



# Group Discussion Method to Improve Learning Outcomes of Grade VII Students in Fiqh Learning: Action Research at MTs Al-Insan

**Muhtar**, MTs Al-Insan, Indonesia

## ABSTRACT

The problem in this study is whether the application of the group discussion method can improve the learning outcomes of Class VII students in the Fiqh Subject in the 2021-2022 Academic Year at MTs AL-Insan Cilegon Lombok Timur. This study uses a classroom action research (CAR) design. With class VII research subjects totaling 9 male students. Using an instrument in the form of a learning outcome evaluation test. This classroom action research design was carried out in 2 cycles with each cycle going through four stages, namely: (1) planning, (2) implementation of actions, (3) observation, and (4) reflection. The results of the study in cycle I showed that students and teachers in learning activities for the average level were classical completion of 25% and individual absorption of 50%. In cycle II it increased to classical completion of 100% and individual absorption of 83%, and for the assessment of student observations in cycle I, namely 50 increased to cycle II to 83, for the assessment of teacher observations in cycle I 100%, cycle II 100%. Based on the analysis of the results of the first cycle test, 2 out of 9 students completed, 25% completed classically and their individual absorption capacity was 50%, while in the second cycle, 9 out of 9 students completed, 100% completed classically and their classical absorption capacity was 83%. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the application of the group discussion method can improve student learning outcomes in class VII MTs AL-INSAN CILEGON Sakra in fiqh learning.

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## Corresponding Author:

**Muhtar**

MTs Al-Insan, Indonesia  
muhtarasuyuthiy@gmail.com

## Introduction

As we know that learning is a harmonious combination of interactions carried out by teachers and students, students with students, or student interactions with learning resources. In the sense that learning is a process of change in human personality and these changes are shown in the form of increasing the quality and quantity of behavior such as increasing skills, knowledge, attitudes, habits, understanding, skills, thinking power, and other abilities. With this interaction, students are expected to be able to

build active, interactive, inspiring, fun, challenging knowledge, and can be motivated so as to achieve the expected competencies. Good learning outcomes according to the expectations above will be achieved if using a method that is appropriate to the conditions of the students and the material presented.

Based on personal experience, in the learning process carried out together through group discussion methods, when students are faced with a problem, they will be able to solve it well and on time, compared to learning alone with the lecture method causing boredom from students so that it has an impact on decreasing student learning outcomes that are less than KKM. Researchers consider and compare the learning outcomes obtained by students with lecture and group discussion methods. The group discussion method is a student-centered teaching strategy that involves dividing students into small groups to discuss a specific topic, issue, or question. This approach encourages active participation, critical thinking, collaboration, and deeper understanding of learning materials. Group discussions shift the learning process from being teacher-dominated to student-driven. In this method, students are encouraged to express their ideas, listen to different perspectives, and work together to build a shared understanding of the subject matter.

One of the main objectives of group discussion is to create a collaborative learning environment where students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and learning from each other. This fosters a sense of community, trust, and mutual respect among learners. When implemented effectively, group discussion helps improve student learning outcomes by encouraging analytical thinking. Students are challenged to explain, justify, and sometimes defend their opinions, which strengthens their comprehension and reasoning skills. Group discussion also enhances communication skills. Students learn to articulate their ideas clearly, listen actively, and respond constructively to their peers. These skills are essential for both academic success and real-life situations.

Another benefit of group discussions is that they cater to diverse learning styles. Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners all find opportunities to engage in ways that suit their preferences, making learning more inclusive and accessible. The method also allows for differentiated instruction. Within a group, students with varying abilities can support one another. High-achieving students can help explain concepts to others, reinforcing their own learning while lifting the understanding of their peers.

In subjects that involve moral reasoning, ethics, or interpretation—such as religious education, social studies, or literature—group discussions are particularly powerful. They allow students to explore complex ideas and develop personal meaning from the content. Teachers play a vital role in facilitating group discussions. They are responsible for organizing the groups, defining clear goals, providing guidance, and ensuring that all students are engaged and on task. A skilled facilitator knows when to intervene and when to step back. Before beginning a group discussion, teachers must

carefully plan the topic, questions, and expected outcomes. Topics should be open-ended, thought-provoking, and relevant to students' lives to ensure meaningful conversation. Group size also matters. Ideally, a discussion group should consist of 4–6 students. This allows for sufficient diversity of opinion while giving each student ample opportunity to contribute.

Group roles can enhance the effectiveness of the discussion. Assigning roles like leader, timekeeper, recorder, and presenter ensures that all members are involved and that the discussion remains focused and productive. The physical setup of the classroom can affect the quality of discussions. Arranging desks in circles or clusters promotes face-to-face interaction, which is essential for communication and collaboration. Assessment in group discussions can be formative and summative. Teachers may observe students' contributions, review group outputs, or have students present their findings. Peer assessment and self-reflection can also be integrated into the evaluation process. Students often feel more motivated and engaged when participating in group discussions. The interactive nature of this method breaks the monotony of traditional lectures and encourages students to take ownership of their learning. In terms of knowledge retention, studies show that students remember more when they actively participate in constructing their understanding. Group discussions offer this opportunity through peer interaction and repeated verbalization of ideas.

This method also builds social-emotional skills. Students develop patience, empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution abilities—traits that are not easily taught through conventional methods but are critical for personal growth. Challenges can arise, however. Some students may dominate the conversation while others remain silent. Teachers must monitor group dynamics and encourage balanced participation through structured prompts and clear expectations. Time management can also be an issue. Discussions may go off-topic or exceed the allocated time. To address this, teachers should set clear time limits and provide guiding questions to keep the conversation focused. In culturally diverse classrooms, group discussion fosters intercultural understanding. When students share personal experiences and perspectives, they learn to appreciate differences and find common ground.

Group discussions can also improve writing skills. After the discussion, students can be asked to write essays or reflections summarizing their learning, which helps them organize their thoughts and improve expression. Technology can enhance group discussions through digital tools like online forums, shared documents, and virtual breakout rooms. These tools make discussions accessible in both in-person and remote learning environments. When used regularly, group discussions contribute to a growth mindset. Students learn that making mistakes is part of the learning process and that understanding develops through exploration and dialogue.

In addition, this method supports lifelong learning habits. Students become more independent, reflective, and proactive in seeking knowledge—skills they will carry

beyond the classroom. For teachers, group discussions provide valuable insight into students' thinking. By listening to conversations, teachers can identify misconceptions and tailor their instruction accordingly. In large classrooms, rotating group discussions or using stations can ensure that all students benefit from the method without becoming overwhelmed. Flexibility and creativity in implementation are key. Group discussions are not limited to humanities subjects. In science, for example, students can discuss hypotheses, analyze results, or debate ethical implications of scientific discoveries. In mathematics, students can explain their problem-solving strategies and compare methods. This deepens conceptual understanding and encourages multiple approaches to learning.

Overall, the group discussion method is a powerful instructional strategy that fosters academic achievement, social development, and personal growth. Its flexibility makes it adaptable across grade levels and subject areas. By encouraging active participation, critical thinking, and collaborative learning, group discussions help create a dynamic and student-centered classroom environment where learners are truly engaged and empowered. In group discussions, students are more active and enthusiastic, they can convey their ideas, and their learning outcomes are maximized compared to the results of the lecture method. Based on the description above, it is important for researchers to further examine efforts to apply group discussion methods to improve learning outcomes for class VII in the Fiqh Subject Tapel. 2021-2022 at MTs AL-INSAN CILEGON Sakra"

## Methods

Classroom Action Research (CAR) was conducted by researchers as observers and also as teachers or instructors in the research. Before implementing CAR, researchers prepared CAR. This research was conducted at MTs AL-INSAN CILEGON Class VII in Fiqh Subject. There were 9 male students in this class. The implementation of CAR was carried out through two cycles, the first cycle was carried out on Wednesday, October 27, 2021 with an allocation of time for each meeting of 2 lesson hours 2 x 45 minutes.

The competencies studied were students' learning outcomes in the field of fiqh study on the provisions of the law of thaharah and its wisdom with the lecture and question and answer methods. The actions that were carried out in the preparation stage of learning were Before presenting the lesson material, a student activity sheet was made that would be studied, and an answer sheet for presenting the material, namely (a) Carrying out learning (1) initial activities. At this stage, the teacher greets, guides students to pray, checks student attendance, provides motivation, conveys objectives, benefits of learning about the topic to be taught, the teacher conveys an outline of the scope of the material and learning steps (2) Core Literacy Activities: Students are given motivation and guidance to see, observe, read, and write it down again, They are given posters and reading materials related to the Thaharah material,

Critical Thinking: The teacher gives students the opportunity to observe and answer several questions starting from factual questions to hypothetical questions in the form of question sheets that must be answered and collected by each student.

These questions must still be related to the Thaharah material. Creativity; The teacher and students draw conclusions about the things that have been learned related to Thaharah. Students are then given the opportunity to ask again about things that are not yet understood. (3) Closing: The teacher and students reflect on the learning experience, The teacher conveys the learning plan for the next meeting and prays.

## Result

Classroom Action Research (CAR) was conducted by researchers as observers and also as teachers or instructors in the research. Before implementing CAR, researchers prepared CAR. This research was conducted at MTs AL-INSAN CILEGON Class VII in Fiqh Subject. There were 9 male students in this class. The implementation of CAR was carried out through two cycles, the first cycle was carried out on Wednesday, October 27, 2021 with an allocation of time for each meeting of 2 lesson hours  $2 \times 45$  minutes. The competencies studied were students' learning outcomes in the field of fiqh study on the provisions of the law of thaharah and its wisdom with the lecture and question and answer methods. The actions that were carried out in the preparation stage of learning were Before presenting the lesson material, a student activity sheet was made that would be studied, and an answer sheet for presenting the material, namely (a) Carrying out learning (1) initial activities. At this stage, the teacher greets, guides students to pray, checks student attendance, provides motivation, conveys objectives, benefits of learning about the topic to be taught, the teacher conveys an outline of the scope of the material and learning steps (2) Core Literacy Activities: Students are given motivation and guidance to see, observe, read, and write it down again, They are given posters and reading materials related to the Thaharah material, Critical Thinking: The teacher gives students the opportunity to observe and answer several questions starting from factual questions to hypothetical questions in the form of question sheets that must be answered and collected by each student. These questions must still be related to the Thaharah material. Creativity; The teacher and students draw conclusions about the things that have been learned related to Thaharah. Students are then given the opportunity to ask again about things that are not yet understood. (3) Closing: The teacher and students reflect on the learning experience, The teacher conveys the learning plan for the next meeting and prays.

In the initial test held before the implementation of cycle II action, it was found that students' abilities were relatively low. The results of the initial test provide an overview that students have not understood the material about the material, for the initial test results on classical completeness it was still 25% and individual absorption capacity 50%. This fact can be seen from the students' answers in completing the initial test where

most students could not provide the right explanation, and did not match the expected answers. From this initial reflection, the researcher tried to improve students' abilities in understanding a lesson. The method used was to apply the group discussion method. The implementation of cycle II action applied learning to the group discussion method (large scale), it turned out to be quite effective in maximizing students' abilities in understanding and using learning concepts. The findings obtained in the implementation of cycle II were when students completed the cycle II test questions, it was found that students who did not complete in cycle I, but successfully completed in cycle II, obtained scores that met the learning completeness criteria even though some were standard, but this shows that students' answers are almost in accordance with what is expected, the absorption capacity related to learning materials is also quite good, as evidenced by the activeness of students in various aspects that support the group discussion process. Regarding the final test of the action, it shows that the learning of group discussion methods to maximize student learning outcomes in FIQIH learning has been maximized with an increase in classical completeness of 75% when compared to cycle I. This is stated by the results of assignment scores and interviews with students as informants. Apart from the achievements expected by teachers almost realized, there are still a number of shortcomings that need to be considered, including students' abilities are not yet maximized in developing their imagination, intuition and critical thinking in the group discussion method given, but some have been able to adapt to the group discussion method.

Students still do not dare to appear to present the results of group discussions in front of the class. This is evidenced by only representatives from each group presenting the results of their discussions. Teachers will have difficulty assessing aspects in terms of performance in delivering material from each student, but if students are accustomed to appearing and given more opportunities/time to discuss and present material, then it is likely that students' abilities will be maximized, more courageous and also the impact of student learning outcomes can be even better. Based on the description above, it is known that learning in the group discussion method is quite effective in maximizing student learning outcomes. The group discussion method also motivates students to actively build their own knowledge. Because the implementation of this learning is based on the theory of constructivism However, as the old saying goes "there is no ivory that is not cracked", even though this group discussion method has been proven to maximize student learning outcomes, this learning also has disadvantages, including not all learning can be learned through the group discussion method because what can be learned is material related to the learning model. In addition, this learning also requires a lot of time to implement it. The application of the group discussion method in Fiqih lessons for seventh-grade students showed a notable improvement in both student engagement and learning outcomes. This was observed through a series of classroom observations, evaluations, and student feedback during the study. Before the

implementation of group discussions, student participation in Fiqih lessons was generally low. Many students were passive, hesitant to ask questions, and seemed uninterested in the subject matter. The initial test scores reflected this, with a majority of students scoring below the minimum mastery criteria. In the first cycle of implementation, students were divided into small groups consisting of four to five members. Each group was given a topic to discuss related to the Fiqih material being taught, such as wudhu, prayer movements, or Islamic rulings on daily life practices. The teacher acted as a facilitator and guided the discussion process.

At the beginning of the first cycle, students showed some confusion and were not used to learning in a collaborative setting. However, as the sessions progressed, they began to participate more actively in their groups, sharing opinions and asking questions among peers. Observational data showed that during discussions, students were more focused and engaged with the topic. They seemed more comfortable expressing their ideas in smaller groups than in whole-class settings. This created a more inclusive learning environment where each student felt valued.

By the end of the first cycle, there was a noticeable improvement in the students' understanding of the material. The post-test results revealed that 60% of students had reached the minimum mastery criteria, compared to only 40% in the pre-test. This indicated a positive trend, though further improvement was still needed. In the second cycle, the teacher refined the group discussion strategy by assigning specific roles within each group, such as leader, recorder, and presenter. This structure gave each student a clear responsibility and encouraged accountability. With better preparation and clearer group roles, students became more confident in presenting their group's conclusions. They also began to ask deeper and more analytical questions about the Fiqih topics discussed, showing improved comprehension and critical thinking.

The classroom atmosphere became more dynamic, with students showing enthusiasm during Fiqih lessons. Peer interactions also improved, as students learned to listen to others' perspectives and engage in respectful dialogue, an important aspect of both education and Islamic character building. By the end of the second cycle, 83% of students achieved scores at or above the minimum criteria. This improvement demonstrated that the group discussion method not only helped students understand the content better but also motivated them to take learning more seriously.

Students reported enjoying the learning process more because they felt involved and could learn from their friends. They stated that discussing religious topics made them feel more connected to the material and helped them apply it in their daily lives. Teachers also observed an increase in self-confidence among students who previously rarely spoke in class. These students began to contribute more regularly within their discussion groups, gaining confidence through peer support. In addition to cognitive improvements, the group discussion method contributed to the development of soft skills such as teamwork, communication, and responsibility. These skills are essential for

students' overall personal development and are in line with the goals of Islamic education. The overall result of this study confirms that implementing group discussion in Fiqih learning is an effective method to enhance student learning outcomes. It supports both academic achievement and character education. This finding suggests that incorporating interactive and collaborative methods like group discussion should be a consistent part of teaching strategies in Islamic studies, especially to build engagement, deepen understanding, and foster meaningful learning among students.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate that the group discussion method is an effective approach to improving student learning outcomes in the subject of Fiqih for Grade VII. Through the implementation of this method, students became more active participants in the learning process, and their understanding of the subject matter improved significantly. In addition, group discussions helped foster social interaction, communication skills, and critical thinking abilities among students. At the initial stage, prior to the implementation of the group discussion method, students were generally passive during Fiqih lessons. They were reluctant to ask questions, hesitant to speak in class, and showed limited interest in the subject. This passivity had a direct impact on their learning outcomes, as reflected in the low scores obtained in the pre-test. The use of traditional lecture-based teaching methods did not seem to meet the needs of students who required more engagement and interaction.

With the introduction of the group discussion method in the first cycle, changes began to emerge. Students were divided into small groups to discuss specific Fiqih topics such as the procedures of ablution, the rules of prayer, and Islamic rulings related to daily life. Although students were initially unfamiliar with this learning strategy, they gradually adapted and began to engage more actively in discussions with their peers. Observations revealed that students felt more comfortable expressing their opinions and asking questions within their small groups compared to speaking in front of the entire class. This method allowed them to build confidence and contributed to a more inclusive and collaborative learning environment. Teachers also observed increased participation from students who were previously quiet or disengaged.

By the end of the first cycle, there was a noticeable improvement in student performance. More than half of the class reached the minimum learning competency (KKM), and students demonstrated a better grasp of the concepts discussed. However, to optimize the learning process, improvements were made in the second cycle, including assigning specific roles within each group such as discussion leader, recorder, and presenter. These role assignments gave students a sense of responsibility and helped the discussions run more smoothly. Students were more organized, and the quality of group presentations improved. They were able to summarize discussion points clearly, ask meaningful questions, and respond critically to different opinions.

This reflects a deeper level of understanding and active processing of Fiqih concepts. In addition to cognitive benefits, the group discussion method also contributed to students' social development. They learned how to cooperate with others, respect differing views, and communicate effectively. These skills are essential not only for academic achievement but also for character building, which is a central goal of Islamic education.

The group discussion method also gave teachers more insight into student comprehension. Through observing group interactions, teachers could identify students who needed additional support or clarification and could provide timely interventions. This made the assessment process more dynamic and continuous rather than relying solely on written tests. Moreover, students reported feeling more engaged and motivated to learn Fiqih. They appreciated the opportunity to share their thoughts and learn from their peers. Many expressed that they found the lessons more enjoyable and meaningful when they were involved in the discussion process.

This study supports educational theories that emphasize student-centered learning. Active learning strategies, like group discussions, encourage students to construct their own understanding through interaction and reflection. This is particularly important in Fiqih, where understanding the reasoning behind Islamic laws and practices requires more than rote memorization. Group discussion also allowed students to explore real-life applications of Fiqih principles. By discussing how Islamic rulings apply in various contexts, students gained a more practical and holistic understanding of their faith, which is vital for internalizing values and practicing religion consciously.

However, the success of this method depends heavily on proper planning and classroom management. Teachers must ensure that groups are well-balanced in terms of ability and participation. Time must be allocated wisely to allow each group to discuss and present their findings. The teacher's role as a facilitator is crucial in guiding the discussion and maintaining a focused learning environment. The use of structured discussion roles, clear instructions, and relevant discussion topics contributed greatly to the success of this method. It is important for teachers to provide clear expectations and continuous encouragement to maintain student enthusiasm and participation.

In summary, the application of the group discussion method in Fiqih lessons not only improved student academic performance but also fostered positive attitudes, communication skills, and collaboration among students. This approach aligns well with the goals of Islamic education, which emphasize both intellectual and character development. Considering the positive impact observed, it is recommended that group discussions become a regular feature in Fiqih instruction and other Islamic studies subjects. By engaging students actively, teachers can cultivate a deeper understanding of religious teachings and support the development of well-rounded, knowledgeable, and morally responsible students.

Another important observation in this study was the increase in students' self-efficacy. When students felt that their voices were heard and their ideas mattered in the group setting, they began to believe more in their ability to understand and contribute to the learning process. This confidence extended beyond the Fiqih classroom and began to influence their participation in other subjects as well. Furthermore, group discussions encouraged peer learning. In many cases, students who had a better grasp of the material naturally took on the role of explaining concepts to others in the group. This peer-to-peer teaching dynamic strengthened the understanding of both the "tutor" and the "learner" and fostered a sense of mutual responsibility for learning.

The collaborative nature of the discussion method also allowed students to practice important values found in Islamic teachings, such as patience, mutual respect, cooperation, and humility. These values were embedded in the way students took turns speaking, listened attentively to their peers, and resolved disagreements respectfully.

It was also evident that students were better able to connect abstract Fiqih concepts with their daily lives. Through guided group activities and discussion prompts, students explored how religious rulings are applied in real-world situations, such as prayer in public places, fasting during school hours, or interactions with non-Muslim peers. These discussions helped internalize Islamic teachings in a more practical and relatable way. Teachers also benefited from this method. Through active monitoring and facilitation of the discussions, they were able to assess student understanding in real time. It allowed for a more formative assessment approach, where misconceptions could be immediately addressed, and differentiated instruction could be provided more effectively.

This method proved especially helpful in mixed-ability classrooms. Students with lower academic performance felt more supported and less pressured in the group setting, while higher-performing students had opportunities to deepen their understanding through peer teaching. The classroom dynamic shifted from competitive to collaborative, promoting a healthier learning environment. It is important to highlight that student enthusiasm was sustained throughout the cycles. Even students who typically showed disinterest in religious subjects began to engage more willingly. They appreciated the opportunity to express themselves and participate in a less formal, more interactive classroom environment.

The classroom layout and seating arrangements were also adjusted to support effective discussions. Desks were arranged in clusters rather than rows, which encouraged face-to-face interaction and facilitated better group communication. These small changes in physical environment contributed to the success of the discussion method. The implementation of group discussion also required time and classroom management strategies. At times, discussions veered off-topic or were dominated by more vocal students. Teachers needed to intervene constructively, using questioning

techniques to redirect conversations and ensure that all students had opportunities to speak.

The role of the teacher shifted significantly from being the sole source of knowledge to becoming a facilitator of learning. This change required preparation, reflection, and adaptability. Teachers had to design thought-provoking discussion prompts, anticipate possible misunderstandings, and guide the learning process without taking over the conversation. Over time, students became more accustomed to the structure and expectations of group work. They began to self-regulate, keep each other on task, and develop leadership qualities. These soft skills are invaluable for their future academic journey and personal development.

Parental feedback gathered informally during the research also indicated that students were discussing Fiqih topics at home more frequently. Parents noted an increase in their children's curiosity and confidence when talking about religious matters, suggesting that the learning was extending beyond the classroom. In terms of gender participation, both male and female students showed active involvement. The inclusive nature of group discussions helped ensure that all voices were heard. Teachers noted that female students, who were initially quieter, gradually became more vocal and confident as the discussions progressed.

This method also encouraged a more student-centered approach to learning, where the teacher was not the only authority. Students began to question, analyze, and explore the reasoning behind Fiqih rulings, thereby developing a more critical and reflective attitude toward their learning. While this research focused specifically on the Fiqih subject, the success of the discussion method suggests its potential application in other subjects within the Islamic curriculum, such as Aqidah Akhlak, Hadith, and even Qur'an interpretation. The approach fosters holistic understanding and relevance of Islamic teachings in various aspects of life. It is also worth noting that the effectiveness of group discussion depends on student maturity and readiness. In the context of Grade VII students, the cognitive and emotional development of students was adequate to support meaningful dialogue. For younger students, however, adjustments in method and structure would be needed.

Assessment strategies were adapted to complement the discussion-based learning. In addition to written tests, students were evaluated through observation, group performance, and oral presentations. These diverse assessment tools provided a more comprehensive picture of student learning and participation. The emotional atmosphere of the classroom also improved. Students were more relaxed, supportive of one another, and displayed greater empathy. The trust built within the groups helped reduce fear of making mistakes, which is essential for a healthy learning experience. Finally, the study showed that when students are given a voice and ownership in their learning, they are more likely to engage deeply with the material. The group discussion method created space for inquiry, dialogue, and reflection — all of which are vital for

meaningful religious education. In conclusion, the extended implementation of the group discussion method not only improved students' academic outcomes in Fiqih but also nurtured their interpersonal, intrapersonal, and spiritual growth. It aligns closely with the objectives of Islamic education, which seeks to develop knowledgeable, thoughtful, and morally grounded individuals.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of classroom action research for 2 cycles, it can be concluded that the application of group discussion methods in fiqh learning can improve the learning outcomes of class VII students of MTs AL-INSAN CILEGON. This is indicated by the increase in student learning outcomes from cycle I to cycle II. In cycle I, the results of student observations were still in the sufficient category, but in cycle II they increased to very good, student learning outcomes from cycle I to cycle II also increased. This is indicated by the percentage of classical learning completion in cycle I of 25% then increased in cycle II to 100%, and the completion of individual absorption power for cycle I of 50% also increased in cycle II to 83%.

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