



Problem-Based Learning for Enhancing Learning Outcomes in Teaching Zakat in Islamic Elementary Schools

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of implementing the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model in improving student learning outcomes on the subject of zakat in grade V at SD Negeri 002 Tapau. This study used the classroom action research method with grade V students as subjects, which was carried out through two learning cycles. Data were collected through observation and documentation to assess teacher activities, student participation, and learning outcomes. The results showed a significant increase in student engagement and learning outcomes, with the level of mastery exceeding the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM). These findings confirm that the PBL model is effective when applied in Islamic Religious Education, as it encourages student activity, deepens understanding of the concept of zakat, and improves the overall quality of the learning process and outcomes.

Keywords: Problem-Based Learning Model; Learning Outcomes; Teaching Zakat

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INTRODUCTION

National education has the main objective of developing the potential of students to become people who believe in and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Law No. 20 of 2003, Article 3). This objective shows that education is not only oriented towards academic achievement, but also includes the formation of a well-rounded personality and character. In this context, religious education plays a fundamental role in building the moral and spiritual foundation of students from an early age. Through religious education, students are expected to be able to internalize the values of faith, piety, and noble character that serve as guidelines in their personal, social, and national lives. Thus, religious education, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI), plays a strategic role in shaping students who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have Islamic character and moral awareness in living their lives (Juhji et al., 2020).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a function that is not merely to transfer religious knowledge, but also to internalize spiritual values that shape the attitudes and behavior of students. Through PAI learning, students are expected to be able to implement Islamic teachings in real life, so that they can realize a meaningful, peaceful, and dignified life in the midst of a developing society. PAI learning in elementary school is an important foundation for children's religious development because at this age, students are in the stage of character and moral value formation. Therefore, PAI must be presented in an interesting, interactive, and relevant manner so that children not only understand Islamic teachings theoretically but are also able to practice them in their daily lives (Nurdiyanto et al., 2024; Pujianti, 2024; Seniwati, 2025).

One of the important subjects in PAI learning in elementary schools is zakat. This material not only has theological value but also contains a very strong social dimension. Zakat teaches the importance of caring, justice, and social solidarity in community life. Through understanding zakat, students are not only introduced to religious obligations but also trained to have empathy for others and understand the social role of Muslims in balancing the welfare of society. Understanding zakat from an early age also serves as a means of instilling values of social responsibility and fostering sensitivity to economic inequality. Thus, the subject of zakat is highly relevant in shaping the social and religious character of elementary school students (Muslimah & Asrori, 2022; Baihaqi, 2024; Muslimah & Asrori, 2022).

However, in practice, teaching zakat material still faces a number of challenges in the field. Based on preliminary observations at SD Negeri 002 Tapau, it was found that 65.93% of students had not achieved mastery of the zakat material. This condition indicates that the teaching that has been carried out has not been able to fully develop students' conceptual understanding optimally. The low learning outcomes can be attributed to various factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include students' diverse learning interests, readiness, and basic abilities. Meanwhile, external factors include limited learning time, lack of supporting facilities, and teachers' teaching strategies that are still conventional in nature. The learning model, which is still dominated by lectures, makes students passive, only receiving information without sufficient opportunity to discuss, explore, and relate the concept of zakat to real-life contexts.

This problem has implications for the weakness of students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In fact, the 2013 curriculum explicitly requires active, creative, and student-centered learning. This curriculum emphasizes the importance of developing 21st-century competencies, such as higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), collaboration, communication, and creativity. In the context of PAI learning, critical and creative thinking skills are essential for students to understand religious teachings rationally and contextually, rather than merely memorizing arguments or definitions. Therefore, innovation is needed in learning strategies that can change passive learning patterns into active and participatory

ones, as well as encourage students to think deeply about the values of Islamic teachings, including zakat (Zulkarnain, 2018).

One learning model that is relevant to addressing these challenges is Problem-Based Learning (PBL). This model is a learning approach that places students at the center of learning activities (student-centered learning) by prioritizing contextual problems as the basis for knowledge exploration. In PBL, students not only receive information but are also actively involved in discovering, analyzing, and solving problems related to real life. Thus, learning becomes more meaningful because students relate theory to practice. In the context of zakat learning, this model can be used to encourage students to analyze social problems in their surroundings, such as poverty and economic inequality, and then relate them to the role of zakat in overcoming these problems. In this way, the concept of zakat is not only understood textually, but also applicatively and contextually (Mallu et al., 2024).

A number of previous studies have also shown that Problem Based Learning is effective in improving student learning outcomes and critical thinking skills. For example, research by Arends (2012) shows that PBL is able to encourage students to develop analytical and collaborative skills through real problem solving. Similarly, research conducted by Hmelo-Silver (2013) states that PBL increases learning motivation because students feel more challenged and responsible for their learning process. In the context of religious education, similar research also found that the application of PBL can deepen the understanding of religious values and foster a reflective attitude towards Islamic teachings, because students are faced with situations that require moral and spiritual reasoning (Putri et al., 2025).

Based on this background, this study was conducted to analyze the effectiveness of applying the Problem-Based Learning model in improving student learning outcomes in zakat material in fifth grade elementary school. It is hoped that through the application of this model, students will not only experience improvements in cognitive aspects, but also develop critical thinking skills, social awareness, and moral responsibility. This study is expected to contribute to the development of more innovative and contextual PAI learning practices, as well as provide alternative solutions for teachers in creating an active, meaningful learning process oriented towards the formation of Islamic character.

METHODOLOGY

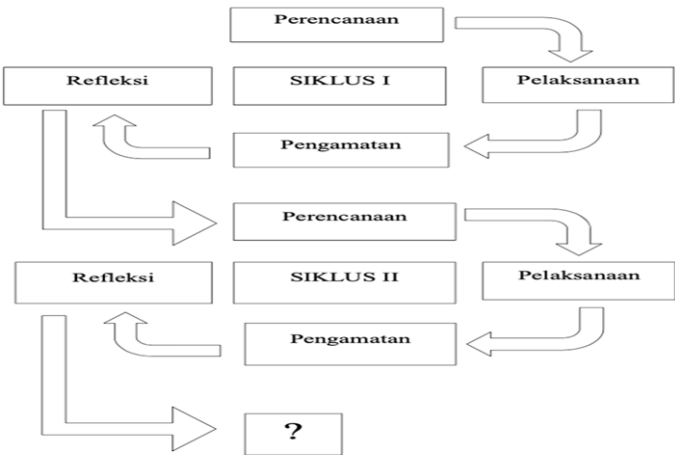
This study used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach because it aimed to improve the learning process and outcomes directly in the classroom through reflective and continuous action. This approach is considered appropriate because it provides space for teachers to become researchers in their own classrooms, so that the results can be applied contextually in Islamic Education learning practices, especially in the subject of zakat (Khaddafi et al., 2025).

The research was conducted at SD Negeri 002 Tapau with 16 fifth-grade students as subjects, consisting of 9 male students and 7 female students. This location was chosen because, based on initial observations, most students did not achieve the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) in zakat material, thus requiring a more innovative and interactive learning model.

This research was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of four stages, namely: planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through observation of teacher and student activities, as well as documentation of student learning outcomes. The research instruments included observation sheets, learning outcome assessment sheets, and reflection notes. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation techniques to ensure consistency between data.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data were obtained from observations of learning activities and teacher reflections, then described to see changes in student learning behavior

and the effectiveness of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model. Quantitative data in the form of learning outcome scores were analyzed to calculate the percentage of learning completeness in each cycle to measure improvements in student learning outcomes (Nur et al., 2023).



Gambar 1. Siklus Penelitian Tindakan Kelas

Figure 1. Research flow

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

This study aims to improve student learning outcomes on the subject of zakat through the application of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model in grade V at SD Negeri 002 Tapau. The results of the study show a significant increase in student understanding and engagement during the two learning cycles.

1. Pre-Cycle Results (Before Intervention)

Based on initial observations and documentation of scores, students demonstrated a low level of understanding of the concept of zakat. Of the 16 students, only 6 achieved the Minimum Passing Score (KKM) with an average score of 65.93 and a passing rate of 37.5%. The low learning outcomes were due to the dominance of the lecture method and the lack of student involvement in problem-solving activities.

2. Cycle I Results

After implementing PBL in cycle I, student learning activities increased with an average engagement rate of 75%. Students began to actively participate in group discussions, although some were still passive in expressing their opinions. The evaluation results showed an increase in the average class score to 74.2 with a mastery level of 68.75%. However, reflection showed that some students still had difficulty understanding the application of zakat in daily life due to a lack of interesting learning media and variety of activities.

3. Cycle II Results

Improvements were made in cycle II with the addition of audio-visual media and ice-breaking activities to increase learning motivation. Student activity increased to 86.84%, and the average learning outcome score rose to 82.5 with a mastery level of 87.5%. Students were better able to explain the types and procedures of zakat and showed high enthusiasm during learning (Elya & Ratnaningsih, 2025).

4. Summary of Quantitative Results

Table 1. Consistent increase in both learning outcomes and student learning activities from the pre-cycle to cycle II

Stages	Average Score	Percentage of Completion	Student Activity
Pre-Cycle	65,93	37,5%	60%
Cycle I	74,20	68,75%	75%
Cycle II	82,50	87,50%	86,84%

The table shows a consistent increase in both learning outcomes and student learning activities from the pre-cycle to cycle II.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model has a positive impact on improving student learning outcomes and activities in the subject of zakat in grade V at SD Negeri 002 Tapau. This improvement can be seen from the quantitative results and changes in student learning behavior during the learning process. The average score, which was only 65.93 in the pre-cycle, increased to 74.20 in cycle I and reached 82.50 in cycle II. The percentage of mastery also increased from 37.5 percent to 68.75 percent in cycle I, then increased again to 87.5 percent in cycle II. In addition, student activity, which was initially low at 60 percent, increased to 75 percent in cycle I and rose again to 86.84 percent in cycle II.

These findings show that the application of PBL can change students' learning patterns from passive to more active and problem-solving oriented. Before the intervention, the learning process was still teacher-centered. Students tended to listen to explanations without actively participating. As a result, their understanding of the concept of zakat was limited to memorizing theory without being able to relate it to real life. This condition is in line with the general problem of Islamic Religious Education learning in elementary schools, which often still emphasizes the cognitive aspect alone. Through the application of PBL, students began to be involved in challenging and meaningful learning situations, where they had to analyze problems, search for information, and find solutions independently or in groups (Lubis, 2024).

In cycle I, the application of PBL showed positive initial changes. Students began to dare to discuss and work together in small groups. Learning activities designed in the form of real-world problem solving, such as simulations of zakat distribution in the surrounding environment, made students feel that learning was closer to their lives. However, student engagement was still uneven. Some students appeared passive in discussions and were not confident in expressing their opinions. This shows that the implementation of PBL in the early stages requires time for adaptation, as students are not yet accustomed to a learning model that demands active participation. Teachers also need to adjust their role from being information providers to facilitators who guide students' thinking processes (Ulum, 2025).

Reflections after cycle I became the basis for improvements in cycle II. Teachers added audio-visual media to provide a concrete picture of zakat practices and held ice-breaking activities to increase learning motivation. These improvements had a real impact on increasing student engagement. In cycle II, almost all students actively participated in group activities, asked questions, and were able to express their opinions with confidence. Students appeared more enthusiastic because the learning process became more varied and enjoyable. Through video screenings and interactive discussions, they not only understood the concept of zakat in theory but were also able to explore its meaning in a social and religious context.

These results show that the PBL model is effective in developing students' critical thinking skills. In this learning process, students are required to understand problems, identify causes, and find solutions based on relevant religious knowledge. This thinking process fosters analytical, logical, and reflective skills that are rarely found in conventional learning. According to Arends, PBL is a learning strategy that can encourage students to develop higher-order thinking skills through active engagement in authentic problem solving. The findings of this study reinforce this view. Students who initially only received information passively are now able to process information critically, evaluate various alternative answers, and conclude learning outcomes based on group discussions (Fadholi et al., 2024).

In addition to cognitive improvement, affective and social aspects also experienced significant development. Through group work, students learned to communicate with friends, listen to others' opinions, and respect different points of view. A sense of responsibility and cooperation grew naturally as they had to complete group assignments with the best results. The zakat simulation activity also fosters empathy towards others, as students are encouraged to understand the importance of sharing and caring for those in need. Thus, PBL not only increases religious knowledge but also shapes students' social and spiritual character (Sembiring, 2023).

In the context of Islamic education, learning that emphasizes direct experience such as PBL is very relevant to the principle of *ta'dib*, which is an educational process that combines aspects of knowledge, morals, and real action. Through problem-based learning, students not only understand religious teachings cognitively but also internalize their values in their daily lives. By understanding zakat through real cases, students can see that Islamic teachings are not just theory, but guidelines for life oriented towards social justice and mutual prosperity (Wawan Setiawan et al., 2024).

These findings are also in line with previous research showing that problem-based learning effectively improves conceptual understanding in religious education. Nurhadi (2019) explains that PBL can strengthen the integration between the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains because students are trained to think, feel, and act simultaneously. In this study, this was evident in the students' skills in explaining the concept of zakat, their active participation in discussions, and their ability to correctly practice the simulation of zakat distribution. All of these indicators describe holistic and meaningful learning.

From the teacher's perspective, the application of PBL also brings changes to the role and teaching strategies. Teachers are no longer the sole source of knowledge but rather facilitators who help students find their own answers to the problems they face. In the implementation of cycle II, teachers succeeded in creating a more open and dialogical classroom atmosphere. Teachers provided space for students to ask questions and experiment with their own ideas. This approach provided a more meaningful and memorable learning experience for students, as they felt valued and actively involved in the learning process (Zahroh et al., 2024).

Although the results were positive, this study has limitations that need to be considered. The number of research subjects, which consisted of only 16 students, certainly limits the generalization of the findings to a wider population. In addition, this study was only conducted in two cycles, so it cannot describe the sustainability of learning outcomes in the long term. The measurement of learning outcomes was also limited to cognitive aspects and observation of activities, while the affective domain and critical thinking skills were not measured using specific instruments. Another factor that may have influenced the improvement in learning outcomes was the improvement in teaching media and methods in cycle II, which was carried out simultaneously with the implementation of PBL (Mardhiyah Mardhiyah et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, this study still makes an important contribution to the development of PAI learning practices in elementary schools. The results show that PBL can be an effective alternative to overcome low student motivation and learning outcomes, especially in materials that require socio-religious understanding such as zakat. Teachers are advised to develop problem-based learning scenarios that are relevant to students' lives. For example, issues regarding the distribution of zakat in the neighborhood, social responsibility, or ways to foster care for others. In this way, students not only understand the material but are also able to implement it in real actions.

In addition, training for teachers on the application of active learning models such as PBL needs to be strengthened. Teachers need to master problem formulation techniques, strategies for guiding group discussions, and authentic

assessment methods so that PBL implementation is effective. Learning support tools such as audio-visual media, teaching aids, and contextual teaching materials also need to be provided to make learning activities more interesting and challenging.

For further research, it is recommended that researchers use an experimental design with control groups and larger sample sizes so that more representative results can be obtained. The study could also add measurements of the affective and psychomotor domains using standardized instruments, such as learning motivation scales or social attitude assessment rubrics. In addition, further research can be conducted in the form of longitudinal studies to assess the sustainability of PBL effects on student learning outcomes and character over a longer period of time.

Overall, this study shows that the application of Problem Based Learning in zakat education in elementary schools can significantly improve student learning outcomes, participation, and social attitudes. PBL provides a meaningful learning process because it connects theory with real life. Through this approach, students learn to understand Islamic teachings not only conceptually but also practically. Thus, zakat learning is no longer seen as mere memorization but as a means of character and social morality building in line with national education goals and Islamic values.

Conclusion

This study aimed to improve student learning outcomes on the subject of zakat through the application of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model in grade V at SDN 002 Tapau. Based on the results of two action cycles, it can be concluded that the application of the PBL model is effective in improving student learning outcomes and active participation. PBL encourages students to understand the concept of zakat more deeply through a contextual, collaborative, and reflective problem-solving process.

Theoretically, the results of this study reinforce the view that problem-based learning is in line with Islamic educational principles that emphasize the integration of knowledge, attitude, and practice (ta'dib). This model helps students not only understand the concept of zakat cognitively but also fosters religious awareness in applying it in daily life.

Practically, these findings have implications for Islamic Education teachers to be more creative in designing learning that places students at the center of learning activities. Teachers are advised to use the PBL model in other materials in Islamic Education that require applied understanding and active student involvement.

For further research, it is recommended that the PBL model be applied to a wider population and at different levels of education to test its consistency and effectiveness. Researchers can also explore the integration of PBL with digital learning technology approaches to make it relevant to the context of 21st-century education and Islamic learning that is adaptive to the times.

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