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## Enhancing Self-Efficacy of Islamic Boarding School Students through Cooperative Learning via Deliberation in Islamic Religious Education

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### Keywords:

*Cooperative learning,  
 Deliberation,  
 Self-efficacy,  
 Islamic students.*

### Abstract

This study aims to explore the implications of cooperative learning through deliberation in enhancing the self-efficacy of Islamic students. Employing a qualitative case study design, the research involved selected students and teachers purposively to provide in-depth insights. Data were collected using multiple methods, including direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, supported by observation guides, interview protocols, and official records as instruments. Data were analyzed through an interactive model comprising data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, while validity was ensured through triangulation across different sources. The findings reveal that cooperative learning through deliberation has a significant positive impact on students' self-efficacy, as indicated by enhanced confidence in expressing ideas, greater ability to understand and explain religious materials, improved collaborative skills, and more independent learning behaviors. These results suggest that deliberation as a cooperative learning strategy fosters an interactive, supportive, and psychologically empowering learning environment, contributing to the holistic development of students' cognitive and emotional capacities.

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### Introduction

Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in shaping the character, personality, and social skills of students, particularly within educational institutions that emphasize moral and spiritual development (Fathurrahman, 2024; Sugiono, 2024). In the broader societal context, the cultivation of self-efficacy, independence, and social competence among young learners is critical for producing responsible, resilient, and morally grounded citizens. Education that merely transmits knowledge without nurturing psychological and social capacities fails to prepare students for the complexities of modern society. By integrating cooperative learning approaches, particularly deliberation-based methods, Islamic education can foster critical thinking, communication skills, and collaborative problem-solving (Putri & Hamami, 2023; Ropi, 2023). Such competencies are essential not only for academic success but also for lifelong social adaptation. Evidence suggests that students with high self-efficacy are more confident, proactive, and capable of overcoming challenges, contributing positively to their communities and society at large. Therefore, exploring

learning models that strengthen psychological and social skills among students is of paramount societal importance.

Despite the recognized importance of holistic education, Islamic educational institutions still face challenges in enhancing students' psychological development, particularly self-efficacy. Many students demonstrate low confidence in expressing opinions, limited collaborative skills, and dependence on teachers or peers when facing academic challenges (Purwanto, 2024; Sugiono, 2024). The traditional focus on rote learning and teacher-centered instruction often hinders the development of independent thinking and social interaction. Consequently, graduates may excel academically yet lack the interpersonal skills and self-belief necessary to navigate complex social and professional environments (Devansh Saxena, 2023; Firmansyah, 2023; Rozi et al., 2023; Zhu & Liu, 2023). This gap between academic achievement and personal development presents a critical problem for educators seeking to foster well-rounded students capable of contributing meaningfully to society. Addressing this issue requires research into pedagogical strategies that integrate cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions of learning, enabling students to develop both competence and confidence simultaneously.

In practice, many Islamic boarding schools continue to employ traditional instructional methods, such as *bandongan* and *sorogan*, which emphasize teacher-centered knowledge transmission. While these methods are effective for mastering religious texts, they often limit student participation, critical thinking, and self-directed learning. Observations indicate that some students remain passive during lessons, reluctant to share ideas, and dependent on peers for guidance. Conversely, cooperative learning models, especially those integrated with deliberation, have the potential to transform classroom dynamics by encouraging active participation, peer-to-peer support, and joint problem-solving (Safuan, 2024; Shaikh, 2024). Despite their theoretical suitability, these approaches are not widely implemented in *pesantren* contexts. The misalignment between traditional pedagogy and the psychological development needs of students underscores the necessity for research that examines practical applications of cooperative, deliberation-based learning to enhance self-efficacy in Islamic education.

Previous studies have demonstrated that cooperative learning positively influences both academic outcomes and social interactions among students. Research by Sari (2023) and Rahmawati & Hidayat (2024) highlights that collaborative group activities foster communication skills, mutual respect, and problem-solving capabilities. Similarly, studies on self-efficacy indicate that students who perceive themselves as capable of achieving learning goals show higher engagement, resilience, and independence in their studies (Tetrasari, 2024). These findings collectively suggest a strong relationship between cooperative learning practices and the development of self-efficacy in educational settings. However, much of the existing literature focuses on general classroom environments rather than the specific context of Islamic boarding schools, where religious and cultural traditions significantly influence learning dynamics.

Research on *pesantren* education reveals that classroom participation remains limited due to the dominance of teacher-centered methods (Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2023). Although cooperative learning is theoretically applicable, there is limited empirical evidence on integrating it with deliberation practices deeply embedded in *pesantren* culture. This gap indicates a research need to explore how cooperative learning combined with traditional deliberation methods can enhance psychological aspects of students, particularly self-efficacy. The significance of addressing this gap lies in developing contextually relevant pedagogical strategies that not only maintain religious learning objectives but also foster social, cognitive, and emotional development. By doing

so, the study can contribute to improving both the quality of learning and the holistic development of students in Islamic educational institutions.

The novelty of this study lies in examining the implications of cooperative learning through deliberation specifically for enhancing self-efficacy among students. Unlike previous research, which has either focused on cooperative learning in general or self-efficacy in isolation, this study explores their integration within a culturally specific learning environment. Deliberation, a traditional pedagogical practice in Islamic education, offers an interactive platform where students can actively engage in discussion, argumentation, and collaborative problem-solving (Syukron, 2024). Investigating this integration addresses a clear research gap and provides a framework for contextualizing modern pedagogical strategies within traditional educational settings. Consequently, the study not only contributes to theory by linking cooperative learning and self-efficacy but also offers practical insights for educators seeking to foster more active, confident, and socially competent learners.

This study aims to answer the research question: How can cooperative learning through deliberation enhance the self-efficacy of Islamic students? Preliminary evidence suggests that cooperative, deliberation-based learning can significantly improve students' confidence, collaboration, and independent learning. However, systematic investigation in the context of Islamic education remains limited. By examining the form, implementation, and implications of this learning model, the research seeks to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it extends existing models of cooperative learning by integrating culturally relevant practices. Practically, it offers educators a replicable approach to foster student engagement, psychological empowerment, and holistic development. Thus, the study positions itself as a bridge between traditional pedagogical practices and modern educational objectives, ensuring that students not only achieve academic proficiency but also develop essential life skills and self-efficacy required for personal and societal success.

## **Method**

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the cooperative learning model in Islamic Religious Education and its implications for students' self-efficacy (Fahmi, 2024). The qualitative approach was chosen to obtain a deep understanding of the phenomenon within its natural context, capturing the experiences, perceptions, and behaviors of participants. The case study method was deemed appropriate as it allows an intensive and comprehensive examination of a single setting, providing rich insights into the processes and outcomes of cooperative learning practices in Islamic education.

The research was conducted at a traditional Islamic boarding school, selected purposively due to its distinctive learning culture, which integrates classical religious texts with deliberation-based cooperative practices. This location provided a relevant context for observing and analyzing how cooperative learning and deliberation are implemented in real educational settings. Data organization focused on three main aspects: (1) the form of the cooperative learning model, (2) its implementation, and (3) its implications for students' self-efficacy. Data were systematically classified, coded, and organized according to these categories to facilitate analysis and interpretation.

Data collection involved multiple methods, including direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to capture firsthand the cooperative learning activities, especially deliberation sessions (Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024; Wutich et al., 2024). In-depth

interviews were conducted with teachers, school administrators, and selected students, chosen purposively based on their involvement and understanding of the learning process. The snowball technique was applied to identify additional relevant informants. Documentation, such as lesson schedules, learning notes, and official records, was collected to complement observational and interview data. Table 1 presents the list of interview respondents, including their roles and initials, providing a clear overview of the participants involved in the study.

**Table 1. Interview Respondents**

| No | Position                    | Initials |
|----|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1  | Head of Deliberation        | SF       |
| 2  | Pesantren Education Officer | SRTB     |
| 3  | Teacher (Male & Female)     | KS, SF   |
| 4  | Students (2 individuals)    | SM, ER   |

Table 1 provides a detailed overview of the interview respondents, showing their roles and initials, which were used as reference points throughout the data collection and analysis process. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (Safarudin et al., 2023), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation involved selecting and focusing on information relevant to the research focus, while data display was presented descriptively to illustrate patterns and relationships among findings. Conclusions were drawn iteratively based on emerging insights (Abdussamad & Sik, 2021). To ensure data validity, triangulation of sources and methods was applied, comparing observational, interview, and documentation data (Agusta, 2003). Additionally, member checking was performed to confirm the accuracy of information with participants (Nurfajriani et al., 2024). Table 1 summarizes the respondents involved in the interviews, including two students, two teachers, the head of deliberation, and a pesantren education officer, providing a clear reference for the data sources used in this study.

## **Findings**

Observations revealed a significant shift in students' willingness to express themselves during group discussions. Students who had previously remained silent due to fear or uncertainty gradually became more active in asking questions and providing responses. This change was evident in small-group deliberation sessions, where students were able to articulate their opinions more confidently and engage in peer-to-peer interactions without hesitation. Interviews confirmed these observations, with one student stating, "I used to stay silent because I was afraid of being wrong, but now I'm braver" (S1). The combination of a safe and supportive learning environment, structured small-group interaction, and repeated practice in expressing opinions contributed to this transformation. Notably, students began to take the initiative to contribute ideas spontaneously, indicating internalization of confidence gained through cooperative deliberation. The increase in courage not only reflects students' willingness to speak but also highlights the role of social interaction and mutual support in building psychological safety. These findings demonstrate that musyawarah facilitates a progressive enhancement of students' courage, which is a key component of self-efficacy and active learning engagement.

Students' confidence in comprehending and communicating material improved markedly as a result of deliberation-based cooperative learning. Observations showed that students could articulate discussion outcomes to peers, restating key points and explaining concepts in their own

words. This practice enabled students to consolidate understanding while simultaneously building self-belief. One student commented, “After discussing with friends, I understand better and feel more confident” (S1), indicating the positive effect of peer interaction on knowledge mastery and self-assurance. The repeated opportunity to explain content to others helped students validate their understanding, reducing uncertainty and hesitation in expressing ideas. Furthermore, this approach encouraged critical reflection, as students needed to clarify concepts before sharing with the group, which strengthened both cognitive processing and confidence. The deliberation process also promoted iterative learning, where feedback from peers allowed students to correct misunderstandings and reinforce correct interpretations. Collectively, these experiences illustrate that cooperative deliberation not only enhances comprehension but also fosters internal confidence, which is essential for independent learning, active participation, and long-term academic success.

**Table 1. Key Findings on Student Self-Efficacy**

| <b>Aspect of Self-Efficacy</b> | <b>Main Findings</b>   | <b>Observation Data</b>                       | <b>Interview Quote</b>   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Courage                        | Students actively express opinions                               | Active participation in discussions           | “I used to stay silent because I was afraid of being wrong, but now I’m braver” (S1) |
| Confidence                     | Students more confident in understanding and explaining material | Able to explain group discussion results      | “After discussing with friends, I understand better and feel more confident” (S1)    |
| Active Participation           | Students actively participate in deliberation                    | Two-way discussions with all members involved | “If I don’t speak, I won’t understand by myself” (S2)                                |
| Collaboration                  | Interaction and mutual support among students                    | Peer assistance in discussions                | “We complement each other; those who understand help those who don’t” (S2)           |
| Independent Learning           | Students prepare before deliberation                             | Reading materials prior to discussion         | “Before deliberation, I usually read the material first” (S1)                        |
| Environmental Support          | Teachers’ facilitation enhances confidence                       | Teacher guidance without domination           | “Students feel braver because they are given space to speak” (U1)                    |

Table 1 provides a comprehensive summary of the key findings regarding student self-efficacy observed in this study. It integrates behavioral evidence from classroom observations with insights gathered from interviews, highlighting six critical dimensions: courage, confidence in understanding and explaining material, active participation, collaboration, independent learning, and environmental support. Each aspect is illustrated with concrete observational data showing how students engage with the cooperative learning process and with direct quotations from students and teachers that reflect their experiences and perceptions. The table demonstrates how deliberation-based cooperative learning facilitates active participation, mutual support, and self-directed study, while the supportive role of teachers enhances psychological safety and confidence. By presenting both empirical behaviors and subjective experiences, Table 1 clearly illustrates the multifaceted ways in which cooperative deliberation positively influences students’ self-efficacy, providing a visual and structured reference for understanding the outcomes of the learning model in practice. Active participation increased significantly among students during musyawarah sessions. Observations indicated that discussions became two-way and inclusive, involving all group members rather than being dominated by a few individuals. Students were more willing to engage, ask questions, and respond to peers’ ideas, reflecting a shift from passive to active learning.

Interviews reinforced this finding; one student noted, “If I don’t speak, I won’t understand by myself” (S2), demonstrating recognition of the importance of active involvement for personal learning. The structure of cooperative learning through deliberation allowed students to assume responsibility for their contributions while promoting mutual accountability within the group. This participatory dynamic not only facilitated knowledge construction but also fostered the development of communication, listening, and problem-solving skills. The process of sharing ideas and receiving peer feedback encouraged reflection and deeper engagement with the material. These findings highlight that structured deliberation sessions can transform classroom interactions, ensuring that each student actively contributes and benefits from collaborative learning, which is fundamental to enhancing self-efficacy and collective learning outcomes.

Collaboration among students improved markedly in both quality and frequency during cooperative deliberation. Observational data indicated students actively assisted one another in understanding material, resolving misunderstandings, and sharing insights to solve group challenges. Interviews reinforced this observation, with one student stating, “We complement each other; those who understand help those who don’t” (S2). These findings suggest that *musyawarah* creates a cooperative learning environment where peer support, knowledge exchange, and shared responsibility are normalized. Students not only learned from peers’ explanations but also developed empathy, patience, and collaborative problem-solving abilities. Collaborative interactions fostered accountability, as each student recognized the importance of contributing to group success, and this sense of interdependence encouraged continuous engagement and peer reinforcement. Moreover, the positive social dynamics strengthened trust and mutual respect within the group. Overall, the findings indicate that cooperative deliberation supports the development of collaborative skills, reinforces social bonds, and provides a practical context in which students’ self-efficacy, particularly in group learning situations, can be nurtured and sustained over time.

Students displayed increased initiative and self-directed behavior in preparation for *musyawarah* sessions. Observations showed that students actively read and reviewed materials before participating in discussions, reflecting an emerging habit of independent study. One student mentioned, “Before deliberation, I usually read the material first” (S1), highlighting motivation to engage with content proactively. This preparation enabled students to participate more meaningfully in discussions, contributing ideas confidently and responding to peers’ questions. The practice of pre-session preparation strengthened cognitive readiness, reinforced comprehension, and promoted responsibility for one’s own learning outcomes. Independent learning also empowered students to monitor and evaluate their understanding, reducing reliance on teachers or peers during deliberation. Over time, this cultivated a sense of autonomy, intrinsic motivation, and accountability for learning. The findings suggest that cooperative learning through deliberation not only enhances interactive engagement during sessions but also positively influences study habits and preparation practices outside the classroom, supporting sustained growth in knowledge mastery and self-efficacy.

The role of teachers as facilitators contributed substantially to students’ confidence and engagement. Observations showed that teachers guided discussions without dominating, providing feedback and support while allowing students to take the lead. One teacher noted, “Students feel braver because they are given space to speak” (U1), emphasizing the importance of a supportive and psychologically safe environment. This facilitative approach encouraged risk-taking in expressing ideas and reinforced students’ sense of agency in learning. The structured yet flexible

environment allowed students to explore concepts, make mistakes, and receive constructive feedback, all of which enhanced confidence and self-efficacy. Observational data showed that when students felt supported, participation became more balanced and inclusive, fostering mutual respect and interaction. Overall, environmental support through teacher facilitation complemented cooperative deliberation by creating conditions that nurtured courage, confidence, and active engagement, contributing holistically to the development of students' self-efficacy.

## **Discussion**

The findings demonstrate that cooperative learning through deliberation significantly enhances student self-efficacy by fostering social interaction, active engagement, and collaborative learning. Cooperative learning theory emphasizes that meaningful interaction among peers is essential for engagement and motivation, which aligns with the observed increase in students' courage to express their opinions during group discussions (Tetrasari, 2024). Small-group deliberations create psychologically safe environments where students feel comfortable voicing ideas, asking questions, and taking initiative without fear of judgment. This environment encourages risk-taking in learning, allowing students to experiment with ideas and gain confidence gradually. By actively participating in discussions and receiving immediate feedback from peers, students develop a sense of agency and ownership over their learning process (Athiyah, 2023; Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2023; Gede & Huluka, 2023; Zidan & Qamariah, 2023). These interactions also enhance communication skills and foster a culture of mutual respect and attentiveness within the group. Overall, deliberation-based cooperative learning promotes both engagement and self-efficacy through structured social and cognitive interactions that empower students to participate confidently in the learning process.

Confidence in understanding and explaining material is reinforced through repeated practice, collaborative discussion, and peer teaching. Observations indicated that students gained greater assurance when tasked with explaining content to group members, demonstrating the principle of mastery experience in Bandura's theory, where successful task performance strengthens self-efficacy (Ansani & H. Muhammad Samsir, 2022). Additionally, observing peers successfully navigate similar tasks provides vicarious experience, allowing students to model effective strategies and build belief in their own capabilities. Social encouragement from teachers and peers further supports confidence by validating effort and providing constructive feedback, creating a positive reinforcement loop. The deliberation process requires students to articulate reasoning, clarify misunderstandings, and integrate peer input, which consolidates learning while reinforcing self-assurance. Over time, this combination of mastery, observation, and social support enhances students' perceived competence and willingness to participate actively, demonstrating that confidence development is deeply interconnected with collaborative, interactive learning processes.

Collaboration among students improved considerably through *musyawarah*, as they assisted one another in understanding complex material and shared responsibilities in completing tasks. Each student recognized that individual contributions directly influenced group success, fostering a sense of accountability, engagement, and responsibility (Bruton et al., 2024; Fathurrahman, 2024). Observations revealed that students not only exchanged knowledge but also offered guidance, support, and corrective feedback to peers who struggled with comprehension. This positive interdependence created a collaborative learning culture in which group achievement depended on collective effort. Beyond cognitive benefits, collaboration strengthened social bonds, trust, and mutual respect within the learning community. Participating in cooperative deliberation allowed students to develop interpersonal and teamwork skills, learn conflict resolution, and negotiate

differing viewpoints, which are essential for both academic and social development. By integrating responsibility, peer support, and collaborative problem-solving, cooperative deliberation provides a comprehensive approach for reinforcing self-efficacy, social skills, and shared learning outcomes.

Deliberation-based learning also encourages independent learning by motivating students to prepare in advance and take ownership of their study process (Fathurrohman et al., 2023). Students reported engaging with the material prior to discussions, which enabled them to contribute meaningfully and respond confidently to peers' questions. Teacher facilitation, which emphasizes guidance without domination, further supports students' autonomy, providing social persuasion and reinforcing self-efficacy (König et al., 2024; Ro, 2024; Rohmatillah & Jannah, 2024). This environment allows students to develop metacognitive skills, plan learning strategies, and monitor their own understanding. Over time, students internalize responsibility for their learning, improving study habits and fostering lifelong learning competencies. The combination of independent preparation, active participation, and supportive facilitation enhances both cognitive engagement and psychological readiness. Consequently, deliberation promotes not only collaborative competence but also personal accountability and self-directed learning, demonstrating that cooperative learning can simultaneously strengthen social, cognitive, and motivational dimensions of student development.

The findings confirm that Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological or emotional states are effectively engaged during *musyawarah*. Students achieve mastery experience by explaining material successfully, vicarious experience by observing peers' achievements, social persuasion through encouragement from teachers and friends, and emotional support through a psychologically safe, non-threatening learning environment (Ghanbari et al., 2024; Saharani & Diana, 2024). These combined factors create an ecosystem in which students' confidence and belief in their ability to succeed are continuously reinforced. The iterative cycle of practice, observation, feedback, and reflection enables students to develop resilience and self-assurance. Emotional support within the cooperative setting reduces anxiety and fosters a positive attitude toward participation, further strengthening self-efficacy. This comprehensive engagement with all four sources demonstrates that cooperative deliberation provides a robust framework for cultivating confidence, competence, and motivation, which are crucial for academic success and holistic personal development.

Overall, cooperative learning through deliberation integrates traditional *pesantren* practices with modern pedagogical principles, producing multiple educational benefits. It enhances academic performance by improving comprehension and retention, while simultaneously fostering psychological empowerment, social cohesion, and independent learning (Agus, 2022; Nurlina et al., 2024). Students engage in structured, collaborative problem-solving, develop interpersonal skills, and cultivate self-directed learning habits. By blending culturally relevant methods with evidence-based cooperative learning strategies, deliberation strengthens students' self-efficacy and prepares them for academic, social, and life challenges. This dual emphasis on cognitive mastery and psychological growth positions cooperative deliberation as a highly effective approach within Islamic education. Moreover, it provides both theoretical contributions for understanding self-efficacy development in culturally specific contexts and practical implications for educators aiming to foster confident, autonomous, and socially competent learners capable of active participation in group and individual learning environments.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that cooperative learning through deliberation positively influences the self-efficacy of students in Islamic boarding schools. The study demonstrates that this approach fosters significant behavioral changes, including increased courage in expressing opinions, greater confidence in understanding and explaining material, enhanced active participation, improved collaboration among peers, and strengthened independent learning. The key insight from this research is that integrating cooperative learning with the traditional deliberation practices of pesantren creates an interactive, collaborative, and supportive learning environment, which not only develops cognitive competence but also reinforces psychological aspects, particularly self-efficacy. In terms of scholarly contribution, this study offers a model for Islamic Religious Education that emphasizes character building, confidence, and active engagement, extending the theoretical understanding of culturally contextualized cooperative pedagogy. However, the study is limited by its focus on a single institution with a small sample, suggesting that future research should explore broader contexts, larger participant groups, and longitudinal designs to examine the long-term impact of cooperative deliberation on self-efficacy and academic outcomes.

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