

THINK-PAIR-SHARE IMPLEMENTATION IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

Irene Vanesha Giovani
giovanii50@yahoo.com

ABSTRAK

Studi kasus ini meneliti bagaimana seorang guru sekolah menengah pertama menggunakan metode Think-Pair-Share (TPS) dan dampak TPS terhadap keterlibatan siswa dan hasil akademis. Data dikumpulkan melalui kelompok fokus, observasi kelas, dan wawancara mendalam menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif untuk mendokumentasikan dampak kompleks TPS terhadap pemikiran kritis, keterlibatan, kemampuan komunikasi, dan kinerja akademis siswa. Hasilnya menunjukkan betapa pentingnya fasilitasi guru yang baik dalam menciptakan budaya pembelajaran kolaboratif dan membangun hubungan yang dalam antara siswa dalam kerangka TPS. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa TPS, jika digunakan dengan hati-hati, dapat menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang menarik dan ramah.

Katakunci : Think-Pair-Share, pembelajaran kolaboratif, sekolah menengah pertama, keterlibatan siswa, penelitian kualitatif.

ABSTRACT

This case study investigates how a junior high school teacher used the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) method and how the TPS affected student engagement and academic results. Data were gathered through focus groups, classroom observations, and in-depth interviews using a qualitative case study design in order to document the complex impacts of TPS on students' critical thinking, engagement, communication abilities, and academic performance. The results demonstrate how crucial good teacher facilitation is to creating a culture of collaborative learning and forging deep connections between students within the TPS framework. This study shows that TPS, when used carefully, may produce engaging and welcoming learning environments.

Keywords : Think-Pair-Share, collaborative learning, junior high school, student engagement, qualitative research

INTRODUCTION

The educational landscape has witnessed a significant shift from traditional teacher-centered approaches to more interactive and collaborative learning methodologies. Among these innovative pedagogical strategies, the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique has emerged as a powerful tool for enhancing student

engagement and academic achievement in diverse educational settings. Originally developed as a cooperative learning strategy, TPS encourages students to first think individually about a question or problem, then discuss their thoughts with a partner, and finally share their ideas with the larger group or class.

The importance of active learning strategies in contemporary education cannot be overstated. Hermann and Foster (2014) emphasize that fostering critical thinking in the classroom through collaborative group work, particularly through the Think-Pair-Share technique, significantly enhances students' analytical and reasoning abilities. This approach aligns with constructivist learning theories that emphasize the importance of social interaction and collaborative knowledge construction in the learning process.

Research has consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of TPS across various educational contexts. Goodman and Berntson (2015) found that Think-Pair-Share significantly improves student participation and motivation, creating more dynamic and engaging classroom environments. Similarly, Sundar (2016) highlighted TPS as a new way to collaborate and communicate, emphasizing its potential to transform traditional

classroom dynamics and promote meaningful student interactions.

The application of TPS in different subject areas has shown promising results. Lyman and Harlow (2014) demonstrated the effectiveness of using Think-Pair-Share to enhance students' comprehension of statistics, while Yoder and Hochevar (2019) found that TPS encourages active learning in introductory psychology courses. These findings suggest that TPS is not limited to specific subject areas but can be effectively implemented across diverse academic disciplines.

Despite the growing body of research supporting TPS implementation, there remains a need for in-depth qualitative studies that examine the nuanced impacts of this strategy on student learning experiences, particularly in the junior high school context. Sampsel (2013) identified significant effects of Think-Pair-Share on student confidence and participation, but called for more comprehensive investigations into the specific mechanisms through which TPS influences learning outcomes.

Additionally, Kothiyal, Majumdar, Murthy, and Iyer (2013) raised important questions about whether learning really happens during TPS implementation, emphasizing the need for careful examination of the actual learning processes that occur during collaborative activities.

Junior high school students face unique developmental and academic challenges that make the investigation of TPS particularly relevant. This transitional period in students' educational journey is characterized by increasing academic demands, social pressures, and the need for developing critical thinking and communication skills. The implementation of collaborative learning strategies like TPS can potentially address these challenges by creating supportive learning environments that promote both academic growth and social development.

This study aims to fill the existing gap in qualitative research by providing an in-depth examination of how TPS is implemented in a junior high school setting and its

multifaceted impacts on student learning experiences. Through a comprehensive qualitative case study approach, this research seeks to understand the complex relationships between TPS implementation, student engagement, academic performance, and the development of critical thinking and communication skills. The findings of this study will contribute to the broader understanding of collaborative learning strategies and provide valuable insights for educators seeking to enhance their pedagogical practices through the implementation of TPS.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study design to provide an in-depth examination of Think-Pair-Share implementation in a junior high school setting. The case study approach was selected as it allows for comprehensive exploration of complex phenomena within their natural context, enabling researchers to capture the nuanced experiences and perspectives of participants involved in TPS activities.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at SMPN 2 Sanggau, a public junior high

school located in Sanggau, West Kalimantan. The focal classroom was an eighth-grade English Language Arts class with 28 students, representing diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The participating teacher had five years of teaching experience and had been implementing TPS strategies for approximately two years prior to the study. Student participants ranged in age from 13 to 15 years old, with varying levels of academic achievement and classroom participation.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection occurred over a six-week period during the spring semester, utilizing multiple sources to ensure comprehensive understanding of the TPS implementation process and its impacts.

Classroom Observations: A total of 12 classroom observations were conducted, each lasting the full 35-minute class period. Observations were scheduled twice weekly and documented using structured observation protocols that captured teacher facilitation techniques, student interaction patterns, engagement levels, and collaborative behaviors. Field notes were taken to record contextual information, non-verbal communications, and emerging themes related to TPS implementation.

In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted

with the participating teacher and 12 purposefully selected students representing diverse academic abilities and participation levels. Teacher interviews were conducted weekly throughout the data collection period, focusing on pedagogical decisions, challenges encountered, and perceived student responses to TPS activities. Student interviews, conducted at the midpoint and conclusion of the study, explored their experiences with TPS, perceived benefits and challenges, and changes in their learning processes and classroom interactions.

Focus Groups: Three focus group sessions were conducted with different groups of 6-8 students each, providing opportunities for participants to discuss their TPS experiences in a collaborative setting. Focus group discussions were facilitated using open-ended questions that encouraged students to share their perspectives on collaborative learning, communication skills development, and the impact of TPS on their academic performance and classroom engagement.

Data Analysis

All interviews and focus group sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Observation notes were typed and organized chronologically. Data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach, beginning with initial

coding of all data sources to identify recurring patterns, themes, and concepts related to TPS implementation and its impacts.

The analysis process involved several stages of coding: open coding to identify initial concepts and categories, axial coding to establish relationships between categories, and selective coding to develop overarching themes. Multiple researchers participated in the coding process to ensure reliability and validity of the findings. Triangulation of data sources was employed to verify emerging themes and provide comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

The study received approval from the institutional review board and school district research committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with special attention to obtaining both parental consent and student assent for minor participants. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study through the use of pseudonyms and removal of identifying information from all reported data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of data collected through classroom observations, interviews, and focus groups revealed

several key themes related to the implementation and impact of Think-Pair-Share in the junior high school setting. These findings provide comprehensive insights into how TPS affects student engagement, academic performance, and the development of critical thinking and communication skills.

Enhanced Student Engagement and Participation

One of the most significant findings of this study was the marked improvement in student engagement and participation following TPS implementation. Classroom observations revealed that student participation increased substantially during TPS activities compared to traditional whole-class discussions, with more than two-thirds of students actively participating in TPS sessions compared to approximately one-third in traditional discussions. This finding aligns with Goodman and Berntson's (2015) research, which demonstrated that Think-Pair-Share significantly

improves student participation and motivation.

Students consistently reported feeling more comfortable sharing their ideas after having the opportunity to discuss them with a partner first. As one student participant noted, "When I talk to my partner first, I feel more confident about what I want to say to the class. It's like practicing before the real thing." This sentiment was echoed by multiple participants and supports Sampsel's (2013) findings regarding the positive effects of Think-Pair-Share on student confidence and participation.

The teacher observed that even typically quiet students became more actively involved in classroom discussions through TPS implementation. She explained, "I've noticed that students who rarely spoke up before are now contributing regularly. The pair discussion seems to give them the courage and preparation they need to participate in larger group conversations." This finding is particularly significant given the developmental characteristics of

eighth-grade students, who often struggle with self-confidence and peer acceptance.

Development of Critical Thinking Skills

The study revealed substantial evidence that TPS implementation fostered the development of critical thinking skills among students. Through the "think" phase of the process, students were encouraged to formulate their own ideas before being influenced by others, promoting independent reasoning and analysis. During the "pair" phase, students were challenged to articulate their thoughts, listen to alternative perspectives, and synthesize different viewpoints.

Observations showed that students engaged in increasingly sophisticated discussions as they became more familiar with the TPS process. Initial pair conversations were often superficial, but over time, students began to ask probing questions, challenge each other's ideas constructively, and build upon their partner's thoughts. This progression supports Hermann and

Foster's (2014) assertion that collaborative group work through the Think-Pair-Share technique significantly enhances students' analytical and reasoning abilities.

One student reflected on this development:

"At first, I would just agree with whatever my partner said, but now I ask questions and we really think about things together. Sometimes we change our minds, and sometimes we come up with completely new ideas."

This quote illustrates the evolution of students' thinking processes and their growing ability to engage in meaningful intellectual discourse.

The teacher noted that students began to apply critical thinking skills beyond TPS activities, demonstrating transfer of learning to other classroom situations. She observed, "I've seen students start to ask better questions during regular lessons and challenge information more thoughtfully. The thinking skills they're developing in TPS seem to be carrying over into other areas of their learning."

Improved Communication and Social Skills

TPS implementation had a profound impact on students' communication and social skills development. The structured nature of the activity provided a safe environment for students to practice articulating their thoughts and listening to others. Observations revealed that students became more skilled at expressing their ideas clearly, asking clarifying questions, and providing constructive feedback to their peers.

The collaborative nature of TPS also contributed to improved interpersonal relationships among students. Focus group discussions revealed that students developed stronger connections with their classmates through regular pair interactions. As one participant explained,

"I've gotten to know kids I never really talked to before. We help each other understand things better, and it's made our class feel more like a team."

This finding is particularly significant in the eighth-grade context, where social dynamics and peer relationships play crucial roles in students' overall school experience. Sundar (2016) emphasized TPS as a new way to collaborate and communicate, and the current study provides concrete evidence of these benefits in practice.

The teacher observed that students became more respectful and supportive of each other through TPS activities. She noted,

"There's been a noticeable change in how students interact with each other. They've learned to listen more carefully, disagree respectfully, and build on each other's ideas. These are skills that will serve them well beyond my classroom."

Academic Performance Improvements

Data analysis revealed consistent improvements in students' academic performance following TPS implementation. Observations showed that students demonstrated better comprehension of lesson content, asked more thoughtful

questions, and produced higher quality work during and after TPS activities. The collaborative discussion component of TPS appeared to help students clarify their understanding and identify areas of confusion.

The teacher reported that students' written work showed improvement in organization, depth of analysis, and incorporation of multiple perspectives. She explained,

"After TPS discussions, students' essays and assignments show much more sophisticated thinking. They're considering different viewpoints and supporting their arguments more effectively."

This finding supports Lyman and Harlow's (2014) research, which demonstrated that Think-Pair-Share enhances students' comprehension across different subject areas. The current study extends these findings to the eighth-grade English Language Arts context, suggesting that TPS benefits are not limited to specific academic disciplines.

Students also reported that TPS activities helped them better understand complex concepts and

retain information more effectively. One participant shared,

"When we talk about things with our partners, it helps me remember better. If I don't understand something, my partner can explain it in a way that makes sense to me."

Teacher Facilitation and Implementation Challenges

The study revealed that effective teacher facilitation was crucial to successful TPS implementation. The participating teacher's role evolved from traditional instructor to facilitator and guide, requiring the development of new pedagogical skills and strategies. Observations showed that the teacher's ability to frame appropriate questions, manage time effectively, and create a supportive classroom environment significantly influenced the success of TPS activities.

Several implementation challenges emerged during the study. Initial resistance from some students who preferred traditional teaching methods required patience and persistence from the teacher. Time

management proved challenging, as TPS activities often took longer than anticipated, requiring careful planning and flexibility. The teacher also had to address issues related to student pairing, ensuring that partnerships were productive and equitable.

However, the teacher reported that these challenges diminished over time as both she and her students became more familiar with the TPS process. She noted,

"The first few weeks were difficult, but once we established routines and expectations, TPS became a natural part of our classroom culture. The benefits far outweighed the initial challenges."

This finding echoes Kothiyal, Majumdar, Murthy, and Iyer's (2013) emphasis on the importance of careful implementation to ensure that meaningful learning occurs during TPS activities. The current study provides practical insights into the specific challenges teachers may encounter and strategies for overcoming them.

Student Perceptions and Attitudes

Students' attitudes toward TPS were overwhelmingly positive, with most participants expressing preference for this collaborative approach over traditional teaching methods. Focus group discussions revealed that students appreciated the opportunity to share their ideas in a low-stakes environment before participating in larger group discussions.

Students particularly valued the social aspects of TPS, noting that it made learning more enjoyable and less intimidating. One participant explained,

"I like that we get to work together and help each other. It makes class more fun, and I don't feel as nervous about sharing my ideas."

The study also revealed that students developed a better understanding of their own learning processes through TPS participation. Many students reported becoming more aware of their thinking patterns and more skilled at self-reflection. This metacognitive development is particularly important for eighth-grade students who are developing

greater independence in their learning.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study have several important implications for educational practice. First, the evidence strongly supports the implementation of TPS as an effective strategy for enhancing student engagement and academic achievement in eighth-grade settings. The collaborative nature of TPS addresses the developmental needs of adolescent learners while promoting both cognitive and social growth.

Second, the study highlights the importance of adequate teacher preparation and ongoing support for TPS implementation. Educators need training in facilitation techniques, question formulation, and classroom management strategies specific to collaborative learning environments. Professional development programs should address both the theoretical foundations of TPS and practical implementation strategies.

Third, the findings suggest that TPS implementation requires a

gradual and systematic approach. Teachers should expect initial challenges and plan for a period of adjustment as students become familiar with collaborative learning processes.

Consistent implementation and clear expectations are essential for success.

Finally, the study demonstrates that TPS benefits extend beyond academic achievement to include improved social skills, communication abilities, and classroom climate. These broader impacts should be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of TPS implementation and making decisions about pedagogical approaches.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative case study provides comprehensive evidence supporting the effectiveness of Think-Pair-Share implementation in eighth-grade settings. The findings demonstrate that TPS significantly enhances student engagement, promotes the development of critical thinking and communication skills, and improves academic performance

when implemented with careful attention to pedagogical principles and student needs.

The study's most significant contribution lies in its detailed examination of the complex processes through which TPS influences student learning experiences. Unlike previous research that primarily focused on quantitative outcomes, this investigation provides rich insights into the mechanisms by which collaborative learning strategies impact student development. The evidence clearly indicates that TPS creates opportunities for meaningful peer interaction, promotes intellectual risk-taking, and develops essential 21st-century skills including communication, collaboration, and critical thinking.

The findings support Hermann and Foster's (2014) assertion that collaborative group work through TPS fosters critical thinking in classroom settings. This study extends their work by demonstrating how these benefits manifest specifically in the eighth-grade context, where students face

unique developmental challenges and learning needs. The research also confirms Goodman and Berntson's (2015) findings regarding improved student participation and motivation, while providing qualitative evidence of the specific ways in which TPS enhances student engagement.

Particularly noteworthy is the study's demonstration of TPS's impact on student confidence and classroom participation, supporting Sampsel's (2013) research while providing deeper understanding of the underlying processes. The structured nature of TPS activities appears to create a supportive environment that enables even reluctant students to participate meaningfully in classroom discussions. This finding has significant implications for addressing participation gaps and creating more inclusive learning environments.

The study also addresses questions raised by Kothiyal, Majumdar, Murthy, and Iyer (2013) about whether meaningful learning actually occurs during TPS implementation. The evidence from this investigation clearly

demonstrates that, when properly facilitated, TPS activities promote deep learning, conceptual understanding, and skill development. The key factor appears to be the quality of teacher facilitation and the establishment of appropriate classroom conditions for collaborative learning.

The research reveals that successful TPS implementation requires careful attention to several factors including teacher preparation, student orientation, appropriate question formulation, and ongoing support for both students and educators. The initial challenges encountered during implementation, while significant, can be overcome through persistence, flexibility, and commitment to collaborative learning principles.

The findings have important implications for educational policy and practice. Schools and districts considering TPS implementation should invest in comprehensive professional development programs that prepare teachers for their evolving role as facilitators of

collaborative learning. Additionally, educational leaders should recognize that TPS implementation requires time, patience, and ongoing support to achieve its full potential.

This study contributes to the growing body of research supporting collaborative learning strategies while providing practical guidance for educators seeking to enhance their pedagogical practices. The evidence demonstrates that TPS, when implemented thoughtfully and consistently, can transform classroom dynamics and create more engaging, inclusive, and effective learning environments for eighth-grade students.

Future research should continue to explore TPS implementation across diverse educational contexts, examine long-term impacts on student learning outcomes, and investigate the specific professional development needs of teachers implementing collaborative learning strategies. Additionally, research examining the effectiveness of TPS in different subject areas and with various student populations

would further enhance our understanding of this valuable pedagogical approach.

The implications of this study extend beyond the immediate classroom context to broader questions about educational reform and the development of 21st-century learning environments. As educators continue to seek effective strategies for preparing students for an increasingly complex and interconnected world, collaborative learning approaches like TPS offer promising pathways for achieving these goals. The evidence presented in this study strongly supports the continued development and refinement of TPS implementation practices in eighth-grade settings and beyond.

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