



The Effectiveness of Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) Cooperative Learning in Improving Arabic Reading Skills

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Abstract

Reading skill (qira'ah) is a foundational capability in Arabic language acquisition, essential for recognizing, comprehending, and interpreting written texts. However, many students at MA Al-Mu'minin Muara Muntai experience difficulties in fluent reading and reading comprehension due to varying educational backgrounds and conventional learning models. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) cooperative learning model in enhancing Arabic reading skills among tenth-grade students. Using a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design, the study involved 42 students divided into an experimental group (X IPS, n=23) and a control group (X IPA, n=19). Data were gathered through observation, pretests, posttests, questionnaires, and documentation, and subsequently analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent sample t-tests via IBM SPSS Statistics 23. The findings revealed an increase in mean reading scores for both the experimental group (pretest = 32.87 to posttest = 52.00) and the control group (pretest = 39.79 to posttest = 50.00). However, the independent sample t-test yielded a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.729 ($p > 0.05$), leading to the acceptance of H_0 and rejection of H_a . Thus, the implementation of the STAD model was not statistically effective in improving students' Arabic reading skills at MA Al-Mu'minin Muara Muntai. Qualitative insights and questionnaire data indicated that this ineffectiveness stemmed from low initial student motivation, unfamiliarity with cooperative procedures, lack of self-confidence, low baseline language proficiency, and limited teacher experience in executing STAD. The study emphasizes the need for baseline skill preparation before introducing complex cooperative strategies.

Keywords: Arabic reading skill, cooperative learning, qira'ah, STAD Model

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A. Introduction

Arabic serves as a unified language among Muslims worldwide and holds global linguistic significance (Pane, 2018). In Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs underscores that Arabic instruction aims to develop oral and written communication skills across four basic language domains: listening (istima'), speaking (kalam), reading (qira'ah), and writing (kitabah) (Muradi, 2013). Among these four domains, reading skill (maharah qira'ah) is an essential gateway to understanding written texts, comprehending Islamic classical literature, and broadening cultural perspectives (Ayu, 2022; Naqa & Tu'aimah, 2003).

Despite its strategic urgency, Arabic reading instruction in Islamic senior high schools (Madrasah Aliyah) frequently faces pedagogical hurdles. At MA Al-Mu'minin Muhammadiyah Muara Muntai, students come from diverse educational backgrounds, including state junior high schools (SMP Negeri) where formal Arabic instruction was non-existent. Preliminary interviews with Arabic teachers revealed that a significant portion of tenth-grade students struggled to articulate Arabic scripts fluently and comprehend basic textbook passages independently (Zukri, 2022). Conventional teacher-centered lecture methods often exacerbate student passivity and disinterest.

To resolve such pedagogical shortcomings, interactive instructional models are needed (Zaini, 2002). Cooperative learning, particularly the Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) model developed by Robert Slavin, has been widely recognized for improving academic achievement through small heterogeneous team activities (Herma & Kusumaningsih, 2022; Slavin, 2009). While several previous studies reported positive outcomes of STAD in reading comprehension (Fadhillah, 2017; Humaidah, 2020; Jalilifar, 2010; Julianti et al., 2020), its contextual effectiveness in rural Islamic schools with low baseline proficiency remains underexplored. Therefore, this study empirically examines the effectiveness of the STAD cooperative learning model in improving Arabic reading skills among tenth-grade students at MA Al-Mu'minin Muhammadiyah Muara Muntai.

B. Literature Review

Cooperative learning is an instructional technique in which students interact in small, heterogeneous teams to assist one another in mastering academic content (Siregar & Nara, 2010; Yoana et al., 2022). Johnson and Johnson emphasize that cooperative models aim to maximize collective and individual achievement, foster positive interdependence, and develop interpersonal social skills (Trianto, 2011). Unlike conventional group work where accountability is diffuse, cooperative learning incorporates strict individual accountability alongside group rewards (Busahwi, 2021).

The Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) technique involves five core stages: class presentation, team study, individual quizzes, individual improvement scoring, and team recognition (Slavin, 2009). In reading instruction (qira'ah), STAD facilitates collaborative text decoding, vocabulary translation, main idea identification, and contextual inference (Fadhillah, 2017; Naqa, 1992). Reading skill itself spans across literal comprehension, interpretative understanding, critical reading, and creative comprehension (Sunarti, 2021). Integrating STAD into qira'ah provides peer-tutoring scaffolds that can lessen individual anxiety during textual processing (Hamid, 2010; Khoiriyah, 2020).

C. Method

This study utilized a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental non-equivalent pretest-posttest control group design (Sugiyono, 2018; Suryabrata, 2006). Two intact classes were assigned as experimental and control groups to compare the effect of STAD treatment against conventional instructional approaches.

The study population comprised all tenth-grade students at MA Al-Mu'minin Muara Muntai during the 2022/2023 academic year. A total sample of 42 students was selected: Class X IPS ($n = 23$) served as the experimental group subjected to STAD, while Class X IPA ($n = 19$) served as the control group receiving conventional teacher-centered instruction.

Data collection instruments included: Multiple-Choice Reading Tests: A 23-item validated instrument measuring literal comprehension, vocabulary mastery, and textual inference. Reliability testing via Spearman-Brown yielded $r_{nn}=0.924 > r_{table}=0.514$, indicating high internal consistency.

Questionnaires: A 5-item Likert-scale questionnaire administered to the experimental group to gather student perceptions regarding STAD implementation.

Observation & Documentation: Field notes and administrative documents covering school profile and lesson plans. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23. Tests for normality (One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov) and homogeneity of variance (Levene's Test) were conducted prior to hypothesis testing. Hypothesis testing was performed using the Independent Sample T-Test at a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ (Santoso, 2020; Sarwono, 2006)

D. Findings

Pretest data collected prior to treatment revealed low baseline reading capabilities across both cohorts. Following the treatment sessions focusing on Arabic housing theme (*Fi al-Sakan*), posttest assessments were administered.

Table 1. Descriptive Summary of Pretest and Posttest Reading Scores

Group	N	Score Range	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
Experimental (STAD)	23	0–100	32.87	52.00	+19.13
Control (Conventional)	19	0–100	39.79	50.00	+10.21

As depicted in Table 1, the experimental group's mean score improved from 32.87 to 52.00, whereas the control group's mean score increased from 39.79 to 50.00. To test whether the observed mean difference was statistically significant, assumption tests were conducted. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test confirmed normal data distribution ($p > 0.05$ for all sets), and Levene's test confirmed homogeneity of variance ($F = 0.395, p = 0.533 > 0.05$). The output of the Independent Sample T-Test is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Independent Samples T-Test Results

Variable	Equal Variances	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Diff.
Learning Outcome	Assumed	0.349	40	0.729	2.000	5.735
	Not Assumed	0.345	36.537	0.732	2.000	5.799

As shown in Table 2, the Independent Sample T-Test yielded $t = 0.349$ with a *Sig.* (2-tailed) value of 0.729. Because the significance level exceeds 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected. Statistically, there is no significant difference in Arabic reading performance between students taught using the STAD cooperative model and those taught using conventional methods. Furthermore, questionnaire responses from the experimental group revealed that while 100% of students enjoyed STAD and found text comprehension easier during activities, 74% reported extreme initial difficulty in reading Arabic texts, and 69% had received no prior Arabic education before enrolling in the madrasah.

E. Discussion

Although both groups demonstrated numerical performance gains, hypothesis testing demonstrated that STAD cooperative learning was not statistically effective in improving student Arabic reading performance at MA Al-Mu'minin Muara Muntai. This finding contrasts with earlier empirical studies by Fadhillah (2017), Humaidah (2020), and Jalilifar (2010), which reported significant positive effects of STAD on foreign language reading comprehension. Field observations and analytical triangulations identified five key factors accounting for the statistical ineffectiveness of STAD in this context:

1. **Low Baseline Linguistic Competence:** A majority of students entered the madrasah without basic Arabic literacy from lower secondary levels, making peer-tutoring mechanisms ineffective due to a lack of stronger peers within groups.
2. **Unfamiliarity with Cooperative Dynamics:** Students felt awkward during peer interactions, resulting in passive participation and reluctance to contribute to group tasks.
3. **Affective Constraints and Confidence:** Students exhibited low self-confidence and high anxiety when tasked with reading aloud or translating texts before peers.
4. **Teacher Experience Gaps:** The instructor had limited prior training in orchestrating STAD, leading to sub-optimal time allocation during team study phases.
5. **Low Learning Motivation:** Interview data confirmed that students rarely practiced Arabic reading outside formal class hours, hindering vocabulary retention between treatment sessions.

These findings indicate that complex cooperative strategies such as STAD require prerequisite baseline language competencies and procedural orientation before they can yield significant performance gains.

F. Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of the Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) cooperative learning model was not effective in enhancing the Arabic reading skills of tenth-grade students at MA Al-Mu'minin Muara Muntai. Statistical testing confirmed no significant difference (Sig. (2"-tailed")=0.729>0.05) between the experimental and control cohorts. The primary barriers included low entry-level Arabic literacy, student unfamiliarity with cooperative protocols, low learning motivation, and limited instructional experience with STAD. Arabic educators are advised to build fundamental vocabulary and decoding skills prior to introducing structured cooperative learning activities.

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