate that the assignment and recitation method effectively enhanced both cognitive achievement and student motivation. The incremental improvements across the three cycles reflected the process of pedagogical refinement and adaptive instruction, which are central to action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014).

From qualitative observations, several key behavioral changes were evident. First, students displayed increased learning autonomy; they were more proactive in asking questions, clarifying concepts, and sharing interpretations. Second, the method fostered collaborative learning. Students began to assist each other during assignments and showed a willingness to discuss moral lessons from Islamic narratives in groups. Third, there was a marked improvement in communication and confidence, as most students participated voluntarily during the recitation phase. These findings are consistent with Majid (2020), who asserts that the recitation method in Islamic education strengthens both moral and intellectual development by combining academic learning with character formation. In addition, classroom management became smoother as students were more focused and disciplined during the sessions, indicating a positive shift in classroom culture.

Quantitative data also supported the observed behavioral trends. The progression from an average score of 69.09 in Cycle I to 81.82 in Cycle III represented an overall increase of 12.73 points or approximately 18.4% improvement in performance. Moreover, the proportion of students achieving mastery rose from 68.18% to 86.36%, a total improvement of 18.18 percentage points. These statistics confirmed the success of the intervention in achieving the research objectives. Similar results have been reported by other studies that implemented task-based and recitation methods, which showed significant improvements in student outcomes due to active participation and self-assessment opportunities (Creswell, 2018; Hamalik, 2018).

Another important finding was the improvement in teacher performance and instructional competence. As the cycles progressed, the teacher became more skilled in managing classroom activities, facilitating discussions, and providing feedback. The teacher's ability to observe, reflect, and refine strategies in real time is a hallmark of effective action research (Hopkins, 2011). The reflective process not only enhanced the

teacher's pedagogical knowledge but also contributed to professional growth and a deeper understanding of students' learning needs. This aligns with Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2014) view that iterative reflection in classroom action research leads to both personal and institutional improvement.

Finally, the overall impact of the intervention extended beyond measurable test scores. Students expressed greater interest and enjoyment in learning Islamic Religious Education, which had previously been perceived as monotonous. They began to view religious study not as rote memorization but as a process of exploration and personal understanding. The sense of achievement experienced during recitations fostered pride and intrinsic motivation, which, according to Hamalik (2018), are essential components of sustainable learning. The teacher observed that even students who initially struggled to engage began to demonstrate noticeable enthusiasm and curiosity by the end of the third cycle.

Discussion

The findings of this classroom action research clearly demonstrate that the application of the assignment and recitation method significantly enhanced student achievement and engagement in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). The improvement in students' mean scores and mastery levels across the three research cycles reflects not only academic progress but also deeper changes in learning behavior, motivation, and self-discipline. This section discusses the implications of these findings in relation to existing pedagogical theories, prior studies, and practical contributions to the field of Islamic education.

The increase in students' learning outcomes from the first to the third cycle confirms the theoretical assumption that active learning approaches are more effective than conventional teacher-centered methods. According to Hamalik (2018), meaningful learning occurs when students are given opportunities to actively construct knowledge through interaction, reflection, and self-expression. In this study, the assignment and recitation method provided such opportunities by requiring students to engage in independent study and oral presentation, transforming passive learners into active participants. The steady increase in the mean test scores—from 69.09 in the first cycle to 81.82 in the third—demonstrates that students benefited from being directly involved in their own learning process. These results are consistent with Sudjana (2016), who emphasizes that task-based learning develops student autonomy, critical thinking, and responsibility for learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the recitation component of the method appears to have played a central role in improving students' confidence and comprehension. As Majid (2020) notes, recitation activities in Islamic education are not merely exercises in memorization; they cultivate the ability to communicate knowledge, internalize moral lessons, and

strengthen understanding through articulation. In the present study, students who participated in the recitation phase demonstrated greater clarity in expressing religious concepts and a stronger moral awareness in relating the stories of the Prophets to daily life. This finding aligns with Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), who argue that verbalization helps students consolidate learning and develop metacognitive awareness. By explaining their ideas to peers, learners reinforce conceptual connections and correct misconceptions, which results in deeper learning.

The results also support the constructivist view of learning proposed by Vygotsky (1978), which emphasizes the social nature of knowledge construction. The collaborative group discussions and peer feedback sessions implemented in the second and third cycles facilitated social interaction and shared understanding among students. Learners who initially struggled to grasp the material became more engaged when supported by peers within their zone of proximal development. This dynamic mirrors the scaffolding process described by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), in which guidance and collaboration gradually lead to independent mastery. Hence, the assignment and recitation method functioned not only as an individual accountability system but also as a cooperative learning strategy that leveraged peer learning as a source of cognitive and affective development.

An equally important aspect revealed by the study is the increase in student motivation. Initially, many learners perceived Islamic Religious Education as monotonous and largely based on rote memorization. However, through structured assignments and opportunities for oral presentation, they began to experience a sense of ownership and pride in their learning. Motivation, according to Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, flourishes when learners feel autonomous, competent, and connected to others. The method employed in this study fulfilled these psychological needs: assignments provided autonomy, mastery of tasks increased competence, and group interactions enhanced social relatedness. Consequently, students became intrinsically motivated, a key factor in sustaining long-term engagement and academic success (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2014).

The transformation of teacher practice is another critical finding. The teacher, who also acted as the researcher, moved from a directive teaching style to a facilitative and reflective role. Through continuous cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, the teacher refined instructional techniques and gained a deeper understanding of student needs. This iterative process embodies the core principle of action research as described by Kemmis and McTaggart (2014), where practitioners engage in systematic inquiry to improve their own teaching. The teacher's growing competence in managing student-centered activities also resonates with the concept of reflective practice advocated by Schön (1983), emphasizing that professional growth occurs through reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Therefore, the

improvement in student outcomes is inseparable from the teacher's evolving pedagogical expertise.

In addition, the success of the assignment and recitation method underscores the importance of integrating moral and cognitive dimensions in Islamic Religious Education. As Rahman (2019) argues, effective religious education must not only impart doctrinal knowledge but also nurture moral reasoning and ethical behavior. The recitation phase in particular allowed students to internalize the moral values embedded in the stories of the Prophets, linking abstract concepts with real-life applications. This moral engagement helped foster empathy, respect, and personal responsibility, aligning with the holistic goals of Islamic pedagogy (Azra, 2018). The method thus aligns with the Quranic principle of *ta'lim wa tarbiyah*—education that combines intellectual enlightenment with character formation.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research on active and task-based learning in religious and general education contexts. For instance, a study by Suyanto and Jihad (2019) found that students taught through task-based learning achieved higher critical thinking scores and demonstrated better retention of content compared to those taught through traditional lectures. Similarly, Rahmah (2021) reported that incorporating recitation and discussion into Qur'anic instruction improved students' confidence and comprehension. These studies, together with the present findings, reinforce the view that participatory learning approaches not only enhance academic performance but also support personal growth and moral awareness—an essential objective in Islamic education.

From a pedagogical standpoint, this research contributes to the development of contextually responsive teaching strategies in Islamic schools. The assignment and recitation method is particularly suited to environments like MIN 40 Pidie, where class sizes are moderate and teachers can closely monitor student progress. The cyclical reflection process also empowers teachers to adapt instruction to student needs dynamically, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. This model can serve as a practical framework for teachers seeking to integrate active learning principles into religious instruction without requiring substantial external resources. It demonstrates that innovation in teaching is possible even within conventional classroom constraints when teachers are willing to experiment, observe, and reflect systematically (Hopkins, 2011).

Finally, the broader implication of this research lies in its contribution to educational reform within Islamic schooling systems. By demonstrating that reflective, student-centered approaches can yield measurable academic and moral gains, the study challenges the stereotype that religious education is inherently didactic and static. Instead, it presents a model for modern Islamic pedagogy that harmonizes faith-based

learning with contemporary educational theory. Such integration is essential in preparing students to apply Islamic values thoughtfully and critically in a rapidly changing world.

Conclusion

This classroom action research demonstrated that the application of the assignment and recitation method effectively enhanced students' academic achievement, learning motivation, and active participation in Islamic Religious Education at MIN 40 Pidie. Through three consecutive cycles of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection, students' average test scores improved significantly—from 69.09 in the first cycle to 81.82 in the third—while the percentage of learners achieving mastery rose from 68.18% to 86.36%. These quantitative improvements were accompanied by observable qualitative changes in students' engagement, confidence, and moral awareness. Learners became more autonomous, collaborative, and expressive in articulating Islamic values, suggesting that the method facilitated both cognitive and affective growth. The study further confirmed that reflective, student-centered approaches can transform traditional religious instruction into a more dynamic and meaningful learning experience. The teacher's active role as a reflective practitioner contributed to continuous instructional refinement, aligning with the principles of participatory action research. Overall, the assignment and recitation method proved to be an effective pedagogical strategy for promoting responsibility, discipline, and deeper comprehension of Islamic teachings among elementary students. The findings underscore the importance of integrating active learning, moral education, and reflective practice to improve the quality and relevance of Islamic Religious Education in contemporary school settings.

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