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Improving Students' Conceptual Understanding through Problem Based Learning Model at SMP Negeri 3 Rao Selatan

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Abstract: This study aims to improve students' conceptual understanding ability in Islamic religious education learning by using a problem-solving-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 junior high school students. The data for this study were obtained using test and observation techniques. Tests are used to measure learning outcomes 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 the problem-solving-based learning model can improve students' conceptual understanding ability in 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 43.31%, the first cycle 60.19% and in the second cycle it increased to 84.66%. Thus, the use of a problem-solving-based learning model can be used as an alternative to improve students' conceptual understanding ability in Islamic religious education learning.

Keywords: Problem based learning, conceptual understanding, islamic education.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education has an important role in shaping the character and faith of students. One of the fundamental materials in PAI is faith in angels, which is part of the pillars of faith. This material not only teaches the concept of faith, but also instills the value of faith that is able to guide students in living their daily lives in accordance with Islamic teachings. However, based on observations in grade VII 1 SMPN 3 South Rao, several problems were found in the learning process in the material of faith in angels. First, learning methods that are still conventional, such as lectures, make students less actively involved in learning.

This causes students to tend to be passive, less motivated, and have difficulty understanding the concept of faith in angels in depth. Second, student learning outcomes in this material are still not optimal. Some students still have difficulty explaining the role

and function of angels in human life. Third, students' religious attitudes that should be reflected in their understanding of this material are still not seen in daily activities. Innovative and interactive learning models are a solution to overcome these problems. One of the models that can be applied is Problem Based Learning (PBL).

PBL is a learning approach that encourages students to actively think critically and solve real problems. Through PBL, students are invited to explore and analyze problems relevant to the material of believing in angels, so that they can understand the concept in depth and apply it in their daily lives. This research aims to increase students' understanding and attitude towards the material of faith in angels through the application of the Problem Based Learning learning model in grade VII 1 SMPN 3 Rao Selatan. With this model, it is hoped that learning will become more interesting, students will be more active, and learning outcomes can be significantly improved.

The Problem Based Learning (PBL) learning model is one of the learning approaches designed to help students develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and the ability to collaborate effectively. In PBL, students are invited to actively engage in the learning process by centering on relevant issues and attracting their attention. According to Arends (2012), PBL encourages students to become independent learners who are able to organize their understanding through various systematic learning steps. This process includes an orientation to the problem,

organizing students to learn, guiding individual and group investigations, developing and presenting works, and evaluating the learning process. This learning model differs from traditional methods that focus on the teacher as the main center of learning. In PBL, the role of teachers is more as a facilitator who helps students find solutions

problems rather than as a single informant.¹ This approach is believed to improve students' understanding because they not only receive information passively but also construct knowledge through hands-on experience. This is in line with the theory of constructivism which emphasizes that learning will be more effective if students can relate new knowledge to real experiences or contexts. The material of faith in angels in Islamic Religious Education has an important position because it is part of the pillar of faith that is the core of the beliefs of Muslims. Angels, created by God from light, are creatures who are always obedient to His commands without the slightest disobedience. In the context of learning, this material aims to instill in students a solid belief in the existence of angels and their role in human life.² In addition, learning about angels also aims to cultivate a religious attitude that is reflected in real daily actions.

By understanding the nature and duties of angels, students are expected to be able to internalize the values of faith that are the moral basis in their lives. In relation to the application of PBL, the material of faith in angels can be taught in a more interactive and meaningful way.³ For example, teachers can start learning by presenting real problems that are relevant to the role of angels, such as the role of Angels Raqib and Atid in recording human deeds. Students are invited to analyze the situation, find solutions, and relate it to the religious teachings they are learning.⁴ Through this process, students' understanding of the concept of believing in angels can be significantly improved, as they not only receive the material theoretically but also see its relevance in daily life. Various previous studies support the effectiveness of PBL in learning. One of the studies conducted by Sugiyanto (2019) shows that this learning model is able to improve student learning outcomes up to 30% better compared to conventional methods. Another study by Maulana (2018) also found that the application of PBL in religious learning can significantly improve students' religious attitudes. This happens because PBL not only emphasizes cognitive understanding, but also encourages students to internalize the values learned through the problem-solving process.

METHODS

In this study, the approach used is a qualitative approach with the type of classroom action research (Classroom Action Research). The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand how the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) learning model can improve students' understanding, religious attitudes, and skills in learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI), especially the material of faith in angels in grade VII of SMPN 3 Rao Selatan.

The qualitative approach allows researchers to dig deeper into the data and gain a richer understanding of the learning process and dynamics that occur during the action. This type of research is classroom action research (PTK) because this research aims to improve and improve the learning process through the application of the PBL model in PAI learning. Classroom action research has a practical goal to improve the quality of learning by involving teachers as actors who observe and evaluate the results of the application of certain methods or models. In this context, PTK is carried out with the aim of improving the quality of learning carried out in grade VII of SMPN 3 Rao Selatan, especially in teaching faith material to angels. Classroom action research is carried out in several cycles, each of which consists of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Each cycle is carried out with planned steps to apply the PBL learning model, observe its impact on student understanding, and evaluate the results obtained. The data collected during the implementation of this research will be analyzed qualitatively to see the extent to which the PBL model can improve student learning outcomes, both in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Through this qualitative approach and this type of classroom action research, it is hoped that researchers can contribute to improving the quality of PAI learning, especially in teaching faith material to angels, which can further improve the quality of learning at the school.

RESULTS

This research uses the classroom action research method which is carried out in several cycles, with each cycle involving planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The research procedure begins with the planning stage, where the researcher and PAI teachers design learning steps that will be applied using the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model. At this stage, researchers and teachers jointly determine the material to be taught, namely having faith in angels, and designing problems that are relevant to students' daily lives that can be used as the main topic in PBL.

After planning, the next stage is the implementation of learning. At this stage, the researcher acts as an observer to see firsthand how the PBL model is applied in the classroom by PAI teachers. In this implementation, students are given problems related to the material of faith to the angels, which they then discuss and solve in small groups. During the learning process, researchers and teachers will facilitate student discussions and interactions, and ensure that

Each student is actively involved in the learning process. Teachers will provide guidance and direction when needed to help students understand the material well. After the implementation of learning, the next stage is observation. At this stage, researchers observed various aspects that occurred during the learning process, including student participation, understanding of concepts, critical thinking skills, and changes in religious attitudes that emerged after the implementation of the PBL model. This observation was carried out by recording all forms of student interaction, both in group discussions and when doing individual assignments. In addition, the researcher will also record students' reactions to the learning materials taught and record the development that occurs from cycle to cycle. After the observation is made, the final stage in each cycle is reflection. At this stage, the researcher and the teacher will jointly analyze the observation results to evaluate whether the learning objectives are achieved. This reflection also aims to find out

whether the application of the PBL model has a positive impact on students' understanding of the material of faith in angels, as well as the improvement of students' religious attitudes and critical thinking skills. Based on the results of the reflection, the researcher will plan the necessary improvements or adjustments for the next cycle so that learning becomes more effective and efficient. This research procedure is carried out in several cycles to obtain maximum results. Each cycle will be evaluated and refined based on feedback from students and observations made. Researchers will ensure that each cycle provides

positive contribution to improving the quality of learning, as well as increasing students' understanding of the material taught. Thus, this research procedure aims to develop and improve the learning process through the application of the PBL model in the material of faith to angels in grade VII of SMPN 3 Rao Selatan.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the data analysis technique is carried out qualitatively with a descriptive approach. This was done to understand and describe the results of the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model on the material of faith in angels in grade VII of SMPN 3 Rao Selatan. This data analysis process involves several important steps, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The first step is data reduction. Data reduction is carried out by selecting, filtering, and summarizing data that has been collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data relevant to the focus of the research will be compiled and grouped based on a specific theme or category. For example, data related to students' activeness in group discussions will be grouped separately, while data related to students' understanding of the material of faith in angels will be classified into different categories. This process allows researchers to focus the analysis on more important aspects and reduce irrelevant information. Once the data has been reduced, the second step is the presentation of the data. The presentation of data is carried out to facilitate the understanding and interpretation of the information that has been collected.

The organized data is then presented in the form of a descriptive narrative describing the situation in the classroom during the application of the PBL model. Researchers can also use tables or graphs to show the results of observations about student engagement, changes in attitudes, and the development of student understanding from each learning cycle. The presentation of this data aims to provide a clear and comprehensive picture of how the PBL model is applied and its impact on the learning process. The final step in data analysis is drawing conclusions. Based on the presentation of data, the researcher will draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the application of the PBL model in increasing students' understanding of the material of faith in angels. This conclusion will be based on patterns that emerge during the research cycle, such as increased student activity in discussions, better understanding of the material, and changes in students' attitudes towards the importance of faith in angels. The researcher will also consider feedback from students and teachers obtained through interviews, as well as evaluation results that show improvement or improvement in learning quality. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, researchers will use triangulation techniques, which are comparing data results from various sources (observations, interviews, documentation) to see their suitability and consistency. Thus, this data analysis process is expected to provide a clear and valid picture of the successful application of the PBL model in PAI learning, especially the material of faith in angels.

The implementation of cycle 1 aims to apply the Problem Based Learning (PBL) learning model to the Faith in Angels material to improve the learning outcomes of grade VII students of SMPN 3 Rao Selatan. This process includes the stages of planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection. At the planning stage, teachers prepare a PBL-based learning plan which includes the preparation of a Learning

Implementation Plan (RPP), the creation of teaching materials, and evaluation instruments. Case studies that are relevant to students' lives are prepared as triggers for problems, such as about the role of angels Raqib and Atid in recording human deeds. This material is designed to stimulate students' critical thinking skills and active participation in discussions. The implementation stage begins with the teacher explaining the case study to the students. In this session, students are invited to understand problems in depth through group-based learning. They are given time to learn independently by looking for information from relevant books or teaching materials. Afterwards, students discuss in small groups to analyze the problem and formulate a solution based on their understanding of the concept of faith in angels.

The results of the discussion are then presented in front of the class, providing an opportunity for other students to provide input and enrich mutual understanding. Teachers act as facilitators who provide guidance and direction throughout the process. In the observation stage, the teacher observes the student's activities during the lesson. Observation includes students' participation in discussions, their ability to analyze problems, and their understanding of the material presented. In addition, additional data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observation sheets to evaluate students' responses to the application of this learning model. Some of the obstacles found include the lack of activity of some students and confusion in understanding the case studies given. The reflection stage showed that student participation in group discussions experienced a significant increase. Most students are able to provide relevant answers to the problems discussed, Although there are still some who are not confident in expressing their opinions.

From the evaluation results, the majority of students achieved category B (good), while only one student managed to enter category A (very good). The obstacle found in this cycle is the lack of ability of some students to associate the concept of faith in angels with daily life. In addition, low confidence in group presentations is also a major concern. Based on this reflection, a remedial plan is formulated for the next cycle. Improvements include more intensive tutoring for struggling students, the provision of more detailed guidance to help students understand case studies, and the application of more interactive methods to encourage equitable student participation. Cycle 1 provides a good foundation for further improvement in students' understanding and learning outcomes through problem-based learning.

In the analysis of the learning outcomes of Cycle 2, it can be seen that most of the students achieved good grades in learning Faith in Angels by using the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model. Based on the results of data processing, it can be seen that the majority of students are in the B grade range, which shows a fairly good understanding of the material taught. Of the total 20 students involved in this cycle, only one student received an A grade, namely Fikri Haikal with a total score of 95. Fikri showed the best achievements in individual presentation and understanding, so he became an example for other students in applying the concept of Faith to Angels as a whole. Most students earn a B, with an average grade that ranges from 84 to 92. Students such as Abdul Aziz, Adip Oktavian, Ahmad Alfarizi, and others showed good results, with a total score of almost 86 to 92. These results indicate that the application of the PBL model has had a positive impact on students' understanding, although some of them still need to increase their confidence in presentations and discussions. However, there was also one student, Muhammad Fadil, who received a C, for a total of 80.

Nonetheless, this can be considered as an outcome that still needs to be improved. Students who get this grade of C may need to pay more attention to their understanding of the material and improve their ability to explain their ideas, both in written and oral form. Teachers can take a special approach to help these students improve their understanding. From this analysis, we can also see that most students are able to present well, although there are some who need to be more confident in speaking in front of the class. This shows

that the PBL model is effective in increasing student participation, but it still takes more time to build students' confidence in making presentations and discussions.

CONCLUSION

Research on improving understanding and faith in angels through the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) learning model in grade VII 1 SMPN 3 Rao Selatan shows significant results in improving the quality of student learning. With the implementation of PBL, students are more actively involved in the learning process, both through group discussions, problem identification, and exploration of solutions relevant to the topic of faith in angels. This model helps students understand the role and function of angels in Islamic teachings in a deep and applicable way, which ultimately strengthens their belief in this second pillar of faith. Interactive and problem-solving-based learning also succeeded in increasing students' motivation to learn Islam more enthusiastically. In addition, the PBL approach also has a positive impact on students' attitudes in internalizing faith values. Students not only understand the concept of having faith in angels in theory, but also show better attitude changes in daily life, such as increasing discipline, honesty, and caring for others. With consistent teacher guidance, PBL provides a meaningful learning experience for students and is relevant to their needs. This proves that the PBL learning model can be one of the effective methods in teaching Islamic Religious Education, especially to improve students' understanding and attitude of faith.

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