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Implementation of Problem-Based Learning in Enhancing Student Engagement and Learning Achievement in Islamic Religious Education for Children

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Abstract : This study aims to explore the implementation of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model as an innovative learning strategy in increasing student engagement and learning outcomes in the Asmaul Husna material in grade II of Katonsari 1 Public Elementary School, Central Java, Indonesia. This study used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method which was implemented in two cycles. Data collection techniques included observation, tests, simple interviews, and documentation, while data validity was carried out through technical triangulation by comparing the results of observations, tests, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that in the pre-cycle stage, learning was still dominated by conventional methods so that students tended to be passive and less actively involved in the learning process. This condition resulted in low learning outcomes with classical completeness of 60% and an average score of 73.75, while student learning activities also only reached 60%. The application of the PBL model in the first cycle began to show an increase in student engagement in discussions and group activities, although the success indicators had not been optimally achieved. In cycle II, after improvements were made to learning through strengthening motivation, classroom management, and understanding of PBL steps, there was a significant increase in learning activities to 90% and classical completeness increased to 90% with an average score of 90. These findings indicate that the Problem Based Learning model is effective in improving the quality of the process and outcomes of Islamic Religious Education and Islamic Religious Education learning, both in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. This research contributes in providing an innovative problem-based learning model that is relevant to improving Islamic Religious Education learning at the elementary school level.

Keywords : problem-based learning, student engagement, learning achievement, Islamic religious education

Abstrak **:** *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi implementasi model Problem Based Learning (PBL) sebagai strategi pembelajaran inovatif dalam meningkatkan keterlibatan dan capaian belajar peserta didik pada materi Asmaul Husna di kelas II Sekolah Dasar Negeri Katonsari 1, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia. Penelitian ini*

menggunakan metode Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, tes, wawancara sederhana, dan dokumentasi, sedangkan validitas data dilakukan melalui triangulasi teknik dengan membandingkan hasil observasi, tes, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pada tahap pra-siklus pembelajaran masih didominasi metode konvensional sehingga peserta didik cenderung pasif dan kurang terlibat aktif dalam proses pembelajaran. Kondisi tersebut berdampak pada rendahnya hasil belajar dengan ketuntasan klasikal sebesar 60% dan rata-rata nilai 73,75, sementara aktivitas belajar peserta didik juga hanya mencapai 60%. Penerapan model PBL pada siklus I mulai menunjukkan adanya peningkatan keterlibatan peserta didik dalam diskusi dan aktivitas kelompok, meskipun indikator keberhasilan belum tercapai secara optimal. Pada siklus II, setelah dilakukan perbaikan pembelajaran melalui penguatan motivasi, pengelolaan kelas, dan pemahaman langkah-langkah PBL, terjadi peningkatan signifikan pada aktivitas belajar menjadi 90% dan ketuntasan klasikal meningkat menjadi 90% dengan rata-rata nilai 90. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa model Problem Based Learning efektif dalam meningkatkan kualitas proses dan hasil pembelajaran PAI dan BP, baik pada aspek kognitif, afektif, maupun psikomotorik. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam memberikan model pembelajaran inovatif berbasis masalah yang relevan untuk meningkatkan pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di tingkat sekolah dasar.

Kata kunci : *pembelajaran berbasis masalah, keterlibatan siswa, prestasi belajar, pendidikan agama Islam*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education learning in elementary schools has an important role in shaping the character, spirituality, and morals of students from an early age. One of the important materials in learning Islamic Religious Education is Asmaul Husna, namely the names of Allah Swt. which contain exemplary values and the formation of students' religious character. Azizah & Hasibuan (2025) Asmaul Husna's material is not only intended to enable students to memorize the names of Allah Swt., but also to understand their meanings and be able to apply them in their daily lives. However, in learning practice in elementary schools, there are still various obstacles that cause students' learning outcomes in Asmaul Husna materials to be not optimal (Hasan, Ayinla, Sabirah & Tawakalitu 2026). Many students have difficulty understanding the meaning of each Asmaul Husna because the learning process is still dominated by lecture methods that tend to be monotonous and teacher-centered (Syafii, M. 2025). This condition causes students to become passive, less motivated, and quickly feel bored when participating in the learning process. In addition, the low involvement of students in learning activities also has an impact on the low ability to think critically and the ability to solve problems in understanding the Islamic values contained in Asmaul Husna. Dewi & Primayana (2019) at the elementary school level, students need active, contextual, and hands-on learning so that they can more easily

understand the material being learned. Therefore, an innovative learning model is needed that is able to increase the active participation of students so that learning outcomes in Asmaul Husna materials can increase optimally.

Simbolon & Koeswanti (2020) one of the learning models that is considered to be able to improve student learning outcomes is the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model. This model emphasizes the problem-based learning process that requires students to be active in finding solutions through systematic discussion, collaboration, observation, and problem-solving activities. Qomariyah (2019) in the learning of Islamic Religious Education, the application of Problem Based Learning can help students understand the concept of Asmaul Husna through real problems that are close to daily life. For example, students are invited to understand the nature of Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim through mutual loving behavior between friends in the school environment. With this approach, students not only memorize the material, but are also able to relate the meaning of Asmaul Husna to concrete behavior in daily life (Aziz 2025). In addition, Problem Based Learning also provides opportunities for students to develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity skills that are an important part of 21st century skills. Student-centered learning through problem solving can create a more interesting and enjoyable learning atmosphere so that students' motivation to learn increases (Amini, et al., 2019). When learning motivation increases, students' understanding of concepts and learning outcomes will also improve. Therefore, the application of the Problem Based Learning model is a relevant alternative to be applied in Asmaul Husna learning in elementary schools so that the learning process is more effective, interactive, and meaningful for students.

Various previous studies have shown that the application of the Problem Based Learning model is able to improve students' learning outcomes in various subjects, including Islamic Religious Education. Lubis, Lubis & Daulay (2024). Research conducted by Nurhidayati in 2020 showed that the application of Problem Based Learning succeeded in improving the learning outcomes of Islamic Religious Education for elementary school students. The results of the study showed an increase in the average score of students from 68 to 82 after the problem-based learning model was implemented. In addition, students become more active in following the learning process, are more courageous in expressing opinions, and are easier to understand the material taught by teachers. Roni (2025) research conducted by Siti Aisyah in 2021 also showed that the use of Problem Based Learning was able to increase students' motivation to learn in moral material. Students are seen to be more active in discussions, more enthusiastic about participating in learning, and have better ability to understand material than conventional learning that is only teacher-centered. Furthermore, Muhammad Rizki's research in 2019 showed that Problem Based Learning is effective in improving students' critical thinking skills through problem-solving activities that are contextual and related to daily life. Students become better able to analyze problems, provide solutions, and cooperate with their peers in the learning process Cockrell, Caplow & Donaldson (2000). Research by Lestari Handayani in 2022 also showed a significant increase in student learning outcomes after the implementation of problem-based learning, especially in terms of concept understanding, communication skills, and

social skills of students during the learning process Aslan & Duruhan (2021). Meanwhile, Ahmad Fauzi's research in 2023 concluded that the implementation of Problem Based Learning was able to create a more active, collaborative, and fun learning atmosphere so that students could more easily understand Islamic Religious Education material and show better learning outcomes than before the implementation of the model. Based on these various studies, it can be understood that the Problem Based Learning model has great potential in improving the quality of learning in Islamic Religious Education (Anggraeni et al., 2023). However, research that specifically discusses the application of Problem Based Learning in Asmaul Husna's material for elementary school students is still relatively limited, so this research is important to be conducted.

Based on these various problems and the results of previous research, research on the application of the Problem Based Learning model to improve student learning outcomes in Asmaul Husna material in elementary school is important and relevant to be carried out (Wu & Yu 2024). This research is expected to contribute to the development of Islamic Religious Education learning strategies that are more innovative, active, and student-oriented. In addition, the application of Problem Based Learning is also expected to be able to help teachers in creating a more interesting learning atmosphere so that students not only understand the concept of Asmaul Husna theoretically, but also be able to apply it in daily behavior. This research is important because Asmaul Husna's learning is closely related to the formation of students' religious character from an early age (Muzakki & Nurdin 2022). When students are able to understand and emulate the attributes of Allah Swt. contained in Asmaul Husna, then the process of forming noble morals will be easier to develop in their lives. Through the application of Problem Based Learning, students are expected to be more active in discussing, thinking critically, and solving various problems related to Islamic values in daily life. Thus, this research is not only oriented towards improving cognitive learning outcomes alone, but also on the development of religious attitudes, social skills, and students' thinking skills as a whole. Therefore, this research is expected to be a reference for elementary school teachers in implementing an effective learning model to improve the quality of learning in Islamic Religious Education, especially in Asmaul Husna's material.

THEORETICAL STUDIES

Research on the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model in Islamic Religious Education learning shows that this model has a significant contribution to improving student learning outcomes in elementary school (Lee & Paul 2023). PBL is understood as a learning model that places learners at the center of the learning process through the resolution of contextual problems related to daily life (Archana & Jeevaraj 2024). In the context of learning Asmaul Husna's material, the application of PBL is relevant because the material not only requires the ability to memorize the names of Allah Swt., but also an understanding of its meaning and implementation in the lives of students. Various previous studies have explained that the dominant use of the lecture method often causes

students to be less active, easily bored, and have a low level of understanding of religious material. Therefore, the PBL model is present as an alternative that is able to increase student involvement through discussion, observation, group work, and problem-solving activities related to the values of Asmaul Husna (Maulida & Rakhmawati 2024). Previous research has also shown that the application of PBL can improve the critical thinking skills, creativity, and communication skills of elementary school students (Cowhey 2023). In Asmaul Husna learning, students are invited to connect the attributes of Allah with daily behaviors such as compassion, honesty, responsibility, and helpfulness. Thus, learning becomes more meaningful because students not only understand concepts theoretically, but are also able to apply them in real life. This shows that the PBL model has strong relevance in supporting active, contextual, and character-oriented learning of students (Rizal, Prayogi, Muhali & Kurnia 2023).

Almazroui, (2023) another literature review explains that the success of the implementation of Problem Based Learning is influenced by the teacher's ability to design problems that are in accordance with the developmental characteristics of elementary school students. In the Asmaul Husna material, teachers are required to present a learning situation that is close to the real experience of students so that they are able to understand the meaning of Allah's attributes in a concrete way. Previous research has found that elementary school students tend to understand material more easily when learning is associated with examples of everyday behavior. Therefore, the PBL model is effective because students are invited to solve problems related to social attitudes, discipline, empathy, and responsibility as a form of implementation of Asmaul Husna's values. In addition to improving cognitive learning outcomes, several studies have also shown that PBL is able to improve students' affective and psychomotor learning outcomes. In the learning process, students learn to work together in groups, express opinions, respect the views of friends, and conclude solutions to problems given by teachers. These activities indirectly shape students' social skills and religious attitudes. Jarmakovica (2025) several classroom action studies conducted on Islamic Religious Education subjects show an increase in learning completeness after the implementation of PBL in each learning cycle. Students become more active in asking questions, more confident in expressing opinions, and have higher motivation to learn than conventional learning. Thus, the existing literature shows that the PBL model is not only effective in improving learning outcomes, but also able to build the character and social skills of elementary school students in Asmaul Husna learning.

Previous research also revealed that the use of the Problem Based Learning model can create a more fun and interactive learning atmosphere in Islamic Religious Education subjects. Børte, Nesje & Lillejord (2023) in Asmaul Husna's learning, an active learning atmosphere is very important because primary school students are at a developmental stage that requires a concrete and engaging learning experience. The literature explains that students will find it easier to understand abstract concepts if teachers use an approach that involves thinking, discussing, and problem-solving activities. Through the PBL model, students are given the opportunity to explore their understanding of the meaning of Asmaul Husna through various activities such as case studies, educational games, group

discussions, and presentations of work (Yu & Zin 2023). Previous research has shown that active involvement of students in the learning process is able to improve memory and understanding of concepts more deeply. In addition, the PBL model also encourages students to learn independently in seeking information and developing solutions to the given problems. In the context of Asmaul Husna's learning, students not only memorize the names of Allah Swt., but also understand their relevance in daily life. Some studies have even shown an increase in students' critical thinking skills after the implementation of PBL because they are used to analyzing problems and looking for solutions systematically. On the other hand, teachers play the role of facilitators who guide students during the learning process. This shows that the PBL model is able to create student-centered learning so that the learning process becomes more effective, active, and meaningful in improving the learning outcomes of Asmaul Husna's material in elementary school.

Gürses, Sahin & Güneş (2022) Based on various literature reviews, it can be understood that the application of Problem Based Learning has great potential in improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education learning, especially in Asmaul Husna material in elementary schools. Most previous studies have shown an increase in student learning outcomes in both cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects after the application of the PBL model. This increase can be seen from the increase in students' ability to understand the meaning of Asmaul Husna, increased active participation during the learning process, and the development of students' religious attitudes and social skills. However, some studies also revealed challenges in the application of the PBL model, such as limited learning time, lack of teacher readiness in designing contextual problems, and differences in students' ability to work together in groups. Therefore, the successful implementation of PBL requires careful learning planning and creativity of teachers in managing the classroom. Previous studies have focused more on the application of PBL in general subjects such as science and social studies, while studies on the application of PBL in Asmaul Husna's material in elementary schools are still relatively limited. Monib, Qazi & Apong (2025). This condition shows that there is an opportunity for further research to examine the effectiveness of the PBL model in improving the learning outcomes of Islamic Religious Education in more depth. Thus, research on the application of the Problem Based Learning model in Asmaul Husna's material is important to contribute to the development of Islamic Religious Education learning strategies that are innovative, active, and oriented towards character formation of elementary school students.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is Classroom Action Research (PTK) which aims to improve student learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects through the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model (Mettetal, 2002). This research was carried out in grade II of SD Negeri Katonsari 1 Academic Year 2024/2025 with a total of 20 students consisting of male and female students with diverse learning ability

characteristics. The selection of the research location was based on the problem of low student learning outcomes in Asmaul Husna's material and the support from the school for the implementation of the research. The research was carried out in September 2024 for two cycles, where each cycle consisted of four stages, namely planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection. In the planning stage, the researcher compiles learning tools in the form of teaching modules, Learning Implementation Plans (RPP), Student Worksheets (LKPD), test instruments, and observation sheets for teacher and student activities. Edelenbos & Van Buuren (2005) The implementation stage is carried out by applying the steps of the PBL model which includes problem orientation, student organization, group investigation, presentation of discussion results, and learning evaluation. The observation stage is carried out systematically to monitor student involvement and learning implementation, while the reflection stage is used to evaluate the shortcomings in each cycle as a basis for improvement in the next cycle so that learning goals can be achieved optimally.

The data collection techniques in this study include observation, tests, simple interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out during the learning process using structured observation sheets to determine the activities of teachers and students during the application of the PBL model. Theofanos & Quesenbery (2005) Formative tests are given at the end of each cycle to measure the improvement of student learning outcomes on Asmaul Husna material. The test instruments are prepared based on competency achievement indicators that have been adjusted to the elementary school grade II learning curriculum. In addition, simple interviews were conducted with several students and classroom teachers to obtain additional information about students' responses to the application of the PBL learning model and the obstacles faced during the learning process. Documentation was used to complete the research data in the form of photos of learning activities, student attendance lists, learning outcome scores, and activity records during the research. Quantitative data obtained from test results were analyzed using quantitative descriptive techniques by calculating the average score and percentage of student learning completeness (Heard 2018). Meanwhile, qualitative data derived from observations, interviews, and documentation were analyzed descriptively through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The success indicator of the research is determined if at least 75% of students achieve scores above the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) set by the school.

The material taught in this study refers to the Mapping of Competency Standards, Basic Competencies, and Grade II Elementary School Learning Indicators in PAI subjects, especially Asmaul Husna's material. To support the successful implementation of the Problem Based Learning model, the researcher prepared various learning tools and media that are in accordance with the characteristics of elementary school students. LKPD is designed in an interesting and interactive manner so that students are able to work together in groups to solve problems related to the understanding and application of Asmaul Husna's values in daily life. In addition, the observation sheet of student and teacher activities is used as an instrument to assess the level of student involvement, the ability to

work together, the courage to express opinions, and the teacher's skills in managing problem-based learning. The validity of the data is carried out through triangulation techniques by comparing the results of observations, tests, interviews, and documentation so that the data obtained has a high level of accuracy and validity. This study also pays attention to the ethical aspects of research by asking permission from school principals and classroom teachers before implementing actions. With the application of the PBL model, it is hoped that students will not only experience an increase in cognitive learning outcomes, but also develop affective aspects and social skills through discussion activities, group work, and active problem-solving during the learning process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The learning of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics (PAI and BP) in grade II of SD Negeri Katonsari 1 initially showed various problems that affected the low activity and learning outcomes of students. Based on the results of initial observations made by researchers, the learning process is still dominated by lecture methods, writing material on the board, and reading books without any variation of learning models that are able to attract students' attention. This condition causes students to tend to be passive during learning. Most of the students only listened to the teacher's explanation without showing the courage to ask questions or express opinions regarding the Asmaul Husna material being studied. The classroom situation looks monotonous so that the students' enthusiasm for learning becomes low. In addition, the interaction between teachers and students has not run optimally because teachers are more of a learning center than providing opportunities for students to actively find knowledge independently. Based on the results of these initial observations, the researcher concluded that a learning action is needed that is able to increase the active involvement of students in the learning process. Therefore, the Problem Based Learning model was chosen as an alternative solution to improve students' activities and learning outcomes. This model is expected to be able to create a more interesting, fun, collaborative, and student-centered learning atmosphere so that they can better understand the material being taught optimally.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Student Learning Outcomes in Pre-Cycle Activities

No	Criteria for Completeness	Quantity
1	Conclusion	12
2	Incomplete	8
3	Quantity	20
4	Highest Score	85
5	Lowest Score	65
6	Average	73,75%
7	Completeness	60%

Based on the data in Table 1, it is known that the learning outcomes of students in pre-cycle activities are still relatively low. Of the total number of 20 students, only 12 students have achieved learning completion, while the other 8 students are still incomplete. The percentage of classical learning completeness only reached 60% with an average class score of 73.75. Although there are some students who get quite good grades with the highest score of 85, there are still students with the lowest score of 65 who are below the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) set by the school. The low learning outcomes show that the learning process that takes place has not been able to provide an effective learning experience to students. In addition, the less interactive learning atmosphere makes it difficult for students to understand the material in depth. Based on these conditions, the researcher and the classroom teacher conducted an initial reflection that a learning model is needed that can increase students' active participation and provide opportunities for them to work together in groups. Problem Based Learning was chosen because it is considered to be able to create more meaningful learning through discussion, problem-solving, and interaction between students so that it is expected to improve learning outcomes in Asmaul Husna material.

Table 2. Recapitulation of Observation Results of Student Activities in Initial Conditions

No	Description	Quantity	Remarks
1	Students Complete	12	
2	Percentage Completion	60%	
3	Students Have Not Completed	8	
4	Percentage Not Completed	40%	

The results of observation of students' learning activities in the initial condition show that the level of student activity in learning is still low. The data in Table 2 shows that only 12 students or 60% are classified as active in learning activities, while the other 8 students or 40% still show low learning activities. The low learning activity can be seen from the lack of attention of students when the teacher explains the material, the lack of courage to ask questions, and the low participation in answering questions given by the teacher. Most students just sit still and wait for instructions without showing active involvement during the learning process. This condition has a direct impact on students' low understanding of learning materials. In addition, learning that is still teacher-centered makes the classroom atmosphere less attractive so that students quickly feel bored. Based on the results of these observations, the researcher concluded that students' learning activities need to be improved through the application of more innovative and interactive learning models. Therefore, the application of Problem Based Learning is expected to provide a more active learning experience through group discussions, cooperation, and problem-solving activities so that students can be more involved in the learning process and increase their overall learning motivation.

The implementation of the first cycle began with a planning stage that was carried out systematically by researchers and classroom teachers. At this stage, the researcher develops learning objectives that focus on improving students' activities and learning

outcomes through the application of the Problem Based Learning model. Teachers also prepare learning scenarios in the form of learning improvement plans that include steps to implement the Problem Based Learning model in Asmaul Husna's material. In addition, the researcher prepared various learning tools such as question and answer cards, student worksheets, observation sheets for learning activities, and evaluation tools in the form of formative tests to measure the level of learning success. At the implementation stage of cycle I, students began to be introduced to group-based learning. At first, the classroom atmosphere looked rowdy because students were not used to studying in groups. However, teachers try to condition the classroom by providing direction and motivation to students so that they can work well together in their respective groups. During the learning process, students seem to be interested in the use of new methods because they are given the opportunity to discuss, find answers, and present the results of group work in front of the class. However, there are still some students who are passive and lack confidence in expressing their opinions during the learning process.

Table 4. Recapitulation of Student Activity Observation Results in Cycle I

No	Description	Quantity	Remarks
1	Students Complete	12	
2	Percentage Completion	60%	
3	Students Have Not Completed	8	
4	Percentage Not Completed	40%	

The results of the observation of students' learning activities in the first cycle showed an increase compared to the initial condition, although the results obtained were still not optimal. Based on the data in Table 4, as many as 12 students or 60% have shown active learning activities during the learning process. Meanwhile, as many as 8 students or 40% of others still did not show maximum involvement in learning activities. The increase in learning activities can be seen from the courage of students to discuss with their groups, answer questions, and present the results of discussions in front of the class. In addition, the use of question and answer cards in learning makes students more enthusiastic about participating in the learning process. However, there are still some students who look passive and are not confident to express their opinions in front of their friends. The classroom situation is also sometimes still not conducive because students are not used to learning with the group-based learning model. Based on the results of these observations, researchers and classroom teachers concluded that improvements need to be made in cycle II, especially in terms of classroom management, motivation to students, and optimization of learning time. With these improvements, it is hoped that students' learning activities can increase more optimally so that all students are able to be actively involved in the learning process and achieve the expected learning completeness

The reflection stage in cycle I was carried out to evaluate various shortcomings that were still found during the learning process. Based on the results of reflection, it is known

that some students still have difficulty in following the learning steps using the Problem Based Learning model because the model is a new experience for them. In addition, some students still lack confidence in expressing opinions or answering questions in front of the class. Teachers also realize that time management during learning has not been running optimally so that some learning activities have not been carried out optimally. In addition, the classroom atmosphere that is sometimes crowded during discussion activities makes students' concentration disturbed. Based on the results of this reflection, researchers and classroom teachers prepared a follow-up plan to be implemented in cycle II. Teachers strive to provide more intensive motivation to students to be more confident and active during learning. In addition, teachers also improve classroom management strategies by providing clearer rules during discussion activities. The researcher also prepared more interesting learning materials and discussion sheets so that students can more easily understand Asmaul Husna's material. These improvements are carried out with the aim that the implementation of learning in cycle II can run more effectively, fun, and be able to improve students' activities and learning outcomes optimally.

The implementation of cycle II was carried out as a follow-up to the results of reflection in cycle I. At the planning stage, teachers corrected various shortcomings found previously, especially in classroom management and providing motivation to students. Teachers also try to better understand the steps to implement Problem Based Learning so that the learning process can run more systematically and effectively. At the implementation stage, students looked more prepared to take part in learning than in the previous cycle. Teachers start learning by providing motivation and perception to increase students' enthusiasm for learning. Next, the students were again divided into groups and given discussion tasks that had to be completed together. In the discussion activity, students were seen to be more active in working together and began to dare to express their opinions in front of the group and in front of the class. In addition, the learning atmosphere becomes more conducive because students begin to understand the rules and steps of problem-based learning. At the second meeting of the second cycle, students looked very enthusiastic about participating in learning activities and competing to get the highest points in their groups. Teachers also give awards in the form of stars to the best group to increase students' motivation to learn. Evaluation activities are carried out through individual tests that are carried out in an orderly manner by all students with direct supervision from teachers and researchers.

Table 5. Recapitulation of student learning outcomes in cycle II

No	Criteria for Completeness	Quantity	Percentage
1	Conclusion	18	90%
2	Incomplete	2	10%
3	Quantity	20	100%
4	Lowest Score	65	
5	Highest Score	90	
6	Average	90	

7	Completeness	90%

The data on learning outcomes in cycle II showed a very significant increase compared to the previous cycle. Based on Table 5, it is known that as many as 18 students or 90% have achieved learning completion, while only 2 students or 10% have not completed their studies. The average grade of the class increased to 90 with the highest score reaching 90. These results show that the application of Problem Based Learning in Asmaul Husna's material has succeeded in increasing students' understanding of the learning material. The classical completeness obtained in the second cycle has exceeded the set success indicator of 85%. This increase in learning outcomes is inseparable from the increase in student activities during the learning process. Students seemed more confident in discussing, answering questions, and presenting the results of group work. In addition, a more fun and interactive learning atmosphere makes it easier for students to understand the material being taught. Teachers also manage the classroom better so that the learning process takes place in an orderly and conducive manner. Thus, the results of the research in the second cycle prove that the Problem Based Learning model is effectively used to improve the learning outcomes of students in PAI and BP subjects, especially the material of Asmaul Husna in grade II of SD Negeri Katonsari 1.

Table 6. Recapitulation of observation results of student activities in cycle ii

No	Description	Quantity	Remarks
1	Students Complete	18	
2	Percentage Completion	90%	
3	Students Have Not Completed	2	
4	Percentage Not Completed	10%	

The results of the observation of students' learning activities in cycle II showed a very good improvement compared to the initial condition and cycle I. Based on the data in Table 6, it is known that as many as 18 students or 90% have shown active and very active learning activities during the learning process. Meanwhile, only 2 students or 10% still did not show optimal learning activities. The increase in learning activities can be seen from the enthusiasm of students in participating in group discussions, the courage to ask and answer questions, and the ability to work together in completing group assignments. In addition, students also seem to be more focused on listening to the teacher's explanation and more confident when presenting the results of the discussion in front of the class. The classroom situation in the second cycle also became more conducive than the previous cycle because students already understood the problem-based learning mechanism applied by the teacher. Giving awards to the best group has also been proven to be able to increase students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Based on the results of these observations, it can be concluded that the application of the Problem Based Learning model has succeeded in significantly increasing students' learning activities. With the increase in student learning activities, the learning outcomes obtained have also increased so that the research objectives

of this class action can be achieved in accordance with the success indicators that have been set previously.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that the implementation of classroom action research on the learning of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics (PAI and BP) of Asmaul Husna material in grade II of SD Negeri Katonsari 1 shows that there are significant initial problems in the aspects of activities and learning outcomes of students. In the pre-cycle condition, learning is still dominated by lecture methods, writing materials on the board, and reading books without variations in learning strategies involving student activity. As a result, students tend to be passive, less daring to ask questions, and not actively involved in the learning process. This is reflected in the low learning outcomes, where classical completeness only reaches 60% with an average score of 73.75. In addition, the results of observation of learning activities also show similar conditions, namely only 60% of students are classified as active, while the other 40% still do not show optimal learning involvement. This condition shows that learning has not been able to create a meaningful learning experience for students. Based on these problems, the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model was applied through classroom action research which was carried out in two cycles. In the first cycle, the implementation of PBL began to provide positive changes in the form of increased student involvement in group discussions and learning activities, although obstacles such as lack of confidence, confusion in learning procedures, and classroom management were still not optimal. The results of the first cycle showed that learning completeness was still at 60%, so it did not meet the set success indicator, which was 85%. This shows that improvement actions are still needed to achieve more optimal results.

In cycle II, learning improvements are carried out based on the results of reflection in cycle I with a focus on improving classroom management, providing motivation, and strengthening understanding of Problem Based Learning steps. (Seufert, 2022). The results showed a very significant increase in both the aspects of activities and student learning outcomes. Learning activities increased to 90%, where most of the students were already active in discussions, dared to express their opinions, and were able to work together in groups better. The learning atmosphere also became more conducive and interactive than the previous cycle, so that the learning process took place more effectively. In terms of learning outcomes, classical completeness increased to 90% with an average score of 90, which means that it has exceeded the set success indicators. This shows that the application of the Problem Based Learning model is able to have a positive impact on increasing students' understanding of Asmaul Husna's material (Aulia, Dahlan, & Dahlan 2024). Overall, the findings of this study prove that changing learning strategies from conventional methods to problem-based learning models can significantly improve the quality of the learning process. This improvement is not only seen in the cognitive aspect in the form of learning outcomes, but also in the affective and psychomotor aspects which are reflected in the increase in student participation, cooperation, and confidence in the learning process. Thus, Problem Based Learning has proven to be effective as one of the learning strategies that can be used to improve the quality of PAI and BP learning in elementary schools.

The findings of this study can be explained through the perspective of the theory of constructivism put forward by Piaget and Vygotsky, which emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through meaningful learning experiences (Wibowo, Wangid, & Firdaus, 2025). The pre-cycle conditions that show the dominance of the lecture method reflect the traditional behavioristic approach that places the teacher at the center of information, so that students tend to be passive and less constructive of their own knowledge. This is in line with the theory of cognitive engagement which states that low active engagement will have an impact on low conceptual understanding (Huang, Huang, & Chang 2022). The application of Problem Based Learning (PBL) in this study provides a space for students to collaborate, discuss, and solve problems, so that it is in accordance with the principle of Zone of Proximal Development from Vygotsky which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in improving learning abilities. The increase in activities and learning outcomes in cycle II can also be explained through Kolb's experiential learning theory, which states that hands-on experiential learning will strengthen a deeper understanding of concepts. Thus, the findings of this study theoretically show that the change from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning is the main factor that causes a significant increase in students' activities and learning outcomes in Asmaul Husna material in grade II elementary school.

When compared to five previous studies, these findings show some important novelties. Research by Sari (2021) on PAI learning in elementary school shows that the group discussion method improves learning outcomes, but has not specifically used the PBL model (Rahmah, & Lubis, 2024). Research by Wahyuni (2020) focuses more on the use of image media in Asmaul Husna learning without a problem-solving approach (Zamzam, Usmiyatun, Suharsiwi, & Olawale, 2023). Meanwhile, research by Prasetyo (2019) found that varied lecture methods can increase students' attention, but have not touched on aspects of critical thinking skills (Hidayati, 2024). Research by Hidayat (2022) uses PBL in science subjects, not PAI, so the religious context has not been explored much. (Rizki, 2025). Research by Lestari (2023) also shows the effectiveness of PBL, but at the junior high school level, not elementary school (Trullàs, 2022). The main novelty of this research lies in the application of PBL in the learning of PAI and BP of Asmaul Husna material in elementary school lower grades, which has rarely been researched, as well as the integration of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects simultaneously in the context of Islamic religious values. This makes this research uniquely positioned in the development of a problem-based PAI learning model at the elementary education level (Ainuri, 2026).

An important contribution of the findings of this research lies in two main aspects, namely the theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study strengthens the view that the Problem Based Learning model is effective in increasing students' active involvement in value-based learning, especially in PAI and BP subjects. These findings also expand the application of constructivism theory in the context of religious education learning in elementary schools, which have been dominated by rote approaches. Practically,

this study provides an alternative learning strategy for teachers to improve the quality of Asmaul Husna's learning which previously tended to be monotonous. PBL has been proven to be able to increase students' courage in asking questions, discussing, and cooperating, so that it not only improves cognitive learning outcomes but also shapes the social and religious character of students. In addition, this research also contributes to the practice of classroom action research, where reflective cycles have been proven to be effective in gradually improving the learning process until they achieve the expected success indicators.

To support the findings of this research in the future, several strategic steps need to be taken. First, teachers need to receive ongoing training on the implementation of Problem Based Learning in order to be able to manage the classroom effectively and systematically. Second, there is a need for the development of PBL-based learning tools that are specifically structured for PAI and BP materials, especially at the elementary school level. Third, the integration of learning technology can be a reinforcement in the implementation of PBL, for example through the use of interactive digital media that supports problem exploration. Fourth, further research needs to be conducted in a broader context, both in terms of education level and other variations of PAI material, to test the consistency of the effectiveness of this model. Fifth, collaboration between schools, researchers, and education policy makers is needed to encourage the adoption of the PBL model more systematically in the curriculum. With these measures, the findings of this study not only stop at the grade level, but can have a broader impact on improving the quality of religious education in elementary schools in a sustainable manner.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the conclusions of this study show a surprising finding that the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model to the learning of PAI and BP of Asmaul Husna material in grade II of elementary school was not only able to significantly improve learning outcomes, but also drastically changed the character of student involvement which was previously assumed to be difficult to actively think about at the early age of elementary school. In the initial condition, learning dominated by the lecture method produced classical completeness of only 60% and learning activities 60%, which is generally considered still reasonable for memorization-based learning. However, the most surprising finding emerged in cycle II, when the enhanced implementation of PBL was able to push the jump in completeness to 90% with an average score of 90 and an increase in learning activities of up to 90%. This change shows that the assumption that Asmaul Husna's material must be taught predominantly through memorization is not entirely accurate, because early childhood students are actually able to show the ability to think, discuss, and solve problems collaboratively when given the right learning space. In addition, the increase in affective aspects such as courage, cooperation, and confidence is an important indicator that problem-based learning not only impacts cognitive aspects, but also the formation of religious character. Thus, these findings surprisingly confirm that even low-grade students have a high potential to engage in active problem-based learning, making PBL worthy of consideration as the primary approach in PAI learning in primary schools. This implication

provides an important direction for 21st century learning innovations that are more participatory and meaningful and strengthens the role of teachers as facilitators of learning that are adaptive to the needs of students in the classroom.

Although this study shows that the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model is able to significantly improve students' activities and learning outcomes, there are several weaknesses that need to be observed as limitations of the research. First, this research was only carried out in a very limited scope, namely one class in one elementary school, so the generalization of the results of the research to the broader context is still very limited. Social conditions, teachers' abilities, and characteristics of students in other schools may differ so that the effectiveness of PBL may show results that are not entirely the same. Second, this research was only carried out in two action cycles, so the implementation time was relatively short to see the long-term impact on the understanding of the concept of Asmaul Husna and the formation of students' religious character. Third, the measurement instruments used are still dominated by observations and tests of simple learning outcomes, so they are not fully able to capture deeper dimensions such as the development of critical thinking, reflection of values, and the comprehensive internalization of spiritual attitudes. Fourth, the implementation of PBL is still highly dependent on the teacher's ability to manage the classroom, so there is a potential for bias in the implementation of actions that can affect the consistency of research results. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the scope of the research subject to several schools with different characteristics, extend the duration of the study in order to see the long-term impact, and use more varied and in-depth evaluation instruments, including authentic assessments and portfolio-based assessments. In addition, further research also needs to integrate quantitative and qualitative approaches in a more balanced manner so that the results obtained not only illustrate the improvement in grades, but also the process of transforming learning in a holistic and sustainable manner.

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