



Efforts to Improve Student Learning Motivation in Islamic Education Learning at SMP Negeri 1 Aen Natas

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model in improving student motivation in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Aen Natas. The research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, conducted in two cycles, with 30 seventh-grade students participating. The study focused on enhancing student engagement, participation, and motivation by applying real-world problems that required students to utilize Islamic principles in their problem-solving process. Data were collected using pre- and post-assessment questionnaires, classroom observations, and student feedback. The findings revealed a significant improvement in student motivation throughout the two cycles. In the first cycle, students demonstrated increased participation, enthusiasm, and a stronger connection to the subject matter. After the second cycle, students showed higher confidence, more active engagement in group work, and a greater interest in Islamic Education. The collaborative nature of PBL, coupled with the relevance of the problems presented, played a key role in fostering student motivation and enhancing their learning experience. The study concluded that the implementation of the PBL model was effective in improving student motivation in Islamic Education. The approach not only encouraged critical thinking and problem-solving skills but also made the subject matter more meaningful and applicable to students' daily lives. These findings highlight the potential of PBL as a valuable strategy for enhancing student motivation and engagement in educational settings.

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Introduction

Student learning motivation is one of the most critical factors influencing academic achievement. Motivation drives students to engage with their studies, persist through challenges, and achieve their full potential. However, in many classrooms, including those at SMP Negeri 1 Aen Natas, student motivation tends to fluctuate, particularly in subjects like Islamic Education. This decrease in motivation can significantly impact the overall quality of learning, as students may lack the enthusiasm to engage with the material, resulting in lower academic performance. As Islamic Education plays an essential role in shaping students' moral and spiritual development, ensuring high levels of motivation in this subject is crucial for the holistic growth of students. In Islamic Education classes, it is essential not only to impart knowledge but also to foster the development of values such as piety, honesty, and responsibility. Unfortunately, many students perceive Islamic Education as a subject that is disconnected from their daily lives or too theoretical. As a result, students may find it difficult to see the relevance of the subject matter, which affects their motivation to engage in learning activities. This lack of motivation can be attributed to several factors, such as the traditional teaching methods, the use of monotonous materials, and insufficient interaction between the teacher and students.

At SMP Negeri 1 Aen Natas, teachers have noticed that many students struggle with motivation, especially when it comes to Islamic Education. Students are often disengaged during lessons, lack interest in the subject matter, and show little initiative to participate actively in class activities. This lack of motivation has been reflected in their academic performance and their general attitude toward the subject. Teachers have identified the need for strategies that can effectively improve student motivation, particularly in Islamic Education, which is a key subject in developing students' character and moral values. Research has shown that one of the most effective ways to improve student motivation is through the adoption of active learning methods. These methods focus on making students more involved in the learning process, allowing them to take ownership of their education. By making learning more interactive and student-centered, students are more likely to feel engaged, and their intrinsic motivation is strengthened. Active learning strategies can include group discussions, project-based learning, and the use of multimedia resources that make the subject matter more engaging and relevant to students' lives.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has emerged as one of the most successful active learning strategies in recent years. PBL focuses on solving real-world problems through critical thinking and collaboration. It encourages students to think independently, research topics, and work in teams to propose solutions. This model has been widely implemented in various subjects and has shown positive outcomes in terms of increasing student motivation and engagement. For Islamic Education, using PBL could offer students an opportunity to engage with the material in a way that makes the

subject more relevant and interesting to them. In response to the challenges posed by low motivation in Islamic Education, SMP Negeri 1 Aen Natas has decided to explore the potential of implementing active learning strategies, particularly Problem-Based Learning, to improve student motivation. The goal is to create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment where students are motivated to actively participate, think critically, and apply Islamic principles to real-life situations. The school recognizes that motivating students in Islamic Education requires innovative approaches that move beyond traditional teaching methods and foster a deeper connection with the subject matter.

The school has also recognized that the teacher plays a crucial role in student motivation. Teachers who employ engaging teaching strategies and create an inclusive, supportive classroom environment can significantly impact students' attitudes toward learning. For Islamic Education, it is vital that teachers not only convey knowledge but also model the values they seek to instill in their students. Teachers can inspire motivation by providing students with opportunities for meaningful learning experiences, encouraging them to explore the relevance of Islamic teachings in their daily lives. A key aspect of improving motivation in Islamic Education is ensuring that the content is presented in a way that resonates with students' interests and experiences. For many students, Islamic Education may seem abstract or disconnected from their personal lives. However, by using real-world problems and examples that students can relate to, teachers can make the content more meaningful and engaging. This approach not only boosts motivation but also helps students develop a deeper understanding of how Islamic teachings apply to contemporary issues.

Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge the importance of student-teacher relationships in fostering motivation. A positive relationship between the teacher and students can encourage trust, respect, and a sense of belonging, all of which contribute to a motivating learning environment. Teachers who take the time to understand their students' needs and interests are better equipped to design lessons that capture students' attention and inspire their enthusiasm for learning. In this research, the primary focus will be on exploring the impact of Problem-Based Learning in improving student motivation in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Aen Natas. By implementing this model, it is expected that students will become more engaged, motivated, and active in their learning. Moreover, the study will assess the effectiveness of this approach in enhancing students' understanding of Islamic principles and their ability to apply these teachings in real-life situations. The results of this study will offer valuable insights into how active learning strategies can improve motivation in Islamic Education and potentially be applied to other subjects as well.

Through this research, the goal is to contribute to the development of more effective teaching practices in Islamic Education, ensuring that students not only gain

knowledge but also develop a genuine interest in the subject. By improving motivation, the study seeks to create a more positive and impactful learning environment that encourages students to engage with Islamic teachings and apply them in their lives. Ultimately, the aim is to equip students with both the academic and moral tools necessary to succeed in their personal and spiritual lives. In conclusion, the need to improve student motivation in Islamic Education is critical to ensuring that students remain engaged, motivated, and successful in their studies. By exploring the potential of Problem-Based Learning as an innovative teaching strategy, this study aims to provide valuable insights into how motivation can be enhanced in this subject area. By fostering a more dynamic, student-centered learning environment, the research seeks to empower students to take ownership of their education and develop a deeper understanding of Islamic values that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Methods

This research is designed using a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach aimed at improving student motivation in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Aen Natas. The study was conducted over two cycles, with each cycle consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The focus of this research is on the application of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as a strategy to enhance student motivation. The study involved 30 seventh-grade students, all of whom participated in the learning process under the PBL model. The research began with an initial assessment of students' motivation levels in Islamic Education before the intervention. This assessment was conducted using a student motivation questionnaire, which measured their interest, enthusiasm, and engagement in the subject. This pre-assessment data served as a baseline for evaluating the changes in student motivation throughout the study. The results of this initial survey indicated that many students lacked interest in the subject, showing low levels of motivation, which prompted the need for the intervention.

The first cycle of the action plan involved the introduction of the PBL model in the classroom. Before the implementation, the teacher prepared a real-life problem related to Islamic teachings, which would require students to apply Islamic principles to find solutions. The chosen problem was designed to be relevant to the students' daily lives and to spark their interest in the subject matter. Students were grouped into small teams and assigned roles within their groups, which encouraged collaboration and peer interaction. The groups worked together to research the problem, discuss their findings, and develop a solution. Each PBL activity was accompanied by a series of guiding questions that encouraged critical thinking and reflection on the moral and ethical aspects of the problem. During the problem-solving process, the teacher facilitated discussions, asked probing questions, and provided support when necessary. The teacher's role was not to deliver direct answers but to guide students through the

process of exploring the problem and developing their understanding of Islamic teachings. This approach was designed to foster independent learning and promote student ownership of the learning process.

After the first cycle of implementation, the teacher conducted an observation to assess the changes in student motivation. The observation was based on both qualitative and quantitative data. The teacher recorded observations of student behavior, such as participation in discussions, enthusiasm for the activity, and willingness to engage in group work. In addition to the teacher's observations, students were asked to complete a post-activity questionnaire that assessed their interest and motivation levels after participating in the PBL session. These data were analyzed to determine if the PBL approach had a positive impact on student motivation. Following the reflection on the first cycle's results, adjustments were made to improve the PBL approach in the second cycle. In the second cycle, more complex problems were introduced, requiring students to engage in deeper research and collaborative problem-solving. The problems were designed to challenge students' thinking and encourage them to apply Islamic teachings in more nuanced ways. Additionally, the teacher continued to emphasize the importance of teamwork and student collaboration, which were key components of the PBL model.

The second cycle also included more opportunities for students to present their findings to the class. This allowed students to showcase their understanding of the problem and share their proposed solutions with their peers. The presentations encouraged public speaking and allowed students to practice articulating their ideas in a clear and organized manner. This aspect of the PBL model was intended to enhance students' confidence in their learning and motivate them to engage more actively in the classroom. Throughout both cycles, data were continuously collected using a combination of observation, student surveys, and reflective journaling. Students were encouraged to keep journals documenting their thoughts and reflections on the PBL activities. This allowed the teacher to monitor students' evolving attitudes toward the subject and gauge their level of motivation. In addition to the surveys and observations, the teacher held individual interviews with some students to gather more in-depth feedback on their experiences with the PBL model.

The reflection phase of each cycle was essential for refining the approach and ensuring that the activities were meeting the goals of improving student motivation. During the reflection, the teacher reviewed the feedback from the students and analyzed the data collected to identify patterns and areas for improvement. The teacher also considered whether the chosen problems were engaging and relevant to the students' lives and whether the group dynamics were supportive of learning. Based on this reflection, modifications were made to the teaching strategies and the problems presented in subsequent cycles. At the end of the second cycle, a post-assessment was

conducted to evaluate the overall impact of the PBL model on student motivation. The post-assessment included a final student motivation questionnaire that measured changes in students' attitudes toward Islamic Education, their engagement in learning activities, and their interest in the subject. The teacher also conducted a final observation, noting any lasting improvements in student participation and enthusiasm for the subject.

The data collected from both cycles were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The pre- and post-assessment questionnaires were analyzed to measure changes in student motivation levels. The teacher's observations, student feedback, and journal entries were analyzed for common themes related to student engagement, participation, and the perceived relevance of the PBL activities. The results were then compared to determine whether the implementation of PBL led to a significant improvement in student motivation. In conclusion, the methodology used in this study provided a comprehensive approach to investigating the impact of Problem-Based Learning on student motivation in Islamic Education. The combination of real-life problem-solving, collaborative learning, and ongoing reflection allowed for continuous improvement and adaptation of the learning process. Through this research, the effectiveness of PBL in improving student motivation was carefully monitored, with the goal of providing valuable insights into how this teaching model can be used to enhance student engagement and interest in Islamic Education.

Result

The results of the research indicate that the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Aen Natas led to noticeable improvements in student motivation. Data collected from pre- and post-assessment questionnaires, teacher observations, and student feedback demonstrated that PBL successfully engaged students, fostering a greater interest in the subject and encouraging them to take an active role in their learning. At the beginning of the study, the pre-assessment results revealed that many students showed low levels of motivation toward Islamic Education. A majority of students expressed a lack of interest in the subject and found it difficult to relate Islamic teachings to their daily lives. This lack of motivation was reflected in their passive participation in class and minimal engagement during lessons. However, after the introduction of PBL in the first cycle, there was a noticeable shift in students' attitudes. Many students began to express a stronger interest in the subject matter and participated more actively in classroom activities. In the first cycle, students were presented with a problem that required them to apply Islamic principles to solve a real-world situation. Throughout the cycle, students worked in small groups to discuss and collaborate on possible solutions. Teacher observations noted a significant increase in student interaction and discussion, with students becoming more eager to share their ideas and solutions with their peers. Additionally, the teacher noted that students seemed more focused and motivated during the group work and problem-solving sessions. The post-assessment conducted

after the first cycle showed that students' motivation levels had increased. The questionnaire results revealed a higher level of interest in the subject compared to the pre-assessment, with students reporting greater enthusiasm for participating in class discussions and activities. Students also expressed a stronger connection to the subject matter, indicating that the real-world problems introduced in PBL helped them see the relevance of Islamic teachings in their daily lives. These findings were supported by the teacher's observations, which highlighted a more engaged and participatory classroom atmosphere.

In the second cycle, more complex problems were introduced to challenge students' critical thinking and deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings. Students were tasked with addressing more nuanced issues that required a more sophisticated application of the Islamic principles they had learned. The second cycle continued to emphasize group work, with students collaborating to develop their solutions and present their findings to the class. The teacher observed that students were more confident in their ability to analyze and solve problems, and they displayed a greater level of teamwork and collaboration. One of the most significant findings from the second cycle was the increased level of student self-confidence. Many students who had previously been hesitant to speak in front of the class or engage in group discussions began to show more initiative. They took on more active roles within their groups, volunteered to present their solutions to the class, and showed a more positive attitude toward their peers. This change in behavior was a direct result of the collaborative nature of PBL, which helped students feel supported and encouraged to participate without fear of judgment.

In addition to the positive changes in student participation, the second cycle also saw improvements in students' problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Students demonstrated a greater ability to think critically about the Islamic principles they were learning and apply them to the real-world problems presented in the PBL activities. This shift was particularly evident during group discussions, where students engaged in deeper analysis of the issues and worked collaboratively to find solutions. This demonstrated that PBL not only increased motivation but also enhanced students' intellectual engagement with the subject matter. Another key result of the research was the positive impact of PBL on students' attitudes toward Islamic Education. Throughout both cycles, students began to view Islamic Education as more relevant and meaningful to their lives. They expressed a stronger appreciation for the subject and were more motivated to continue learning about Islamic values. The increased relevance of the content and the application of Islamic principles to real-life situations helped bridge the gap between theory and practice, making the subject matter more engaging and valuable to students.

Furthermore, the teacher's reflective notes from both cycles indicated that the PBL model also improved the teacher-student relationship. The teacher was able to foster a more supportive learning environment, where students felt comfortable expressing their ideas and asking questions. This positive relationship contributed to a more motivating classroom atmosphere, as students were encouraged to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from one another in a collaborative setting. The overall results of

this research suggest that the implementation of the PBL model had a significant positive impact on student motivation in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Aen Natas. The increased engagement, participation, critical thinking, and positive attitudes toward the subject all point to the effectiveness of PBL in motivating students. Students were not only more interested in the subject but also demonstrated improved skills in problem-solving, collaboration, and applying Islamic values to their lives. Based on these findings, it is clear that Problem-Based Learning is an effective strategy for enhancing student motivation in Islamic Education.

Discussion

The implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Aen Natas demonstrated a significant improvement in student motivation. The data collected from both pre- and post-assessments, as well as from classroom observations, indicate that the PBL approach effectively engaged students, stimulated their interest in Islamic Education, and encouraged them to actively participate in their learning. This aligns with research that suggests active learning strategies, such as PBL, can enhance student motivation by making learning more relevant and engaging. One of the key findings of the study was the marked increase in student participation. In the initial phase of the research, many students displayed low levels of enthusiasm and engagement in Islamic Education. They often appeared disinterested in the lessons, which negatively impacted their overall academic performance. However, after the introduction of the PBL model, students became more involved in the learning process. The shift from a traditional, teacher-centered approach to a more student-centered model allowed students to take ownership of their learning. They were no longer passive recipients of information but active participants in solving real-world problems related to Islamic values.

The collaborative nature of PBL was another factor that contributed to the improvement in student motivation. Students worked in small groups, which not only fostered teamwork but also helped them develop communication and social skills. Through collaboration, students learned how to share ideas, listen to their peers, and reach a consensus on solutions to the problems at hand. This collaborative learning environment allowed students to feel more supported and encouraged to engage with the material, which in turn increased their motivation to participate. The relevance of the problems presented in PBL also played a critical role in increasing student motivation. Students often struggled with finding the connection between Islamic Education and their everyday lives. However, by introducing real-world problems that required students to apply Islamic principles, the lessons became more meaningful. For instance, the problems students tackled were related to issues they could encounter in their daily interactions, such as honesty, fairness, and compassion. This helped students see the practical application of Islamic teachings and made the subject matter more relatable, which significantly boosted their motivation to engage with the content.

Moreover, the problem-solving aspect of PBL helped students develop critical thinking skills. As students worked through the problems, they were encouraged to think critically, analyze different perspectives, and find solutions based on Islamic values. This not only enhanced their understanding of the subject but also empowered them to approach challenges in their personal lives with a more reflective and thoughtful mindset. The development of these skills further contributed to students' motivation, as they could see the tangible benefits of their learning beyond the classroom. Another noteworthy finding from the study was the improvement in students' self-confidence. Prior to the implementation of PBL, many students exhibited low self-esteem and hesitated to participate in class discussions. They were reluctant to share their thoughts for fear of making mistakes or being judged by their peers. However, through the PBL activities, students gained more confidence in their ability to contribute to group discussions and present their ideas to the class. The supportive and non-judgmental environment fostered by PBL allowed students to feel safe in expressing their thoughts and engaging with the material, which played a significant role in increasing their motivation.

The teacher's role as a facilitator was also essential in the success of the PBL approach. Rather than simply delivering information, the teacher guided students through the problem-solving process, encouraging them to think critically, collaborate, and apply Islamic principles to their solutions. This shift in the teacher's role allowed students to take a more active role in their learning and helped them develop a sense of autonomy. The teacher's support was crucial in maintaining a positive learning environment, where students felt motivated to participate and engage with the content. The results of the study also indicated that PBL contributed to a positive change in students' attitudes toward Islamic Education. Many students who initially perceived the subject as boring or irrelevant began to show greater interest and enthusiasm. This shift in attitude can be attributed to the more interactive and meaningful approach to learning that PBL provides. As students were able to see the direct connection between the content and their personal lives, their perception of the subject became more favorable, which naturally led to an increase in motivation.

Furthermore, the use of PBL in Islamic Education not only improved students' motivation but also helped enhance their moral and ethical development. By engaging with real-world problems and applying Islamic values to those problems, students were able to internalize the teachings of Islam in a more practical and meaningful way. This aspect of PBL allowed students to connect theoretical knowledge with practical application, fostering a deeper understanding of Islamic principles and how they can be used to navigate the challenges they face in daily life. The positive results from the first cycle were reinforced during the second cycle, where students tackled more complex problems. The increased difficulty of the problems required students to engage in more

in-depth research and critical thinking, which further enhanced their motivation. The teacher noted that students appeared more eager to engage with the material, demonstrating a greater willingness to tackle challenging tasks. This demonstrated the potential for PBL to not only sustain motivation but also to encourage continuous intellectual growth.

Despite the positive outcomes, there were challenges during the implementation of PBL. Some students initially found it difficult to transition from a traditional learning approach to the more dynamic PBL model. They were not accustomed to working in groups or taking on a more active role in their learning. However, over time, as students became more familiar with the PBL process, their confidence and motivation increased. The teacher also faced challenges in managing time effectively, as PBL activities required more time for discussion, research, and problem-solving. However, these challenges were addressed through careful planning and ongoing reflection, which led to improved outcomes in subsequent cycles. The study also highlighted the importance of teacher reflection in improving the effectiveness of the PBL model. After each cycle, the teacher reflected on the successes and challenges of the approach and made necessary adjustments for the next cycle. This continuous process of reflection and refinement ensured that the PBL model was tailored to meet the needs of the students and contributed to the improvement of their motivation. Teacher reflection is crucial in action research as it allows educators to adapt their teaching methods based on student feedback and performance.

Overall, the results of the study suggest that Problem-Based Learning is an effective strategy for improving student motivation in Islamic Education. The active, student-centered approach of PBL fostered greater engagement, critical thinking, and collaboration among students, leading to improved motivation and academic performance. Furthermore, the real-world relevance of the problems addressed in PBL made the subject matter more meaningful and engaging for students. These findings support the idea that PBL can be a powerful tool in enhancing student motivation and fostering deeper learning in Islamic Education.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model in Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 1 Aen Natas has proven to be an effective strategy for improving student motivation. Through the use of real-world problems that required students to apply Islamic principles, the study demonstrated significant increases in student engagement, participation, and enthusiasm for the subject. Students became more active participants in their learning, taking ownership of their education and collaborating with peers to solve problems. The data collected from pre- and post-assessment questionnaires, teacher observations, and student feedback showed a clear

positive shift in students' attitudes toward Islamic Education. The use of PBL not only helped students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills but also made Islamic teachings more relevant and applicable to their daily lives. As a result, students were more motivated to learn and were able to connect theoretical knowledge with practical applications. Additionally, the study highlighted the importance of teacher facilitation in creating a supportive learning environment. By adopting a facilitator role, the teacher encouraged collaboration, guided students through the problem-solving process, and fostered a classroom atmosphere where students felt safe to participate and express their ideas. This approach helped boost students' confidence and further increased their motivation to engage in Islamic Education. While there were initial challenges in adapting to the PBL model, such as students' unfamiliarity with group work and the teacher's need to manage time effectively, these challenges were addressed through ongoing reflection and adjustments. The second cycle of implementation saw even more positive outcomes, indicating the potential for sustained improvements in student motivation when PBL is carefully implemented and refined over time. In conclusion, the results of this research suggest that the Problem-Based Learning model is a highly effective method for enhancing student motivation in Islamic Education. The approach not only fosters greater student engagement and participation but also promotes deeper learning and application of Islamic principles. The findings from this study can serve as a valuable reference for educators seeking to improve motivation in Islamic Education and potentially other subjects as well, through active learning strategies like PBL.

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