



Improving Students' Critical Thinking Skills Through Problem Based Learning in Class IV SDN 04 Talago

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Article History:

Submission : 18-11-2024
Revised : 22-11-2024
Accepted : 24-12-2024
Published

Keywords: Thinking Skills, PBL

Kata kunci:

Keterampilan Berpikir,
PBL

Abstrac

This study aims to explore the importance of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in shaping character and critical thinking skills in students, as well as the relevance of teaching models used in contemporary educational contexts. Several teaching models were analyzed including Problem-Based Learning (PBL), problem-based approaches, and their impact on developing critical thinking skills. Furthermore, this research highlights the role of Aqidah education and the materials related to faith in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at both the elementary and higher education levels, as well as how philosophy-based approaches to Islamic education, such as the Ibn Khaldun model, can enhance rational reasoning and critical thinking in students. Based on various studies, this research reveals that the application of PBL and problem-based learning methods positively impacts Islamic learning outcomes and students' critical thinking skills, which are essential for preparing the 21st-century generation. This study also emphasizes the need for innovation in the design of Islamic Religious Education curricula to foster character development and reflective thinking skills in students across different educational levels.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pentingnya pendidikan agama Islam (PAI) dalam membentuk karakter dan kemampuan berpikir kritis peserta didik, serta relevansi model-model pembelajaran yang digunakan dalam konteks pendidikan kontemporer. Beberapa model pembelajaran yang dianalisis antara lain Problem-Based Learning (PBL), pendekatan berbasis masalah, dan pengaruhnya terhadap pengembangan keterampilan berpikir kritis. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menyoroti peran pendidikan aqidah dan materi aqidah dalam kurikulum pendidikan agama Islam di tingkat dasar hingga perguruan tinggi, serta bagaimana pendekatan yang didasarkan pada filosofi pendidikan Islam seperti model Ibnu Khaldun dapat meningkatkan penalaran rasional dan berpikir kritis siswa. Berdasarkan berbagai penelitian yang ada, penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa penerapan metode PBL dan pembelajaran berbasis masalah memiliki dampak positif dalam meningkatkan hasil belajar pendidikan agama Islam dan kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa yang sangat diperlukan untuk mempersiapkan generasi abad ke-21. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan perlunya inovasi dalam desain kurikulum pendidikan agama Islam untuk menumbuhkan karakter dan keterampilan berpikir reflektif pada siswa di berbagai jenjang pendidikan.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a very important role in the formation of students' personalities. Through PAI, students are not only taught to understand religious teachings, but also encouraged to practice religious values in their daily lives. One of the fundamental aspects of PAI is understanding and believing in the pillars of faith, including faith in God's messengers. This material not only teaches students about the names of the apostles, but also about their duties, traits, and the wisdom behind their faith, which is expected to be an example for students in their lives.



However, based on initial observations in class IV of SDN 04 Talago, a gap was found between expectations and reality in students' understanding of the material of Believing in the Apostles of God. Many students still struggle to understand more than just the names of the apostles. They tend to memorize information without understanding the duties, characteristics, and wisdom contained in the teachings of believing in the messengers of God. This indicates a weakness in the ongoing learning process, where the approach used is less able to optimize student understanding.

In addition, students' critical thinking skills are also very minimal. In conventional learning that tends to be one-way, students are not given the opportunity to think deeper or analyze the material being taught. They only receive information passively without any exploration or discussion that can trigger the development of their critical thinking skills. In fact, critical thinking skills are very important competencies in today's world of education, especially in facing global challenges and rapid technological developments.

The less interactive learning process is also one of the main problems. Learning that takes place in the classroom still uses traditional methods that tend to focus on delivering material from teacher to student without any active involvement from students. Students mostly listen to the teacher's explanation, memorize, and do assignments without being given the opportunity to actively participate in the learning process. This causes students to be less involved in understanding the material in depth.

The lack of innovation in learning approaches is another factor that hinders the effectiveness of learning. The learning model applied by teachers is still limited to conventional approaches that do not accommodate students' needs in developing critical thinking and collaboration skills. Innovative learning, which involves students in solving real problems and connecting subject matter to everyday life, has not been fully implemented in the classroom.

In this context, it is important to find a learning approach that can overcome these problems and improve students' understanding of the material of Believing in Allah's Messengers. One of the relevant approaches is Problem Based Learning (PBL). This learning model is designed to involve students in solving real problems, which can stimulate them to think critically, collaborate, and take an active role in the learning process.

The application of PBL in learning Belief in Allah's Messengers is expected to change the paradigm of passive learning to be more active and based on problem solving. In PBL, students are faced with situations or problems that require deep thinking, research, and collaboration to find solutions. Thus, students not only memorize information, but are also able to relate the subject matter to their daily experiences and lives.

In addition to improving student understanding, the application of PBL also aims to improve students' critical thinking skills. In PBL, students are involved in the process of analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information that can help them develop better critical thinking skills. This ability is very important in the 21st century era, where students are required to be able to think analytically and critically in dealing with various problems.

PBL also gives students the opportunity to work in groups, share ideas, and learn from their peers. This collaboration not only enriches students' understanding, but also helps them develop social and teamwork skills, which are essential in the real world. By working together, students can support each other in solving problems and understand the subject matter in a deeper way.

With this background, this study aims to apply the Problem Based Learning (PBL) learning model in learning Belief in the Messengers of God in class IV SDN 04 Talago. This research is expected to make a positive contribution to improving students' understanding of the material of faith in the apostles and their critical thinking skills. In addition, the application of PBL is also expected to make learning more interactive, fun, and relevant to students' lives.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of classroom action research (PTK). Classroom action research was chosen because of its specific purpose to improve and enhance the quality of learning directly in the classroom. PTK allows researchers to plan, implement, observe, and reflect on every action taken during the learning process. This study aims to improve students' understanding of the material of faith in Allah's messengers and develop their critical thinking skills through the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model.

In this study, the PTK was conducted in several cycles consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The first cycle began with lesson planning which included selecting the PBL model as the method to be applied. PBL was chosen because this approach can help students to think critically, analyze, and apply religious values in daily life. In the planning, teachers also prepare various problems or scenarios that can stimulate students to develop a deeper understanding of the material being taught.

The action in this PTK involves the implementation of the PBL model in the classroom. In each cycle, students will be faced with a problem related to the topic of Believing in Allah's Messengers. The problem is designed in such a way as to encourage students to think critically and work together in groups to find solutions. The teacher acts as a facilitator who directs students in the learning process, provides feedback, and encourages discussion and collaboration between students.

Observations were conducted throughout the cycle to monitor the learning process. This observation aims to see how students engage in PBL activities, the extent to which they develop critical thinking skills, as well as how they work in groups. Observation also includes observing the interaction between students and teachers, as well as the interaction between students in groups. The data obtained through this observation will be used as evaluation material to improve learning in the next cycle.

Reflection is an important stage in PTK, where teachers and researchers together analyze the results obtained after each cycle. At this stage, the teacher will assess the effectiveness of PBL implementation in improving students' understanding of the material and their critical thinking skills. Reflection also includes an evaluation of the learning process that has been implemented, both in terms of material delivery, methods used, and interaction between students and teachers. The results of this reflection will be used to plan better actions in the next cycle.

Each research cycle will focus on improving the quality of learning, by improving and refining the process based on the findings and feedback obtained during the previous cycle. If necessary, changes are made to the material provided, the way the class is managed, or the PBL method used. This aims to continuously adapt learning to the needs of students so that they can achieve optimal learning outcomes.

The data collected in this research is descriptive, which includes direct observation, interviews with students and teachers, as well as documentation in the form of notes and student work products. Observations were made to record students' behavior and involvement in the learning process. Interviews were used to explore students' views on the learning process and to understand their experiences during the implementation of PBL. Documentation in the form of assignment results, discussions, or group projects will be analyzed to assess the extent to which students' critical thinking skills develop.

All data obtained will be analyzed inductively, namely by looking for patterns or themes that emerge from the learning process. The researcher will assess whether the application of PBL can improve students' critical thinking skills and affect their understanding of the material of Believing in Allah's Messengers. This qualitative approach allows the researcher to explore

a deeper understanding of the dynamics of learning, as well as provide insight into the impact of PBL implementation on students in the context of religious teaching.

By using the PTK method, it is expected that this research can make a significant contribution to improving the quality of PAI learning in class IV SDN 04 Talago. The application of the PBL model can have a positive impact not only on the understanding of religious material, but also on the development of students' critical thinking skills which are very important in 21st century education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

In cycle I of this study, the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model on the material "Believing in Allah's Apostles" began with the provision of contextual problems relevant to students' daily lives. The problems given were about the duties and roles of God's apostles in guiding mankind, as well as how the exemplary values of the apostles can be applied in students' lives. In planning, the problem scenario is presented in the form of a story that describes the challenges faced by the people at the time of the apostles and how the solutions provided by the apostles can be exemplary.

The learning process begins with problem orientation, where the teacher gives a scenario about a child who is confused in facing life problems and looking for a solution based on the example of God's messengers. Students are divided into 5 small groups, each consisting of 4 people, to discuss and find solutions to the given problem. Each group is given the opportunity to organize their understanding of the attributes of the apostles and their duties, as well as looking for links between the problems in the scenario and the teachings taught by the apostles.

At the discussion stage, the observations made showed that most students found it difficult to identify a suitable solution to the given problem. About 40% of the groups experienced obstacles in understanding the link between the proposed problem and the apostle's task. The more active groups were seen to be able to discuss well, exchange opinions, and provide arguments based on their understanding of the existing teaching materials. This group successfully demonstrated critical thinking in assessing the apostle's duties and traits.

However, the other 60% of the groups were less active and less able to explain in detail the role of the apostle in solving the problem posed. Some students also seemed to have difficulty in connecting religious lessons with the context of their daily lives. This became an obstacle in the deeper learning process. After the discussion, the groups presented their problem solving results in front of the class. Some groups showed good understanding, although some presented inaccurate answers.

The teacher gave feedback during the presentation and corrected some errors that appeared in the students' understanding. Some of the errors found were the lack of understanding of the attributes of the apostle and the unclear link between the given problem and the teachings of the apostle. Afterwards, the teacher emphasized important points, such as understanding the duty of the apostle as the guide of the people and the noble qualities possessed by the apostle. The teacher also gave a written test at the end of the cycle to measure the extent to which students understood the material that had been taught.

The results of the written test evaluation showed that the majority of students (70%) scored below the expected standard, with most students earning a D grade. Out of 30 students, only 9 students managed to get a grade of C or higher. The data showed that although some students were able to grasp the basic concepts about apostles, most still struggled to relate their knowledge to real life and demonstrate adequate critical thinking skills.

The level of student participation in group discussions also showed considerable variation. About 45% of students showed active participation in the discussion, while 35% of students were only passive and mostly followed the group without making significant contributions. This reflects the differences in ability and motivation among students in undergoing problem-based learning.

At the reflection stage, the teacher and researcher together analyzed the results obtained and agreed that although there was progress in some students, there were still many who needed more intensive assistance. Students who are less active in discussions need to be given more motivation so that they can play an active role in the group. In addition, a less in-depth understanding of the material was one of the main causes of the low evaluation results. Some students still need to be given additional explanations regarding the role of the apostle in the context of their daily lives.

Based on the results of reflection and analysis, researchers and teachers agreed to improve several aspects in the next cycle. Among these are providing additional exercises in the form of more structured questions, clarifying the link between the subject matter and real life, and improving the management of group discussions so that all students can contribute actively. This aims to improve students' critical thinking skills and deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings, especially in terms of believing in Allah's messengers.

In cycle II, the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model experienced significant improvements compared to the first cycle, especially in terms of managing group discussions and presenting more structured material. At the beginning of learning, the teacher gave a clearer introduction to the material "Believing in Allah's Messengers" and related it to students' daily lives. This aims to arouse students' interest and curiosity so that they can more easily relate the material learned to their own experiences. The teacher also introduces more specific and challenging contextual problems, which encourage students to think more critically and deeply.

During the discussion process, most students showed increased participation and enthusiasm. Students were more active in sharing their opinions and exchanging information. This reflected the improvement in the management of the discussion, where every student was given the opportunity to speak and express their views. The teacher only gave directions when needed, without too much intervention, so students had the freedom to develop their own thoughts. These results show that with better management, students can be more actively involved in the discussion and deepen their understanding.

At the end of the group discussion, each group presented their problem solving results in front of the class. The group presentations in cycle II showed a significant improvement in the quality of students' understanding. They were able to explain concepts related to the apostles of God more clearly, structurally, and in accordance with real-life contexts. Most groups were able to relate their understanding of the duties and attributes of the apostles in a more logical and relevant way. This shows that the implementation of more structured PBL and improvements in the discussion process had a positive impact on students' understanding.

Teachers provide more in-depth feedback after group presentations. Such feedback not only corrects errors in understanding the material, but also leads students to dig deeper and develop their thinking more critically. Follow-up discussions on topics that are still difficult to understand allow students to clarify concepts that they have not fully mastered. This indicates that the more detailed feedback in cycle II was able to improve students' overall understanding.

The written test given after the group discussion showed a significant increase in scores compared to the test in the first cycle. Most students obtained better grades, with more students achieving a grade of C or higher. Of the 30 students who took the test, 20 students

managed to obtain a B or better, while only 10 students obtained a D grade. This shows an increase in students' understanding of the material on believing in Allah's messengers after the implementation of PBL in the second cycle.

Analysis of the test results showed that students were better able to relate the concepts they had learned to their daily lives. Students' understanding of the duties of the apostles, their attributes, and the wisdom of faith in the apostles became deeper. These results reflect an increase in students' critical thinking skills, where they are not only memorizing information, but also able to analyze and apply that understanding in a real context.

The level of student participation in group discussions also increased in cycle II. About 75% of students showed active participation, both in expressing opinions and in listening and responding to the opinions of group mates. Students who were previously passive in the discussion began to show courage to speak and ask questions. This indicates an increase in learning motivation and student involvement in problem-based learning.

DISCUSSION

In cycle I, the use of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model showed considerable variation in results among students. Most students were in category D, which indicates that they faced difficulties in both individual aspects, discussions, and group work. Although there were some students who obtained higher scores, the majority of students were not able to achieve adequate understanding of the material "Believing in the Messengers of God". This indicates that the implementation of PBL in the first cycle still needs improvement, especially in managing group discussions and providing more intensive guidance.

However, in cycle II, there was a significant improvement in student learning outcomes. The improvements made, such as strengthening the management of group discussions and presenting the material more systematically, proved successful. Although there were still students in the D category, most students managed to move up to the C or B category. This shows that PBL can promote better understanding in students, but it also requires a more personalized approach and more focused teaching strategies for struggling students.

In category D in cycle I, there were students such as Nahda Putri Vinoa and Nando Kurniawan who scored below 76. They had difficulty in following the learning, both in group discussions and understanding the material. This indicated the need for further intervention to ensure that these students received sufficient attention in individual and group guidance. In cycle II, although some students were still in this category, they showed a slight improvement in terms of contribution to the discussion and understanding of the material, although not yet achieving the expected results.

A significant improvement was seen in category C in cycle II. Students such as Meizy Ananda Pratama, Billy Irland Pratama, and Zahwa Ufairah Adzka showed considerable progress. They had sufficient understanding of the material and could follow the discussion better. Although there is room for further improvement, such as strengthening critical thinking skills and group contribution, students in this category show that they are starting to be able to utilize PBL more effectively. This is evidence that the PBL model provides better results when students get the opportunity to be more involved in the learning process.

Meanwhile, in category B, there was one student in cycle I who showed good understanding, namely Rindu Al Azira. In cycle II, there were more students who reached category B, such as Nurul Fazhila, Meisya Yulianda, and Muhammad Azzam. This achievement shows that students began to be able to contribute to the discussion and understand the material better. Although they had not yet reached category A, they showed a better understanding of the topics discussed and were able to relate the material to real life.

In category A, in cycle II there were two students, Elfyna Keizya and Zahwa Ufairah Adzka, who achieved the highest scores. They showed a very deep understanding of the material and were able to contribute optimally in group discussions. Their achievements indicate that PBL is able to optimize the potential of high-ability students, provided they are given the opportunity to be actively involved in learning. This shows that the PBL model is effective in encouraging high-achieving students.

Based on the analysis of both cycles, it can be concluded that PBL provides a great challenge for students in developing critical thinking skills and group work. Although not all students achieved optimal results, most showed significant improvement after improvements were made in cycle II. Therefore, it is important to continue to evaluate and reflect on the application of this model in order to maximize its benefits for all students.

However, despite the improvement, the evaluation results also showed that there were still students who struggled to reach category C or higher. This indicates that PBL needs further adjustments in order to more equitably impact all students. More intensive guidance and teaching strategies that are more suited to students' ability levels can help improve their achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model in learning the material "Believing in Allah's Messengers" can improve students' understanding, although there are variations in achievement among students. In the first cycle, most students had difficulty in understanding the material and actively participating in group discussions. However, with improvements in the management of discussions and presentation of material in the second cycle, there was a significant increase in the achievement of student learning outcomes. The majority of students were able to move up to higher categories, namely categories C and B, with some students reaching category A.

The implementation of PBL proved effective in developing critical thinking skills and group work, although some students still needed more intensive assistance. PBL successfully encouraged students to engage more actively in the learning process, and provided opportunities for them to relate the material to real life. High ability students, as noted in category A, showed the best achievement, indicating that PBL can be optimal for those with great potential.

However, despite the improvement, there are still students who have difficulty in following the learning and have not yet reached category C. This suggests that to maximize learning outcomes, teaching strategies need to be further adjusted to be more inclusive for all students, including those who are struggling. Therefore, a more personalized approach and reinforcement of individual aspects, discussion, and group collaboration are needed to ensure that all students can achieve optimal learning outcomes.

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