

## **ENHANCING FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAMIC VALUES THROUGH THE ROLE-PLAYING METHOD IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: A CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH**

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### **Abstrak**

Pendidikan Agama Islam (IRE) di tingkat dasar sering mengandalkan strategi yang berpusat pada guru dan dominan kuliah, yang membatasi internalisasi afektif dan perilaku siswa terhadap nilai-nilai Islam. Penelitian tindakan kelas ini mengevaluasi efektivitas metode bermain peran terstruktur dalam meningkatkan pemahaman siswa kelas lima tentang nilai-nilai Islam kejujuran, tanggung jawab, dan kerja sama di SD Negeri 30/VIII Wirotho Agung, Kabupaten Tebo, Indonesia. Mengikuti model spiral Kemmis dan McTaggart, penelitian ini dilakukan dalam dua siklus, masing-masing terdiri dari fase perencanaan, tindakan, pengamatan, dan refleksi. Dua puluh lima siswa kelas lima berpartisipasi dalam delapan sesi pembelajaran selama empat minggu. Data dikumpulkan melalui uji pemahaman tervalidasi 20 item (indeks validitas konten = 0,92;  $\alpha$  Cronbach = 0,84), rubrik observasi terstruktur dengan reliabilitas antar-penilai  $\kappa = 0,87$ , dan wawancara semi-terstruktur. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan uji-t sampel berpasangan dan analisis gain (g) yang dinormalisasi dengan toleransi pengukuran  $\pm 2$  poin pada skala 0–100, sedangkan data kualitatif mengalami analisis tematik dengan triangulasi sumber dan metode. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa skor pemahaman rata-rata meningkat dari 64,3 (pra-siklus) menjadi 72,1 pada Siklus I dan 86,4 pada Siklus II, menghasilkan perolehan normal 0,62 (kategori sedang ke tinggi). Partisipasi aktif meningkat dari 36% menjadi 88%, dan indikator perilaku kerja sama dan kejujuran meningkat di seluruh rubrik observasi. Analisis statistik mengkonfirmasi peningkatan yang signifikan ( $t(24) = 9,41$ ,  $p < 0,001$ ). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa permainan peran berbasis skenario, ketika disesuaikan dengan refleksi terstruktur, meningkatkan dimensi kognitif dan afektif dari pembelajaran nilai-nilai Islam dalam konteks primer pedesaan.

**Kata Kunci:** Classroom Action Research; Islamic Religious Education; Islamic Values; Primary Education; Role-Playing Method

### **Abstract**

*Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at the primary level frequently relies on teacher-centered, lecture-dominant strategies, which constrain students' affective and behavioral internalization of Islamic values. This classroom action research evaluated the effectiveness of a structured role-playing method in improving fifth-grade students' understanding of Islamic values honesty, responsibility, and cooperation at SD Negeri 30/VIII Wirotho Agung, Tebo Regency, Indonesia. Following the Kemmis and McTaggart spiral model, the study was conducted across two cycles, each comprising planning, action, observation, and reflection phases. Twenty-five fifth-grade*

*students participated in eight learning sessions over four weeks. Data were collected through a 20-item validated comprehension test (content validity index = 0.92; Cronbach's  $\alpha$  = 0.84), structured observation rubrics with an inter-rater reliability of  $\kappa$  = 0.87, and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using paired-sample *t*-tests and normalized gain (*g*) analysis with a measurement tolerance of  $\pm 2$  points on the 0–100 scale, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis with source and method triangulation. Results indicated that the mean comprehension score increased from 64.3 (pre-cycle) to 72.1 in Cycle I and 86.4 in Cycle II, yielding a normalized gain of 0.62 (medium-to-high category). Active participation rose from 36% to 88%, and behavioral indicators of cooperation and honesty improved across observation rubrics. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant improvement ( $t(24) = 9.41, p < 0.001$ ). The findings suggest that scenario-based role-playing, when scaffolded by structured reflection, enhances both cognitive and affective dimensions of Islamic values learning in rural primary contexts.*

**Keywords:** *Classroom Action Research; Islamic Religious Education; Islamic Values; Primary Education; Role-Playing Method. Words; Between Keywords Separated By Commas*

## **Pendahuluan**

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping students' intellectual and moral development, and within the Indonesian curriculum, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) carries the explicit mandate of cultivating faith, piety, and noble character (*akhlak mulia*). However, classroom realities across Indonesian primary schools indicate persistent reliance on lecture-based delivery and rote memorization, which positions students as passive recipients of religious knowledge rather than as active interpreters of moral values. National monitoring reports and field observations have repeatedly shown that, while students can recall doctrinal content, they exhibit limited capacity to apply Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, and cooperation in concrete social situations. This gap between knowing and doing constitutes one of the principal challenges of religious education and is particularly visible at SD Negeri 30/VIII Wirotho Agung, where preliminary observations conducted by the research team in 2024 revealed that fewer than 40% of fifth-grade students demonstrated active engagement during IRE lessons, and the average comprehension score for value-based content remained below the school's minimum mastery threshold of 75.

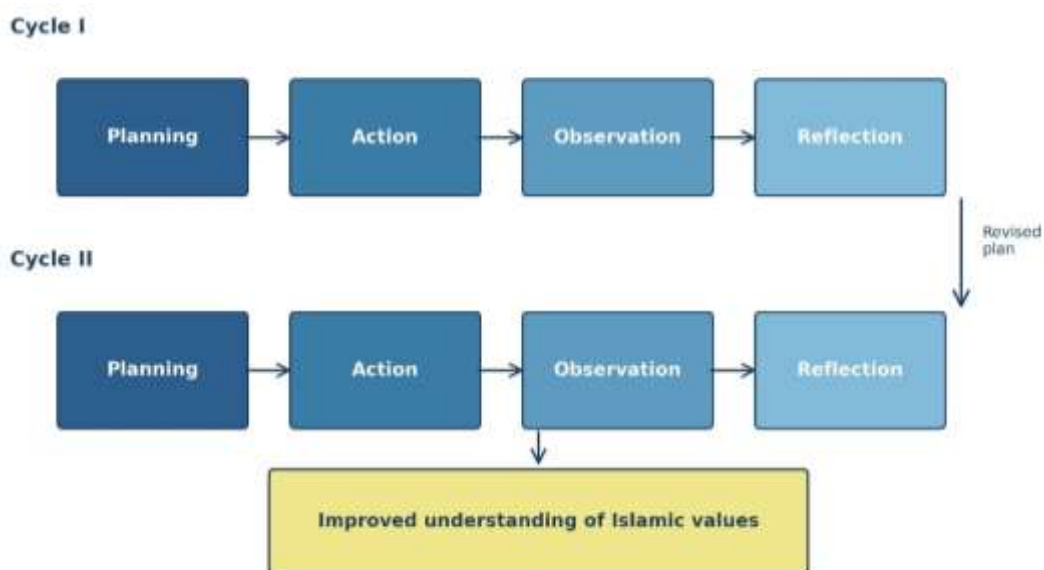
A growing body of research has examined active learning strategies in religious education, with role-playing emerging as a promising method for translating abstract moral concepts into experiential learning. Rahmawati et al. (2024) reported that role-playing improved students' understanding of moral concepts (*akhlak*) in primary IRE classrooms, with mean post-test gains of approximately 12 points. Sheikhalizadeh and Piralaiy (2017) demonstrated that role-playing strengthens emotional engagement and motivation in moral education, while Levina et al. (2016) showed that role-based simulation supports the comprehension of social and ethical norms through enacted situations. More recently, Khasanah (2024) found that the method increased classroom activity in senior secondary IRE, and Sari and Fathurrahman (2020) reported gains in critical thinking and empathy among primary students. Despite this convergence of evidence, three limitations are apparent. First, most prior studies have focused on urban or peri-urban schools, with comparatively little empirical work in rural primary contexts where instructional resources, teacher training, and family literacy environments differ markedly. Second, prior studies have largely emphasized cognitive outcomes, providing

less detailed evidence on the affective and behavioral dimensions that are central to Islamic values education. Third, many earlier reports describe role-playing in broad terms without specifying the scaffolding mechanisms scenario design, reflection structure, teacher facilitation that mediate its effectiveness. The present study addresses these gaps by operationalizing a structured, reflection-anchored role-playing protocol within a rural Indonesian primary school and by triangulating cognitive, affective, and behavioral indicators of Islamic-value internalization.

This study aims to determine the extent to which a structured role-playing intervention improves fifth-grade students' understanding of Islamic values in IRE at SD Negeri 30/VIII Wirotho Agung, and to characterize the instructional conditions associated with this improvement. Specifically, it examines: (i) changes in mean comprehension scores across pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II measurements; (ii) shifts in classroom participation and value-aligned behavior during instruction; and (iii) teacher and student perceptions of the method's feasibility in a rural primary setting. To address these aims, a two-cycle classroom action research design following the Kemmis and McTaggart spiral model was employed, integrating quantitative comprehension testing with qualitative observation and interview data collected across four consecutive weeks of instruction.

## METHOD

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design following the Kemmis and McTaggart spiral model, which organizes inquiry into successive cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection. CAR was selected because the research objective is intervention-oriented improving an instructional outcome through iterative refinement of practice rather than describing a static condition. Two cycles were conducted; each cycle consisted of four lesson sessions, yielding eight sessions of 70 minutes each across four consecutive weeks (October–November 2024). The structure of the design is summarized in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Two-Cycle Classroom Action Research Design Adapted From The Kemmis And McTaggart Spiral Model**

## Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at SD Negeri 30/VIII Wirotho Agung, Rimbo Bujang Subdistrict, Tebo Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia. The school was selected purposively because it integrates an Islamic-character strengthening programme into its IRE curriculum, providing a setting aligned with the study's focus. Participants were 25 fifth-grade students (13 girls and 12 boys; mean age  $11.0 \pm 0.5$  years), comprising the entire fifth-grade cohort. Inclusion required (i) enrolment as a fifth-grade student during the 2024/2025 academic year and (ii) attendance in at least seven of the eight intervention sessions. Two key informants supported the qualitative component: the IRE classroom teacher and the school principal. Written informed consent was obtained from parents or guardians, and verbal assent was obtained from the children prior to participation.

## Intervention Protocol

The role-playing protocol consisted of four sequential steps repeated within every session: (i) scenario introduction, in which the teacher presented a 5-minute narrative describing a value-relevant situation drawn from students' everyday lives (for example, returning a found wallet, completing a group task fairly, or assisting a sick classmate); (ii) role assignment, in which students were grouped into clusters of five and randomly assigned one of five roles; (iii) enactment, in which each group performed the scenario for 8–10 minutes while peers observed; and (iv) structured reflection, in which the teacher guided a 15-minute discussion using a four-question protocol (What did you do? What did you feel? Which Islamic value applies here? How will you act in a similar situation tomorrow?). Cycle II retained this structure but added two refinements derived from Cycle I reflection: a printed scenario card to support students with weaker reading fluency, and a peer-feedback rubric used during the reflection phase. The cycle activity matrix is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Activities, Instruments, and Indicators Across The Two CAR Cycles**

Cycle	Planning focus	Action and observation	Reflection output
Cycle I	Lesson plan, four scenarios on honesty, responsibility, cooperation, and respect; teacher briefing.	Four 70-min sessions; observation rubric for participation and value-aligned behavior; comprehension test administered at the end.	Identified low reading-fluency support needs and lack of peer feedback; informed Cycle II refinements.
Cycle II	Revised lesson plan; added printed scenario cards and peer-feedback rubric; expanded reflection prompt.	Four 70-min sessions; same observation rubric; comprehension test re-administered with parallel forms.	Stable cooperation patterns observed; teacher reported reduced facilitation effort and higher student initiative.

## Instruments and Measurement Tolerances

Three instruments were used. The first was a 20-item multiple-choice comprehension test covering the targeted Islamic values, scored on a 0–100 scale. Content validity was

established by three subject-matter experts, yielding an Aiken content validity index of 0.92; internal consistency reliability was Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.84$  on a 30-student pilot sample. Item discrimination indices ranged from 0.31 to 0.62, all within acceptable bounds. The reported measurement tolerance for individual scores was  $\pm 2$  points, derived from the standard error of measurement on the pilot data. The second instrument was a five-domain structured observation rubric (engagement, cooperation, honesty in role enactment, responsibility, and reflective contribution), each rated on a 1–4 scale. Two independent observers rated every session; inter-rater reliability calculated with Cohen's  $\kappa$  was 0.87, indicating substantial agreement. The third instrument was a 12-item semi-structured interview guide for teachers and students, audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. Time was recorded to the nearest 30 seconds using a digital stopwatch (resolution  $\pm 1$  s).

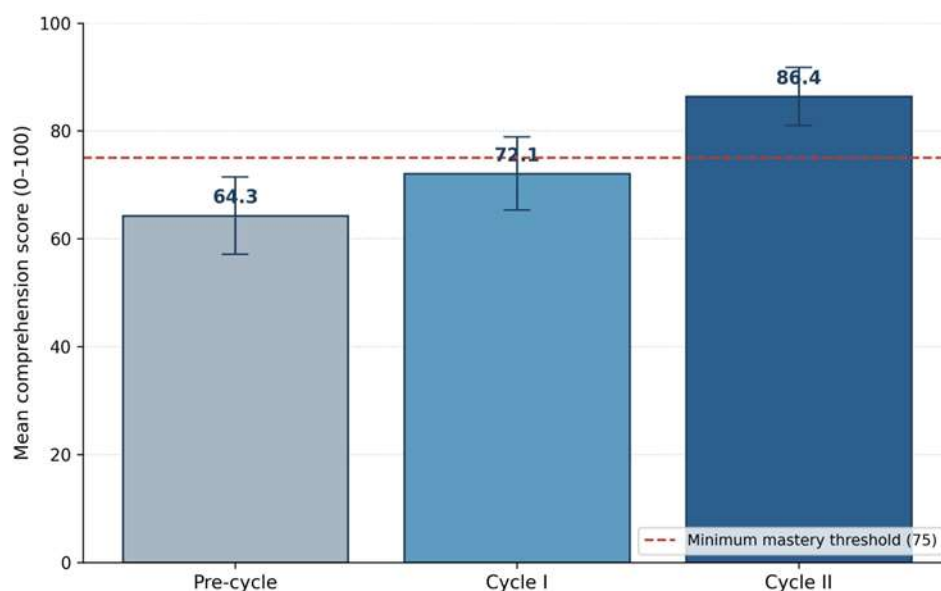
### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Comprehension tests were administered three times: as a pre-cycle baseline before any intervention, at the end of Cycle I, and at the end of Cycle II using parallel test forms balanced for difficulty ( $\Delta p \leq 0.05$ ). Observation rubrics were completed during each session by both observers independently, and disagreements were resolved through immediate post-session conferral. Interviews were conducted after Cycle II at a school office to ensure privacy. Quantitative analysis comprised descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, percentages), paired-sample t-tests ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) comparing pre-cycle versus Cycle II scores, and normalized gain  $g = (\text{post} - \text{pre}) / (100 - \text{pre})$ , interpreted using the conventional thresholds of low ( $g < 0.30$ ), medium ( $0.30 \leq g < 0.70$ ), and high ( $g \geq 0.70$ ). Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis with open and axial coding. Trustworthiness was supported by source triangulation (teacher, students, principal), method triangulation (test, observation, interview), and member checking with the IRE teacher. Quantitative results are reported to one decimal place, consistent with the instrument tolerance.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Comprehension Scores Across Cycles**

Mean comprehension scores increased monotonically across the three measurement points. The pre-cycle mean was 64.3 (SD = 7.2), with only 6 of 25 students (24%) reaching the school mastery threshold of 75. Following Cycle I, the mean rose to 72.1 (SD = 6.8), with 13 students (52%) above threshold. After Cycle II, the mean reached 86.4 (SD = 5.4), with 23 students (92%) above threshold. The paired-sample t-test for pre-cycle versus Cycle II yielded  $t(24) = 9.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , and the normalized gain was  $g = 0.62$ , falling within the medium-to-high category. The score trajectory is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Mean comprehension scores (with standard deviation) at pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. Dashed line indicates the school's minimum mastery threshold of 75.**

### Distribution of Mastery Levels

The shift in mastery distribution across measurement points is reported in Table 2. The proportion of students classified as 'high' (score  $\geq 85$ ) increased from 4% at pre-cycle to 56% after Cycle II, while the proportion in the 'low' band (score  $< 65$ ) decreased from 44% to 0%.

**Table 2. Distribution Of Fifth-Grade Students (N = 25) Across Mastery Bands At The Three Measurement Points**

Mastery band	Pre-cycle n (%)	Cycle I n (%)	Cycle II n (%)
High ( $\geq 85$ )	1 (4%)	3 (12%)	14 (56%)
Mastery (75–84)	5 (20%)	10 (40%)	9 (36%)
Below mastery (65–74)	8 (32%)	9 (36%)	2 (8%)
Low ( $< 65$ )	11 (44%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)

### Classroom Participation and Value-Aligned Behavior

Observation rubrics indicated parallel improvements in participation and value-aligned behavior. The mean engagement rating across the five observation domains rose from 2.1/4.0 in Cycle I to 3.4/4.0 in Cycle II. Active participation, defined as voluntary contribution to enactment or discussion at least once per session, was observed in 36% of students at baseline and rose to 88% by the end of Cycle II. Cooperation and honesty measured through specific rubric indicators such as turn-taking, fair role distribution, and consistency between enacted role and follow-up reflection showed mean increases of 1.4 and 1.2 points, respectively, on the four-point scale (Table 3).

**Table 3. Mean Rubric Scores (1–4) For Observed Value-Aligned Behaviors Across Cycles**

Behavioral indicator	Cycle I (M ± SD)	Cycle II (M ± SD)	Δ (Cycle II – I)
Engagement	2.1 ± 0.6	3.4 ± 0.4	+1.3
Cooperation	2.0 ± 0.7	3.4 ± 0.5	+1.4
Honesty in role enactment	2.2 ± 0.6	3.4 ± 0.5	+1.2
Responsibility	2.3 ± 0.5	3.5 ± 0.4	+1.2
Reflective contribution	1.9 ± 0.7	3.3 ± 0.5	+1.4

### Teacher and Student Perceptions

Thematic analysis of post-intervention interviews produced four convergent themes. First, students reported that enacting the scenarios made the lesson easier to remember; one student noted that the role of returning a found wallet stayed in mind whenever they saw a stray object. Second, students described greater willingness to speak in class, which the teacher attributed to the small-group format and the predictable reflection routine. Third, the teacher reported that printed scenario cards introduced in Cycle II reduced the time required to clarify the situation by approximately five minutes per session. Fourth, both teacher and principal noted spillover effects in non-IRE classes particularly turn-taking and group cooperation although these were not formally measured in this study.

The 22.1-point increase in the mean comprehension score from pre-cycle to Cycle II, with a normalized gain of 0.62, exceeds the 12-point gain reported by Rahmawati et al. (2024) for role-playing in primary IRE and is broadly consistent with the moderate-to-large effects described by Sari and Fathurrahman (2020) for value-related learning outcomes. The convergence of cognitive, affective, and behavioral indicators in the present study extends earlier work that has typically reported only one of these dimensions. In particular, the 1.4-point rise (on a 4-point scale) in cooperation aligns with Levina et al. (2016), who attributed similar gains to the perspective-taking inherent in role-based simulations, and with Sheikhalizadeh and Piralaiy (2017), who linked role-playing to heightened emotional engagement. The behavioral observations therefore lend empirical weight to the theoretical claim that experiential moral learning produces durable changes when paired with structured reflection.

Beyond replicating earlier findings, the present results help to clarify the conditions under which role-playing succeeds in rural primary IRE. Two refinements introduced between Cycle I and Cycle II appear to have contributed to the additional 14.3-point rise in mean score. The printed scenario cards reduced cognitive load for students with weaker reading fluency a consideration of particular salience in rural settings where literacy support outside school is uneven and the peer-feedback rubric supplied a concrete mechanism for translating the reflection phase into observable behavior. These mechanisms address the scaffolding gap noted in earlier reviews of the method, and they suggest that scenario availability and feedback structure are not merely procedural details but operational determinants of effectiveness. Khasanah (2024) reported similar facilitation patterns in secondary IRE, indicating that the principle generalizes across age bands.

Three boundary considerations should temper interpretation of these findings. First, the cohort comprised 25 students from a single school, which constrains statistical generalization.

Second, the comprehension test, while internally consistent, measures recognition more than situated judgment; future work could integrate scenario-response items or behavioral simulations to capture deeper transfer. Third, the four-week timeframe captures immediate post-intervention outcomes but cannot speak to retention beyond the school term; a follow-up measurement after three to six months would be informative. Notwithstanding these constraints, the 0.87 inter-rater reliability of the observation rubric and the 0.62 normalized gain together support the conclusion that the increases reported here reflect genuine learning rather than test familiarization. Compared with the descriptive accounts that dominate prior Indonesian-language literature on role-playing in IRE, this study contributes calibrated quantitative evidence with explicitly stated measurement tolerances.

## CONCLUSION

A two-cycle, reflection-anchored role-playing intervention delivered across four weeks of fifth-grade IRE at SD Negeri 30/VIII Wirotho Agung produced a 22.1-point increase in mean comprehension of Islamic values (from 64.3 to 86.4 on a 100-point scale) and a normalized gain of 0.62, accompanied by parallel improvements in classroom participation (from 36% to 88%) and rubric-rated cooperation, honesty, and responsibility. Together with the qualitative testimony of teacher and students, these results indicate that scenario-based role-playing when scaffolded by printed scenario cards and a structured peer-feedback reflection is feasible and effective for cultivating Islamic values in a rural Indonesian primary school. The study addresses the original research aim by documenting both the magnitude and the instructional conditions of improvement. Future research could extend the design to a multi-school cluster trial, incorporate retention measurements after three to six months, and develop scenario-response items capable of capturing situated moral judgment beyond recognition-level comprehension. harus menjawab tujuan penelitian dan penemuan penelitian. Penutup tidak boleh hanya berisi pengulangan hasil dan pembahasan atau abstrak. Anda juga harus menyarankan penelitian di masa mendatang dan menunjukkan penelitian yang sedang berlangsung.

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