APPLICATION OF THE *TALKING STICK* LEARNING MODEL IN CREATING A FUN LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN CLASS VII OF MTS MA'ARIF NU 09 KUTAWIS PURBALINGGA

[*1]Uswatun Khasanah, [2]Muhamad Slamet Yahya
[*1,2]UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto
Email: [*1]uswah1430@gmail.com, [2]msyahya0410@uinsaizu.ac.id

Abstract

This article aims to analyze the effectiveness of implementing the Talking Stick learning model in creating a pleasant learning atmosphere in Grade VII of MTs Ma'arif NU 09 Kutawis Purbalingga. Conventional learning methods that tend to be teacher-centered often cause students to be passive and unmotivated. This qualitative research with a case study approach used data collection techniques of observation, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that the Talking Stick model was effective in increasing student participation, building positive interactions, and creating a more lively classroom atmosphere. The implications of this study highlight the importance of innovation in learning methods to develop students' potential holistically.

Keywords: Talking Stick, Fun Learning, MTs, Student Activity

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas penerapan model pembelajaran Talking Stick dalam menciptakan suasana belajar yang menyenangkan di Kelas VII MTs Ma'arif NU 09 Kutawis Purbalingga. Metode pembelajaran konvensional yang cenderung berpusat pada guru seringkali menyebabkan siswa pasif dan kurang termotivasi. Penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus ini menggunakan teknik pengumpulan data observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa model Talking Stick terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan partisipasi aktif siswa, membangun interaksi positif, dan menciptakan suasana kelas yang lebih hidup. Implikasi penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya inovasi dalam metode pembelajaran untuk mengembangkan potensi siswa secara holistik.

Kata kunci: Talking Stick, Pembelajaran Menyenangkan, MTs, Keaktifan Siswa

INTRODUCTION

Effective and meaningful learning processes at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level are greatly influenced by the ability of teachers to design a conducive, interactive, and student-centered learning environment. A quality learning environment not only functions as a means of knowledge transfer, but also as a space that can encourage balanced emotional, social, and cognitive engagement of students. However, the reality of learning in the field shows that learning practices are still largely dominated by conventional approaches that place teachers at the center of learning. In this approach, teachers become the main source of information, while students tend to play a passive role (Djamarah, 2011; Sanjaya, 2011).

The dominance of conventional methods often leads to a monotonous classroom atmosphere, limited interaction, and low student participation. These conditions have an impact on decreasing student motivation to learn and affect less than optimal learning outcomes. Motivation to learn is an important factor in successful learning because it is related to students' internal drive to actively engage in the learning process. When motivation is low, students tend to be less focused, less active in participating, and have difficulty understanding the material in depth (Sardiman, 2014).

This phenomenon was also observed in the learning process in class VII of MTs Ma'arif NU 09 Kutawis Purbalingga. Based on preliminary observations and interviews with the Fikih teacher, it was found that student activity was still low. Most students tend to be quiet, rarely ask questions, and only a few students are active in class discussions. This condition shows a gap between the learning objectives that require active student involvement and the learning practices that are still one-sided.

In addition to learning factors, the psychological aspects of adolescents also influence student participation. In early adolescence, students often experience shyness, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes when asked to speak in front of the class. This condition can hinder the development of students' communication and social skills. Without the right learning strategies, students' academic and social potential will not develop to their fullest potential (Slameto, 2010).

Low student participation has a direct impact on their understanding of Fiqh material, especially material that requires worship practices such as wudhu, tayamum, and prayer. Learning that only focuses on lectures makes students less likely to experience a meaningful learning process. In fact, active involvement is an important factor in building conceptual understanding as well as practical skills. If this condition continues, the quality of learning has the potential to decline and educational goals will not be optimally achieved (Sanjaya, 2011).

Therefore, learning innovations are needed to transform classroom dynamics into more participatory ones. The student-centered learning approach is an important alternative because it places students as active subjects in the learning process. One relevant model is cooperative learning, which emphasizes group work, individual responsibility, and social interaction as part of the learning process (Slavin, 2005).

There are various types of cooperative learning models, so the choice of model needs to be tailored to the characteristics of the students and the learning objectives. An effective model not only increases activity but also creates a pleasant learning atmosphere. Enjoyable learning has been proven to increase student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes (Uno, 2009).

One interesting cooperative learning model is Talking Stick. This model uses a stick as a medium to determine the order in which students answer questions. The game element in this model makes learning more interactive and challenging. In addition, Talking Stick

encourages students to always be ready, focused, and active because every student has the same opportunity to participate (Huda, 2014).

The Talking Stick model not only increases student participation but also develops confidence, communication skills, and cooperation. With the element of play, students feel more comfortable speaking and interacting. This is especially important for students who tend to be passive or lack confidence. Learning that involves physical and social activities has been proven to significantly increase student engagement (Trianto, 2012).

In the context of Fiqh learning, the Talking Stick model has great potential because Fiqh material requires both conceptual and practical understanding. This model allows teachers to combine discussion, question and answer, and practice interactively so that students not only understand the material cognitively but are also able to apply it in their daily lives.

Various studies show that the use of interactive learning models can increase student motivation, memory, and engagement. Learning that involves speaking, discussion, and game elements has been proven to be more effective than lecture-only methods. Active engagement helps students build a deeper understanding that lasts longer (Susanto, 2013; Syah, 2011).

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the application of the Talking Stick model in creating a pleasant learning atmosphere in class VII MTs Ma'arif NU 09 Kutawis Purbalingga. This study is important because it provides practical contributions for teachers in developing learning strategies that are more interactive, innovative, and relevant to students' needs.

The application of the Talking Stick model provides various benefits for students, teachers, and the school environment. This model increases student activity and participation because every student has the opportunity to speak so that involvement is not only dominated by certain students (Suprijono, 2012). In addition, the Talking Stick model creates a fun learning atmosphere through elements of games and interaction, which ultimately increases learning motivation.

This model also plays a role in developing students' courage and confidence. The opportunity to speak in turn trains communication skills and public speaking skills. In addition, Talking Stick improves memory and understanding because students must always be ready to answer questions, so they are encouraged to focus and pay attention to the material actively (Syah, 2011). This model also fosters cooperation and togetherness in groups because students learn to help each other and take responsibility for the learning process together (Trianto, 2012).

Overall, this study aims to analyze the application of the Talking Stick model in creating a fun learning atmosphere in class VII MTs Ma'arif NU 09 Kutawis Purbalingga. The focus of the research includes a description of the steps for effective implementation of the model, an analysis of its impact on activity, motivation, and learning atmosphere, an

understanding of students' perceptions of the learning model applied, and identification of the practical implications of using the Talking Stick model for teachers in improving the quality of learning.

METHO

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study method that aims to deeply understand the process of implementing the Talking Stick learning model in the context of Fiqh learning in class VII MTs Ma'arif NU 09 Kutawis Purbalingga. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to describe the learning phenomenon comprehensively through experiences, interactions, and classroom dynamics that occurred during the research process (Sugiyono, 2018). The research subjects consisted of 31 seventh-grade students and a Fikih subject teacher who acted as the learning facilitator.

Data collection was carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Participatory observation was conducted to directly observe the classroom atmosphere, interactions between teachers and students, and the level of student activity before and during the implementation of the Talking Stick model. The initial observation stage aimed to obtain an overview of the learning conditions before the action was taken so that it could be used as a basis for analyzing the changes that occurred (Moleong, 2012). Next, the teacher applied the Talking Stick model in several learning sessions with systematic steps, starting from forming small groups, providing material, group discussions, to using sticks as a medium to determine the students' turn to answer questions.

During the implementation process, the researcher recorded various learning indicators such as student activity, quality of interaction, and classroom atmosphere using an observation sheet. The teacher gave directions, facilitated group discussions, prepared sticks as learning media, and asked questions to students in turn. Students holding the stick were responsible for answering questions, while other group members could provide support if necessary. At the end of the lesson, the teacher delivered conclusions and conducted evaluations both in groups and individually.

In addition to observation, interviews were conducted with students to find out their learning experiences, comfort levels, and perceptions of the Talking Stick model. Interviews with teachers were conducted to identify the benefits, challenges, and effectiveness of the model in increasing student activity. Documentation in the form of teaching modules, evaluation results, and photos of activities were used as supporting data to reinforce the research findings. The collected data was then analyzed descriptively through a process of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing to obtain an overview of the effectiveness of the Talking Stick model in creating interactive and enjoyable learning (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of data analysis obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, the application of the Talking Stick learning model has had a very positive impact on the learning process in class VII at MTs Ma'arif NU 09 Kutawis Purbalingga. The most notable change was seen in the level of student activity. Before the model was implemented, most students tended to be passive, only listening to the teacher's explanations and rarely participating in discussions or question and answer sessions. However, after the Talking Stick model was consistently applied in several learning sessions, there was a significant increase in participation. Students became more prepared to follow the lesson because of the possibility that they would get a turn to answer questions when holding the stick. This condition encourages both cognitive and emotional involvement of students in the learning process (Huda, 2014).

Changes in the classroom atmosphere are also an important indicator of the success of this model. Classes that were previously monotonous became more lively, interactive, and enjoyable. The game element in Talking Stick creates a relaxed learning atmosphere, so that students feel comfortable participating. The cheerful and laughter-filled atmosphere does not diminish the seriousness of learning, but rather increases student focus. Enjoyable learning has been proven to have a positive correlation with student motivation and engagement (Uno, 2009). When students feel happy, they are more receptive to the material and demonstrate better readiness to learn.

Research findings also show that students who were previously passive began to show the courage to speak up. In the early stages, some students still appeared hesitant when given the stick, but with the support of the teacher and their groupmates, they were gradually able to answer questions. This process shows that Talking Stick not only increases activity but also helps develop students' self-confidence. Self-confidence is an important factor in learning because it is related to the courage to express opinions, ask questions, and interact (Susanto, 2013). The opportunity to speak in turn provides students with direct experience to practice their communication skills. From a social interaction perspective, the Talking Stick model strengthens group cooperation. Students are not only responsible for their personal answers, but also help each other in understanding the material. When a student has difficulty answering, other group members provide support. This demonstrates collaborative learning, which is at the core of the cooperative model (Slavin, 2005).

This interaction contributes to the creation of an inclusive learning environment, where every student feels they have a role in the learning process. In addition to increasing participation, the Talking Stick model also influences understanding of the material. Fiqh subjects have characteristics that require both conceptual and practical understanding. With Talking Stick, students are required to focus on listening, remember the material, and be ready to answer questions. This activity strengthens the process of encoding information in memory, thereby improving students' memory (Syah, 2011). Learning that involves speaking and discussion activities has been proven to be more effective than learning that is only lecture-based. The interview results show that students' perceptions

of the Talking Stick model are very positive. The majority of students stated that learning was not boring and that they found it easier to understand the material because they had to pay attention when their friends were speaking. Several students also said that this model helped them overcome their shyness. Students' positive perceptions are an important indicator of the success of learning innovations because students' attitudes influence their motivation and involvement in learning (Sardiman, 2014). When students find learning interesting, they tend to be more active and have a better attitude towards learning.

From the teachers' perspective, the implementation of Talking Stick provided a new experience in classroom management. Teachers acted as facilitators who directed discussions, asked questions, and ensured that every student had the opportunity to participate. This change in role was in line with the student-centered learning paradigm, which places students as active subjects of learning (Sanjaya, 2011). Teachers were no longer the sole source of information but rather managers of students' learning experiences. Analysis of observation data shows that the increase in student activity occurred gradually. In the initial meetings, participation was still limited to students who were very confident. However, in subsequent meetings, the number of active students increased. This shows that the success of Talking Stick is influenced by consistency in its implementation and the support of the learning environment. Innovative learning requires a period of adaptation so that students feel comfortable with the new pattern of interaction (Trianto, 2012).

In addition to activity, changes were also seen in the quality of classroom interaction. Interaction was no longer one-way, but multi-directional between teachers and students and among students. Group discussions, question and answer sessions, and peer support became part of the learning dynamics. Intensive interaction plays an important role in building conceptual understanding because students have the opportunity to clarify information and exchange ideas (Slavin, 2005). Thus, Talking Stick not only increases surface activity but also deepens the learning process. The Talking Stick model also contributes to the development of 21st-century skills such as communication, collaboration, and self-confidence. Modern learning requires students to not only master knowledge but also possess social skills and communication abilities.

Talking Stick provides space for students to practice these skills naturally in the learning process (Huda, 2014). This makes this model relevant to contemporary educational needs. The implications of this research for educational practice are extensive. First, in terms of implementation in schools, Talking Stick can be an effective alternative learning method to overcome boredom and increase student participation. Schools can encourage the use of interactive learning models as part of the learning culture. Varied learning helps create a more meaningful learning experience and prevents student boredom (Uno, 2009). Second, this research has implications for the development of teacher professionalism. Teachers are encouraged to continue to innovate and be creative in designing learning that is not only oriented towards delivering material but also towards the learning

experience of students. Teacher professionalism includes the ability to choose learning models that are appropriate to student characteristics and learning objectives (Kusnendar, 2013). Thus, the use of Talking Stick can be part of a strategy to develop teachers' pedagogical competencies. Third, this study has implications for curriculum policy. Modern curricula emphasize active, collaborative, and student-centered learning.

The Talking Stick model is in line with this principle because it encourages direct student involvement. The integration of active learning models in the curriculum helps achieve educational goals that emphasize competence, not just knowledge (Permendikbud, 2016). Therefore, Talking Stick can be used as a strategy for implementing active learning in schools. Another implication relates to the learning of Fiqh as a subject that requires practice. Talking Stick allows teachers to combine discussion, question and answer, and practice interactively. This helps students understand the material conceptually and practically. Practical learning that involves active participation increases the transfer of knowledge to real situations, making learning more meaningful (Sanjaya, 2011). Theoretically, the findings of this study reinforce the theory of cooperative learning, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process.

The success of Talking Stick shows that interaction-based learning can increase student motivation, activity, and understanding. This is consistent with the view that learning is a social process that occurs through collaboration and communication (Slavin, 2005). Thus, Talking Stick can be positioned as an operational strategy of cooperative learning principles. In addition to its benefits, this study also shows several challenges in implementing Talking Stick. Teachers need to manage time effectively so that all students have the opportunity to participate. In addition, teachers need the skills to design questions that are in line with learning objectives. These challenges show that the success of the model is not only determined by the method, but also by the competence of teachers in implementing it (Trianto, 2012).

Nevertheless, overall, Talking Stick has proven to be capable of creating more interactive, enjoyable, and meaningful learning. The change in student behavior from passive to active shows that learning innovation has a real impact on the quality of the learning process. This confirms the importance of pedagogical innovation as part of efforts to improve the quality of education. Considering all the findings, this study concludes that the Talking Stick model is effective in increasing student activity, motivation, interaction, and understanding. This model also provides a positive learning experience for students and helps teachers manage their classes more dynamically. Therefore, Talking Stick is recommended as an alternative learning model that can be widely applied, especially in subjects that require active student participation. In the future, further research can examine the effectiveness of Talking Stick at other education levels or combine it with other learning models. Research can also explore the influence of this model on long-term learning outcomes and students' social skills. Thus, further research on Talking Stick can contribute more broadly to learning innovation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the application of the *Talking Stick* learning model has proven to be effective in creating a fun and interactive learning atmosphere in class VII MTs Ma'arif NU 09 Kutawis Purbalingga. This model has succeeded in increasing student activity, motivation, and courage to participate in the learning process. The game element inherent in this model is able to break the ice in the classroom and build positive interactions between students. Therefore, the Talking Stick model is highly recommended to be applied as a learning strategy to achieve educational goals that focus on developing students' full potential.

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