

Efforts to Improve Understanding of the Main Material of Morals Through the Problem Based Learning Model for Class VIII Students of SMP Negeri 2 Tambusai

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Abstract, This class action research aims to improve students' understanding of the material of *Praiseworthyhlak* through the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) learning model. The research subjects were students of class VIII SMP Negeri 2 Tambusai in the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, totalling 30 students. The research was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Data collection instruments used comprehension tests and student activeness observation sheets. The results showed an increase in student understanding after the application of the PBL model. In the pre-cycle, the average student score was 65 with 36.7% completeness. After the application of PBL in cycle I, the average score increased to 73.3 with 66.7% completeness. In cycle II, there was a significant increase with an average score of 82 and a completeness rate of 90%. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the PBL model is effective in improving understanding of the material of Morals.

Keywords : Problem Based Learning, Praiseworthy Behaviour, Islamic Religious Education.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Character education in Indonesia is currently one of the main focuses in efforts to shape the nation's identity. Within this framework, praiseworthy morals education becomes an important component in the learning process, especially at the secondary education level. It not only equips students with theoretical knowledge of morality, but also instils values that will

guide them in facing the challenges of everyday life. The expanding impact of globalisation has triggered new complexities and challenges in the cultivation of moral values, so efficient and effective learning methods are urgently needed (Sartika et al., 2024; Yuniyanto et al., 2020).

Students are often trapped in monotonous educational routines that

provide little space for critical reasoning and independent exploration. In this context, the Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach emerges as an innovative alternative to develop students' understanding of praiseworthy morals. PBL focuses on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are relevant in real life, so it is expected that students can better connect with the material discussed (Abidin, 2022; Ismayanti & Tarsono, 2022; Sartika et al., 2024; Yuniyanto et al., 2020). In a study conducted by Mardiana et al. (2018), it was explained that PBL increased students' engagement in learning by stimulating their interest in learning moral values (Mansur & Purek Loli, 2019).

However, the main challenge faced by educators is how to deliver praiseworthy moral material in a way that is inspiring and acceptable to students. To address this issue, PBL serves not only to improve students' academic understanding, but also to help them internalise the moral values needed in daily life (Indrawan & Alim, 2022; Muliani, 2022). This is important, given that rapid social change brings greater moral risks to the younger generation (Kartini & Tri Putra, 2020).

At SMP Negeri 2 Tambusai, the need for an innovative learning approach is urgent. Based on initial observations, many students have difficulty in understanding

the concepts of praiseworthy morals and are less able to apply them in everyday life. This phenomenon is supported by data showing that most students are less motivated in taking religious lessons, especially about morals, which leads to low academic scores. Research shows that the application of more active and participatory learning strategies can make a significant difference in students' understanding and attitude towards teaching materials.

The implementation of this research aims to test the extent to which the PBL model can improve the understanding of class VIII students of SMP Negeri 2 Tambusai on the material of praiseworthy morals. It is expected that by applying PBL, students not only understand but are also active in discussing and analysing moral problems faced in everyday life. Furthermore, this is expected to equip students with noble characters and be ready to face future challenges.

Through this research, it is hoped that deeper insights will be gained into the implementation of PBL in the context of moral learning in secondary schools, as well as providing recommendations for the development of more effective learning methods in character education.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a classroom action research (PTK) approach with a two-cycle design. Each cycle consists of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection (Suharsimi, 2013). The research subjects were VIII grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Tambusai, totalling approximately 30 students.

In the planning stage, the researcher develops a lesson plan using the PBL model, which includes the selection of relevant moral issues and the preparation of triggering questions, which aim to encourage students to develop their critical and analytical thinking (Indrawan & Alim, 2022). In the action phase, students will be divided into groups to discuss the issues that have been determined, design solutions, and make presentations in front of the class. Data will be collected through observations during the teaching and learning process and through questionnaires filled out by students to measure changes in their understanding of the material on praiseworthy morals after the implementation of PBL (Jamal et al., 2023; Zulhijra et al., 2024).

Furthermore, at the reflection stage, researchers together with colleagues will analyse the data collected to evaluate the improvement of students' understanding. The success of this study is measured based

on the increase in pre-test and post-test scores conducted before and after the application of the PBL method (Haniyah et al., 2024; Jamal et al., 2023; Zulhijra et al., 2024). With this approach, it is hoped that students will not only gain knowledge about praiseworthy morals, but also be able to apply them in their daily lives.

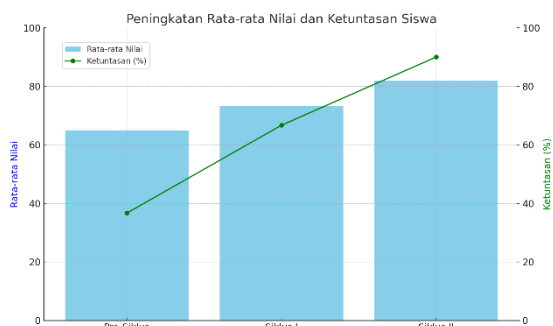
III. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. Assessment was carried out through material comprehension tests and observation of student activeness. A recapitulation of student understanding results from each cycle can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Student Comprehension Results from Pre-Cycle to Cycle II

Stage	Average Score	Student Completion (≥ 75)	Percentage Completeness
Pre-Cycle	65	11 dari 30	36,7%
Cycle I	73,3	20 dari 30	66,7%
Cycle II	82	27 dari 30	90%

The following is a graph of the increase in the average score and percentage of student completeness from pre-cycle to cycle II. It can be seen that after the



application of the Problem Based Learning model, there was a significant increase in student learning outcomes.

Graph 1: Improvement in Average Score and Completeness

Learning Islamic Religious Education, especially on the material of *Praiseworthy Morals*, is often considered as rote material by students. This results in shallow understanding and lack of active involvement in the learning process. Based on the results of initial observations (pre-cycle), it was found that most students in class VIII SMP Negeri 2 Tambusai were still passive in participating in lessons and had difficulty in understanding and applying moral values in everyday life. The average student score only reached 65, and learning completeness only reached 36.7%. This condition is the basis for the need to apply innovative learning strategies and encourage students to think critically, one of which is the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model.

The PBL model was applied starting in cycle I. Students were given case studies

that were close to their lives, such as issues about honesty, co-operation and responsibility. They were asked to discuss in small groups and convey the solutions they found through presentations. The results in cycle I showed a significant improvement, both in cognitive aspects and student participation. The average score increased to 73.3 and the completeness reached 66.7%. In addition, the classroom atmosphere became more lively. Students began to express their opinions, ask questions, and discuss actively.

Nevertheless, some weaknesses were still found in the implementation of the first cycle. Some students were still passive and did not fully participate in the group. Some groups were also not optimal in dividing tasks and responsibilities. Based on this reflection, improvements were made in cycle II, including giving clearer directions, monitoring group dynamics more intensively, and providing examples of moral attitudes that students can emulate in real life.

These improvements had a positive impact. In cycle II, students' understanding increased. The average score rose to 82, and the completeness rate reached 90%. The classroom atmosphere became more interactive, students seemed more enthusiastic in exploring the material, and group discussions took place effectively.

Students began to be able to relate the moral values learned to the daily situations they experience, such as the importance of being honest in exams, helping friends in difficulty, and respecting other people's opinions.

The Problem Based Learning model is proven to not only improve learning outcomes, but also foster critical attitudes, cooperation, and responsibility in students. The learning process becomes meaningful as students actively build their own knowledge based on real problems. This is in line with the learning objectives of PAI, which is to instil Islamic values not only in the cognitive aspect, but also in daily attitudes and behaviour.

Thus, the application of the PBL model in learning Praiseworthy Morals has a positive impact on student understanding. Learning is no longer one-way and teacher-centred, but becomes interactive and contextual. These results indicate that learning strategies that involve students actively and reflectively are very effective in Islamic Religious Education subjects, especially in competencies related to character building.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been conducted in two cycles, it can be concluded that the application of the

Problem Based Learning (PBL) model can improve the understanding of class VIII students of SMP Negeri 2 Tambusai on the material of *Praiseworthyhlak*. There was an increase in both the average student score and the percentage of learning completeness, from 36.7% in the pre-cycle to 90% in cycle II. In addition, the PBL model also encourages students to be more active, critical, and collaborative in learning.

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