

PAI STUDY PROGRAM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Rizky Indira Amalia Nasution¹, Arlina²

¹ Pendidikan Agama Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

² Pendidikan Agama Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Email : rizky0301191006@uinsu.ac.id¹, arlina@uinsu.ac.id²

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Abstract :

This article examines academic achievement, human resources and higher education benchmarks. This is very important for a student to know where his abilities are. This research uses qualitative methods to collect data by direct observation in the field and conducting interviews with students at the North Sumatra State Islamic University (UINSU) in the PAI Study Program as well as running a Documentation Study which is used to test, interpret and predict as a data source. The results of this research are about the strategies of the PAI study program in improving student academic achievement. Some of the strategies implemented are providing academic ethics at the beginning of lectures, encouraging students to read from various sources, establishing a scheduled learning system, establishing an effective lecture system, urging students to maintain a balance between studies, work and organizations; assess students' academic abilities; and conducting personal counselling and collaboration with families in helping students.

Keywords : *Strategy PAI, Achievement, Academic, College Student*

Abstrak :

Artikel ini mengkaji tentang Prestasi akademik yang merupakan tolak ukur sumber daya manusia begitu juga dalam perguruan tinggi. Hal tersebut sangat penting bagi seorang mahasiswa agar dapat mengetahui sampai dimana kemampuannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif ini mengumpulkan data dengan observasi langsung ke lapangan dan melakukan wawancara dengan mahasiswa Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UINSU) di Prodi PAI serta melakukan Studi Dokumentasi yang digunakan untuk menguji, menafsirkan dan meramalkan sebagai sumber data. Hasil penelitian ini mengenai strategi dari prodi PAI dalam meningkatkan prestasi akademik mahasiswa. Beberapa strategi yang dilakukan adalah pemberian etika akademik di awal perkuliahan; mengimbau mahasiswa untuk membaca dari berbagai sumber; menetapkan sistem pembelajaran yang terjadwal; menetapkan sistem perkuliahan yang efektif; mengimbau mahasiswa agar menjaga keseimbangan antara perkuliahan, pekerjaan, serta organisasi; melakukan penilaian terhadap kemampuan akademik mahasiswa; dan melakukan konseling pribadi dan kolaborasi dengan keluarga dalam membantu mahasiswa.

Kata Kunci: *Strategi, PAI, Prestasi, Akademik, Mahasiswa*

INTRODUCTION

Achieving academic achievement begins with the learning process. The learning process starts from birth, babies, toddlers, teenagers, adults. (Qodir, 2017), (Basunari, Mardana, Suwindra, & Kom, 2017), In this process, learning begins with family life because the family is the first educational institution, which always teaches the principles of example, ethics, and manners in relationships. Learning is a part of life that lasts a lifetime, anytime and anywhere, and indefinitely. Learning is not just collecting and memorizing, not just reading and writing, but learning shows changes in behavior for the better (Nahar, 2016), (Collins & Halverson, 2018), (Elder & Paul, 2020).

Increasing academic achievement is the main goal in the world of education. Good academic achievement not only reflects individual abilities, but also becomes a benchmark for educational success in producing competent and quality graduates (Darim, 2020). In the era of globalization and increasingly fierce competition, the drive to improve academic achievement becomes increasingly important. High academic achievement provides benefits that are not only personal, but also have an impact on society, the nation and the country as a whole.

Improving academic achievement is not only about achieving high scores in exams or assignments, but also involves developing intellectual abilities, creativity, problem-solving abilities, and deep understanding in various fields of knowledge (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2007), (Council, 2012), (Indrawati & Wardono, 2019). Apart from that, good academic achievement also reflects discipline, commitment and dedication to education (Pratiwi et al., 2021). In this context, efforts to improve academic achievement are not only limited to increasing academic knowledge and skills, but also involve aspects of character development, moral values and ethics.

Increasing student academic achievement is a vital aspect in the world of higher education. Along with the development of globalization and increasingly fierce competition, students are required to achieve better academic achievements in order to prepare themselves for a successful future. Currently, higher education institutions have a big responsibility in providing encouragement and support to students to improve their academic achievements (Febianti & Joharudin, 2018). Academic achievement not only reflects individual success, but also contributes to the quality of graduates and the reputation of higher education (Triwiyanto, 2013). Therefore, improving student academic achievement is the main focus for higher education institutions throughout the world.

It is important to understand that the drive to improve student academic achievement is not limited to individual efforts, but also involves the entire educational community, including lecturers, academic staff, and support service providers. This collaborative effort aims to create an environment that supports and motivates students to achieve better results in their studies.

By understanding the importance of encouraging students to improve their academic achievement, they can open the door to their success in the world of education and beyond (Riyanto, 2014). Apart from that, increasing academic

achievement also contributes to improving the quality of human resources and overall economic growth (Sudarsana, 2015). Therefore, research and efforts to improve student academic achievement are very relevant and important in the world of education today.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a very important role in shaping individual character, morals and ethics, which is very important in forming a quality generation (Kuswanto, 2014). Higher education is a critical stage where students are not only expected to achieve good academic achievements but also gain a deep understanding of religion and morals that will guide them in their daily lives and future careers (Merdeka, 2020). Therefore, the PAI Study Program in higher education has a big responsibility to develop effective strategies to improve the quality of education and student academic performance.

In facing various challenges in learning and understanding the Islamic religion in the ever-changing modern era, the PAI Study Program must remain relevant and responsive to student needs and the demands of societal development. Therefore, efforts to continue to develop brilliant strategies in Islamic religious education are a necessity.

The importance of developing brilliant strategies in the PAI Study Program is also related to the broader goal, namely forming a national character that loves the country and religion (Kosim, 2020). Strong Islamic religious education in universities can contribute to creating the nation's next generation who cares about moral, ethical and cultural values. This study will provide relevant insights and conc solutions

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used by researchers is the qualitative method. This qualitative method was chosen to complete the final assignment in higher education. The definition of qualitative methods according to Kirk and Miller is a tradition in the social sciences that fundamentally relies on human observation in their environment (Zellatifanny & Mudjiyanto, 2018). According to Mappasere & Suyuti (2019), qualitative research has various approaches so that researchers choose themselves according to the object. The aim of qualitative research is not to change human form and behavior and analyze quality (Sarosa, 2021). Qualitative research also aims to better understand human, social and environmental problems. The researcher's aim was to choose a qualitative method to search, discover and describe how students achieve academic achievement in higher education (Fitrah, 2018).

The location of this journal research was carried out at the Islamic Religious Education Study Program, North Sumatra State Islamic University. The time for conducting the research was from 22 February 2023 to 23 May 2023. Methods for collecting data were through a) Observation: Researchers made observations on students from the Class of 2021; b) Interview: An interview is a conversation that has a purpose carried out by two parties, namely the interviewer and the interviewee (Linarwati et al., 2016). Researchers interviewed face to face with informants. Interviews were carried out to obtain accurate data from students from the Class of 2021. Researchers interviewed representative

lecturers from the Islamic Religious Education Study Program and 6 students from the Class of 2021; c) Documentation Study: Documents are used by researchers to test, interpret and predict as a data source (Nilamsari, 2014). As for the form of documentation, the researcher used the object of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program and 6 students.

Techniques for analyzing qualitative research data according to Miles and Huberman are divided into: a) Reduction: summarizing the data so that it provides a clear picture and makes it easier for researchers to collect and search for data; b) Data Display: describes data to make things easier and achieve goals; c) Conclusions: make conclusions so that it is hoped that new findings will emerge (Fadli, 2021). Techniques for validating qualitative research data according to Denzin (1978) are divided into 1) Extension of Participation; 2) Perseverance; 3) Triangulation; 4) Examination through Discussion; 5) Negative Case Analysis; 6) Member Checking (Najoan, 2015).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on research conducted at the North Sumatra State Islamic University, qualitative data was obtained in the form of researchers' observations of students of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program, which resulted in the following points:

1. Academic Achievement and Accreditation of PAI Study Program
 - a. Academic achievement plays an important role in improving the accreditation of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program. Academic achievement has a very important role in increasing the level of accreditation of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program (PAI). When the majority of PAI students and students are able to achieve high academic achievements, this has the potential to result in good study program accreditation, as well as ensuring that the teaching staff there is of high quality.
 - b. Students with good academic achievements are given the opportunity to take courses in the upper semester and become ambassadors for the PAI Study Program. For students who achieve significant academic achievement, they are given the opportunity to take courses in the upper semester, and they are expected to maintain high standards. In addition, students with a high GPA can be made ambassadors for the PAI Study Program, which can help promote the study program and provide inspiration to other students to achieve similar achievements. Thus, academic achievement not only benefits individuals, but also contributes significantly to improving the quality and accreditation of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program.
 - c. Barriers in the learning system. However, it cannot be denied that in order to achieve academic achievements, students will definitely encounter several obstacles on their educational journey. Obstacles in academic achievement can come from various factors such as work, decreased interest in studying, conflicts with lecturers, or

problems in the campus environment or when organizational activities such as competitions, training, and other activities interfere with academic performance. To overcome this, students can choose to discuss and find solutions with lecturers or authorities. In this way, students can face these obstacles wisely and try to achieve better academic achievements.

2. PAI Study Program Strategy in Improving Student Academic Achievement

- a. Providing academic ethics at the beginning of lectures
Academic ethics is important for the achievements that students will achieve in lectures. Academic ethics is the main foundation in creating a learning environment that is fair, honest and has integrity. This is proven by the provision of academic ethics at the beginning of lectures by the PAI Study Program which motivates students in accordance with Law Number 12 of 2012. Academic ethics is taught from the beginning of lectures through lecturers, banners, online banners, posters in class, wall magazines because ethics is considered can affect academic achievement.
- b. Encourage students to read from various sources
Reading from various sources is an important step to support increasing one's understanding and insight. In reading from a variety of sources, individuals can broaden the scope of their knowledge, gain diverse perspectives, and develop better critical analysis skills. Likewise, students are encouraged to read from various book sources, both printed and online, to broaden students' insight.
- c. Establish a scheduled learning system
A learning system that includes preparing daily, weekly and monthly schedules is the main foundation for students so that academic and non-academic activities can run well.
- d. Establish an effective lecture system
 - The approach of reading the material first and outlining questions has proven effective. The learning system by first reading the material to be presented and outlining the questions is an approach that has been proven effective in increasing students' understanding of the lecture material. In addition, working in groups to complete course assignments also plays an important role in deepening understanding through discussion and collaboration.
 - Discussions in groups are effective in increasing understanding. In the learning process, it is important to carry out discussions and consultations after lecture hours are over, because we can learn from various sources, not only from textbooks. Apart from that, completing coursework quickly and thoroughly is a principle that is worth sticking to, because this prevents a buildup of assignments which can result in rushing.

- e. Encourage students to maintain a balance between studies and work, as well as organizations Furthermore, it is important for students to maintain a balance between studies and work, and avoid too much involvement in organizations on campus that can interfere with their focus on studying. Academic achievement must be prioritized, because that is the case.

DISCUSSION

Students accepted into higher education are quality students. At this university, students compete to improve their academic achievements. A student must have high enthusiasm, must not give up if he encounters obstacles in learning because students are the nation's next generation. According to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (UU Sisdiknas), the government seeks and organizes a national education system to increase faith and devotion to God Almighty as well as noble morals to make the nation's life intelligent (Jannah, 2013). Students at universities have various backgrounds, including customs, place of residence, school of origin, gender, and economic status, but their goal remains the same, namely wanting to excel in academic and non-academic matters. This achievement is very important because it can show the quality and quantity of oneself, as an experience and lesson, as well as a measuring tool for the extent of knowledge gained through intelligence and skills (Pianda, 2018).

According to Darmawati (2013), learning is an effort to change for the better, and students try as hard as they can to improve their achievements. There are two types of achievements in higher education, namely academic and non-academic achievements (Retnowati et al., 2016). Academic achievement, as explained by Arrixavier & Wulanyani (2020), is measured through the Achievement Index (IP), which reflects the results of student evaluations. Education at higher education allows students to be more independent compared to previous educational institutions.

Non-academic achievements, on the other hand, are achievements produced through student participation in various activities such as research, scientific work competitions, sports, arts and religious activities (Safitri, 2021). These non-academic achievements help students develop their interests, talents and skills (Saputro et al., 2018). Higher education institutions, such as UINSU (North Sumatra State Islamic University), offer two types of learning activities: academic activities and non-academic activities. Academic activities include courses that students must take, such as those at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training with the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program. Meanwhile, non-academic activities involve various student organizations which help increase interest and talent in achieving academic achievements.

UINSU (North Sumatra State Islamic University) has 2 learning activities including: 1) Academic activities are courses that students must take in class or outside class (online). One of them is the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training with the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) study program (Prodi). 2) Non-Academic Activities are activities carried out by students outside lecture

hours which function to increase interest and talent in achieving academic achievements. Activities include: LDK AL IZZAH (AL IZZAH Campus Da'wah Institute), SEMA (Student Senate), DEMA (Student Executive Council), HMJ (Department Student Association), Scouts, MAPASTA (Student Lovers of the Universe), PMI (Indonesian Red Cross) , LKSM (Student Creativity and Arts Institute), UKOMI (Institute Student Sports Activities Unit), KOPMA (Student Cooperative), LPM DINAMIKA (Student Press Institute), MENWA (Student Regiment), HMI (Islamic Student Association), PMII (Student Association Indonesian Islam), PASKIBRA, IMM (Muhammadiyah Student Association), GSM (North Sumatra Teaching Movement), ADDAKWAH. Students who are active in organizations must take part in academic activities and there is no reason not to participate in learning. In organizations, students gain a lot of lessons, experience indirectly and can appreciate their talents.

Academic achievement is a factor for measuring the success of the teaching and learning process, because every student has aspirations towards a better quality life process (Dinata et al., 2016). Academic achievement in higher education is assessed through UTS (Mid-Semester Exam) and UAS (Final Semester Exam), with support from independent assignments, group assignments, presentation assignments, Critical Book Report (CBR), Critical Journal Review (CJR), and Mini Research. The results of this academic achievement are reflected through the IP (Achievement Index) and are an important factor for measuring the success of the teaching and learning process. Every student has aspirations towards a better quality of life, and academic achievement is one of the determinants. Thus, academic and non-academic achievements in higher education have an important role in forming a quality future generation for the nation. Academic achievement is a very important factor in student life in higher education. This is because academic achievement is the main benchmark for success

CONCLUSION

The results of research at the North Sumatra State Islamic University are the PAI Study Program and students of the Class of 2021. The PAI Study Program motivates its students to improve their academic achievements so that the knowledge gained in lectures can be realized in work.

Students who enter the UINSU Islamic Education Study Program are students who excel and receive support from their families, so that in taking courses the students are motivated to improve their achievements through a good GPA. GPA is very important to determine one's abilities during college. UINSU students prioritize lectures over work and organizations. These students are enthusiastic about studying, even though there are obstacles, they can overcome them well, they also get a good GPA. Academic achievement is very necessary for students both in college and where they work.

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