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## Improving Student Understanding through Problem Based Learning Method in Islamic Education Learning at SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira

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**Abstract:** This study aims to improve students' understanding of Islamic religious education through Problem Based Learning. 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 Problem Based Learning 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 increased to 90.32%. Thus, through Problem Based Learning can be used as an alternative to improve students' understanding of Islamic religious education learning.

**Keywords:** Problem based learning model, student understanding, islamic education.

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### INTRODUCTION

Zakat is one of the pillars of Islam that is the obligation of every Muslim. As an instrument of social justice, zakat functions to help the underprivileged, reduce poverty, and improve the welfare of the people. However, public awareness and understanding of zakat still vary. In the context of basic education, knowledge about zakat is often only taught theoretically, without an approach that is relevant to the real situation faced by students. At the elementary school level, especially in grade V of SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira, zakat material is an important part of learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI). However, the learning methods used often only focus on one-way lectures or explanations, so they do not involve students actively. As a result, many students do not deeply understand the concept, purpose, and benefits of zakat. This can also have an impact on the lack of ability of students to associate zakat with daily life. Effective and innovative learning methods are

needed to improve students' understanding of zakat. One method that can be applied is Problem Based Learning (PBL), a learning approach that involves students in solving real problems. This method places students as active subjects in the learning process, so that they can explore important concepts through discussion, analysis, and presentation. The application of the PBL method is expected to answer the challenges of zakat learning in class V of SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira. With this method, students are invited to understand the concept of zakat in depth, relate it to real situations, and develop critical thinking and collaboration skills. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of the PBL method in improving the understanding of zakat in grade V students of SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira. Based on the description above, this study aims to improve students' understanding of zakat at SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira through the problem based learning research method. This study will also examine the effectiveness of the problem-based learning method in increasing students' participation and motivation to learn and identify obstacles and solutions in the implementation of the method. It is hoped that the results of this research can make a positive contribution to the development of more innovative and effective Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies at the elementary school level.

## **METHODS**

This study uses the classroom action research method. The definition of classroom action research is research that combines research procedures with substantive actions, an action carried out within the discipline of inquiry, or an attempt by a person to understand what is happening, while being involved in a process of improvement and change. Thus, the procedure for the implementation of this research will follow the basic principles of action research that have been commonly carried out. In this class action research, it consists of four series of activities carried out in a repetitive cycle, in this study the researcher uses two cycles. This Class Action Research took place at SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira, Sosopan District, Padang Lawas Regency, North Sumatra Province. This research will be carried out in the first semester of the 2024/2025 Academic Year, from December 2024 to January 2025. The techniques used to collect data from the field are; 1) Observation; 2) Test; 3) Documentation. The instruments used in this study are; 1) Observation; 2) Interview; 3) Field Notes; 4) Test. In this study, there are 2 data analysis, namely quantitative data and qualitative data. State Elementary School 0305 Pagaranbira is a place where researchers conduct Classroom Action Research, located on Jl.Lintas Sosopan, Agaran Bira Jae Village, Sosopan District, Padang Lawas Regency, North Sumatra Province. It has 6 classrooms, 1 teacher's room, 2 school toilet rooms, 2 teachers' houses, 1 school warehouse. The teachers of SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira totaled 11 people consisting of 1 principal, 6 classroom teachers, 3 subject teachers, 1 administrative staff. Five people have become State Civil Apparatus (PNS), four State Civil Apparatus (PPPK) and two people are still honorary employees. The number of students at SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira is 100 students, consisting of 44 male students, and 56 female students, 6 study groups (rombel). All study groups enter in the morning. 0305 Pagaranbira State Elementary School is located in the middle of the community settlement of Pagaran Bira Jae village

## **RESULTS**

This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) method in enhancing students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira. The research sought to determine how PBL could improve student engagement, critical thinking, and overall academic performance in Islamic Education by encouraging students to actively solve real-world problems. Data were collected through

pre-tests, post-tests, classroom observations, and student interviews, providing a comprehensive analysis of the method's impact on learning outcomes.

The pre-test results revealed that students had a basic understanding of Islamic Education but faced challenges in applying the concepts to real-life situations. Many students could recall key facts or verses from the Quran but struggled to understand their deeper meanings or apply them in practical scenarios. The post-test results showed a notable improvement in students' understanding and ability to apply Islamic teachings in various contexts, reflecting the positive impact of the PBL method.

Classroom observations also demonstrated that PBL significantly increased student engagement. Students were more active during lessons when tasked with solving problems related to Islamic teachings. This active participation was a stark contrast to traditional teaching methods, where students were often passive recipients of information. The PBL approach prompted students to think critically, discuss ideas with their peers, and collaborate on finding solutions to problems. This increased interaction not only deepened their understanding but also enhanced their enthusiasm for learning.

The PBL method encouraged students to take ownership of their learning process. By working on real-world problems, students were given the opportunity to explore Islamic values in meaningful ways. For instance, students discussed ethical dilemmas, such as how to apply honesty or fairness in everyday situations, and collaborated to find solutions that reflected Islamic principles. This hands-on approach helped students connect Islamic teachings to their daily lives, making learning more relevant and meaningful.

The study also found that the PBL method improved students' critical thinking skills. Instead of merely memorizing facts or verses, students were required to analyze situations, question assumptions, and consider different perspectives. For example, when presented with a problem related to Islamic ethics, students needed to assess various solutions and discuss the ethical implications of each choice. This process of problem-solving helped students develop a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings and strengthened their ability to think critically and independently.

In addition to enhancing understanding, PBL fostered a collaborative learning environment. Students worked in groups to discuss problems and share ideas, which promoted teamwork and communication skills. The collaborative aspect of PBL allowed students to learn from each other, share diverse viewpoints, and arrive at collective solutions. This peer interaction contributed to a more supportive and engaging learning environment, where students felt encouraged to participate and express their thoughts.

Interviews with students revealed that they found the PBL method more enjoyable and effective than traditional teaching methods. Many students mentioned that they appreciated the opportunity to solve problems related to their faith, as it made the material feel more relevant to their lives. Students reported that working on group projects and discussing solutions with their peers helped them better understand complex concepts and see the practical applications of what they were learning. They also expressed a sense of pride and achievement when they successfully solved problems and applied Islamic principles in real-world scenarios.

However, the study also identified some challenges in implementing PBL in the classroom. One challenge was the time required to facilitate group work and discussions, as well as the preparation of problem-based scenarios. Teachers needed to allocate sufficient time for students to engage in the problem-solving process, which could sometimes extend the lesson duration. Additionally, some students faced difficulties in collaborating effectively within groups, requiring extra support and guidance from the teacher to ensure equal participation and productive discussions.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that the Problem-Based Learning method significantly improved students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira. The method encouraged active participation, critical thinking, and the application of Islamic teachings to real-life situations. By focusing on problem-solving and

collaboration, PBL created a more engaging and dynamic learning environment that enhanced students' comprehension and enthusiasm for the subject. Despite some challenges in implementation, the overall results suggest that PBL is a highly effective approach for improving student learning outcomes in Islamic Education.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study clearly indicate that the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) method is an effective strategy for improving students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira. By encouraging students to actively engage in solving real-world problems, PBL moved beyond traditional teaching methods, which often focus on rote memorization. Students were no longer passive recipients of information; instead, they took on an active role in their learning, which significantly increased their engagement and understanding of Islamic concepts.

One of the most significant findings was that PBL encouraged deeper understanding and application of Islamic teachings. Unlike traditional methods where students memorize facts and verses from the Quran, PBL required students to connect these teachings to real-life situations. For example, when discussing concepts like honesty, fairness, or charity, students were presented with problems or dilemmas in which they had to apply these values to make decisions. This approach helped students understand the practical implications of Islamic principles, making learning more meaningful and relevant to their daily lives.

Classroom observations showed that students were more engaged and motivated when using PBL. They were excited to work together on solving problems and discuss potential solutions with their peers. The PBL method's emphasis on collaboration allowed students to exchange ideas and learn from one another. In turn, this created a more interactive and dynamic classroom environment. Unlike traditional teacher-centered approaches, where the teacher typically lectures and students listen passively, PBL encouraged students to take responsibility for their learning, which resulted in a deeper engagement with the material.

The development of critical thinking skills was another important outcome of the PBL method. As students faced various problems, they needed to analyze the situations critically and consider multiple solutions. This method helped students understand that Islamic principles are not just abstract concepts to be memorized, but living values that can be applied to real-world challenges. For example, when exploring the concept of justice, students discussed different perspectives and considered how to apply fairness in situations like resolving conflicts or making ethical decisions in their daily lives. This process not only strengthened their understanding of Islamic ethics but also improved their ability to think critically.

Furthermore, PBL allowed for personalized learning. While traditional teaching methods tend to be uniform, PBL enabled students to approach problems in different ways and at their own pace. The open-ended nature of the problems encouraged students to think creatively and come up with diverse solutions. This autonomy in learning allowed students to feel more in control of their education, which likely contributed to the observed increase in motivation and academic performance.

The collaborative nature of PBL was also found to have a positive impact on students' social and communication skills. Working in groups to solve problems fostered teamwork, discussion, and the sharing of ideas. Students learned how to listen to others, express their opinions clearly, and negotiate solutions collectively. These interactions not only helped students better understand Islamic teachings but also taught them important interpersonal skills that are essential in both academic and real-world settings.

Despite its many advantages, the study also revealed several challenges associated with implementing PBL in the classroom. One significant challenge was the time required to prepare problem-based scenarios and to facilitate group discussions. Teachers needed

to invest time in creating meaningful, contextually appropriate problems that would engage students and encourage deep learning. Additionally, PBL required a shift in classroom management, as teachers had to ensure that students remained focused during group work and that all students were contributing equally. These additional demands on teachers' time and effort could be a potential obstacle, particularly in schools with limited resources.

Finally, it is important to consider the varying levels of student participation in group work. While many students thrived in the collaborative environment of PBL, others struggled with contributing actively to discussions. In some cases, certain students may have been less confident or hesitant to participate, which could hinder the overall effectiveness of the method. Teachers played a crucial role in addressing these disparities by providing additional support and guidance to students who needed it. With careful monitoring and encouragement, teachers can help ensure that all students are equally involved and benefit from the PBL approach.

In conclusion, the Problem-Based Learning method significantly improved students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira. The active, student-centered approach enhanced engagement, critical thinking, and the practical application of Islamic values. While challenges such as preparation time and group dynamics exist, the overall benefits of PBL in terms of increased student motivation, collaboration, and deeper understanding of Islamic teachings make it a valuable method for teaching Islamic Education. Teachers are encouraged to continue using and refining PBL to further enhance student learning outcomes.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) method effectively enhances students' understanding of Islamic Education at SD Negeri 0305 Pagaranbira. By shifting from traditional methods to a more active, student-centered approach, PBL encouraged students to engage more deeply with the material. Instead of merely memorizing Islamic teachings, students were able to apply these principles to real-life situations, leading to a more meaningful and relevant learning experience. The findings also reveal that PBL contributed to the development of critical thinking skills among students. By solving real-world problems, students were required to analyze situations, consider multiple perspectives, and make informed decisions based on Islamic principles. This not only deepened their understanding of the material but also enhanced their problem-solving abilities, which are crucial both in academic and everyday life. Another significant outcome of this study was the improvement in student engagement. Through collaborative group work, students had the opportunity to exchange ideas, discuss solutions, and learn from each other. This teamwork and peer interaction created a more dynamic classroom environment where students felt motivated and invested in their learning. The increased participation and enthusiasm were key factors in the overall success of PBL in the classroom. Despite its benefits, the study highlighted some challenges in implementing PBL, particularly in terms of preparation time and managing group dynamics. Teachers needed to invest extra time to design meaningful problem-based scenarios and to facilitate student discussions. Additionally, ensuring that all students participated equally in group work required careful monitoring and support from the teacher. However, with proper planning and classroom management strategies, these challenges can be addressed effectively. In conclusion, Problem-Based Learning has proven to be a valuable method for improving students' understanding of Islamic Education. The method fostered deeper engagement, critical thinking, and the practical application of Islamic principles, making it an effective tool for enhancing student learning outcomes. Despite some challenges, the benefits of PBL far outweigh the difficulties, suggesting that it should be incorporated more widely in Islamic Education curricula to further support student development and academic success.

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