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The Application of the Problem-Based Learning Model to Improve Learning Outcomes in Islamic Education and Character Building

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Abstract: This study investigates the application of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model to improve students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education and Character at SDN 005 Cemaga Selatan. The research was motivated by low student engagement and achievement resulting from traditional, teacher-centered methods. PBL, as a student-centered approach, emphasizes active participation, collaboration, and critical thinking through real-world problem-solving. The study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design conducted in two cycles, each involving planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Data were collected using observation sheets, learning outcome tests, and field notes, and analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings indicate a significant improvement in students' learning achievement and participation: the average score increased from 69.0 in the pre-cycle to 73.0 in Cycle I and 87.0 in Cycle II, with the mastery level improving from 60% to 100%. The results show that PBL not only enhances cognitive achievement but also fosters moral reasoning and reflective learning aligned with Islamic values. The study concludes that implementing PBL in Islamic Education contributes to meaningful learning experiences and moral development. Recommendations are provided for teachers and schools to integrate PBL principles into daily teaching practices to support holistic student growth.

Keywords: Character Learning; Classroom Action Research; Student Engagement

INTRODUCTION

Education in the twenty-first century demands a transformative shift in how learning is structured, experienced, and evaluated. Traditional teacher-centered models—where students serve merely as passive recipients of knowledge—are increasingly inadequate for nurturing the intellectual and moral capacities necessary in the modern world. In Indonesia, particularly in Islamic Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam* or PAI) at the primary level, this pedagogical limitation often manifests as low motivation, minimal participation, and poor mastery of learning outcomes. The situation at SDN 005 Cemaga Selatan reflects this broader issue: most students demonstrated low engagement and limited achievement in lessons concerning *Asmaul Husna*, one of the core topics in Islamic character formation. Initial assessments indicated that 80% of students failed to achieve the Minimum Mastery Criteria (*Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal* or KKM).

The need for pedagogical innovation is therefore urgent. A learning model that can cultivate students' active participation, curiosity, and higher-order thinking skills while strengthening their moral and spiritual understanding is essential. The *Problem-Based Learning* (PBL) model provides a promising alternative. Originating from constructivist principles, PBL encourages learners to construct knowledge through inquiry and collaborative problem-solving. In this process, students are not passive recipients but active participants who explore authentic issues, generate hypotheses, and reflect on solutions in real contexts.

In Islamic Education, PBL's potential is particularly relevant. The integration of cognitive learning and moral action lies at the heart of Islamic pedagogy, which aims not only to transfer knowledge but also to nurture ethical consciousness (*akhlaq*). By engaging students in authentic problems drawn from daily life or scriptural narratives, teachers can connect learning objectives with spiritual and moral reasoning. For example, when studying *Asmaul Husna* (the Beautiful Names of Allah), students may explore how divine attributes such as *Ar-Rahman* (the Most Merciful) and *Al-Adl* (the Just) manifest in human behavior and social relations. This reflective inquiry enables students to internalize moral values while developing analytical and collaborative competencies.

Previous observations at SDN 005 Cemaga Selatan revealed several challenges in the teaching of Islamic Education and Character. Lessons were typically delivered through lectures, memorization, and textbook recitation. Such teacher-centered practices limited opportunities for dialogue, exploration, and contextual understanding. Students frequently appeared disengaged—talking to peers, displaying low motivation, and struggling to recall lesson material during assessments. As a result, learning outcomes consistently fell below the expected standard, with the majority of students unable to meet the KKM threshold.

Educational reforms in Indonesia emphasize student-centered learning as a hallmark of 21st-century education. Teachers are expected to act as facilitators, motivators, and evaluators rather than sole knowledge providers. This paradigm aligns with global trends emphasizing critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (often referred to as the "4Cs"). The integration of PBL in Islamic Education offers a practical means to realize this vision.

PBL situates students at the center of the learning process by engaging them in structured problem scenarios that require investigation, collaboration, and reflection. Instead of receiving direct answers, students construct understanding through guided inquiry and peer discussion. Such a model encourages not only cognitive growth but also affective and social development—dimensions that are deeply compatible with Islamic educational values emphasizing holistic human development (*insan kamil*).

The significance of this research extends across pedagogical, theoretical, and practical dimensions. Pedagogically, it demonstrates the effectiveness of PBL as a student-centered learning model that enhances both cognitive and affective outcomes in Islamic Education. Theoretically, it contributes to the growing body of literature on constructivist approaches in faith-based education, offering insights into how inquiry and moral reasoning can be harmonized. Practically, it provides teachers with a tested model for classroom implementation, enabling them to foster meaningful engagement and reflective learning.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional approach that positions students as active participants in constructing their own understanding through the investigation of authentic, complex problems. Barrows and Tamblyn (1980), pioneers of the model, defined PBL as "a learning method based on the principle of using problems as the starting point for the acquisition and integration of new knowledge." Rather than emphasizing rote memorization or passive reception of information, PBL encourages students to engage in inquiry, analysis, and reflection to reach a deeper understanding of concepts.

According to Hmelo-Silver (2004), the core goals of PBL are to help students develop (1) flexible knowledge, (2) effective problem-solving skills, (3) self-directed learning abilities, (4) collaboration skills, and (5) intrinsic motivation. These goals correspond closely to the key competencies required in 21st-century education, where learning is seen as a lifelong process of inquiry and innovation rather than the accumulation of static knowledge.

PBL operates on several defining characteristics:

1. Authentic problems as learning triggers. Problems are designed to mirror real-life situations that are ill-structured and require students to apply multiple forms of knowledge.
2. Student-centered inquiry. Learners take responsibility for identifying what they need to know, searching for relevant information, and sharing findings with peers.
3. Collaborative learning. Students work in teams, exchanging ideas and constructing solutions collectively.
4. Teacher as facilitator. The teacher provides scaffolding, guiding questions, and feedback rather than direct instruction.
5. Reflection and metacognition. Students evaluate their learning processes and outcomes to develop self-awareness and continuous improvement.

These principles demonstrate that PBL aligns naturally with constructivist learning theory, which views knowledge as actively constructed through social interaction and personal experience.

The PBL model is grounded in constructivist and experiential learning theories. Constructivism, as articulated by Piaget (1972) and Vygotsky (1978), posits that learners build new knowledge structures based on prior experiences through processes of assimilation, accommodation, and social interaction. Vygotsky's concept of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) emphasizes the importance of social mediation in learning, suggesting that collaboration with peers and guidance from teachers can advance cognitive growth. PBL embodies this by fostering dialogic learning—students co-construct meaning through discussion and problem-solving.

In addition, John Dewey's experiential learning theory (1938) provides philosophical grounding for PBL. Dewey argued that education must be rooted in experience and that reflective inquiry transforms experience into learning. PBL operationalizes this principle by situating students in real-world contexts where they must analyze situations, test ideas, and reflect on outcomes. The process of confronting and resolving problems mirrors authentic human reasoning and decision-making, fostering deep understanding rather than surface-level recall.

Furthermore, Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle—comprising concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation—resonates with the iterative structure of PBL. Each problem-solving phase allows students to engage cognitively, emotionally, and socially, developing both conceptual and practical competencies.

PBL also aligns with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as drivers of motivation. By giving students control over learning decisions and opportunities for collaboration, PBL satisfies these psychological needs and cultivates intrinsic motivation.

Islamic Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*) aims to develop balanced human beings—intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and socially—reflecting the Qur'anic vision of *insan kamil* (a complete human). Traditional instruction in Islamic subjects has often relied heavily on memorization and teacher explanation. While this approach can preserve doctrinal accuracy, it may limit students' ability to apply Islamic teachings to real-life moral and social challenges.

In this regard, the philosophy and methodology of PBL offer valuable pedagogical renewal for Islamic Education. First, PBL encourages critical reflection, an essential element of *tafaqquh* (deep understanding of religion). Instead of accepting information passively, students analyze moral and theological concepts through questioning and dialogue, which fosters both intellectual and spiritual maturity.

Second, PBL nurtures collaborative moral reasoning, in line with Qur'anic injunctions such as *"And cooperate in righteousness and piety"* (Qur'an 5:2). Through group discussions and collective inquiry, students learn to respect differing viewpoints and engage in *musyawarah* (consultation), a practice deeply embedded in Islamic ethical tradition.

Third, PBL promotes contextual and meaningful learning. Islamic Education becomes not only about knowing divine laws and attributes but also about applying

them to social realities. For example, when exploring *Asmaul Husna*, students might investigate how values like mercy (*Ar-Rahman*) and justice (*Al-Adl*) guide everyday decision-making, conflict resolution, and social responsibility. Such contextualization bridges the gap between cognitive understanding and moral action, fulfilling the Qur'anic command to integrate faith and practice (*iman* and *amal shalih*).

Fourth, PBL enhances student autonomy and accountability, principles that resonate with the Islamic view of human agency (*ikhtiyar* and *amanah*). Students take responsibility for their learning, engage in independent inquiry, and are accountable for the quality of their contributions to group work. This pedagogical structure fosters moral independence—a critical aspect of character education (*akhlak*).

Finally, PBL aligns with the educational aims expressed in the *Law on the National Education System (Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003)*, which envisions education as a process to "develop students' potential to become faithful, pious, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, and independent citizens." By integrating inquiry-based learning with value-based formation, PBL operationalizes these aims within Islamic Education contexts.

A growing body of research supports the efficacy of PBL in enhancing learning outcomes, including in religious and moral education contexts. Suprijono (2013) found that PBL increases students' cognitive achievement and engagement through active participation and group problem-solving. Similarly, Daryanto and Karim (2020) demonstrated that PBL fosters critical thinking and social skills by positioning learners as co-creators of knowledge.

In Islamic education, studies by Linillah (2014) and Suryaana (2014) revealed that PBL enhances both understanding of religious content and moral behavior. Their findings show that students involved in PBL not only perform better academically but also exhibit improved empathy, cooperation, and respect—values central to *akhlaq al-karimah*. Other research (Situmorang et al., 2008) also supports that PBL strengthens pedagogical competencies by transforming the teacher's role into that of a guide and reflective practitioner.

These empirical insights confirm that PBL can serve as an effective framework for integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning—dimensions essential for Islamic moral development. When learners actively engage in problem-solving related to ethical dilemmas, environmental stewardship, or community service, they experience religion as a living, dynamic guide rather than abstract doctrine.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, often referred to as Penelitian Tindakan Kelas in Indonesian educational research. The CAR model was selected because it enables teachers to systematically investigate and improve their own teaching practices through cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). This iterative process aligns with the study's purpose: to identify and address instructional

challenges that limit student engagement and achievement in Islamic Education and Character lessons.

The CAR approach allows for direct intervention in the classroom, ensuring that changes in instructional methods can be observed, measured, and refined in real time. The use of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model served as the central intervention. The effectiveness of this model was evaluated over two complete cycles, following an initial pre-cycle (baseline) phase to assess existing learning conditions.Each action cycle consisted of four core stages:

1. Planning – identifying learning objectives, designing lesson plans using PBL principles, preparing instruments (observation sheets, student worksheets, and evaluation tests), and organizing groups.
2. Acting – implementing PBL lessons, where students were presented with authentic problems related to Asmaul Husna and guided through collaborative inquiry.
3. Observing – collecting data through systematic observation of teacher and student activities, including engagement, collaboration, and participation.
4. Reflecting – analyzing outcomes, identifying successes and limitations, and planning adjustments for the next cycle.

This cyclical process ensured that both quantitative improvements (in test scores) and qualitative enhancements (in motivation, interaction, and moral reflection) could be captured holistically.

The study was conducted at SDN 005 Cemaga Selatan, a public elementary school in the Natuna Regency of the Riau Islands Province, Indonesia. The research focused on fourth-grade students during the 2022/2023 academic year. The class consisted of 10 students (five boys and five girls), representing diverse backgrounds in academic achievement and religious understanding.

The teacher who served as both the classroom instructor and the researcher facilitated the intervention, supported by one assistant observer. The topic selected for implementation was "Mari Belajar Asmaul Husna" ("Let's Learn the Beautiful Names of Allah"), a core component of the Islamic Education and Character curriculum. This topic was chosen because it integrates cognitive understanding of divine attributes with affective and moral learning outcomes, making it suitable for PBL-oriented activities.

Data were collected using multiple methods to ensure triangulation and validity. The following instruments were employed:

1. Observation Sheets

   These were used to record teacher and student activities during each lesson. Observations focused on indicators such as participation, collaboration, questioning, problem analysis, and reflective dialogue. Teacher performance was evaluated on instructional clarity, facilitation of group work, and responsiveness to student needs.
2. Learning Outcome Tests

   Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to measure students' cognitive achievement regarding the Asmaul Husna content. Each test contained structured and open-ended questions assessing understanding, application, and reflection.

3. Field Notes

   The teacher-researcher maintained detailed notes documenting classroom dynamics, student behaviors, and insights gained during implementation. These qualitative data provided contextual understanding of student engagement and character development.

4. Documentation

   Photographs, lesson plans, and student work samples were collected to provide supporting evidence of classroom processes and outcomes.

This combination of instruments allowed the researcher to analyze the data comprehensively—both numerically and interpretively.Data analysis followed two complementary approaches: quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data derived from pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed to calculate mean scores, mastery percentages, and improvements across cycles. Learning mastery was determined by comparing the number of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) of 70. The improvement in learning outcomes was expressed in percentage gains from pre-cycle to cycle I and cycle II.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data from observation sheets and field notes were analyzed through thematic coding, identifying patterns related to student engagement, collaboration, problem-solving behavior, and moral reflection. Teacher activity scores were also analyzed using rating scales, providing a descriptive understanding of pedagogical improvement.

Data from both analyses were then triangulated to strengthen the validity of findings. This mixed analytical approach enabled a more nuanced interpretation of how PBL influenced not only academic performance but also attitudes, communication, and character development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Classroom Action Research (CAR) was conducted over one pre-cycle and two implementation cycles, each consisting of the stages of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The research aimed to determine whether the application of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model could improve students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education and Character—specifically on the topic *Asmaul Husna*.

The pre-cycle served to establish the baseline conditions of the classroom, revealing that students were generally passive, unmotivated, and dependent on the teacher. In contrast, the first and second cycles represented systematic efforts to introduce and refine PBL-based learning strategies that actively involved students in problem-solving, reflection, and collaboration.

Initial observation and assessment before implementing PBL indicated low engagement and limited academic performance. The teacher primarily used

lecture and question–answer methods, which centered learning around the teacher rather than students. As a result, students rarely asked questions, worked independently, or collaborated meaningfully with peers.

The average score on the pre-test was 69.0, and only 60% of the students achieved the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM). Additionally, classroom observation revealed the following issues:

- Students appeared easily distracted and often conversed with peers during explanations.
- Motivation and curiosity toward religious topics were low.
- Group work and peer discussion were rarely conducted.
- Students demonstrated limited ability to relate religious concepts (e.g., *Asmaul Husna*) to real-life moral situations.

These conditions highlighted the urgent need for a learning model that could enhance active participation, contextual understanding, and moral reflection—objectives inherently supported by the PBL model.

In the first cycle, the teacher designed learning activities based on PBL principles. Students were divided into small groups of 4–5 members. Each group was presented with a real-world problem scenario related to *Asmaul Husna*. For instance, students were asked to discuss:

"How can we reflect Allah's attribute *Ar-Rahman* (the Most Merciful) in our daily interactions with friends at school?"

Lesson plans included the five core stages of PBL: (1) problem orientation, (2) organizing learning, (3) guiding inquiry, (4) developing and presenting solutions, and (5) analyzing and reflecting. Learning resources included student worksheets, Qur'anic excerpts, and short stories illustrating moral dilemmas.

During implementation, students collaborated within their groups to discuss possible answers to the problem scenario. They identified what they already knew and what they needed to learn. The teacher facilitated discussions by posing guiding questions and ensuring that every student contributed to group dialogue.

At first, students appeared hesitant to express opinions, as they were unfamiliar with inquiry-based learning. However, as discussions progressed, they became more confident in presenting ideas and relating them to Qur'anic values.

Observation sheets indicated noticeable improvement in classroom dynamics compared to the pre-cycle. Approximately 80% of students actively participated in group discussions. Student interactions were more respectful, cooperative, and focused. Teacher activity scores also improved as the instructor shifted from an authoritarian role to a facilitator role—encouraging exploration and dialogue.

Quantitative results also showed a positive trend. The average post-test score in Cycle I increased to 73.0, with 80% of students achieving mastery. Students demonstrated better understanding of *Asmaul Husna* concepts and their practical application in daily behavior.

Reflection at the end of Cycle I identified several areas for improvement:

- Some students remained passive in group discussions and relied on dominant peers.

- Time management was still a challenge; groups sometimes exceeded the allotted discussion time.
- Students needed more structured guidance to connect problem-solving results with moral reflection.

These insights informed adjustments for Cycle II, particularly in designing clearer instructions and scaffolding reflective activities.

Based on reflections from Cycle I, the second cycle emphasized deeper reflection and balanced group participation. The teacher redesigned problem scenarios to include more complex moral dilemmas requiring both reasoning and empathy. An example prompt was:

"If you see a friend being treated unfairly, which of Allah's names should guide your response, and how should you act accordingly?"

Lesson plans incorporated structured reflection worksheets that guided students to connect their problem solutions with corresponding Qur'anic principles. The teacher also developed more explicit rubrics for assessing collaboration, creativity, and moral reasoning.

Cycle II implementation showed substantial improvement in student confidence and engagement. Students discussed more freely, used supporting evidence from Qur'an verses, and linked abstract values to concrete behavior. Many students shared personal experiences demonstrating mercy (*rahmah*) and justice (*adl*).

The teacher continued to act as facilitator, asking probing questions and encouraging peer feedback. For instance, when a student proposed a solution, the teacher would ask, "Which of Allah's attributes does this reflect?" or "How can we apply this value outside the classroom?" Such questioning promoted critical and moral reflection simultaneously.

Observation results from Cycle II indicated significant progress in both student and teacher performance:

Table 1. Table of Cycle

Indicator	Pre-Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
Average Score	69.0	73.0	87.0
Students Meeting KKM	60%	80%	100%
Student Engagement	Low	Moderate	High
Teacher Facilitation Score	68.75%	73.96%	84.38%

The data clearly show a consistent upward trajectory. By Cycle II, **100%** of students achieved learning mastery, and classroom interaction reached a high level of collaboration.

Qualitative observations confirmed that students developed greater self-confidence, empathy, and understanding of how *Asmaul Husna* informs ethical behavior. Students also demonstrated more respectful communication, a deeper sense of responsibility, and greater initiative in discussions.

Reflections at the end of Cycle II revealed that the PBL approach had succeeded in fostering not only cognitive improvement but also affective and behavioral growth. Students could articulate the meaning of divine attributes and

exemplify them in hypothetical and real-life contexts. Teachers reported feeling more effective and satisfied with classroom dynamics, noting that students were more disciplined and emotionally engaged.

The overall improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II demonstrates the iterative power of CAR: adjustments made based on reflection led to more effective facilitation and richer learning experiences.

The results demonstrate that the application of the PBL model effectively improved students' learning outcomes and engagement in Islamic Education and Character lessons. These findings are consistent with theoretical and empirical literature affirming the benefits of PBL in promoting critical thinking, collaboration, and contextual understanding (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Suprijono, 2013; Daryanto & Karim, 2020).

From a cognitive perspective, PBL enabled students to construct knowledge actively rather than memorizing information. According to constructivist theory, meaningful learning occurs when learners integrate new information into existing cognitive frameworks. Through discussion, investigation, and reflection, students deepened their understanding of *Asmaul Husna* beyond rote memorization. They learned to associate divine attributes with concrete moral actions, thereby internalizing abstract concepts.

This transformation illustrates what Bruner (1966) termed "learning by discovery," in which students develop intellectual independence and transfer knowledge to new contexts. The improvement in test scores from 69.0 to 87.0 indicates that PBL enhanced both comprehension and application.

Equally important is the affective dimension of learning. Islamic Education aims not only to build intellectual competence but also to cultivate *akhlaq al-karimah*—noble character. PBL's collaborative and reflective structure provided a natural environment for developing empathy, respect, and responsibility. Group discussions allowed students to practice moral reasoning, negotiation, and cooperation—skills consistent with Islamic ethical principles such as *ta'awun* (mutual help) and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood).

When students discussed how to embody mercy or justice in daily life, they engaged in *muhasabah* (self-reflection), transforming knowledge into lived values. This outcome supports Dewey's (1938) notion that moral growth arises from reflective experience, as well as Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on the social dimension of moral development.

The shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered paradigm was central to the study's success. Initially, the teacher acted as the primary source of information, limiting student autonomy. Through PBL, the teacher became a facilitator—posing guiding questions, providing feedback, and encouraging exploration. This transition aligns with the 21st-century educator's role as a designer of learning environments rather than a transmitter of content.

The observed increase in the teacher's activity score (from 68.75% to 84.38%) demonstrates improved instructional practices characterized by scaffolding, questioning, and differentiated support. These findings echo the argument of Barrows and Tamblyn (1980) that effective facilitation is essential for sustaining inquiry and reflection in PBL.

The collaborative nature of PBL significantly enhanced student communication and social interaction. As Vygotsky (1978) posited, learning is a socially mediated process that occurs through interaction within the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). In this study, peer dialogue served as a medium for co-constructing knowledge and refining understanding.

Students who initially struggled benefited from discussions with more capable peers, reflecting the scaffolding process central to Vygotskian theory. Over time, these interactions nurtured a supportive learning community where students learned to value cooperation over competition.

The success of PBL in this context also underscores its compatibility with Islamic pedagogical philosophy. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) often used dialogic and problem-based approaches when teaching his companions—encouraging them to think critically, ask questions, and derive lessons from real situations. This aligns with the Qur'anic invitation to reflect (*tafakkur*) and reason (*ta'aqqul*).

Therefore, PBL in Islamic Education is not merely a pedagogical innovation but also a revival of classical Islamic teaching methods that emphasize understanding through reflection and application. By integrating PBL with Qur'anic values, the learning process becomes both intellectually stimulating and spiritually transformative.

The findings of this study corroborate earlier research by Linillah (2014) and Suryaana (2014), who reported that PBL enhances learning outcomes and character formation in Islamic contexts. Both studies observed that students taught using PBL demonstrated better comprehension, teamwork, and moral awareness than those taught using conventional methods. Similarly, Situmorang et al. (2008) highlighted the role of PBL in strengthening teacher professionalism through reflective practice.

The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that even in small-class settings like SDN 005 Cemaga Selatan, PBL can produce significant cognitive and moral gains. This suggests that the effectiveness of PBL is not limited by class size or resources but depends primarily on the quality of facilitation and alignment with curriculum goals.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model significantly improved students' learning outcomes and engagement in Islamic Education and Character at SDN 005 Cemaga Selatan. The findings demonstrated a continuous increase in achievement from the pre-cycle to Cycle II, with average scores rising from 69.0 to 87.0 and mastery levels from 60% to 100%. Beyond cognitive gains, PBL fostered active participation, collaboration, and critical thinking while helping students internalize the moral and spiritual values embedded in Asmaul Husna. The interactive and reflective nature of PBL transformed the learning atmosphere from passive to participatory, making Islamic teachings more meaningful and relevant to students' daily lives. Moreover, the study highlights the broader pedagogical and philosophical

compatibility between PBL and Islamic Education. By positioning the teacher as a facilitator and students as active problem-solvers, PBL supports the holistic goals of Islamic education—to develop insan kamil (a complete human being) who is intellectually capable and morally grounded. This approach bridges modern educational innovation with classical Islamic pedagogical wisdom, integrating tafakkur (critical reflection), musyawarah (collaborative consultation), and akhlaq al-karimah (noble character). Therefore, PBL stands as an effective and spiritually grounded strategy for enhancing both academic achievement and moral formation in Islamic learning contexts.

Implications

The findings of this study carry several important implications for Islamic education, particularly in relation to teaching and learning practices in Asmaul Husna. The consistent improvement in both cognitive and affective outcomes demonstrates that the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model effectively bridges the gap between intellectual understanding and moral formation. This suggests that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) can move beyond traditional memorization toward a more holistic model that integrates faith, knowledge, and action (iman, ilmu, amal). By engaging students in authentic problem-solving activities, teachers can foster a deeper connection between the conceptual understanding of Allah's attributes and their practical application in daily life.

Moreover, the integration of PBL into Islamic learning creates a dynamic classroom environment where students not only learn about divine values such as compassion, justice, and honesty but also practice them through collaboration, empathy, and reflection. This indicates that Islamic education should not only aim to transmit doctrinal knowledge but also to cultivate character and spiritual awareness. The findings affirm that inquiry-based and reflective learning strategies align well with the holistic philosophy of Islamic education, supporting the formation of learners who are intellectually competent, spiritually grounded, and socially responsible.

Recommendations

In light of these implications, several recommendations can be drawn to enhance the practice and development of Islamic Religious Education. Teachers should be encouraged to implement the PBL model more widely, especially when teaching abstract religious concepts that require deeper understanding and reflection. Through contextual problem scenarios, teachers can help students relate lessons from Asmaul Husna to their personal and social lives, thus fostering not only intellectual growth but also moral consciousness. Continuous professional development programs should be provided to equip teachers with the skills needed to design and facilitate inquiry-based lessons effectively.

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