

Enhancing Students' Learning Outcomes through Problem-Based Learning: An Empirical Study in Classroom Contexts

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve students' learning outcomes through the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model in Islamic Education (PAI) for seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Pringgasela. This research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) consisting of two cycles, each involving planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages. The study was conducted collaboratively between the teacher and the researcher as an observer. Data were collected using learning outcome tests and observation sheets to assess teacher and student activities. Quantitative analysis was used to determine individual and classical mastery, while qualitative analysis examined the implementation process. The results showed significant improvements across cycles. Classical mastery increased from 60.71% in Cycle I to 89.28% in Cycle II. Teacher activity scores improved from 65.21 to 86.95, and student activity scores rose from 60.86 to 86.95. These findings indicate that the PBL model effectively enhances student learning outcomes and classroom engagement.

Keywords: learning outcomes, PBL, Classroom, context, empirical study

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INTRODUCTION

Learning is closely related to education, as educational goals can only be achieved through the learning process. Education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' character and personality across all aspects of human life worldwide. General education differs from Islamic education, as the latter comprises interconnected components that interact with one another to achieve predetermined objectives. However, these components often operate in a conventional, natural, and less structured manner. One of the main issues lies in the learning methodology, which tends to be monotonous, compounded by limited facilities, infrastructure, and financial resources. Consequently, the quality of Islamic education remains relatively low (Nata, 2008).

Islamic education can be understood as an educational program aimed at instilling Islamic values through teaching and learning processes conducted both inside and outside the classroom, integrated into the subject of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Within the national curriculum, PAI is a compulsory subject at all levels of formal education, from kindergarten to higher education, and is designed according to educational stages and contexts (Syarifudin, 2018).

As a subject, Islamic Religious Education plays a significant role in shaping individuals who are faithful and possess noble character (akhlaq al-karimah). Therefore, it must be delivered through varied

instructional models to ensure that students can easily understand and apply the material in their daily lives, ultimately fostering individuals who are religious, morally upright, and responsible citizens.

Based on preliminary observations conducted on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, at SMPN 2 Pringgasela, students' learning outcomes in PAI were still relatively low. The average score was 65, with the highest score of 87 and the lowest of 45. Only 63% (18 students) achieved mastery, while 37% (10 students) did not meet the minimum competency standard (KKM) of 75. This condition was largely influenced by the teacher's reliance on monotonous teaching methods, primarily lectures and limited question-and-answer sessions. As a result, students often experienced boredom, drowsiness, and lack of motivation, leading to low engagement and attention during lessons. Additionally, instructional time was inefficient, as students were required to copy material from textbooks before the lesson began, causing lesson plans (RPP) to be implemented ineffectively. These factors negatively affected students' learning outcomes.

In many teaching and learning processes, teachers have not optimally managed classroom instruction, resulting in students being less active and less creative in exploring their competencies. A lack of innovation in selecting teaching methods, strategies, and models, as well as insufficiently relevant and simplified materials, further contributes to low student achievement.

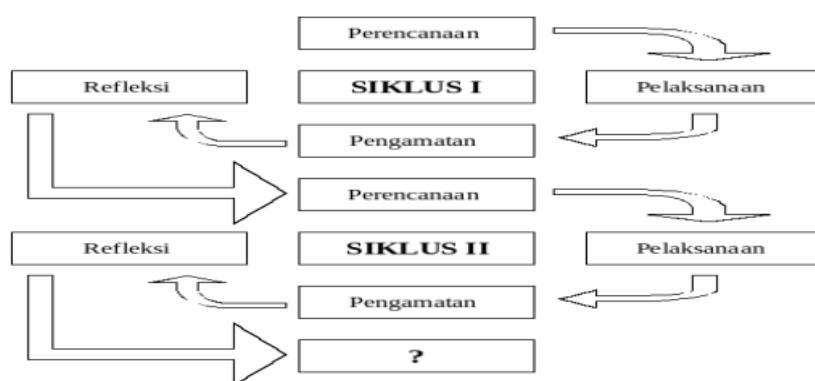
Observations also indicate that conventional teaching methods dominate classroom practices, making students passive participants. Teachers tend to favor lectures because they are simple and require minimal preparation. However, this approach does not equip students with effective learning strategies, such as critical thinking and self-motivation, which are essential for successful learning (Trianto, 2009). Consequently, students often become disengaged, as learning activities are limited to listening, note-taking, reading, and memorization.

To address these issues, various instructional models can be implemented to create more engaging learning experiences. One such model is Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which encourages students to think critically, analytically, systematically, and logically in solving problems through empirical data analysis. This model also promotes scientific attitudes and independent as well as collaborative problem-solving based on real-life contexts (Sanjaya, 2010). Through PBL, students are given opportunities to present ideas, express opinions, engage in argumentation, and communicate effectively with peers. This enables teachers to better understand students' thinking processes and provide appropriate guidance, facilitating meaningful interactions between teachers and students as well as among students (Rusman, 2018).

Therefore, the Problem-Based Learning model is considered an appropriate approach to improve students' learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education for seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Pringgasela. By implementing this model, students are expected to become more active and independent learners, while also gaining knowledge and experience through problem-solving activities. Previous studies have also demonstrated the effectiveness of PBL in improving learning outcomes, such as research by Lestari (2020) and Ismi (2022), which confirmed its positive impact on students' achievement and problem-solving abilities. Based on the background described above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled: "The Implementation of the Problem-Based Learning Model to Improve Students' Learning Outcomes in Islamic Religious Education for Seventh-Grade Students at SMP Negeri 2 Pringgasela."

METHODOLOGY

The type of research employed in this study is Classroom Action Research (CAR). CAR can be defined as a process of examining instructional problems occurring in the classroom through reflective inquiry, with the aim of solving these problems by implementing a series of planned actions in real classroom settings and analyzing the effects of such interventions (Sanjaya, 2009). This study was conducted during the second semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. To obtain optimal and expected results, the researcher designed several stages to be implemented in this classroom action research. The research consisted of four main stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The overall research process can be illustrated as follows:



Gambar 3.1 Classroom action research cycle

The observation stage was conducted to obtain an objective overview of the learning process and to monitor students' behavior during the implementation of the classroom action research. This stage involved systematically observing the activities of both the teacher and students, including any obstacles and difficulties encountered during the instructional process. All observed activities were recorded using observation sheets prepared by the observer, and the results were utilized to improve the implementation in the subsequent cycle. In addition, students' learning outcomes were evaluated at the end of each cycle through test instruments. The reflection stage involved reviewing and analyzing the actions implemented in the classroom based on the observation and evaluation results. This process served as a basis for refining and improving the planning and implementation of actions in the next cycle. Specifically, teachers and students examined the outcomes of the first cycle to identify strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, the results of data analysis from Cycle I were used as a reference for planning Cycle II, with necessary improvements made to address the identified shortcomings.

This study employed observation and tests as data collection techniques. Observation was conducted to examine teacher and student activities during the learning process using structured observation sheets based on lesson plan indicators, with a checklist system ("yes" or "no"). Meanwhile, tests in the form of 10 multiple-choice questions were administered at the end of each cycle to measure students' learning outcomes. The data analysis consisted of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative analysis measured individual mastery (≥ 75) and classical mastery ($\geq 85\%$) using standard formulas. Qualitative analysis focused on student and teacher activities, calculated based on observed aspects and categorized into levels ranging from "very poor" to "very good/very active." Reflection was carried out collaboratively by the observer and teacher to identify weaknesses and obstacles during the learning process and to

determine appropriate improvements for the next cycle. The study was considered successful when both teacher and student activities reached at least a “good” category and classical learning mastery achieved $\geq 85\%$.

DISCUSSION

This classroom action research was conducted as an effort to improve students’ learning outcomes through the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model in a seventh-grade class at SMPN 2 Pringgasela. The study was carried out over two weeks, from April 3 to April 11, 2023, and consisted of two cycles. Each cycle included one meeting for material delivery and one meeting for evaluation, with the evaluation tests administered outside regular class hours. Qualitative data were obtained from observations of teacher and student activities during the learning process, while quantitative data were collected from students’ evaluation test results consisting of 10 multiple-choice items per cycle.

The findings showed a 28.57% improvement in learning outcomes from Cycle I to Cycle II. In Cycle I, the average score was 72.14 with a classical mastery of 60.71%, which increased in Cycle II to an average score of 80.35 and classical mastery of 89.28%. This improvement was attributed to the teacher’s ability to create a focused, engaging, and conducive learning environment. Students became more disciplined, attentive, and actively participated in discussions and presentations. They demonstrated increased confidence in expressing opinions, asking questions, and providing feedback during group work. The enjoyable learning atmosphere also encouraged collaboration and active engagement among students.

Problem-Based Learning is a student-centered instructional model aimed at solving real-world problems and fostering critical thinking through structured steps such as problem identification, information sharing, presentation, and evaluation (Amaludin, 2021). This model also enhances students’ problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and ability to acquire new knowledge (Kusumawati, 2022). Over time, students became more active and enthusiastic, especially when learning in groups.

The PBL model also contributed to increased student activity, with scores rising from 60.86% in Cycle I to 86.95% in Cycle II, indicating a 26.09% improvement and a “very active” category. This increase in activity positively influenced learning outcomes, as students showed better cooperation, confidence, and independence, particularly during evaluation where most completed tasks without cheating.

Teacher activity also improved significantly, from 65.21% in Cycle I (fair category) to 86.95% in Cycle II (very good category). Initial shortcomings included lack of apperception, unclear learning objectives, and limited guidance during group discussions. However, through reflection and improvement, the teacher became more effective in facilitating learning, guiding discussions, and engaging students. In the PBL approach, the teacher acts as a facilitator, manager, and strategist rather than the sole source of knowledge.

In conclusion, the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning model effectively improved students’ learning outcomes, as evidenced by increased teacher and student activities and enhanced academic achievement from Cycle I to Cycle II in Islamic Education for Grade VII at SMPN 2 Pringgasela.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model can improve teacher teaching activities, student learning activities, and students’ learning outcomes in Islamic Education for seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Pringgasela in the second semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. This is evidenced by the increase in teacher activity observation results from 65.21% in Cycle I to 86.95% in Cycle II. Similarly, student activity increased from 60.86% in Cycle I to 86.95% in Cycle II. In terms of learning outcomes, student mastery improved from 17 students (60.71%) in Cycle I to 25 students (89.28%) in Cycle II. Likewise, classical mastery increased

from 60.71% in Cycle I to 89.28% in Cycle II. These findings indicate that the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model effectively enhances students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education for Grade VII at SMPN 2 Pringgasela in accordance with the instructional material.

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