

Improving Learning Outcomes In Religious Education Islam Through The Snowball Throwing Method In Grade III Of Elementary School

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Abstract

This classroom action research aimed to improve third-grade students' learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) on the topic of Commendable Character at SDN 2 Pansor through the Snowball Throwing method. Using the Kemmis and McTaggart model, the study was carried out in three cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages, and involved 25 third-grade students (11 boys and 14 girls) in the 2025/2026 academic year. Learning outcome data were collected through multiple-choice and essay tests at the end of each cycle and analyzed descriptively to determine the percentage of classical learning mastery. The results showed a consistent increase in classical completion, from 40% (10 of 25 students) in the pre-cycle condition to 44% in Cycle I, 64% in Cycle II, and 92% in Cycle III, exceeding the 80% success indicator. It is concluded that the Snowball Throwing method effectively improves third-grade students' PAI learning outcomes by encouraging them to think, formulate questions, and interact more actively during the learning process.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial process in shaping the quality of human resources. Through education, students acquire not only knowledge but also moral values, attitudes, and skills necessary for everyday life (Purwanto, 2021). One subject that plays a crucial role in the character formation of elementary school students is Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Islamic Religious Education aims to instill the values of faith, piety, and noble morals in students so they can practice Islamic teachings in their lives.

According to Muhaimin (2021), Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in elementary schools holds a very strategic position as the foundation for developing Islamic character and personality, which will serve as lifelong assets for students. Success in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is determined not solely by mastery of conceptual or academic material but also by the process of internalizing religious values in students' daily behavior (Priyono & Widodo, 2022). However, in reality, conventional, teacher-centered learning methods are still often found in classroom practice (Slameto, 2022).

Overly teacher-dominated learning through lectures can lead to students becoming passive participants in the learning process. Students tend to simply listen to the teacher's explanations without being directly involved in challenging exploration activities. This situation seriously impacts students' low levels of cognitive and social engagement in the learning process, resulting in suboptimal understanding of the subject matter (Ervina et al., 2025).

Based on the results of preliminary observations conducted comprehensively in grade III of SDN 2 Pansor on January 15, 2026, it was discovered that the Islamic Religious Education learning process still faces problems closely related to low student learning outcomes and activeness. This is evident from the attitude of some students who show little interest and enthusiasm in participating in learning activities. Preliminary data show that of the 25 grade III students, there are 15 students (60%) who have not reached the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) set at 70. The students' deficiencies are most visible in the cognitive skills level of the Application domain (C3), especially when they are faced with difficulties in applying the concept of noble behavior when answering interactive questions (Sudjana, 2022).

To address these problems, intervention is needed in the form of implementing interactive, collaborative, and fun learning methods. One method considered relevant and effective is the Snowball Throwing cooperative learning method (Huda, 2022). This method is an innovative active cooperative learning model that incorporates game elements combined with in-depth cognitive processes (Agustin & Gumala, 2021). The Snowball Throwing method encourages students to actively formulate questions, articulate their thoughts on a piece of paper, which is then formed into a ball, and thrown to classmates for verbal answers (Isjoni, 2020).

The theoretical application of this method aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivism principle, which emphasizes that knowledge is socially constructed through interactions with peers within the Zone of Proximal Development (Santrock, 2021). The Snowball Throwing method is believed to train student readiness, stimulate courage to express opinions, and alleviate boredom during the teaching and learning process (Ramadhan & Suharyat, 2022). Various previous research literature shows that this method can significantly improve learning outcomes, such as the findings of Irawahyuni et al. (2021) and Saffan (2023), which demonstrate a consistent increase in learning outcomes when using this cooperative strategy at the elementary level.

This study aims to describe the improvement in student learning outcomes after the implementation of the Snowball Throwing method in Islamic Religious Education (Commendable Morals) learning in grade III of SDN 2 Pansor. It is hoped that this research can provide an empirical reference for improving the quality of education, especially in subjects oriented towards moral and character development (Widiastuti & Setiawan, 2023).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach. This approach was chosen because CAR focuses on direct improvement efforts to learning practices occurring in the classroom (Arikunto et al., 2021). The CAR design used in this study adopts the Kemmis and McTaggart model, implemented in continuous action cycles. Each cycle consists of four main stages: (1) planning, (2) action, (3) observation, and (4) reflection. In detail, the planning stage involved preparing the Lesson Implementation Plan (RPP) based on reflection from the previous cycle, preparing the Commendable Morals teaching material, and preparing small pieces of paper along with the observation sheets and end-of-cycle test instruments needed for the Snowball Throwing activity. The action stage was carried out in three face-to-face meetings per cycle following the standard Snowball Throwing procedure: the teacher opened the lesson and delivered the core material, then divided students into small groups and appointed a group leader for each group; the group leader received supplementary explanation from the teacher and relayed it to their group members; each student then wrote one question about the material on a piece of paper, crumpled it into a "snowball," and the balls were thrown among students for several minutes; each student who caught a ball answered the question written on it in turn, after which the teacher provided clarification and reinforcement to close the session. The observation stage was conducted simultaneously with the action stage by the researcher together with the class teacher as collaborator, who recorded student activity, participation, and classroom dynamics using the observation sheet. The reflection stage was carried out after the end-of-cycle test, in which the researcher and the class teacher jointly reviewed the observation data and test results to identify weaknesses to be addressed in the planning of the next cycle.

This research was conducted at Pansor 2 Public Elementary School, Kayangan District, North Lombok. The study lasted for three months, from May to July 2026. The subjects were all 25 third-grade students of Pansor 2 Public Elementary School in the 2025/2026 academic year, consisting of 11 boys and 14 girls (Moleong, 2021).

Research data were collected through several instruments and techniques. First, observation was used to observe the activities, participation, and interactions of teachers and students during the learning process using the Snowball Throwing method. Second, learning outcome tests (in the form of multiple-choice questions and essays) were administered at the end of each cycle to measure students' cognitive achievement related to the Commendable Morals material (Yusuf, 2019). Third, documentation in the form of Lesson Implementation Plans (RPP), grade lists, and photographs of activity documentation were used as supporting data to validate field findings (Sugiyono, 2022).

The data analysis techniques used included qualitative and quantitative analysis, each serving a distinct and complementary function in this study. Qualitative data obtained from observation sheets functioned to describe and explain the process behind the numbers, namely the dynamics of student activity, participation, interaction, and behavioral changes during the implementation of the Snowball Throwing method in each cycle; these data were analyzed using the interactive analysis procedure of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Meanwhile, quantitative data from the end-of-cycle test scores functioned to measure and verify the extent to which students' cognitive learning outcomes actually improved and whether the pre-determined success indicator had been achieved; these data were analyzed using the classical completion percentage. The success indicator for this action is determined if there is a positive increase in activeness and the classical learning completion percentage has reached at least 80%, where the individual minimum completion criterion (KKM) is 70 (Dimiyati & Mudjiono, 2022).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This Classroom Action Research (CAR) was implemented in stages, from the pre-cycle (initial conditions) to Cycle III action. Learning outcomes were evaluated gradually at the end of each cycle to determine the effectiveness of the Snowball Throwing method in Islamic Religious Education learning on the topic of Commendable Morals (Lestari, 2023).

Initial Conditions (Pre-Cycle)

In the initial conditions, before the intervention was implemented, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning activities in grade III of SDN 2 Pansor were conducted conventionally, dominated by lecture methods (Hamalik, 2021). Observations showed a high level of student passivity. During the pre-cycle evaluation, learning outcomes were relatively low. Of the 25 students, only 10 (40%) successfully exceeded the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) threshold of 70. Meanwhile, 15 students (60%) failed to complete the course. The average class score obtained in this pre-cycle was 62.40, far below the completion standard (Arsyad, 2022).

Implementation and Results of Cycle I

Based on the results of the pre-cycle reflection, an action plan for Cycle I was developed, starting with the implementation of the stages of the Snowball Throwing cooperative learning model. The implementation phase was carried out in three face-to-face sessions. The teacher grouped students, provided basic materials, and asked each student to formulate questions on paper before crumpling them into a 'snowball' (Lestari et al., 2025). During the Cycle I observation phase, new enthusiasm was seen among students interested in this game model. However, technical challenges persisted, with some students feeling awkward and lacking confidence when formulating their own questions, and minor commotion occurred during the paper ball throwing (Munadi, 2021).

The learning evaluation results at the end of Cycle I showed slight positive movement. The class average score rose to 66.28. The number of students achieving the Minimum Competency (KKM) increased to 11 (44%), while 14 (56%) were still considered incomplete.

Because the classical success indicator (80%) had not been achieved, the study must continue to Cycle II with several specific improvements in question-making assistance and classroom management.

Implementation and Results of Cycle II

Cycle II was designed by providing additional scaffolding (structured guidance) from the teacher during the material preparation session by the group leader and the formulation of questions on paper (Nengsih & Niangsih, 2024). This repeated action began to show results in improved social interactions; children began to get used to it, became more confident in discussions, and were more conducive to throwing the ball and answering questions in turns. Students' emotional and intellectual engagement improved and influenced a more adequate understanding of the concept of Commendable Morals (Qomaria & Saifulah, 2025).

The cognitive test results at the end of Cycle II reflected quite drastic improvements. The number of individual completion rates rose significantly, with 16 students (64%) achieving scores above the Minimum Completion Minimum (KKM) of 70. Nine students (36%) remained incomplete. The class average score also increased to 70.52. Although the graph shows a positive trend, this achievement (64%) fell short of the 80% success indicator. Therefore, the cycle continued to the third stage to achieve full method maturity.

Implementation and Results of Cycle III

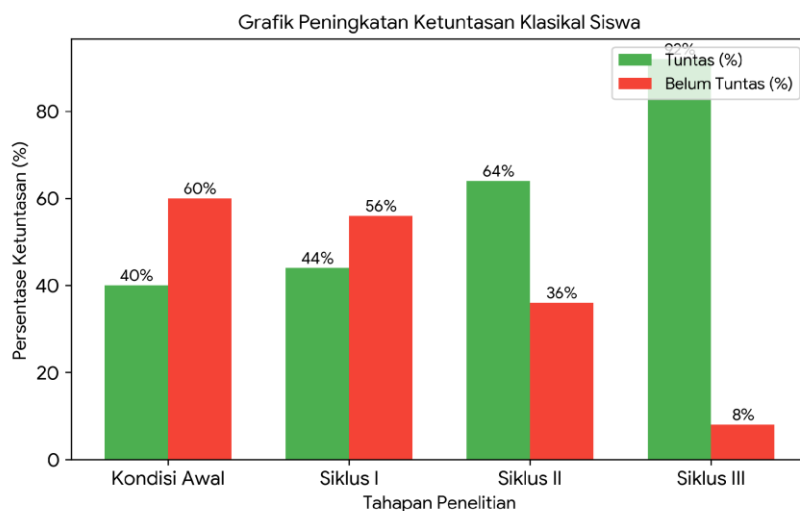
Cycle III is the stabilization and optimization phase of the Snowball Throwing method. During this phase, researchers focused on nine students who had not yet completed the Snowball Throwing method in Cycle II by ensuring their direct involvement in holding the ball and providing verbal appreciation when they answered correctly (Mashuri et al., 2024). Observations in Cycle III revealed a highly interactive and enthusiastic classroom atmosphere. Third-grade students no longer felt awkward and instead demonstrated highly fluid communication skills in responding to questions about the implementation of Commendable Morals in everyday life (Suleman et al., 2024).

The culmination of this method's intervention was reflected in the final evaluation results of Cycle III. Data obtained showed that 23 students (92%) had successfully achieved learning completion. The average class score jumped to 78.32, a significant increase from the pre-cycle condition (62.40). Only 2 students (8%) still had not reached the KKM. Considering that the percentage of completion (92%) had exceeded the success indicator set at a minimum of 80%, the action was stopped with the conclusion that the Snowball Throwing method was successfully implemented.

Table 1. Comparison of Student Learning Outcomes from Initial Conditions to Cycle III

Research Stage	Number of Students Completed	Completion Percentage	Number of Students Not Yet Complete	Percentage of Incompleteness
Initial Conditions	10	40%	15	60%
Cycle I	11	44%	14	56%
Cycle II	16	64%	9	36%
Cycle III	23	92%	2	8%

Graph 1. Improvement in Classical Completion of Islamic Education Learning Outcomes



Discussion on Improving Learning Outcomes

The dramatic increase in classical mastery scores from 40% to 92% in Cycle III from the pre-cycle stage provides strong evidence of the efficacy and functionality of this cognitive-motor activity-based cooperative model. The success of the Snowball Throwing method lies in its engineered learning environment, which reduces teacher dominance and distributes learning responsibilities evenly and engagingly to students (Annisa & Satria, 2024).

Through this method, students are required to read and understand the material collaboratively to be able to formulate valid questions. The process of formulating these questions cognitively is at the synthetic level of thinking, which allows students to retain the material on Commendable Morals more firmly in their long-term memory (Djamarah, 2020). Furthermore, the kinesthetic element of crumpling up paper and throwing it creates a sense of surprise and positive anticipation that stimulates mild adrenaline. This breaks the monotony of passive learning (Royo et al., 2025).

According to Huda (2022) and Isjoni (2020), the cooperative learning model has a dual impact (instructional and nurturant effects); in addition to transferring academic knowledge, group work trains empathy, solidarity, communication, and conflict management. This was clearly recorded during the improvement from Cycle I to Cycle III, where students who were initially busy with their own activities began to care about teaching their groupmates so that their team would perform better when responding to ball throws. The results of this study strengthen previous similar studies regarding the vitality and superiority of Snowball Throwing in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as concluded by Agustin & Gumala (2021) and Ervina et al. (2025).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the implementation process of Classroom Action Research (CAR) that has been carried out from the initial conditions to the Cycle III stage, it can be concluded that the application of the Snowball Throwing type of cooperative learning method can significantly increase the activity and cognitive learning outcomes in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subject of the topic of Commendable Morals in grade III students of SDN 2 Pansor, as evidenced by the consistent increase in classical learning completion from 40% in the pre-cycle condition to 92% by Cycle III. Beyond this numerical achievement, the findings carry several practical implications for PAI teachers. First, the group-leader and question-writing steps in Snowball Throwing can be adopted as a low-cost, easily replicable technique for making Commendable Morals material more concrete and memorable, since formulating a question requires students to process the material more deeply than simply listening to a lecture. Second, teachers are advised to provide structured scaffolding, such as guiding group leaders before they relay the material to their peers, particularly in the early cycles, as this study found that students' confidence and

question quality only improved once such guidance was consistently provided. Third, teachers should pay deliberate attention to students who remain passive or incomplete after the first cycle, for instance through the targeted, individualized involvement strategy applied in Cycle III of this study, rather than treating the whole class uniformly across cycles. Overall, these practical steps allow PAI teachers to integrate variations of cooperative learning with enjoyable educational media to support the formation of Islamic character alongside academic competence at the elementary education level.

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