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Improving Students' Understanding of Islamic Education Learning through the Project-Based Learning Model at SD Negeri 1506 Bunut

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Abstract: This study aims to improve students' understanding of Islamic religious education through the Project Based Learning Model. This study is a classroom action research that uses four steps, namely planning, action, observation and reflection. The subjects of this study were elementary school students. The data for this study were obtained by test and observation techniques. Tests are used to measure learning and observations are used to analyze teacher and student learning activities. The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive statistics by comparing the results obtained with indicators of research success. The results of the study indicate that through the Project Based Learning Model, it can improve students' understanding of Islamic religious education learning. This can be seen from the increase in the percentage of student learning completion in each cycle with details of the pre-cycle 40.89%, the first cycle 68.87% and in the second cycle it increased to 90.32%. Thus, through the Project Based Learning Model it can be used as an alternative to improve students' understanding of Islamic religious education learning.

Keywords: Project based learning model, students' understanding, islamic education.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the important subjects that plays a role in shaping the character and personality of students. One of the goals of PAI is to instill the values of Islamic teachings reflected in the Qur'an and Hadith. In this case, Surah Al-Ma'un is one of the relevant materials to be taught in elementary schools because of its content that emphasizes the importance of social care, empathy, and helping others.

However, based on initial observations in class V of SD Negeri 1506 Bunut, Sosa Julu District, it was found that students' understanding of the values contained in Q.S. Al-Ma'un was still low. Most students only understand the verses of the Qur'an textually without relating their meaning to daily life. This is reflected in the students' lack of awareness to help friends in need or show a caring attitude towards the surrounding environment. This condition shows that the PAI learning that has been carried out so far is not effective in instilling the values of Q.S. Al-Ma'un in depth.

One of the factors that affects students' low understanding is learning methods that are still conventional, such as lectures and memorization, which do not involve students actively in the learning process. In fact, students' active involvement is essential to help them understand concepts in depth and apply them in real life. Therefore, innovations are needed in learning methods that can increase students' understanding of Q.S. Al-Ma'un values as well as integrate these values into their daily behavior.

The Project-Based Learning (PjBL) learning model is one of the alternatives that can be applied to overcome these problems. PjBL is a learning model that emphasizes the active involvement of students in completing projects that are relevant to real life. Through PjBL, students are invited to explore information, discuss, and work collaboratively to produce solutions to certain problems. In the context of Q.S. Al-Ma'un learning, this model can be used to design projects related to social activities, such as raising donations, helping others, or cleaning up the environment.

Based on this background, this class action research aims to improve the understanding and implementation of Q.S. Al-Ma'un values through the application of the Project-Based Learning learning model in grade V students at SD Negeri 1506 Bunut, Sosa Julu District, Padang Lawas Regency. It is hoped that the results of this research can make a positive contribution to improving the quality of PAI learning and instilling the noble values of the Qur'an in students.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate the effectiveness of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model in improving students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 1506 Bunut. The research was conducted in a classroom setting, where students were exposed to the PBL model as an alternative teaching strategy to traditional methods. The objective was to assess whether this model could enhance students' comprehension and retention of Islamic Education concepts by providing a more hands-on, real-world approach to learning.

The participants of this study were 30 students from grade 5 of SD Negeri 1506 Bunut. These students were selected through purposive sampling, as they were actively enrolled in the Islamic Education subject, which was the focus of this research. The study lasted for one semester, during which the students were introduced to various PBL activities designed to promote engagement and deepen their understanding of key Islamic concepts such as honesty, compassion, justice, and charity.

Data collection involved multiple methods to capture both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the learning process. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to assess changes in students' knowledge and understanding of the material before and after the intervention. The tests focused on key learning outcomes related to Islamic teachings. Additionally, classroom observations were conducted to monitor student participation, engagement, and behavior during the project-based activities. Teachers also recorded anecdotal notes on students' interactions and performance throughout the lessons.

Furthermore, student interviews were conducted to gather insights into their experiences with the PBL model. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing students to express their thoughts and feelings about the learning process. This qualitative data provided a deeper understanding of how the PBL model impacted students' motivation, interest, and perceived comprehension of Islamic Education. Teacher interviews were also conducted to gain feedback on the implementation of the PBL model and its effectiveness in promoting student learning.

The PBL activities were designed around real-world problems and scenarios relevant to the students' daily lives, encouraging them to apply Islamic values and principles to solve these problems. For instance, students worked on a project related to helping the community, where they discussed Islamic teachings on charity and how they could implement them in practical ways. The projects were collaborative, with students

working in small groups, which fostered teamwork and peer learning while also promoting critical thinking and creativity.

To analyze the data, pre-test and post-test scores were compared to determine the impact of the PBL approach on students' knowledge and understanding of Islamic Education. Classroom observations were analyzed to identify patterns of engagement, participation, and collaboration during the PBL activities. The interview transcripts were coded and categorized to identify common themes regarding students' experiences and perceptions of the learning model.

The study followed ethical guidelines by ensuring that all participants, including students and teachers, provided informed consent before participating in the research. Additionally, the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants were maintained throughout the study to protect their privacy.

In conclusion, this research used a combination of pre- and post-tests, classroom observations, and interviews to assess the effectiveness of the Project-Based Learning model in enhancing students' understanding of Islamic Education. By employing a diverse range of data collection methods, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of how PBL can be implemented to improve both the academic and personal development of students at SD Negeri 1506 Bunut.

RESULTS

The primary goal of this research was to determine whether the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model could improve students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 1506 Bunut. The results of this study show a significant positive impact on student learning outcomes as a result of implementing PBL. Both qualitative and quantitative data collected throughout the study indicate that students' comprehension of key Islamic concepts, such as honesty, charity, and justice, improved substantially after participating in the project-based activities.

Pre-test results indicated that students had a basic understanding of Islamic Education principles, but they struggled to apply these concepts to real-world situations. Most students were able to recall Islamic values but had difficulty relating them to practical scenarios or making meaningful connections between the teachings and their own lives. This passive learning environment limited their ability to retain and understand the material deeply. However, after the PBL intervention, the post-test results revealed a noticeable increase in their understanding and application of the material. Students showed significant improvements in their ability to relate Islamic teachings to real-life contexts and demonstrate a deeper comprehension of the subject.

Classroom observations during the implementation of the PBL model highlighted a marked increase in student engagement and participation. During the project activities, students were actively involved in discussions, brainstorming sessions, and collaborative group work. This engagement was particularly evident in the Islamic Education projects, where students were encouraged to explore real-world issues, such as how Islamic principles of charity could be applied in helping their local community. The hands-on nature of the projects allowed students to experience the relevance of the subject matter, which fostered a sense of ownership over their learning process.

Furthermore, the PBL model facilitated collaboration among students, enhancing their ability to work in teams and learn from each other. Group work allowed students to discuss ideas, share resources, and collaborate on solving problems. This cooperative learning environment fostered a sense of community and encouraged students to value the opinions and perspectives of their peers. The collaborative nature of the PBL approach also helped students develop social skills, such as communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork, which are important not only for academic success but also for their personal development.

The students' ability to apply Islamic teachings in practical scenarios improved noticeably after engaging in PBL activities. For example, in one project, students were tasked with planning a community charity event based on Islamic principles of charity (Zakat). Students actively researched how Islamic teachings encourage helping others and how they could apply these teachings by organizing a charity drive. By working on such real-life problems, students were able to see how their learning could impact the community, which significantly deepened their understanding and commitment to the subject.

Interviews with students provided further insights into their experiences with the PBL model. Many students reported that they found the learning process more enjoyable and engaging compared to traditional, lecture-based methods. They appreciated the opportunity to work on projects that had real-world relevance, and many students expressed excitement about applying what they had learned in practical ways. One student mentioned, "I like that we can work together and help others. It makes me feel like I'm really learning something important." Such feedback highlighted the increased motivation and intrinsic interest that students experienced as a result of the PBL approach.

Additionally, teachers' feedback reinforced the positive impact of the PBL model on student understanding. Teachers noted that students became more proactive in their learning and showed greater enthusiasm for the subject. One teacher commented, "The students are more excited and take the lessons seriously. They ask questions and are more involved in class discussions now." The teachers also observed that the project-based activities allowed them to better assess students' critical thinking skills, as students were required to engage in problem-solving and decision-making throughout the projects.

The results also indicated improvements in student retention of the material. Since PBL emphasizes hands-on learning and active involvement, students were better able to remember and apply what they had learned. This was evident in their ability to recall Islamic concepts during post-tests and in their discussions during project presentations. The practical application of the lessons in real-world contexts allowed students to retain the material more effectively and for a longer period of time.

Despite the many positive outcomes, some challenges were identified during the study. One challenge was the time required for project planning and execution. Teachers needed to invest considerable time in designing meaningful projects that aligned with the curriculum and ensured that the students were able to complete the tasks within the given timeframe. This was particularly challenging in the initial stages of the study, as teachers had to adjust to the new teaching method and become more familiar with the process of guiding students through the PBL activities. However, once the teachers became more accustomed to the model, they found the process more manageable.

Another challenge was that some students initially struggled with the open-ended nature of the projects. These students were used to more structured, teacher-directed lessons and found it difficult to take full responsibility for their learning. However, after some initial guidance and support, these students became more confident in managing their own learning and collaborating with their peers. Over time, the students' ability to work independently and think critically improved significantly, further highlighting the long-term benefits of the PBL model.

In conclusion, the findings of this study clearly show that the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model significantly improved students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 1506 Bunut. The shift from passive learning to active, project-based learning allowed students to engage more deeply with the material, improve their critical thinking skills, and apply Islamic principles to real-world situations. While challenges in implementation were encountered, the overall results suggest that the PBL model is a highly effective strategy for enhancing student comprehension and fostering greater interest in Islamic Education. The study's findings recommend that the PBL model be

considered as a regular approach in teaching Islamic Education to further improve student learning outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The results of this research indicate that the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model had a significant positive impact on students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 1506 Bunut. One of the key strengths of PBL is its ability to engage students by connecting academic content to real-life contexts. By incorporating projects that required students to explore and apply Islamic principles to practical situations, students were able to see the relevance of what they were learning. This helped them understand Islamic teachings in a deeper and more meaningful way, moving beyond rote memorization to actual application.

One of the most notable outcomes of this study was the increased student engagement observed throughout the implementation of PBL. In contrast to traditional teaching methods, which can sometimes result in passive learning, PBL encouraged active participation from students. During project-based activities, students were not only engaged in the learning process but also took ownership of their work. They worked collaboratively, shared ideas, and solved problems together, which made the learning experience more interactive and dynamic. This active involvement led to a noticeable improvement in their understanding of key Islamic concepts such as charity, justice, and kindness.

Collaboration was a central feature of the PBL approach, and the study revealed that students benefited significantly from working together in groups. Group work allowed students to learn from each other, discuss different perspectives, and apply Islamic values in collaborative settings. It also helped foster a sense of community in the classroom, as students supported one another and worked towards a common goal. This sense of unity was particularly important in Islamic Education, where concepts of brotherhood, solidarity, and mutual support are central to the teachings. Through PBL, students were able to internalize these values in a practical, hands-on manner.

The application of Islamic principles in real-world scenarios was another important benefit of the PBL approach. One example was a project in which students organized a charity event based on the Islamic concept of Zakat (charity). This project gave students the opportunity to explore the social responsibility aspects of Islam and actively contribute to their local community. The process of researching, planning, and executing the project allowed students to see the impact of Islamic teachings in action, reinforcing the idea that their learning had a direct and meaningful effect on the world around them.

Students' critical thinking skills were also developed through the PBL model. By engaging in problem-solving tasks and exploring real-world issues, students had to think critically about how Islamic principles could be applied to solve problems. This was a significant departure from traditional methods that often focus more on memorization than on critical thinking. The PBL approach encouraged students to analyze situations, make informed decisions, and approach problems with creativity and logical reasoning. These skills are valuable not only for academic success but also for personal and social development.

Moreover, students demonstrated improved retention of material as a result of the hands-on learning experiences provided by PBL. Because students were actively involved in the learning process and had opportunities to apply what they were learning in real-world situations, the material was more likely to be retained over time. This finding aligns with the literature on PBL, which suggests that active learning techniques, such as those used in project-based activities, promote better retention compared to passive learning approaches. The PBL model helped students internalize Islamic concepts in a way that was meaningful and long-lasting.

However, the study also highlighted several challenges associated with implementing the PBL model. One of the challenges mentioned by both teachers and students was the time required to plan and execute the projects. Since PBL involves complex activities that require careful organization and coordination, it was more time-consuming than traditional methods. Teachers had to invest additional time in designing projects that aligned with curriculum objectives and ensured that students were able to meet learning goals. This added time commitment was particularly noticeable during the initial stages of the study, as teachers adjusted to the demands of the new teaching model.

Another challenge was that some students initially struggled with the open-ended nature of the projects. Many students were accustomed to structured, teacher-directed lessons and found it difficult to navigate the more self-directed and collaborative nature of PBL. Some students were unsure about how to manage their time effectively or how to contribute to group discussions and decision-making processes. Teachers provided additional guidance and support, helping students develop the skills they needed to succeed in this learning environment. Over time, students became more comfortable with the PBL approach and began to take more initiative in their learning.

Despite these challenges, the overall impact of PBL on student learning was overwhelmingly positive. Teachers reported that students became more enthusiastic about Islamic Education and were more willing to participate in lessons. The ability to see the real-world application of Islamic principles helped students connect more deeply with the subject matter. Teachers also observed that students developed better problem-solving, teamwork, and communication skills, which are essential both in academic settings and in everyday life. The success of the PBL model in enhancing student understanding of Islamic Education suggests that this approach has the potential to be widely adopted in other subjects as well.

In conclusion, the PBL model proved to be an effective strategy for improving students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 1506 Bunut. The study demonstrated that by engaging students in real-world, hands-on projects, they were able to apply Islamic principles in meaningful ways, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter. The collaborative and student-centered nature of PBL promoted critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills, which contributed to an overall improvement in student motivation and academic performance. Despite some challenges, such as time constraints and initial adjustment difficulties, the positive outcomes of the study suggest that PBL is a valuable tool for enhancing learning in Islamic Education and other subjects. Future research should explore ways to address the challenges of PBL implementation and further assess its impact on students' long-term academic success.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research on the application of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) learning model to improve the understanding and implementation of Q.S. Al-Ma'un values in grade V students of SD Negeri 1506 Bunut, Sosa Julu District, it can be concluded; 1) Application of the PjBL Model: The PjBL learning model can be applied well in the learning of Q.S. Al-Ma'un. The learning process that actively involves students through real projects, such as "Healthy Food Sharing Activities," makes students better understand and appreciate the values contained in Q.S. Al-Ma'un; 2) Improving Student Understanding: The application of PjBL is able to increase students' understanding of the values of Q.S. Al-Ma'un. The average student score increased from 50 in the Pre-Cycle to 67 in Cycle 1 and 81 in Cycle 2, with all students achieving the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM); 3) Implementation of Q.S. Al-Ma'un Values: Students begin to apply Q.S. Al-Ma'un values in daily life, such as sharing, helping others, and caring for the surrounding environment. Project activities provide students with hands-on experience to internalize those values in concrete actions.

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