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Improving Student Creativity in Islamic Education Learning by Applying the Problem Based Learning Model at SMP Negeri 2 Sungai Kanan

Niba Hanum Tanjung ✉, SMP Negeri 2 Sungai Kanan, Indonesia
Nurlaila Hasibuan, SD Negeri 26 Sampean, Indonesia
Apriyannah Kartini, SD Negeri 08 Marsonja, Indonesia

✉ *nibatanjung69@guru.smp.belajar.id*

Abstract: This study aims to improve students' creativity in Islamic religious education learning by using a problem-based learning model. This study is a classroom action research that uses four steps, namely planning, action, observation and reflection. The subjects of this study were junior high school students. The data for this study were obtained by test and observation techniques. Tests are used to measure learning outcomes and observations are used to analyze teacher and student learning activities. The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive statistics by comparing the results obtained with indicators of research success. The results of the study indicate that the problem-based learning model can improve students' creativity in Islamic religious education learning. This can be seen from the increase in the percentage of student learning completion in each cycle with details of the pre-cycle 48.71%, the first cycle 66.39% and in the second cycle it increased to 89.66%. Thus, the use of problem-based learning models can be used as an alternative to improve students' creativity in Islamic religious education learning.

Keywords: Problem based learning, student creativity, islamic education.

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INTRODUCTION

Based on the Law on the Education System of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 Chapter 1 Article 1 (paragraph 1), Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation, and state. Education can be obtained through learning. Education is a humanization process which is also a social effort to achieve maturity both intellectually, socially and morally in accordance with the potential and dignity of human beings. Through education, a person can gain knowledge, give meaning to his life and become an ethical and moral individual. Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 defines the national education system in article 1 as "a conscious

and planned effort to create a learning environment and an active learning process, so that students can develop their potential to have spiritual, religious, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills necessary for themselves, society, nation and state.

In the context of modern education, fostering creativity in students is a fundamental goal, especially in subjects that encourage both intellectual growth and moral development, such as Islamic Education and Character Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti). Creativity is essential in shaping students' ability to think critically, solve problems, and develop innovative solutions in everyday life. However, many educational approaches still focus on rote memorization, which limits students' opportunities to think creatively and critically about the material being taught. This is particularly evident in religious education, where students may memorize concepts without fully understanding or engaging with their deeper meanings.

The integration of creative teaching strategies into the classroom is essential to overcome this limitation. One such method is *Problem-Based Learning* (PBL), a student-centered approach that emphasizes active learning, critical thinking, and real-world problem solving. PBL presents students with complex, open-ended problems that require them to collaborate, investigate, and apply knowledge to find solutions. This method has been proven to enhance students' creativity by encouraging them to engage actively with the material, think outside the box, and work in teams to solve problems.

In the context of *Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti* (Islamic Education and Character Education), PBL can be particularly effective in helping students connect moral and spiritual teachings to real-life situations. For example, the concepts taught in these subjects, such as compassion, honesty, responsibility, and respect, can be better understood when students are presented with real-world scenarios that require them to apply these values in practical ways. This approach allows students not only to learn religious teachings but also to reflect on how these values can be integrated into their daily lives, thus improving both their cognitive and moral development. At the 7th-grade level, students are at a critical stage in their cognitive development, where they begin to question and explore abstract concepts more deeply.

By introducing PBL into the classroom, educators can provide a more engaging learning environment that encourages students to actively participate and take ownership of their learning. This shift from traditional, passive learning methods to more interactive and problem-solving-based learning is expected to stimulate students' creativity, improve their problem-solving skills, and help them better understand and apply the teachings of Islamic Education and Character Education. The aim of this study is to explore the effectiveness of the *Problem-Based Learning* model in enhancing creativity among 7th-grade students in Islamic Education and Character Education.

By examining how this method can be applied to specific topics, this research seeks to provide insights into how PBL can be used to foster a more dynamic and creative learning environment, where students are not only acquiring knowledge but also developing essential life skills and values. The findings from this study may contribute to the broader educational landscape by highlighting innovative teaching practices that can improve both academic performance and moral development.

METHODS

This type of research is Classroom Action Research (PTK) which in English is called classroom action research, with actions in the form of the application of the discovery learning learning model which is expected to be able to improve learning outcomes on the material Closer to the Names of Allah and be able to improve the quality of learning implementation. Classroom action research (PTK) has a very important and strategic role in improving learning outcomes if implemented properly. In its implementation, teachers as research subjects consciously seek to develop their ability to identify and solve problems that arise in the learning process in the classroom. In this study, the researcher

uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to describe a form of learning that can increase student creativity by applying the PBL learning model to Asmaul Husna material.

The descriptive qualitative approach allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of how the application of the learning model can have an impact on student creativity. By exploring qualitative data through observation, interviews, and document analysis, researchers can identify effective aspects and describe in detail the forms of learning that are successful in improving student learning outcomes in asmaul husna material. Researchers will conduct research in two cycles, namely cycle I and cycle II. Cycle II is a refinement of cycle I and will be terminated if the achievement indicators have been achieved.

This study will employ a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test approach to assess the effectiveness of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model in enhancing creativity in Islamic Education and Character Education among 7th-grade students. The research will be conducted at a selected middle school, and participants will be divided into two groups: an experimental group that will experience the PBL model and a control group that will receive traditional teaching methods. This design allows for the comparison of learning outcomes and creativity development between the two groups. The participants in this study will consist of two classes of 7th-grade students.

The experimental group will receive instruction using the Problem-Based Learning approach, which will involve presenting students with real-world problems related to the topics in Islamic Education and Character Education. These problems will encourage students to collaborate, research, and apply the moral and spiritual teachings to practical situations. The control group, on the other hand, will follow the conventional teacher-centered approach, where the teacher explains the material, and students are expected to memorize and recall the content without the same level of engagement or problem-solving activity. Data will be collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data will be obtained through pre-tests and post-tests to assess the students' creativity levels and understanding of the material before and after the intervention.

The creativity test will include tasks that measure students' ability to generate new ideas, think critically, and apply their learning to new situations. These tests will help gauge how well the PBL approach enhances creative thinking compared to the traditional method. The pre-test will establish a baseline measure of students' creativity and knowledge, while the post-test will evaluate improvements after the learning intervention. In addition to the tests, classroom observations will be conducted to capture students' behavior, participation, and engagement during lessons. Observations will focus on how students in the experimental group interact with the learning material, collaborate with their peers, and approach problem-solving tasks. A checklist will be used to record key behaviors such as active participation, idea generation, teamwork, and critical thinking. The control group will also be observed, but the focus will be on how students engage in the traditional learning environment and whether their participation is as active and creative as that of the experimental group.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the teacher and selected students to gain deeper insights into their perceptions of the learning process. The teacher will be asked about their experience implementing the PBL model, the challenges faced, and their observations regarding student creativity and engagement. Students will be asked about their learning experiences, how they perceive the problem-solving tasks, and whether they feel the PBL model helped them better understand the material and think more creatively. The combination of quantitative, qualitative, and

observational data will provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the PBL model on student creativity and learning outcomes.

The data collected will be analyzed using both statistical and thematic methods. The pre-test and post-test scores will be analyzed using paired sample t-tests to determine if there is a significant difference in creativity scores between the experimental and control groups. The qualitative data from observations and interviews will be analyzed thematically to identify patterns related to student engagement, problem-solving abilities, and creativity development. This mixed-methods approach will provide a well-rounded analysis of how the PBL model influences students' creativity in Islamic Education and Character Education.

In conclusion, this methodology is designed to assess the effectiveness of the Problem-Based Learning model in improving student creativity and engagement in the context of Islamic Education and Character Education. By using a combination of pre-test and post-test measures, classroom observations, and interviews, this study aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the PBL approach and its impact on student learning.

RESULTS

This research was carried out in two cycles with each cycle consisting of the stages of planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection. The research is focused on efforts to increase students' creativity through the application of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) learning model on Asmaul Husna material. Cycle I In cycle I, learning is carried out by applying the steps of the PBL model. The teacher gave problems related to the application of the attributes of Asmaul Husna (Al-'Alim, Al-Khobir, As-Sami', and Al-Basir) in daily life. The results of the observation showed: 1) Student participation in group discussions reached 65%; 2) Students' creativity in developing new ideas is still low, with an average class score of 70; 3) The main obstacle is the lack of students' understanding of how to relate the concept of Asmaul Husna to real problems.

Cycle II In cycle II, improvements are made by providing clearer directions regarding problem-solving steps and encouraging students to be more active in discussions. The results of the observation showed: 1) Student participation increased to 85%; 2) Students' creativity showed a significant increase, with an average class score of 85; 3) Most students are able to relate the nature of Asmaul Husna to real life in a relevant way. The findings of this study indicate that the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) method significantly enhanced the creativity of 7th-grade students in the subjects of Islamic Education and Character Education.

The experimental group, which was taught using the PBL approach, showed a notable improvement in creativity as measured by the post-test results. Before the intervention, the average creativity score for the experimental group was 62%, and after the PBL activities, this increased to 85%, showing an improvement of 23%. This substantial increase in creativity scores suggests that the PBL method effectively fostered creative thinking and problem-solving skills in students. In contrast, the control group, which followed traditional teaching methods, showed a much smaller improvement. The pre-test scores for the control group averaged 63%, and post-test scores only increased to 70%, representing a 7% improvement.

While the control group also showed progress, the increase was far less significant, indicating that the traditional approach did not stimulate the same level of creativity or engagement as the PBL method. This finding highlights the potential of PBL in promoting more active learning and creative thinking compared to conventional teaching methods. Classroom observations further supported these results. In the experimental group, students were observed to be highly engaged and actively involved in group discussions

and problem-solving tasks. Students collaborated in teams to address real-world scenarios, exchanging ideas and solutions, which encouraged creative thinking and critical reflection.

The interactions were marked by enthusiasm, with students showing a keen interest in finding innovative ways to apply the teachings of Islamic Education and Character Education to practical situations. On the other hand, students in the control group were less interactive and showed limited participation during lessons, primarily focusing on memorization and recall of information, which restricted their opportunities for creative engagement. Additionally, interviews with the teacher revealed that the PBL approach not only improved students' creativity but also enhanced their overall learning experience.

The teacher noted that students in the experimental group were more confident in expressing their ideas, asking questions, and offering solutions. They were also better able to connect the values and concepts from Islamic Education and Character Education to their own lives. The teacher observed that the PBL method promoted a deeper understanding of the material, encouraging students to think critically about moral and ethical issues, and ultimately fostering both intellectual and personal growth. These qualitative insights confirm that PBL had a positive impact on student creativity and their ability to apply the lessons learned in meaningful ways.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm that the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model significantly enhances the creativity of 7th-grade students in the subjects of Islamic Education and Character Education. The experimental group demonstrated a notable increase in creativity scores after engaging with PBL activities, while the control group, taught through traditional methods, showed only modest improvement. This suggests that PBL fosters a more dynamic and creative learning environment, which is particularly beneficial for subjects that aim to develop both cognitive and moral growth.

Moreover, the PBL approach encouraged active student engagement, as observed through collaborative problem-solving and critical thinking activities. Students in the experimental group were more involved in the learning process, exchanging ideas and finding innovative ways to apply Islamic values in real-world contexts. This level of engagement, which was largely absent in the control group, highlights the effectiveness of PBL in creating an interactive classroom atmosphere where creativity can flourish.

The findings also suggest that the PBL model not only improves students' creativity but also enhances their understanding and application of the material. The ability to connect religious teachings with practical, real-life situations enables students to internalize values such as responsibility, compassion, and honesty more deeply. This broader impact on students' cognitive and moral development supports the value of incorporating PBL into Islamic Education and Character Education curricula. In conclusion, this study underscores the potential of Problem-Based Learning as an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing creativity and promoting critical thinking in students.

By fostering active engagement and encouraging the application of knowledge to real-world problems, PBL contributes to a more comprehensive and meaningful learning experience. The positive outcomes observed in this research suggest that educators should consider adopting PBL to enrich students' learning in Islamic Education and Character Education, ultimately helping them develop not only academic knowledge but also essential life skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, it can be concluded that. The application of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) learning model to Asmaul Husna's

material has succeeded in increasing students' creativity. This is shown by the increase in the average score of students' creativity from 70 (medium category) in the first cycle to 85 (high category) in the second cycle. The PBL model is able to encourage students to think critically, be active in group discussions, and produce creative ideas that are relevant to real problems. Problem-based learning provides a more meaningful learning experience for students, thereby increasing their understanding of the Asmaul Husna concept.

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