

## Implementation Of Problem Based Learning Method In Islamic Religious Education Subjects In Improving Student Understanding At Darut Taqwa High School

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<b>Abstract</b>	
<p>The direction of this research is to explore the dynamics of the implementation of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach as it is learned in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as well as to examine the extent to which this approach affects the level of student understanding in the Darut Taqwa High School environment. This research is based on a descriptive qualitative paradigm, with data collection techniques that include participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis as the main instruments. The participants include PAI teachers and high school students. The results of the study indicate that the use of the PBL method is able to increase students' active participation, hone their critical thinking skills, and deepen their understanding of religious materials. The success of the implementation of PBL is supported by the readiness of teachers, the availability of adequate learning media, and the motivation of students to learn. However, there are still obstacles such as limited time and inequality in students' ability to work with groups.</p>	<p><b>Keywords:</b> Problem Based Learning; Islamic Education; Student Understanding.</p>
<b>Abstrak</b>	
<p>Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi dinamika implementasi pendekatan Problem Based Learning (PBL) dalam mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di lingkungan SMA Darut Taqwa dan untuk mengetahui pengaruhnya terhadap tingkat pemahaman siswa. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis dokumen. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini meliputi guru PAI dan siswa sekolah menengah atas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan metode PBL mampu meningkatkan partisipasi aktif siswa, mengasah kemampuan berpikir kritis, serta memperdalam pemahaman siswa terhadap materi keagamaan. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa keberhasilan implementasi PBL dipengaruhi oleh kesiapan guru, ketersediaan media pembelajaran yang memadai, dan motivasi siswa,</p>	<p><b>Kata Kunci:</b> Pembelajaran Berbasis Masalah; Pendidikan Islam; Pemahaman Peserta Didik.</p>

meskipun terdapat hambatan seperti keterbatasan waktu pembelajaran dan ketidakmerataan kemampuan siswa dalam bekerjasama dalam kelompok.

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## 1. Introduction

Improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in high schools is the main focus in an effort to improve students' understanding, attitudes, and character in accordance with Islamic values. One of the approaches that is increasingly applied and proven effective is the Problem Based Learning (PBL) method, which is able to stimulate learning activities and develop students' critical thinking skills through contextual problem solving. In this study, the implementation of PBL in the school environment showed positive results in improving religious understanding and building students' analytical and argumentative skills, as well as fostering interest in learning and a sense of responsibility for the learning process. In general, the success of PBL implementation cannot be separated from the readiness of teachers, adequate facilities, and student motivation, so that this method can be used as a strategic option in improving the quality of PAI learning at the high school level.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as a step that is implemented in a planned and mindful manner to prepare students to be able to recognize, understand, live, believe, have piety, have good behavior, and implement Islamic religious teaching that they get from the Qur'an and Hadith. This education not only functions as religious teaching, but also as guidance and guidance so that Islamic teachings can become a way of life that guides the daily behavior and attitude of students (Mohammad Ali Mahmudi, Syafruddin, 2016).

In addition, PAI in schools plays a crucial role in shaping and increasing students' faith and devotion, as well as instilling Islamic values as a guide for life to achieve happiness not only in this world but also in the hereafter. This education also serves to adjust the way of thinking of students so that they can interact with the social and physical environment in accordance with Islamic teachings (Ayatullah, 2013).

However, in reality, the PAI learning process still faces a number of obstacles. Traditional learning methods that are still widely used where teachers are the center of learning, often make students less active and only listeners. As a result, students' understanding of PAI material becomes less in-depth and learning outcomes are not optimal (Harahap et al., 2024). This is supported by findings in several schools that show that the level of student learning completeness in PAI subjects is relatively low. Most students only memorize the material without understanding its meaning and its relation to real situations in daily life

One of the pedagogical strategies that is considered transformative in responding to these problems is the implementation of the Problem Based

Learning (PBL) method. This approach places problematic reality at the center of the learning process, so that students are encouraged to think critically, actively and be able to develop skills in solving real problems with their lives (Mutoharoh, 2023). This method was first introduced in 1969 at McMaster University, Canada, and since then it has been widely used at various levels of education around the world. PBL aims to provide a more meaningful and real learning experience for students by connecting teaching materials with situations in their life dynamics. Not only that, PBL also supports students to hone their learning skills independently, thinking critically, creatively, and cooperating, which is very crucial in facing complex problems in today's world (Suryani, 2018).

With this method, students do not tend to acquire information passively, but also engage directly in the process of finding, analyzing and solving problems together. Various findings reveal that PBL is able to increase the level of understanding of concepts, their ability to think critically, and students' activeness in PAI learning.

The results of previous research prove that the application of PBL in PAI learning is able to increase the level of learning outcomes and students' ability to think critically rapidly. In addition, PBL also helps students in identifying problems, expressing opinions, evaluating, and providing solutions to the problems faced (Zahroh Chindy Putri Wahyuningtyas, 2016)

Improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in high school is an urgent need to improve students' understanding and character in order to be able to face the challenges of the times. One of the approaches that has proven to be effective and widely applied is the Problem Based Learning (PBL) method, which is able to stimulate active participation and develop students' critical thinking skills through contextual problem solving. Several previous studies, such as the one conducted by (Maulana, 2024), stated that PBL is able to improve students' understanding and analytical skills in general, but still requires a more in-depth study of the success factors and obstacles to implementation in a particular school environment. In addition, research by (Zahroh Chindy Putri Wahyuningtyas, 2016) shows that PBL can improve students' critical thinking skills in PAI learning, but its application is more focused on aspects of cognitive abilities without investigating its impact on students' motivation and attitudes comprehensively. Therefore, this study aims to examine in more depth the application of PBL in the context of certain schools, especially in Darut Taqwa High School, as well as identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that affect the success of its implementation. Thus, this research plays a role in providing practical solutions and supporting the development of more effective and contextual PAI learning methods.

Based on this description, this study will examine the implementation of the PBL method in PAI learning at Darut Taqwa High School. The purpose of this research is to find out the process of implementing the PBL method in PAI learning and analyze its impact on student understanding. It is hoped that the findings will be able to make a constructive contribution to optimizing the quality of PAI, as well as being a catalyst in the formation of students' character which is

not only good for intellectuals, but also mature in character in the spiritual dimension and sensitive in their social interactions (Harahap et al., 2024).

## **2. Methods**

The methodology applied is qualitative research which aims to analyze how PBL is implemented in the context of PAI. The application of a qualitative approach that is descriptive in nature and classified as a field research category. The focus is on analyzing processes and thinking, as well as applying scientific logic, with an emphasis on the results obtained for the location being studied (Erisa Agustin, Rina Mida Hayati, 2023). The purpose of this activity is to describe the situation that takes place at the location in a direct way by making observations, meetings, and interviews with Islamic teachers, so that the information obtained is relevant to the reality in the field (Ayas Hendra Hermawan, Dedi Setiawan, 2024). The methods adopted include observation, interviews, and documentation.

Observation is a data collection process that relies on human sensory capture such as sight, smell, and hearing in order to obtain relevant information to answer the formulation of research problems. The results of observations include a variety of dynamics, ranging from activities and events, to conditions, atmospheres, certain objects, and individual affective expressions. This observational activity is aimed at obtaining a complete and contextual understanding of the phenomenon being studied, as a basis for formulating answers to questions (Rahardjo, 2011).

Interviews are a form of dialogical interaction that is methodologically designed to explore in-depth information through the exchange of questions and answers between researchers and resource persons or study subjects. Along with the acceleration of communication technology, this practice is no longer tied to physical presence, but can rather be mediated by digital devices that allow for long-distance connectivity. In essence, interviews function as an exploratory instrument to uncover layers of meaning on the issue or theme that is the focus of the investigation. Alternatively, it can be interpreted as a process of verifying data or information that has been obtained previously through different methods (Rahardjo, 2011).

Beyond interview and observation techniques, empirical data can also be traced through traces of information recorded in documentary artifacts, such as written correspondence, diaries, visual documentation, meeting minutes, memorabilia, and activity journals. This kind of document serves as a search for information that allows researchers to reconstruct past events. Researchers must have a good theoretical understanding to understand all the documents, so that they are not just considered as meaningless items (Rahardjo, 2011).

The analysis as explained by Miles and Huberman includes three activities that take place simultaneously, namely: deduction and presentation of data, and drawing conclusions (verification).

Data reduction is a step in selecting and focusing on simplification, abstraction, and modification of raw data taken from various written field records.

This process continues to occur dynamically throughout the research, even though the search has not started, but all data has been collected comprehensively. The direction and form are often conditioned in the construction of the conceptual framework, the focus of the issues explored, and the choice of data collection strategies that the researcher has determined in advance (Rijali, 2018).

Data presentation is a process in which a set of information has been arranged, so that it is possible to draw conclusions and make decisions (Maulana, 2024). In order to draw conclusions, of course, it must be based on the results of data analysis, which are not only obtained from field records, observations, and documentation.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

#### **a. Application of Problem Based Learning (PBL) Method in PAI Learning at Darut Taqwa High School**

Based on the results of interviews and observations in the field, the PAI learning process at Darut Taqwa High School has implemented the PBL approach systematically. This method is used as a strategy to increase the level of active involvement of students in understanding Islamic concepts through contextual problem solving.

The implementation of PBL is divided into several stages, which are relevant to the model developed (Howard S. Barrows & Robyn M. Tamblyn, 1981) and adapted in the context of Indonesian education, including:

- 1) **Problem Orientation**  
The initial stage begins with the provision of stimulus in the form of actual problems related to teaching materials. For example, in learning about Islamic morals or ethics, teachers present social cases that are close to students' lives, such as the abuse of social media or the behavior of adolescents who deviate from religious teachings. This stage is important to build students' curiosity and stimulate the critical thinking process from the beginning (Arends, 2012).
- 2) **Organizing Learning Activities**  
Once the case is introduced, the teacher groups students into small groups to have discussions, formulate hypotheses, and design problem-solving measures. This activity aims to develop collaboration and problem-solving skills collectively.
- 3) **Independent and Group Investigations**  
Furthermore, students explore information independently or in groups. They sought references from various Islamic sources, including the Qur'an, hadiths, textbooks, and scientific articles. Teachers play the role of facilitators, providing guidance without dominating the learning process (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).
- 4) **Preparation and Delivery of Results**  
Students then design reports or presentations to explain the findings and solutions that have been formulated. This delivery can be done in

the form of class discussions, visual presentations, or other creative works. This stage trains students' communication skills and scientific reasoning.

5) Reflection and Evaluation

At the end of the process, teachers and students jointly evaluate the activities that have been carried out, both in terms of the group cooperation process and the quality of the solutions produced. The feedback provided by teachers aims to strengthen students' understanding and improve the learning process in the future (Savery, 2006).

The PBL method is well applied and in accordance with active learning principles. Showing that students become more active, critical, and able to relate it to the reality of PAI material, PBL is effective in increasing the level of critical thinking and deep understanding (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

However, the application of this method requires the readiness of teachers to design problem scenarios and guide student discussions in a directed manner. Good time management is also very necessary so that all stages of learning can be carried out optimally.

**b. Results of the Implementation of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) Method in Improving Students' Understanding of PAI Materials**

Based on the results of the learning evaluation through formative tests and interviews with a number of students, it was obtained that the implementation of the PBL model has a positive and strong impact on students' understanding of PAI subjects.

Some indicators that show this increased understanding include:

1) Increase in Average Comprehension Score

As with the test acquisition, the average score of students increased from 68 before the application of the PBL method to 82 afterwards. This increase reflects a positive change in students' understanding of religious concepts. This is in line with findings that show that PBL is able to increase the level of conceptual understanding because students are trained to find information and solutions to a problem on their own (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

2) More Contextual Understanding

Students find it easier to understand the material when it is associated with real conditions in daily life. This contextual approach makes PAI material more lively and applicative, not limited to mere memorization. This is in line with the opinion (Arends, 2012), which reveals that problem-based learning facilitates students to build meaning deeply through direct experience.

3) Increased Analytical Skills and Idea Delivery

In the group discussion process, students show better ability to express opinions, formulate solutions based on Islamic values, and

present arguments in a structured manner. Improving critical thinking skills is one of the main goals of the implementation of PBL (Savery, 2006).

- 4) **Increased Independence and Learning Responsibility**  
Students are encouraged to learn independently and responsibly in the process of searching for information. They actively seek references from the Qur'an, hadiths, textbooks, and relevant digital sources, according to the topic of the problem given.
- 5) **Changes in Attitudes towards PAI Lessons**  
Students who initially thought PAI lessons were monotonous and theoretical began to show enthusiasm and interest. They consider learning to be more interactive, challenging, and fun, because it is directly related to various issues relevant to the dynamics of their lives.

The implementation of the PBL method in PAI learning has been proven to be able to effectively increase the level of student understanding, especially in religious materials. It allows students in this approach to learn not only through theory, but also with direct experience in solving problems in accordance with the dynamics of life and Islamic values. In addition, PBL encourages active participation, critical thinking, and cooperation between students, which in turn strengthens their analytical and problem-solving skills. This success is obtained by the role of the teacher as a facilitator who guides the discussion and helps students find answers, so that the learning process becomes more meaningful and in accordance with the context of life (Rahman & Ramli, 2024).

This success is also supported by the main characteristics of PBL which encourages students to think critically, creatively, and collaborate in solving their problems. This process makes students more emotionally and intellectually engaged, which ultimately improves the quality of their learning outcomes.

### **c. Factors that Support and Hinder the Application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) Method**

The implementation of the PBL method in PAI subjects at Darut Taqwa High School has received support from various parties and conditions that support the creation of innovative and meaningful learning.

- 1) **Supporting Factors**  
In its application at Darut Taqwa High School, the Problem Based Learning (PBL) method received support from various elements that strengthened its implementation in the classroom. These supporting factors include:
  - a) **School Commitment to Learning Innovation**  
The school shows openness to innovative learning models, including PBL, by giving teachers the flexibility to design and implement unconventional learning strategies. This support can be seen from the time allocation, academic policies, and motivation given to teaching staff.

- b) **Access to Diverse Learning Resources**  
Teacher students also have sufficient access to a variety of teaching materials, including textbooks, digital media, and internet facilities. The availability of these learning resources allows students to dig up information from various references to solve the given problem.
- c) **Teachers' Abilities in Managing PBL**  
PAI teachers have good competence in applying the PBL method, starting from compiling problem scenarios, forming study groups, to guiding the discussion process. This ability is very crucial in realizing a directed and active learning atmosphere.
- d) **Active Participation and Student Enthusiasm**  
Students show a positive response to problem-based learning. Their involvement can be seen in discussion activities, expressing opinions, and finding solutions related to life problems associated with Islamic values.
- e) **Availability of Adequate Facilities and Tools**  
The provision of tools and materials that are relevant and sufficiently support problem-based learning activities, such as props and materials that support scientific activities (Palmin & Anwar, 2022).

## 2) Inhibiting Factors

Although it has a lot of support, the implementation of PBL also encounters several obstacles that must be overcome so that learning runs optimally. Some of these barriers include:

- a) **Limited Learning Time**  
The time allocated for each meeting is often not enough to complete the entire process of group discussions and presentations. This is a challenge in itself, because PBL takes a relatively long time for exploration and problem-solving stages.
- b) **Lack of Involvement of Some Students**  
Not all students actively participated in the discussion activities. Some students tend to be passive because they lack confidence or are not used to expressing ideas openly in front of their friends.
- c) **Inadequate Facilities and Infrastructure**  
Learning support facilities, such as projectors, audio-visual devices, and classrooms that support group learning, are not yet equally available. This sometimes hinders the effectiveness of PBL implementation in every class.
- d) **Differences in Students' Abilities in One Class**  
Varying levels of academic ability in a class lead to an imbalance in participation in group discussions. More active

students tend to dominate, while other students are less engaged to the maximum.

- e) PBL learning strategies through discussion and team work  
Group work and discussion are important components of PBL. The PBL model encourages students to think critically through team collaboration, which in turn develops their cognitive abilities through the process of empowerment, testing, and integration of ideas on an ongoing basis. Discussion and teamwork also train students to be more sensitive to others, express opinions effectively, solve problems together, determine the right solutions, and make relevant conclusions (Sa'idah et al., 2019).

Overall, the application of the PBL method continues to be effective at Darut Taqwa High School, despite several technical and non-technical obstacles. To optimize its application, teachers are required to be more creative in time management and group division strategies. On the other hand, continuous training and mentoring for teachers is needed so that they are more skilled in developing learning scenarios and managing PBL-based classes effectively.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The implementation of the PBL method during the learning of PAI subjects at Darut Taqwa High School showed encouraging results and had a positive impact on student understanding. Through this approach, students are not only invited to understand the material theoretically, but also trained to be able to think logically and critically in dealing with life problems related to Islamic values. Learning is no longer one-way from teacher to student, but rather becomes interactive, as students are directly involved in identifying problems, discussing in groups, looking for references, and formulating solutions based on the principles of Islamic teachings.

Although there are still a number of challenges in its implementation, such as limited study time, inadequate facilities, and uneven student participation in groups, these obstacles are not the main obstacles. With a good classroom management strategy, support from the school, and teacher capacity building through training, these obstacles can be overcome gradually.

Therefore, the conclusion is that the PBL method is a relevant and effective learning strategy to be applied in PAI subjects. The existence of this method not only increases the level of students' understanding of the subject matter, but also contributes to shaping attitudes, characters, and ways of critical thinking that students need in solving complex life challenges in today's modern era.

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