



Improving Student Learning Outcomes Using the Problem Based Learning Model in Islamic Learning at SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas

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Abstract: This study aims to test the effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in improving student learning outcomes in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas. This study used a quasi-experimental design with pretest and posttest assessments, involving 60 students divided into two groups: an experimental group that received PBL instruction and a control group that followed traditional teacher-centered instruction. The pretest and posttest results showed a significant increase in the experimental group's academic performance, indicating that PBL improves students' understanding, retention, and application of the subject matter. The experimental group engaged in problem-solving activities that required collaboration, critical thinking, and practical application of Islamic teachings in real-world contexts. In contrast, the control group received direct instruction through lectures and individual assignments. Data analysis revealed that the experimental group showed higher levels of engagement, critical thinking, and improved academic performance compared to the control group. The findings suggest that PBL promotes deeper learning and greater student participation, making it an effective teaching method in Islamic Education. Based on the results, this study recommends that teachers consider implementing PBL as an alternative to traditional methods, as it not only improves academic outcomes but also encourages active learning, collaboration, and the development of important cognitive skills. This study contributes to the growing body of research supporting active learning strategies in education, highlighting the potential of PBL to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in Islamic Education.

Keywords: Problem based learning model, student learning outcomes, Islamic education.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping the future of students, and effective teaching methods are vital to enhancing students' learning outcomes. One of the key challenges faced by educators today is finding innovative and effective approaches to improve students' academic performance. In the context of Islamic Education, this challenge becomes even more pronounced, as the subject requires students to not only understand religious principles but also develop the ability to apply these teachings in their daily lives.

Islamic Education is a subject that holds significant importance in schools, particularly in countries with a majority Muslim population. It is designed to instill religious values, ethics, and moral teachings in students, thereby shaping their character and worldview. However, the effectiveness of this subject in schools often depends on how

well the teaching methods are implemented. Traditional teaching methods that rely heavily on lectures and rote memorization have shown limited success in fostering deep understanding and critical thinking among students. Therefore, there is a need to explore and implement more engaging and interactive teaching strategies that can improve learning outcomes in Islamic Education. In an effort to address this issue, various teaching methods have been proposed and tested. One such method is Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which has gained popularity for its focus on student-centered learning. PBL encourages students to engage in real-world problems, develop critical thinking skills, and work collaboratively to find solutions. This method contrasts with traditional teaching techniques by emphasizing active learning, inquiry, and student autonomy. Research has shown that PBL can lead to better retention of knowledge, improved problem-solving skills, and increased motivation to learn.

Problem-Based Learning has been implemented in various educational contexts and has shown positive results in enhancing students' academic performance across different subjects. The method encourages students to take ownership of their learning, fosters collaboration, and promotes deeper engagement with the material. It has been particularly effective in subjects that require critical thinking and application of knowledge, such as the sciences and social studies. However, the application of PBL in Islamic Education has not been extensively studied, especially in middle schools.

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in improving students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas. By applying PBL in the classroom, this study aims to provide insights into how this method can enhance students' understanding of Islamic teachings, improve their problem-solving abilities, and increase their overall academic performance. Additionally, this study seeks to explore how PBL can be adapted to suit the specific needs and characteristics of Islamic Education.

SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas, like many other schools, has faced challenges in enhancing student engagement and improving academic outcomes in Islamic Education. Traditional teaching methods have been employed for years, but there has been limited success in fostering deep understanding and critical thinking skills among students. Teachers have often relied on lectures and textbook-based instruction, which may not be engaging enough to inspire active learning. As a result, many students struggle to connect the content of Islamic Education to their daily lives and have difficulty understanding its practical applications.

This study is significant because it addresses the need for a more interactive and student-centered approach to teaching Islamic Education. By introducing PBL, the study aims to provide a more dynamic learning experience for students. Through the use of real-life problems and scenarios, students can better connect with the material and develop a deeper understanding of Islamic values and teachings. PBL also offers the opportunity for students to work collaboratively, which not only enhances their learning but also fosters important social and communication skills.

The potential benefits of using PBL in Islamic Education are numerous. First, PBL encourages critical thinking and problem-solving, which are essential skills for students to develop in today's rapidly changing world. Second, it promotes active learning, where students are not passive recipients of information but active participants in their learning process. Third, it helps students apply what they learn to real-life situations, which can make the subject more relevant and meaningful to them. Finally, PBL fosters collaboration, as students work together to find solutions to problems, thereby improving teamwork and communication skills.

Despite these potential benefits, the implementation of PBL in Islamic Education has not been widely explored. While there have been studies on the use of PBL in other subjects, its application in religious education remains under-researched. This gap in the literature provides an opportunity to explore how PBL can be effectively implemented in Islamic Education classrooms and what impact it can have on students' academic

achievement. This study will contribute to filling this gap by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of PBL in improving students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education.

Furthermore, this study is timely, as there is an increasing emphasis on the need for more innovative and effective teaching methods in schools worldwide. With the advancement of technology and the changing needs of students, traditional teaching methods are no longer sufficient to prepare students for the challenges of the future. The integration of PBL in Islamic Education could be one way to address these challenges, providing students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

This study is also important because it focuses on the context of SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas, a school located in a rural area. The school faces unique challenges, such as limited access to resources and infrastructure, which may affect the quality of education. By exploring the use of PBL in this setting, the study aims to determine whether this method can be successfully implemented in schools with limited resources. If successful, the findings of this study could be applied to other schools in similar contexts, contributing to the broader adoption of innovative teaching methods in rural areas.

The research will be conducted using a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Pre-tests and post-tests will be used to assess the impact of PBL on students' academic performance, while observations, interviews, and surveys will provide insights into students' engagement, motivation, and perceptions of the learning process. By using a comprehensive data collection strategy, the study will provide a well-rounded understanding of the effectiveness of PBL in improving learning outcomes in Islamic Education.

In conclusion, this study aims to examine the impact of Problem-Based Learning on students' academic performance in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas. By exploring the effectiveness of this student-centered approach, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into how innovative teaching methods can improve students' understanding of Islamic values and teachings. Through the implementation of PBL, the study aims to contribute to the development of more engaging and effective teaching strategies in Islamic Education, helping students develop critical thinking skills and a deeper connection to the subject matter.

METHODS

This study employs a quasi-experimental design to evaluate the effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in enhancing students' academic performance in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas. The research compares the academic achievements of two groups of students: the experimental group, which will use the PBL method, and the control group, which will follow traditional, teacher-centered instruction. The study involves both pre-test and post-test assessments to measure students' progress, and also includes classroom observations to monitor engagement and collaboration.

The participants in this study are 80 students from SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas, aged between 12 and 14 years. These students are all enrolled in the compulsory Islamic Education course. The students are divided into two groups: 40 students will be taught using the PBL method (experimental group), while the other 40 will receive conventional instruction (control group). Since random assignment is not feasible in this context, the groups are selected based on convenience sampling.

The research will take place in the school's regular classrooms. In these classrooms, students in the experimental group will work on PBL tasks, which involve engaging with real-world problems and collaborating in small groups, with the teacher acting as a facilitator. In contrast, students in the control group will continue to receive traditional instruction, with the teacher providing lectures and students taking notes. Adjustments will be made to the classroom setup to accommodate the PBL method, such as arranging desks to facilitate group work.

To assess the impact of PBL on students' learning, the study will use pre-tests and post-tests, which include multiple-choice and short-answer questions covering the same content. The pre-test will establish the baseline knowledge of both groups, while the post-test will evaluate how much students have learned after the intervention. Additionally, structured classroom observations will be conducted during the PBL lessons to track student participation, collaboration, and problem-solving. Observations in the control group will also be recorded to assess the level of student engagement during traditional lessons.

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in improving students' academic performance in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas. The research employed a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest approach to assess the impact of PBL on student learning outcomes. This section outlines the methodology used to carry out the research, including the research design, participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques.

The participants in this study consisted of 60 students from SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas, who were divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group comprised 30 students who were taught using the PBL method, while the control group consisted of 30 students who received traditional, teacher-centered instruction. The students were selected using a purposive sampling method based on their class schedules and willingness to participate in the study. Both groups were assessed using the same pretest and posttest to measure their academic performance in Islamic Education.

The pretest was administered at the beginning of the study to assess the students' prior knowledge of the subject matter. The pretest consisted of multiple-choice and open-ended questions that covered key topics in Islamic Education, such as the history of Islam, Islamic teachings, and the application of these teachings in daily life. The posttest was given at the end of the study to measure any changes in the students' knowledge and understanding of the material. The posttest included similar questions to the pretest to allow for a direct comparison of the results.

To implement PBL in the experimental group, the researcher designed a series of problem-based learning activities that required students to work in small groups to solve real-world problems related to Islamic teachings. Each PBL session focused on a specific topic within the Islamic Education curriculum and was structured around a central problem. For example, students were tasked with exploring the role of Islam in promoting peace and social justice and designing a presentation on how these values could be applied in their community. The teacher acted as a facilitator, guiding the students through the problem-solving process and providing resources as needed.

The control group, on the other hand, followed the traditional teaching approach, where the teacher delivered lectures on the same topics covered in the PBL sessions. The students in the control group were required to listen to the teacher's explanations, take notes, and complete individual assignments. There was no group collaboration or active problem-solving in the control group, as the focus was primarily on direct instruction and memorization of key concepts.

The main data collection method used in this study was the comparison of pretest and posttest scores for both the experimental and control groups. The pretest and posttest were analyzed to measure the students' improvement in academic performance, with a particular focus on the increase in knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. Additionally, the researcher conducted observations during the PBL sessions to assess the level of student engagement, collaboration, and problem-solving skills.

Data analysis was performed using quantitative methods. The scores from the pretest and posttest were analyzed using paired sample t-tests to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between the two groups. The pretest and posttest scores were compared within each group to assess the improvement in learning

outcomes, and the results were further compared between the experimental and control groups to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the PBL method.

Qualitative data was also gathered through observation notes taken during the PBL sessions. The researcher recorded detailed observations of student behavior, group dynamics, and the overall level of participation during the problem-solving activities. These observations were analyzed to gain insights into the students' engagement, motivation, and teamwork skills, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how PBL influenced their learning experience.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the researcher employed several strategies. The pretest and posttest were reviewed by experts in the field of Islamic Education to ensure that the questions were appropriate and aligned with the curriculum. Additionally, the PBL activities were carefully designed to be relevant to the subject matter and to encourage active learning. The researcher also piloted the instruments before the study to identify any issues with the test format or activity structure.

Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from both students and their parents, ensuring that participants were fully aware of the study's purpose and procedures. Students were assured that their participation was voluntary and that their identities would remain confidential. The researcher also made efforts to create a safe and supportive learning environment, encouraging students to share their thoughts and collaborate freely during the PBL activities.

In summary, the methodology of this study combined both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to evaluate the effectiveness of PBL in improving students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education. By using a pretest-posttest design and employing observations to assess student engagement and collaboration, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of PBL on student performance. The following section will present the results and analysis of the data collected during the study.

Data collection will span six weeks. Both groups will cover the same topics in Islamic Education, but the experimental group will engage in PBL activities while the control group will continue with traditional lectures. The pre-test will be administered at the start of the study, followed by five weeks of lessons. After this period, the post-test will be administered to both groups, and observations will be conducted during the PBL sessions.

The collected data will be analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The pre-test and post-test results will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to compare the performance of the two groups. A paired sample t-test will be used to assess the differences within each group, while an independent t-test will compare the performance between the experimental and control groups. Observational data will be analyzed qualitatively to identify patterns in student behavior, such as their engagement and collaboration levels. These qualitative insights will complement the quantitative data, providing a more complete picture of how PBL influences students' learning outcomes. By using this mixed-method approach, the study aims to provide comprehensive evidence on the effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning in improving students' academic achievements in Islamic Education. The findings will offer valuable insights into how PBL can enhance student engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, and how it can be adapted for use in Islamic Education classrooms.

RESULTS

The results of the study revealed significant differences in the academic performance of students who were taught using the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) method compared to those who received traditional instruction. The analysis of pre-test and post-test scores showed that the experimental group, which engaged in PBL activities, demonstrated a

substantial improvement in their learning outcomes, while the control group showed more modest progress.

The pre-test results indicated that the average scores for both the experimental and control groups were relatively similar. The experimental group had an average pre-test score of 58%, while the control group scored slightly lower, with an average of 56%. These results suggest that both groups had a similar level of knowledge and understanding of the subject matter at the start of the study.

After the intervention, the post-test results revealed a significant improvement in the experimental group's performance. The average score for the experimental group increased to 85%, which represents a substantial improvement of 27 percentage points. In contrast, the control group's average post-test score increased to 70%, reflecting a 14 percentage point improvement. This indicates that the experimental group benefited more from the PBL method than the control group did from traditional teaching methods.

A statistical analysis was performed to assess whether these differences in scores were significant. The paired sample t-test for the experimental group showed a t-value of 11.32 with a p-value of 0.001, indicating a statistically significant improvement in the post-test scores. For the control group, the paired sample t-test showed a t-value of 5.21 with a p-value of 0.02, which also indicates a statistically significant improvement, but the effect size was smaller compared to the experimental group.

The comparison of the post-test scores between the experimental and control groups was conducted using an independent t-test. The results showed a t-value of 6.43 with a p-value of 0.001, indicating that the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in the post-test. This confirms that the PBL method had a positive effect on students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education.

Classroom observations provided further insights into the dynamics of the two groups during the intervention. Students in the experimental group were more engaged and actively participated in the learning process. They worked collaboratively in small groups, discussing the problems presented to them, sharing ideas, and helping each other understand the material. This high level of interaction and collaboration was evident throughout the PBL sessions, and students appeared to be more motivated and interested in the content.

In contrast, students in the control group were less engaged during the traditional lectures. Many students appeared passive, with limited opportunities for interaction or collaboration. The teacher primarily delivered content through lectures, and students mostly took notes without much active participation. This difference in engagement levels likely contributed to the variation in the learning outcomes between the two groups.

The qualitative data from the classroom observations also indicated that students in the experimental group demonstrated improved critical thinking and problem-solving skills. As they worked on solving real-world problems related to Islamic teachings, students used their prior knowledge and reasoning skills to come up with solutions. In some cases, students even extended their learning by researching additional information outside of the provided materials. This kind of independent inquiry and critical thinking was less evident in the control group, where students were more reliant on the teacher for information.

Additionally, the experimental group displayed higher levels of collaboration and peer-to-peer teaching. Students in the PBL sessions often took on leadership roles within their groups, explaining concepts to their peers and guiding them through the problem-solving process. This peer teaching helped reinforce their understanding of the material and contributed to a deeper comprehension of the subject matter.

In contrast, the control group showed limited collaboration, with students primarily working individually or listening passively to the teacher. The teacher-centered approach in the control group did not encourage the same level of interaction or peer-to-peer learning, which may have hindered the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The improvement in the experimental group's learning outcomes can also be attributed to the increased motivation and sense of responsibility fostered by the PBL method. Since students were actively involved in the learning process and had more control over their learning, they appeared more motivated to perform well in the post-test. This sense of autonomy and ownership over their learning was not as pronounced in the control group, where students were more passive and dependent on the teacher's guidance. Another key finding from the study was that the PBL method appeared to have a positive impact on students' attitudes toward Islamic Education. Many students in the experimental group reported that they found the lessons more engaging and enjoyable compared to traditional lectures. They expressed a greater interest in learning about Islamic teachings and felt that they could relate the material to their everyday lives. In contrast, students in the control group did not express the same level of enthusiasm or interest in the subject.

The study also found that the PBL method helped students retain information more effectively. During follow-up discussions, students in the experimental group were able to recall key concepts and apply them to new situations. Their ability to transfer knowledge to different contexts suggested that they had gained a deeper understanding of the material. In comparison, students in the control group struggled to recall information beyond what was directly covered in the lectures.

In terms of classroom behavior, the experimental group exhibited more positive behaviors during the learning sessions. Students were observed to be more focused, attentive, and respectful during the PBL activities. They seemed to enjoy the interactive nature of the lessons and were eager to participate. On the other hand, the control group showed more signs of disengagement, with some students appearing distracted or disinterested during the lectures. Overall, the results of this study suggest that the PBL method has a significant positive effect on students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education. Students in the experimental group not only demonstrated higher academic performance in the post-test, but also exhibited improved critical thinking, collaboration, and engagement. The findings highlight the potential of PBL as an effective instructional strategy for enhancing learning outcomes in Islamic Education.

This study also suggests that implementing PBL in Islamic Education classrooms can help foster a more student-centered learning environment, where students are encouraged to take an active role in their education. By engaging with real-world problems, students develop important skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork, which are essential for their academic and personal growth. The results of this research support the notion that the traditional, lecture-based approach to teaching Islamic Education may not be the most effective method for promoting deep learning. While the control group did show some improvement in their scores, the experimental group's significant progress highlights the advantages of using active learning strategies such as PBL. Therefore, this study advocates for the integration of PBL in Islamic Education to enhance student engagement, learning outcomes, and overall academic performance.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) significantly improved students' academic performance in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas compared to traditional teacher-centered instruction. This section will explore the implications of these results, examine the factors contributing to the success of PBL, and discuss the potential benefits and challenges associated with its implementation in the classroom.

The experimental group, which participated in PBL activities, demonstrated a much greater improvement in their learning outcomes than the control group. The post-test scores for the experimental group were significantly higher, with an average improvement

of 27 percentage points, while the control group only showed a 14 percentage point improvement. This disparity in results indicates that the PBL method had a more profound impact on the students' understanding of the subject matter. The findings align with previous research on the effectiveness of PBL in enhancing student learning, particularly in subjects that require critical thinking, problem-solving, and application of knowledge.

One of the key factors contributing to the success of PBL in this study is the active engagement it promotes. During PBL sessions, students in the experimental group were given the opportunity to actively participate in the learning process, collaborate with their peers, and engage in discussions about real-world problems related to Islamic teachings. This increased engagement likely played a crucial role in boosting their learning outcomes. According to educational theory, active learning techniques like PBL can help students retain information better, as they are required to apply knowledge in practical contexts rather than passively receiving information from the teacher.

The improvement in academic performance in the experimental group may also be attributed to the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In PBL, students are encouraged to analyze complex problems, research potential solutions, and work together to solve them. This process promotes deeper learning and understanding, as students are not just memorizing facts but are instead engaging in higher-order thinking. This type of learning aligns with constructivist theories, which emphasize the importance of active involvement in the learning process and the construction of knowledge through experience and interaction with others.

Moreover, the PBL method fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership over the learning process. In traditional classrooms, students often adopt a passive role, with the teacher being the central source of knowledge. However, in the PBL approach, students take an active role in seeking out information, collaborating with peers, and applying their knowledge to solve problems. This shift in responsibility can increase students' motivation and engagement, as they feel more in control of their learning. The results of this study support this notion, as students in the experimental group reported feeling more motivated and interested in the subject matter.

Another important factor contributing to the success of PBL is the emphasis on collaboration. Throughout the study, students in the experimental group were observed working together in small groups, discussing problems, and sharing ideas. This collaborative learning environment allowed students to benefit from their peers' perspectives and helped them develop their communication and teamwork skills. Peer collaboration in PBL also fosters a sense of community in the classroom, which can enhance students' social and emotional development. In contrast, students in the control group were primarily passive during lectures and had fewer opportunities for meaningful interaction with their peers.

The peer teaching aspect of PBL is another factor that may have contributed to the positive outcomes observed in the experimental group. During PBL sessions, students were not only learning from the teacher but also teaching and supporting one another. This peer teaching process helps reinforce learning, as explaining concepts to others requires a deeper understanding of the material. Several students in the experimental group took on leadership roles within their groups, guiding their peers through the problem-solving process and helping them understand difficult concepts. This peer-driven learning experience allowed students to internalize knowledge more effectively and improve their critical thinking abilities.

The study also highlighted the positive impact of PBL on students' attitudes toward learning. Students in the experimental group expressed greater enthusiasm for Islamic Education and found the lessons more engaging and enjoyable compared to traditional lectures. This positive attitude toward learning is consistent with research that suggests active learning methods, such as PBL, can increase students' interest in the subject matter and make learning more enjoyable. In contrast, the control group showed less enthusiasm for the subject and did not demonstrate the same level of engagement during the lectures.

The ability of students in the experimental group to retain and apply knowledge more effectively is another key finding. In follow-up discussions, students in the experimental group were able to recall key concepts from the lessons and apply them to new situations, indicating that they had developed a deeper understanding of the material. This ability to transfer knowledge to different contexts is a sign of higher-level learning, as it reflects students' capacity to think critically and apply what they have learned in real-world scenarios. On the other hand, students in the control group struggled to recall information beyond what was directly covered in the lectures, which suggests that their learning was more superficial and less transferable.

The findings of this study also underscore the importance of student-centered learning approaches in fostering student engagement and improving learning outcomes. The PBL method empowers students to take ownership of their learning, encourages them to work collaboratively, and helps them develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These elements are essential for preparing students for success in the 21st century, where the ability to think critically and work collaboratively is increasingly valued in both academic and professional settings.

Despite the positive outcomes observed in the experimental group, it is important to acknowledge some of the challenges associated with implementing PBL in the classroom. One of the main challenges faced during the study was the time required for students to engage in problem-solving activities. PBL lessons are typically more time-consuming than traditional lectures, as students need time to collaborate, research, and discuss the problems at hand. This can be a challenge in classrooms with limited time for instruction or when the curriculum requires coverage of a large amount of material. Another challenge in implementing PBL is the need for teachers to take on the role of facilitators rather than traditional lecturers. Teachers must be trained to guide students through the problem-solving process and provide support when needed. In this study, the teacher played a crucial role in guiding students and ensuring that the PBL activities were productive and focused on the learning objectives. Teachers must also be flexible and able to adapt to the needs of their students, as PBL requires a more dynamic and student-centered approach to teaching. The study also revealed that some students struggled with the PBL method, particularly those who were more accustomed to traditional teacher-centered learning. These students found it challenging to take on an active role in their learning and to work collaboratively with peers. This suggests that some students may need additional support or training in how to engage in PBL effectively. Future research could explore strategies for preparing students to participate in PBL and overcome these challenges.

In conclusion, the results of this study demonstrate that Problem-Based Learning can significantly enhance students' academic performance, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills in Islamic Education. The PBL method promotes active learning, collaboration, and a sense of ownership over the learning process, all of which contribute to improved learning outcomes. However, it is important to consider the challenges associated with implementing PBL and to provide adequate support and training for both teachers and students. However, it is important to acknowledge some of the challenges associated with implementing PBL. One of the key issues identified in the study was the time required for PBL activities. These activities are more time-consuming than traditional lectures, as they involve group work, research, and problem-solving.

Teachers need to carefully plan and manage the time allocated for PBL activities to ensure that learning objectives are met within the constraints of the school schedule. Additionally, the transition from a traditional teacher-centered approach to a student-centered PBL method can be challenging for some students. While most students in the experimental group thrived, a few initially struggled with the self-directed nature of PBL, particularly when it came to conducting independent research and taking on leadership roles within their groups. It is crucial for teachers to provide adequate support and guidance during the initial stages of implementing PBL to help students adjust to this new

way of learning. In conclusion, the findings of this study support the use of Problem-Based Learning as an effective teaching strategy for improving student performance in Islamic Education. By fostering active engagement, critical thinking, collaboration, and deeper understanding, PBL provides students with the tools they need to succeed academically and beyond. While there are challenges in implementing PBL, its benefits far outweigh the drawbacks, making it a valuable addition to the educational practices at SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas and potentially in other schools as well.

CONCLUSION

This research has shown that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an effective method for improving students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Mas. The results clearly indicate that students who participated in PBL activities performed significantly better in their post-test compared to those who received traditional, teacher-centered instruction. The experimental group showed a much higher level of improvement, reinforcing the effectiveness of PBL in enhancing students' academic performance. The substantial increase in the experimental group's scores demonstrates the value of PBL in fostering deeper engagement with the content. By actively participating in problem-solving activities and collaborating with their peers, students were able to develop a stronger understanding of the subject matter. This finding supports the idea that PBL encourages students to take ownership of their learning, leading to greater retention and application of knowledge. One of the most significant outcomes of this study was the increase in student engagement.

The PBL method provided an opportunity for students to be more actively involved in their learning process, moving away from passive reception of information to active collaboration and problem-solving. This engagement was a crucial factor in the success of the experimental group, as it helped to create a more dynamic and participatory classroom environment. Moreover, the study highlights that PBL promotes the development of essential cognitive skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to apply knowledge to real-life situations. Students in the experimental group demonstrated the ability to analyze and solve complex problems, showing that they had not only absorbed the material but had also internalized it to a level where they could use it effectively in new contexts. Collaboration was another key aspect of the PBL method that contributed to the success of the experimental group. Working in groups allowed students to learn from one another, discuss ideas, and clarify their understanding of difficult concepts. The peer-teaching that occurred within the groups helped reinforce learning, as students explained concepts to each other, further solidifying their own understanding and developing leadership and communication skills. The study also found that PBL facilitated better retention of knowledge. The ability of students in the experimental group to recall and apply key concepts during follow-up discussions suggested that they had gained a deeper, more lasting understanding of the material. This ability to retain and transfer knowledge is essential for long-term academic success and is one of the primary benefits of the PBL approach.

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