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Implementation of Problem Based Learning Model to Improve Conceptual Understanding and Active Participation of Students in Zakat Learning in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the low learning outcomes of students in zakat material in grade V of SD Negeri Bedono 1 Sayung Demak, which shows the need for the implementation of a more innovative and contextual learning model. The purpose of the study is to analyze efforts to improve student learning outcomes through the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model to zakat materials in the classroom. This research uses a qualitative-quantitative approach in the form of Class Action Research (PTK) which is carried out in two cycles, each consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The research subjects were 30 students (18 males and 12 females). Data were collected through observation, interviews, and learning outcome tests, then analyzed in a comparative descriptive manner. The results showed a significant increase in student learning outcomes: the percentage of learning completeness increased from 70% in cycle I to 90% in cycle II, with average test scores rising from 70 to 85. In addition, students' activities and enthusiasm during learning have also increased. These findings prove that the PBL model is effective in increasing students' conceptual understanding and active participation in zakat materials. This research makes a practical contribution to Islamic religious education in primary schools by offering relevant, contextual, and problem-solving oriented learning strategies.

Keywords: Problem Based Learning, learning outcomes, zakat, classroom action research, Islamic religious education.

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A. Introduction

Islamic religious education in elementary schools has a strategic role in instilling moral, spiritual, and social values from an early age, including understanding the teachings of zakat as one of the pillars of Islam that contains the dimension of worship as well as social justice (Azra, 2019; Ma'arif, 2020). However, in learning practice in many elementary schools, including at SD Negeri Bedono 1 Sayung Demak, zakat materials are often taught textually and by memorization, so they are less able to connect concepts with the reality of students' lives (Rahman & Hadi, 2021). Conventional approaches such as lectures and questions and answers tend to make students passive, which has an impact on low learning outcomes and lack of conceptual understanding (Saputra, 2020). In fact, according to Prasetyo & Wijayanto (2021), learning religious values will be more meaningful if it is associated with the social context and developed through an approach that triggers active student involvement. On the other hand, 21st-century education trends emphasize the importance of developing critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills competencies that can be facilitated through innovative learning models such as Problem Based Learning (PBL) (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Although PBL has been widely tested for its effectiveness in the fields of science and mathematics (Hidayat et al., 2022; Sari & Suryani, 2023), its application in Islamic religious learning, especially in zakat materials in the lower classes, is still very limited (Nurhayati & Fitriani, 2022). This gap shows the need for empirical exploration of how PBL can be designed and implemented contextually in the teaching of zakat values to improve student learning outcomes.

This study aims to analyze efforts to improve the learning outcomes of grade V students of SD Negeri Bedono 1 Sayung Demak on zakat materials through the application of the Problem Based Learning model in 2024. Specifically, this study answers the following questions: (1) How can the application of the PBL model be designed in zakat learning that is relevant to the context of students' lives? and (2) To what extent is the application of the model able to improve students' cognitive learning outcomes and active participation? This research is based on the hypothesis that contextual problem-based learning will improve students' conceptual understanding and learning motivation in learning zakat (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the development of pedagogical practices in Islamic religious education in elementary schools. Theoretically, the research findings enrich the literature on the adaptation of the PBL model in the domain of learning religious values and norms a field that has been dominated by a normative-memorization approach (Zainuddin et al., 2021). Practically, this study provides a learning model that can be replicated by teachers to teach zakat materials in a more meaningful, relevant, and participatory way. At the policy level, research results can be considered in the preparation of Islamic religious learning guidelines that are oriented to 21st century skills, in line with the spirit of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes differentiated and contextual learning (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Thus, this research not only answers local needs, but also provides broader implications for the transformation of religious learning in elementary schools.

B. Theoretical Studies

Problem Based Learning (PBL) is an innovative learning model that puts students in real problem-solving situations as the starting point of the learning process. According to Hmelo-Silver (2004), PBL is defined as an instructional approach in which students learn through investigation into complex, collaborative, and open-ended authentic issues. In the context of basic education, Arends (2019) explains that PBL encourages students to activate initial knowledge, formulate questions, seek information, and actively construct new understandings. The main characteristics of PBL include: (1) contextual problem-centered learning, (2) the role of the teacher as a facilitator, (3) small group collaboration, and (4) critical reflection. In the learning of Islamic religion, especially zakat material that contains a socio-economic dimension, PBL allows students not only to understand the provisions of fiqh, but also to reflect on its relevance in daily life, such as distribution justice and social empathy.

The PBL model is rooted in Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism, which emphasizes that knowledge is built through social interaction and scaffolding within the Proximal Development Zone (ZPD).

In addition, the theory of meaningful learning from Ausubel (1968) is also relevant, because PBL encourages students to associate new information with the cognitive structure they already have. The basic assumption of this approach is that learning becomes more meaningful and sustainable when students are actively involved in the process of knowledge construction through real experience. The implication is that in the learning of zakat which is often taught normatively and abstractly PBL can change the paradigm from "memorizing provisions" to "understanding and internalizing values". This is in line with the principles of transformational pedagogy in religious education, which aims to form character and social awareness (Nurhayati & Suryadi, 2021).

A number of previous studies have tested the effectiveness of PBL in various learning contexts. Hidayat et al. (2022) found that the application of PBL in science subjects in grade V of elementary school increased students' learning outcomes and critical thinking skills by 28%. In the field of religious education, Prasetyo & Wijayanto (2021) reported that PBL was able to increase junior high school students' understanding of the concept of alms through social case simulations. However, these studies are generally conducted at the intermediate level or on non fiqh materials. Meanwhile, a study by Sari & Suryani (2023) in elementary schools still focuses on general subjects, not religious education. A significant difference lies in the context of zakat material which is normative and requires an approach that integrates legal aspects, values, and social reality a complexity that has not been explored much in the literature on PBL at the elementary level.

Based on this theoretical and empirical synthesis, it is clear that PBL has great potential to improve learning outcomes in Islamic religious education, especially in zakat materials. However, there is a significant research gap: the lack of studies that test the empirical application of PBL in the learning of zakat fiqh in elementary school grades, where students are at the concrete operational stage according to Piaget and require a strong contextual approach. This research is here to fill this gap by adapting the PBL model to the local context and age of grade V students, while testing its impact on cognitive learning outcomes and affective engagement. Thus, this research not only enriches the literature on Islamic religious pedagogy, but also provides a practical model that can be replicated in other elementary schools.

C. Research Methods

This study uses the Classroom Action Research (PTK) approach with the design of the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of a repeating cycle consisting of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014). This design was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objectives that are participatory, collaborative, and aim to improve learning practices directly in the classroom (Mills, 2017). PTK allows researchers who are also classroom teachers to identify learning problems contextually, design evidence based interventions (in this case, the application of the Problem Based Learning model), and evaluate their impact iteratively (Henderson, 2021). The selection of PTK is also based on the characteristics of zakat material which requires a contextual approach and real problem solving, so it requires space for pedagogical experiments that are responsive to classroom dynamics (Widodo & Purnomo, 2020). The research was carried out in two cycles, each lasting two meetings (a total of four meetings), with the final reflection of each cycle being used to refine the planning of the next cycle. The subjects of the study were all grade V students of SD Negeri Bedono 1 Sayung Demak for the 2024 school year, totaling 30 students (18 boys and 12 girls), who were taken through the total sampling technique because the class population was homogeneous and limited (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach ensures that the research findings represent the real conditions of the classroom without selection bias.

Data collection was carried out through three main instruments: (1) learning outcome tests in the form of objective questions and essays validated by material experts and learning experts; (2) structured observation sheets to assess student activities and the implementation of the PBL model; and (3) semi structured interview guidelines to explore students' perceptions of the learning process. The learning outcome test is designed based on indicators of achievement of basic competencies related to zakat, with a

minimum completeness criterion (KKM) of 70. The validity of the test instrument was tested through content validity by two lecturers of Islamic religious education and one senior teacher (Fraenkel et al., 2019), while the reliability was calculated using the Alpha Cronbach formula ($\alpha = 0.82$), indicating a high level of reliability (George & Mallery, 2019). Quantitative data from the test were analyzed in a comparative descriptive manner to compare the average score and percentage of completion between cycles, while qualitative data from observations and interviews were analyzed thematically through the stages of coding, categorization, and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Complex statistical software is not used because the focus of analysis is descriptive and reflective, according to the PTK principle (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). Research ethical considerations are strictly applied: research permission is obtained from the principal, informed consent is collected before implementation, and the confidentiality of students' identities and freedom of participation are fully guaranteed (BERA, 2018). The entire procedure is designed so that the research can be replicated by teachers or other researchers in similar contexts.

D. Results and Discussion

Result

The value of student learning outcomes in the zakat material of class V SDN Bedono 1 obtained before using the problem based learning learning model still has student scores that get a score below the KKTP, thus it is necessary to make improvements in the 1st cycle learning activities. In the planning stage, the researcher prepares several things to support the learning process using the PBL model, namely: Preparation of Teaching Schedules and Modules, Researchers prepare activity schedules in accordance with the schedule of PAI (Islamic Religious Education) class V subjects and create teaching modules that contain learning steps with PBL. Preparation of Media and Learning Tools, Preparing learning media and resources that support PBL, as well as test tools in the form of multiple choice as post test I. Observation of Teachers and Students, Preparing observation sheets to observe the activities of teachers and students during learning. Classroom Design: Organize the classroom to support group activities in PBL learning.

The implementation of learning in Cycle 1 is carried out through three main stages: Introduction, Core Activities, and Closing. In the preliminary stage, the teacher opens the lesson with greetings, prayers, and questions and answers related to zakat materials. Teachers also divide students into groups, provide motivation, and convey learning objectives. At the core activity stage, the teacher delivered zakat material and provided pictures for students to analyze. Students are invited to give their opinions about the picture and discuss zakat material in groups. The teacher facilitates the discussion by giving explanations and answering students' questions. Each group then presented the results of their discussion in front of the class. In the closing stage, the teacher and the students together conclude the material that has been studied, and the teacher provides information on the material to be studied in the next meeting.

Observation of teacher activities showed that in the first and second meetings, teachers were quite good at managing learning with the PBL model. Teachers are able to follow the steps in the teaching module, such as inviting students to read and conclude the material. However, there are several shortcomings, such as: lack of motivation given to students, teachers do not provide opportunities for students to ask questions, interaction between teachers and students as well as between students and other students is not optimal, teachers have not fully succeeded in guiding students in group discussions. However, despite these shortcomings, overall, the performance of teachers in Cycle 1 was in the good category, with a clear improvement at the second meeting.

Observations of students' activities show that they are still unfamiliar with the PBL model. Some of the things found in these observations include: Many students are not used to working in groups and solving problems together, students do not fully appreciate the opinions of their group friends, which leads to incoherence in discussions, interaction between students and teachers as well as between students also seems to be lacking, with some students being shy to ask questions or express opinions. Nonetheless, most students show good enthusiasm in following the learning, identifying problems, and arguing or answering questions. By the end of Cycle 1, although there were still some obstacles, there was a noticeable

improvement in student interaction and discussion skills. Student learning activities reached the category quite well with some room for improvement.

Conclusion in cycle 1, the use of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model in zakat materials in grade V of SDN Bedono 1 showed positive results despite several challenges, namely: In teacher performance, the improvement in the quality of learning can be seen in the performance of teachers who are getting better in managing the learning process, although there are still aspects that need to be improved, such as motivation and interaction with students. In student activities, students show an increase in participation and enthusiasm despite still having difficulty in working effectively in groups. Some students also seem reluctant to ask questions or express their opinions.

Based on the results of the student learning assessment of zakat material from 20 students, there were 18 students who completed it, namely those who had scores more than the KKTP standard of 70. Students who scored below the standard of Learning Goal Achievement Criteria were two students with scores of 50 and 60 who were below the KKTP. The results of the assessment of student learning outcomes of zakat material in cycle II showed a very good increase. This increase can be seen in the figure above, where there are 18 students whose learning outcomes are in the complete category with an average of 81.5 completeness of 90%, students achieve the KKTP 70 results in the first cycle only 14 students with a completion percentage of 70%. From the results of cycle I to cycle II there was an increase of 20%. With this improvement, the learning process of applying the PBL (Problem Based Learning) model has succeeded in making significant changes during the time students learn PAI zakat material and cooperation in solving problems in groups has been increasingly seen with the attitude of students shown during the learning process, they are involved in learning such as actively asking questions, respecting the opinions of friends and participating in group work.

In the first cycle, it can be seen that student learning activities for PAI lessons of zakat material are in accordance with the Problem Based Learning learning steps and are classified as quite good. However, in cycle II, students' learning activities for PAI lessons on zakat material have increased, which is in accordance with the Problem Based Learning learning steps and is classified as very good. And the obvious improvement is in student learning outcomes. This proves that learning by applying the Problem Based Learning model can improve student learning outcomes in PAI zakat material lessons. The results of the students' observation sheets can be presented in the following picture:

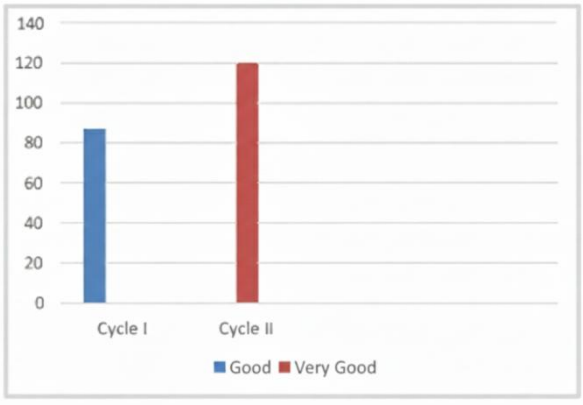

Figure 1. Diagram of Student Observation Sheet Results in Cycle I and Cycle II

The diagram above shows an increase in student activities after the implementation of the Problem Based Learning model. If viewed from the diagram, in the first cycle student activities are classified as quite good. Meanwhile, the results of the second cycle of teacher activities increased to the very good category. Based on the results of the average score of learning outcome assessment in the cycle, which is 73.50, as many as 12 students achieved completeness whose score obtained ≥ 70, if percentaged, only 70% of students reached KKTP 70. Meanwhile, students with a score of < 70 amounted to 6 students or around 30%. From the information above, the figure has not reached the success criteria desired by the researcher,

which is 80% with a KKTP of 70. And the results of student activities in this cycle are only in the good category.

The researchers' findings in the second cycle showed that there was a change in student learning activities that were classified as very good. Student learning outcomes can also be seen with the average student score increasing from 73.50 to 81.50. From this data, it can be seen that students who obtained a score of ≥ 70 out of 12 students around 70% to 18 students or 90% of students reached KKTP 70. The acquisition of student learning outcomes also increased from the good category to excellent. This condition shows that there has been a significant increase from the actions of cycle I to cycle II. Therefore, it is concluded that the actions in cycle II have reached the desired success criteria, which is 80% with KKTP 70. This can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics from Reading Results of Cycle I and Cycle II

Information	Cycle I	Cycle II
Average	71,50	81,50
Highest Score	90	100
Lowest Score	40	50

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the increase in student learning outcomes is followed by an increase in student learning activities with the Problem Based Learning model. Therefore, the researcher decided to stop the research until cycle II, because in this cycle the results of the assessment of student learning outcomes have met the success indicators, and the learning activities of teachers and students are in accordance with the steps of the Problem Based Learning model. The increase in teacher activity in each cycle can be seen more clearly in the diagram below, so the whole of cycle I and cycle II in figure 2 is visualized into the following diagram:

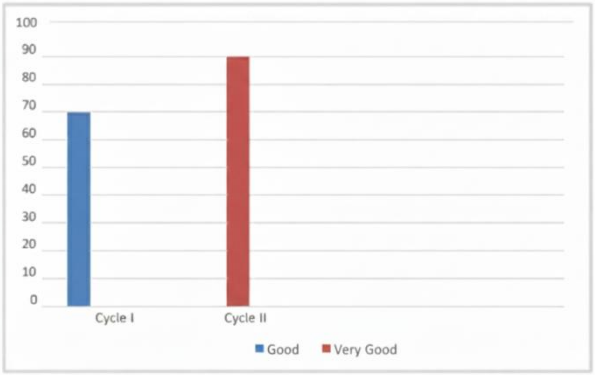

Figure 2. Diagram of Results of Teacher Observation Sheets in Cycle I and Cycle II

The diagram above shows an increase in teacher activities after the implementation of the Problem Based Learning model. If you look at the diagram, in the first cycle the teacher's activities are classified as good. Meanwhile, the results of the second cycle of teacher activities increased to the very good category. The improvement in learning outcomes of each cycle can be seen more clearly, so the overall in cycle I and cycle II in figure 3 is visualized into the following diagram:

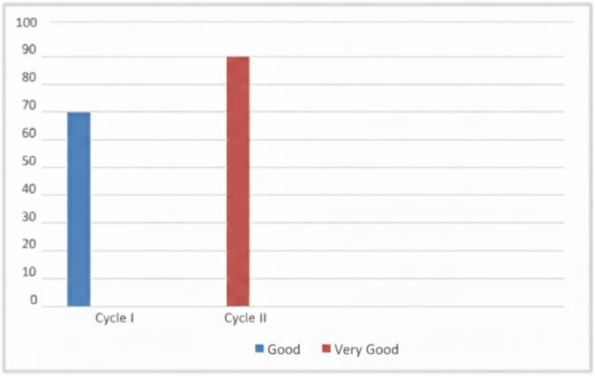

Figure 3. Diagram of Reading Skill Assessment Results in Cycle I and Cycle II

The results of the student learning assessment in the first cycle showed that there were 14 students in the complete category with a completion percentage of 70% of students reaching KKTP 70. In the second cycle this increase can be seen in the figure above, where there are 18 students whose learning outcomes are in the complete category with a completion percentage of 90% of students reaching KKTP 70. From the results of cycle I to cycle II there was an increase of 20%. Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the improvement of students' reading skills is followed by an increase in student learning activities with the Problem Based Learning model. Therefore, the study decided to stop the research until cycle II, because in this cycle the results of the assessment of students' reading skills have met the indicators of reading success, and the learning activities of teachers and students are in accordance with the steps of the Problem Based Learning model.

Discussion

The findings of the study showed a significant increase in student learning outcomes after the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model on zakat materials, both in terms of completeness and average score. The increase in completion percentage from 70% to 90% and the increase in average scores from 70 to 85 between cycles I and II not only reflect quantitative improvement, but also indicate that PBL has successfully overcome conceptual and contextual learning barriers. In the first cycle, even though most of the students have reached the KKM, there is still a tendency for superficial understanding for example, students are able to mention the mandatory conditions of zakat, but have difficulty explaining their relevance in real life. With the improvement of problem design and discussion facilitation in cycle II, students began to be able to relate the principle of zakat to social issues such as poverty and distribution justice, which shows a shift from rote learning to meaningful understanding. This is in line with the basic principle of PBL which places authentic problems as a trigger for knowledge construction (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). Thus, the improvement in learning outcomes is not just a motivational effect, but the result of a deeper cognitive process through investigation, collaboration, and reflection core elements that are consistently strengthened in the implementation of the second cycle.

These findings are in line with a number of previous studies that tested the effectiveness of PBL in the context of primary education. Hidayat et al. (2022) reported an average increase in scores of 25 points in science learning in grade V of elementary school after the implementation of PBL, with increased student involvement as a key factor. Similarly, Prasetyo & Wijayanto (2021) found that PBL was able to increase the understanding of religious values in junior high school students through social case simulations. However, this study extends the findings into the domain of Islamic jurisprudence at the elementary school level a context that is rarely explored in the latest literature (Nurhayati & Fitriani, 2022). The main difference lies in the complexity of the material: zakat requires not only an understanding of the law, but also the internalization of social values, so it requires a design of problems that are sensitive to the local context and the cognitive development of children aged 10–11 years (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978). The success of this study shows that PBL can be effectively adapted even for normative religious material,

provided that the issues presented are relevant to the student's life experience. Thus, this study not only supports the previous findings, but also expands the scope of PBL application to the realm of Islamic religious education in elementary schools, which has been dominated by expository methods (Rahman & Hadi, 2021).

Theoretically, these findings strengthen the foundation of social constructivism in religious learning. When students are given space to investigate issues such as "Why is zakat important for the fishing community in Bedono Village?" which is close to their reality they not only memorize the postulates, but build meaning through dialogue and collaboration. This supports Vygotsky's argument that meaningful knowledge is born from social interaction in the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, the increase in student enthusiasm and participation observed during observation showed that PBL also had an impact on the affective dimension of learning, namely the growth of a sense of belonging to the values learned (Krathwohl et al., 1964). The practical implications are very significant: Islamic religious education teachers can use PBL as a strategy to revive fiqh material that is often considered dry or abstract. By designing contextual problem scenarios for example, related to the management of zakat fitrah in the school environment teachers can transform the classroom into a dynamic space for moral reflection. These findings are also relevant to the demands of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes project based learning and character building, so that it can be a replicative model for similar schools in coastal areas (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

While the results show the effectiveness of PBL, it's important to emphasize that its success depends heavily on the quality of implementation particularly in problem design, facilitator roles, and collaboration structures. The 20% increase in completeness between the two cycles does not occur automatically, but rather is the result of critical reflection on the weaknesses of cycle I, such as a lack of guidance in group discussions and overly general problems. In cycle II, the problem is made more specific and directly related to the student's life, while the teacher is more active in providing scaffolding during the discussion a practice that is in line with the principles of responsive pedagogy in PBL (Wood et al., 1976; Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006). This confirms that PBL is not just a method, but an approach that requires high pedagogical competence. Implicitly, these findings suggest the need for teacher training in designing and facilitating problem based learning, especially in the context of religious education (Zainuddin et al., 2021). In addition, a significant improvement in learning outcomes in a short period of time (two cycles) shows the potential of PBL as an efficient short term intervention to improve the quality of learning in primary schools. Thus, this study not only provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of PBL on zakat materials, but also offers a practical framework that educators can adopt to integrate Islamic values with 21st century skills holistically (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

E. Conclusion

This study confirms that the application of Problem Based Learning (PBL) is consistently able to improve student learning outcomes in zakat materials, as reflected in the increase in learning completeness from 70% to 90% and the average score that increases from 70 to 85 in two cycles. However, the most striking finding was not only in the quantitative increase, but also in the qualitative change in the way students interpreted zakat. Surprisingly, many students who previously viewed zakat as only a formal obligation began to associate it with social welfare issues in their neighborhoods, such as helping underprivileged friends or understanding the role of zakat in economic equity in coastal villages. This shows that PBL not only improves cognitive aspects, but also triggers a profound affective transformation, namely the internalization of the values of justice and empathy as part of religious understanding. These findings raise the general assumption that fiqh material is technical and difficult to relate to the life experiences of elementary school students. Quite the opposite, when taught through authentic issues that are relevant to the local context, the concept of zakat becomes alive and meaningful. Thus, this study confirms that a contextual and participatory pedagogical approach can transform religious learning from memorization rituals into a transformative character formation process.

Although the results of the study show the effectiveness of PBL, this study has a number of limitations that need to be considered. First, subject coverage was limited to one class (30 students) in one coastal elementary school, so the findings could not yet be generalized to different geographical or social contexts. Second, the duration of the study only included two cycles (four meetings), so it was not possible to measure the sustainability impact of PBL on long term retention of understanding. Third, measurement instruments are still predominantly quantitative (written tests), while affective aspects such as changes in attitudes towards social diversity or concern are only measured through informal observation, not through a valid psychometric scale. To overcome these limitations, future research should use mixed methods with a wider and heterogeneous sample, involving several schools in different regions. In addition, it is necessary to develop standardized affective instruments such as attitude questionnaires or reflective journals to capture the internalization dimension of value more objectively. Finally, follow up research can extend the duration of the intervention to a full semester to assess the sustainability of the effects of PBL, as well as involve systematic teacher training to ensure the quality of model implementation. Thus, the findings of this study can be the initial foundation for the development of a more inclusive, contextual, and sustainable Islamic religious learning model.

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