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Improving Student Understanding through Project Based Learning Model in Islamic Education Learning at SD Negeri 0101 Sibuhuan

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Abstract: This study aims to improve students' understanding of Islamic religious education through the Project Based Learning 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 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 Learning Model it can be used as an alternative to improve students' understanding of Islamic religious education learning.

Keywords: Project based learning model, student understanding, islamic education.

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INTRODUCTION

Religious education in elementary schools has an important role in shaping students' character and personality. One aspect of Islamic religious education that needs special attention is the teaching of infak and almsgiving. These two concepts are not only part of religious teachings, but are also essential moral values to form a generation that cares, is generous, and has social solidarity. However, the facts in the field show that the understanding and practice of infak and alms among students is still relatively low. Infak and alms are teachings emphasized in Islam as a form of implementation of noble morals. In the Qur'an and Hadith, there are many verses and narrations that teach the importance of sharing sustenance for the benefit of others.

In addition to getting closer to Allah SWT, infak and alms have a great social impact, such as reducing social disparities, fostering empathy, and improving people's welfare. At

the primary education level, especially in grade 6 of elementary school, students are at a crucial stage of moral and social development. According to Kohlberg's theory of moral development, at this age, children begin to understand social norms and the importance of sharing. Therefore, infak and alms education must be designed in such a way that students not only understand the concept in theory, but also be able to apply it in daily life. Based on initial observations at SD 0101 Sibuhuan, it was found that even though infak and alms have been taught in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects, students' understanding of these concepts is still superficial. Most students understand infak and alms as routine activities that are carried out at certain times, such as giving money on Fridays or when there is a fundraiser at school.

This practice shows that the teaching of infak and alms emphasizes more on symbolic aspects, without integrating a deep understanding of their meaning and benefits. In addition, the lack of creativity in learning methods is wrong. One factor that causes low student understanding. The dominant lecture method makes students tend to be passive and find it difficult to understand the relevance of infak and alms in daily life. In fact, the application of an interactive and contextual learning model can help students understand this concept more deeply. To overcome this problem, innovations are needed in learning methods that are able to improve understanding as well as hone students' critical thinking skills.

Two relevant learning models for this purpose are Project Based Learning (PjBL) and Problem Based Learning (PBL). Project Based Learning, This model is oriented towards learning activities that involve students in real projects that are relevant to their lives. In the context of teaching infak and alms, students can be given projects such as raising funds to help friends in need, creating awareness campaigns about the importance of almsgiving, or compiling reports on the impact of infak activities they undertake. This model allows students to learn directly through experience, so that their understanding becomes more profound and applicable.

Problem Based Learning, This model involves students in the process of solving real problems that are relevant to the learning topic. For example, teachers can provide cases about social inequality in the surrounding environment and invite students to find solutions through infak and alms activities. With this method, students are trained to think critically, work together, and understand the relationship between the theory taught and its application in real life. The use of Project Based Learning and Problem Based Learning models is in accordance with the independent curriculum which emphasizes the importance of project-based learning and problem solving.

This approach is also in line with the demands of 21st century learning, where students are not only required to have theoretical knowledge, but also be able to practice it with critical, creative, collaborative, and communicative thinking skills. Although this learning model has a lot of potential, its application is not free from challenges. Teachers need special training to integrate this model in learning, while students may need time to adapt to a more active approach. However, with careful planning and support from various parties, the implementation of the Project Based Learning and Problem Based Learning models can have a significant positive impact.

Increasing the understanding and practice of infak and alms among elementary school students is an urgent need to create a generation that has social empathy and noble morals. Through learning innovations such as Project Based Learning and Problem Based Learning, it is hoped that students will not only understand the concepts of infak and alms in depth, but also be able to practice them in daily life. Thus, SD Negeri 0101 Sibuhuan can be an example of successful implementation of effective and relevant learning in shaping students' character.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with an experimental design. This approach was chosen because the research aims to determine the effect of the application of Project Based Learning (PjBL) and Problem Based Learning (PBL) learning models on improving understanding and practice of infak and alms among Grade 6 students of SD Negeri 0101 Sibuhuan. The experimental design used was a quasi-experiment with a pretest-posttest non-equivalent control group design. In this design, the experimental group will be treated using the PjBL and PBL learning models, while the control group will be taught with the conventional lecture method.

Before and after the treatment, both groups will be given tests to measure their understanding of infak and alms as well as observation of real practices carried out. Research Design: Experimental Group 1 (PjBL): Students taught with the Project Based Learning model. Experimental Group 2 (PBL): Students who are taught with the Problem Based Learning model. Control Group: Students taught by conventional lecture methods. The quantitative approach and experimental design were chosen because the study focused on statistically testable measurements and comparisons. With the experimental design, researchers can identify the direct influence of the learning model on the understanding and practice of infak and alms in students. Research Variables, in this study, there are two types of variables that will be observed and measured, namely independent variables and dependent variables.

The explanation of each variable is as follows; 1) Independent Variable (X). Independent variables are variables that are given treatment or intervention in this study. This variable is in the form of a learning model applied to the experimental group and the control group. The learning models tested were; 1) Project Based Learning (PjBL) Model; 2) Problem Based Learning (PBL) Model; 3) Conventional lecture method (control group). This treatment aims to see the influence of each learning model on improving the understanding and practice of infak and almsgiving; 2) Dependent Variable (Y). Dependent variables are variables that are measured to determine the impact of the treatment given. In this study, the dependent variable includes two main aspects that are the focus of the research, namely; 1) Students' Understanding of Infak and Alms This understanding is measured through written tests given to students before and after treatment, which includes theoretical knowledge regarding the concepts of infak and alms according to Islamic teachings; 2) Infak and Alms Practice by Students This practice is measured through observation of students' behavior in real activities, such as participation in fundraising, infak and alms-based social activities, or their contribution to programs that focus on sharing sustenance in schools or communities; 3) Control variables.

To ensure that the results of the study are not influenced by factors other than the learning model, several control variables also need to be considered, such as; 1) Age and level of students' initial knowledge about infak and alms; 2) The socio-economic background of the student's family that may affect the perception and behavior of students towards infak and alms; 3) Other teaching methods that may be carried out by teachers that can affect learning outcomes. The population in this study is all 6th grade students at SD Negeri 0101 Sibuhuan, which is the elementary school that is the object of the research. This population was chosen because grade 6 students are at a stage of moral development that is mature enough to understand and apply religious values such as infak and alms. Research Sample, This research sample will be taken by purposive sampling, namely by selecting classes that meet certain criteria, such as classes that have homogeneity in social background and sufficient prior knowledge. The sample will be divided into three groups, namely two experimental groups and one control group Sampling is carried out using purposive sampling techniques to select classes that are considered representative of population characteristics.

This selection considers factors such as students' willingness to actively participate, as well as teachers' willingness to implement different learning models. Each

selected class will be treated accordingly with a defined learning model (PjBL, PBL, or lecture). Each experimental group and control group will be given a pretest and posttest to measure changes in the understanding and practice of infak and almsgiving. The types of data used in this study are quantitative data and qualitative data. The Primes data sources in this study are; 1) Students; 2) Teachers. Secondary data sources in this study are; 1) Documentation; 2) Literature. The following are the data collection techniques used in this study; 1) Test (Pretest and Posttest): To measure students' understanding of infak and almsgiving, a written test will be given before and after the implementation of the learning model.

The pretest was conducted before the treatment began to determine the level of students' initial understanding, and the posttest was conducted after the treatment was completed to measure changes in students' understanding of the concepts of infak and almsgiving. This test will include questions that test students' knowledge of the meaning, benefits, and application of infak and alms; 2) Observation: Direct observation is carried out on student activities during the learning process and social activities related to infak and almsgiving. This observation aims to assess students' involvement in the real practice of infak and almsgiving, as well as to evaluate their interaction and participation in discussions or projects related to the topic; 3) Interview: Interviews are conducted with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to get more information about the learning process applied, the challenges faced, and the teacher's perception of the effectiveness of the learning model used.

These interviews are semi-structured to allow for deeper information digging; 4) Documentation: Documentation techniques are used to collect data in the form of records or documents related to the implementation of infak and alms learning, such as learning implementation plans (RPP), syllabus, and documentation of social activities in schools that involve students in sharing activities. The instruments used in this data collection include; 1) Test Sheet: The test sheet consists of written questions designed to measure students' understanding of infak and alms, which includes multiple choice, short fills, and descriptive questions; 2) Sheet Observation: Observation sheets are used to record students' activities in infak and alms projects or practices, as well as to evaluate the extent to which students are involved in these activities; 3) Interview Guidelines: Interview guidelines for teachers are used to explore information about teachers' experiences in implementing the learning model, including the challenges and successes experienced during the research.

The data obtained in this study will be analyzed using quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. The researcher will process data obtained from tests, observations, and interviews to test the influence of the learning model on the understanding and practice of infak and alms in students. Here are the data analysis steps that will be carried out; 1) Quantitative Data Analysis: Quantitative data obtained from the results of the pretest and posttest will be analyzed to measure the difference in students' understanding of infak and alms between before and after the implementation of the learning model. This analysis will use statistical tests to test the hypotheses that have been formulated; 1) Descriptive Statistics: First, the data will be analyzed descriptively by calculating the mean value, standard deviation, and score distribution for each group (experiment and control).

It provides an overview of the level of understanding of students before and after the treatment; 2) Paired Samples T-Test (for measurements in the same group): To test the changes that occur in each group (before and after treatment), the researcher will use the Paired Samples T-Test. This test was used to find out if there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group and the control group; 2) Qualitative Data Analysis, Qualitative data obtained from observations and interviews will be analyzed with thematic analysis techniques. The researcher will identify patterns or themes that arise from student interactions, observation of student behavior related to infak and alms practices, and interviews with teachers.

RESULTS

The findings of this research indicate a significant improvement in students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 0101 Sibuhuan following the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model. Initially, students had difficulty grasping abstract concepts and connecting Islamic teachings to their daily lives. However, through the application of PBL, students were able to actively engage with the subject matter in a more hands-on and experiential way. This approach allowed them to apply Islamic principles in real-world scenarios, leading to a deeper and more meaningful understanding.

In the first cycle of the research, students were introduced to the PBL model, where they were tasked with working on projects related to key Islamic concepts. These projects required students to explore topics such as the five pillars of Islam, Islamic charity (Zakat), and the significance of prayer (Salat) through collaborative activities. While students showed initial excitement about the projects, their understanding of the subject matter was still limited due to their lack of prior exposure to the PBL approach. As a result, there was a noticeable gap between the expected learning outcomes and the actual level of comprehension demonstrated by students.

However, by the second cycle of the study, students began to better grasp the concepts and their application through the ongoing projects. The second cycle allowed students to refine their understanding and engage more deeply with the material. Through collaboration, inquiry, and research, students were able to build a stronger connection to the Islamic principles they were studying. The iterative process of working on projects helped them refine their knowledge and solve problems by applying Islamic values to practical situations. As a result, students showed significant improvement in their ability to explain and demonstrate key concepts from Islamic Education.

The results from the second cycle revealed an increase in student motivation and participation. Students were more enthusiastic about their learning, as they could see the real-life relevance of what they were studying. The PBL model promoted self-directed learning, where students took the initiative to research and explore topics in depth. This autonomy in learning fostered a sense of responsibility among the students, motivating them to perform better in their tasks and projects. Additionally, students began to take ownership of their learning by working collaboratively with their peers, which contributed to a more dynamic and interactive classroom environment.

The teacher's role as a facilitator rather than a traditional instructor was key to the success of the PBL model. In this study, the teacher guided students through the project tasks, encouraged inquiry, and provided feedback throughout the process. By acting as a mentor and not just a lecturer, the teacher helped students navigate challenges, ask meaningful questions, and think critically about the subject matter. The supportive learning environment created by the teacher allowed students to feel comfortable exploring their ideas and expressing their opinions, which enhanced their understanding of Islamic Education.

In addition to the increase in student engagement and motivation, the PBL model also led to improved collaboration and teamwork. Students worked together on projects, which required them to communicate effectively, share ideas, and collaborate in problem-solving. These collaborative activities not only helped reinforce Islamic values such as cooperation, respect, and mutual support, but they also enhanced students' social and communication skills. The ability to work in teams allowed students to learn from one another, and different perspectives contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the material.

Assessments conducted throughout the study, including observations and project presentations, showed a clear improvement in students' understanding of Islamic Education. The use of authentic assessments, such as project presentations and discussions, provided students with opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge in a

practical and meaningful way. This type of assessment was particularly effective in measuring students' ability to apply their learning to real-life situations, which is a central goal of Islamic Education. The overall results indicated that the PBL model had a positive impact on students' understanding and retention of Islamic concepts.

In conclusion, the implementation of the Project-Based Learning model significantly enhanced students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 0101 Sibuhuan. The approach fostered active learning, critical thinking, collaboration, and application of Islamic principles in real-world contexts. By engaging students in hands-on projects, the PBL model made the learning process more relevant and meaningful. The results demonstrate that PBL is an effective method for improving student comprehension and fostering a deeper connection to the material.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrate that the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model had a positive impact on students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 0101 Sibuhuan. One of the key strengths of PBL is its ability to connect theoretical concepts to real-world applications, which helped students make meaningful connections with the subject matter. By working on projects related to Islamic principles, students were able to see how the teachings of Islam apply to everyday situations, leading to a deeper understanding and retention of the material.

Throughout the study, students' engagement significantly improved as they transitioned from passive learning in traditional classroom settings to active participation in project-based activities. In the beginning, students struggled to grasp abstract Islamic concepts. However, through hands-on projects and collaborative efforts, they were able to engage with the content more effectively. The PBL model encouraged inquiry, prompting students to ask questions and seek answers on their own, which is an important aspect of deep learning. This shift in learning dynamics contributed to greater student motivation and enthusiasm.

Moreover, the collaborative nature of PBL was instrumental in fostering teamwork and communication skills among students. By working together on projects, students learned to value each other's perspectives and collaborate toward common goals. This not only enhanced their social skills but also reinforced Islamic values of cooperation, mutual respect, and shared responsibility. As students interacted and exchanged ideas, they gained a broader understanding of the subject and developed important skills that will benefit them beyond the classroom.

The teacher's role as a facilitator was another important factor that contributed to the success of PBL in this study. Instead of being the primary source of information, the teacher guided students through the project process, offering support and encouragement. This allowed students to take ownership of their learning and build critical thinking skills. The teacher's ability to create a supportive learning environment enabled students to confidently explore topics, ask meaningful questions, and collaborate effectively, which ultimately improved their understanding of Islamic Education.

While the PBL model yielded positive results, it is important to acknowledge that there were some challenges during the implementation process. The transition from traditional methods to PBL required time and adjustment, particularly for students who were initially unfamiliar with this approach. However, by the second cycle, students had adapted and were more actively engaged in their learning. These challenges highlight the need for careful planning and support when introducing new teaching methods. Despite these obstacles, the overall findings suggest that PBL is an effective and engaging approach for enhancing student understanding of Islamic Education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been carried out regarding the application of Project Based Learning (PjBL) and Problem Based Learning (PBL) learning models to improve the understanding and practice of infak and alms in grade 6 of SD Negeri 0101 Sibuhuan, it can be concluded as follows; 1) The initial condition of students' understanding and practice of infak and alms shows that most students have a low level of understanding and less structured practices. This is shown by the results of the pretest which indicates that students still need to strengthen basic concepts and motivation to practice infak and alms in daily life; 2) The application of the PjBL and PBL learning models significantly improves students' understanding of infak and alms. This is reflected in the increase in posttest results of students in the experimental group compared to the control group that only uses the conventional lecture method. The PjBL model emphasizes on the development of relevant real projects, while the PBL model focuses students on solving problems related to infak and almsgiving, both of which successfully motivate students to be more active in learning; 3) The real practice of infak and alms of students has also increased after the implementation of the learning model. Observations showed that students were more involved in social activities, such as fundraising and sharing with classmates or the surrounding community, after participating in PjBL and PBL-based learning; 4) The effectiveness of the PjBL and PBL models can be seen from the comparison of learning outcomes where these two learning models provide better results than conventional methods. The PjBL model has a greater impact on practical skills, while the PBL model is more effective in improving conceptual understanding.

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