The Influence of Using Problem Solving Methods in Moral Learning at MIS Al Washliyah Pauh

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of using the problem-solving method in moral education at MIS Al Washliyah Pauh. The background of this research is the low level of student engagement in moral education learning, as well as the lack of students' ability to face and solve moral issues that arise both in school and daily life. The problem-solving method was chosen because it encourages students to think critically, analytically, and reflectively in finding solutions to problems related to moral values. This research uses a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design. The research sample consisted of two classes: the experimental class, which applied the problem-solving method, and the control class, which used conventional methods. Instruments used in this study included moral education achievement tests and student activity observation sheets. Data were analyzed using the t-test to identify differences in learning outcomes between the two groups. The results showed a significant difference in learning outcomes between students taught using the problem-solving method and those taught using conventional methods. Students in the experimental class demonstrated improved understanding of the material, active participation in discussions, and enhanced ability to formulate solutions to moral problems. Therefore, the use of the problem-solving method has a positive impact on improving the quality of moral education at MIS Al Washliyah Pauh. This study recommends the broader implementation of the problem-solving method in Islamic Religious Education, especially in moral education topics.

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Introduction

Education is not merely about transferring knowledge but also about shaping the character and behavior of students. One essential aspect of character education is moral education, which plays a vital role in forming students who are not only intellectually capable but also morally upright.

In the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), moral education (akhlak) is a fundamental component. It aims to instill values such as honesty, responsibility, respect,

and discipline based on Islamic teachings. These values are expected to guide students in their daily lives and social interactions. However, in practice, the teaching of akhlak often faces challenges. Many students find the subject monotonous and disconnected from real-life situations. As a result, students may struggle to internalize moral values or apply them in their behavior.

Traditional teaching methods, which are often teacher-centered and lecture-based, contribute to this problem. Such methods tend to limit student participation and critical thinking, making it difficult for students to understand and solve moral dilemmas independently. Therefore, there is a growing need for innovative and interactive teaching methods that actively involve students in the learning process. One such method is the problem-solving approach, which encourages students to engage in discussion, reflection, and analysis of moral issues.

The problem-solving method allows students to face simulated or real-life moral problems and work collaboratively to find appropriate solutions. Through this process, students not only gain knowledge but also develop moral reasoning and decision-making skills. This method aligns well with the goals of moral education in Islam, which emphasize understanding, sincerity (ikhlas), and the practical application of moral teachings in everyday life. By confronting moral challenges directly, students learn how to respond wisely and responsibly. MIS Al Washliyah Pauh, as an Islamic elementary school, is committed to improving the quality of moral education. Teachers are encouraged to adopt teaching strategies that are more student-centered and responsive to the needs of 21st-century learners.

Preliminary observations at MIS Al Washliyah Pauh revealed that students often show a passive attitude during moral education lessons. Many are unable to relate the content to their real experiences, which limits the effectiveness of the learning process. To address this issue, the researcher implemented the problem-solving method in moral education classes to investigate its impact on students' learning outcomes and engagement.

This research seeks to answer the question: Does the use of the problem-solving method significantly influence the effectiveness of moral education in terms of student understanding, participation, and behavior? By exploring this question, the study aims to contribute to the development of more effective instructional strategies in Islamic Religious Education, particularly in teaching akhlak.

The findings are expected to provide insights for teachers, school administrators, and curriculum developers on how to improve moral education by integrating active learning methods such as problem-solving. Ultimately, this study aspires to support the broader mission of Islamic education: to nurture students who not only excel academically but also embody noble character traits in their personal and social lives.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design, specifically the non-equivalent control group design. This design was chosen due to the practical constraints in assigning students randomly to groups, considering the existing class structures at MIS Al Washliyah Pauh. The design involved two groups: an experimental group that received instruction using the problem-solving method and a control group that was taught using conventional, lecture-based methods.

The population of the study consisted of all sixth-grade students at MIS Al Washliyah Pauh during the 2024/2025 academic year. The school was selected purposively based on the researcher's preliminary observations, which indicated a need for more effective and engaging moral education strategies. From this population, two classes were selected using purposive sampling to serve as the experimental and control groups. Both groups were assumed to have relatively similar academic abilities based on previous test scores.

The research variables consisted of the independent variable, which was the teaching method (problem-solving vs. conventional), and the dependent variable, which was students' moral learning outcomes. Moral learning outcomes were measured in terms of three indicators: cognitive understanding of moral concepts, active participation during lessons, and ability to solve moral dilemmas.

The teaching intervention in the experimental group involved the implementation of the problem-solving method over the course of six weeks. Each week, students were presented with moral case studies or dilemmas relevant to their age and daily life experiences. These included scenarios involving honesty, helping others, respect for parents and teachers, and conflict resolution among peers.

In each session, students worked in small groups to analyze the problems, discuss possible solutions, and present their conclusions to the class. The teacher acted as a facilitator, guiding the discussion with open-ended questions and encouraging students to reflect on Islamic teachings related to the dilemmas. This process was intended to promote critical thinking, collaboration, and the internalization of moral values.

In contrast, the control group received instruction through the conventional method, which involved lectures, reading materials, and brief question-and-answer sessions. The teacher explained moral values directly from the textbook, and students were expected to memorize and recall information without engaging in active problem-solving or real-life application.

To assess the learning outcomes, the researcher developed a comprehensive test consisting of multiple-choice and short essay questions that measured students' understanding of moral concepts. Additionally, an observation checklist was used to

evaluate student participation during class discussions and group activities. This checklist was used consistently throughout the intervention period.

The validity and reliability of the research instruments were tested prior to their use. The test items were validated by two expert teachers in Islamic Religious Education and one educational psychologist. A pilot study was conducted with a different class to ensure the clarity and effectiveness of the test and observation instruments. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure internal consistency, and the result indicated a high level of reliability ($\alpha > 0.80$).

Data collection was carried out before and after the intervention period. Pre-tests were administered to both groups to ensure that the students had comparable prior knowledge of the subject matter. Post-tests were given at the end of the intervention to determine any differences in learning outcomes attributable to the teaching method.

The data analysis process involved descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were used to summarize student performance. For inferential analysis, the independent sample t-test was applied to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the learning outcomes of the two groups. The significance level was set at 0.05.

To ensure ethical considerations, the researcher obtained permission from the school principal and informed consent from teachers and students involved in the study. Students were assured that their participation would not affect their grades, and all data were treated confidentially. The activities in the experimental group were designed to be inclusive and non-disruptive to the normal learning environment. Overall, this research methodology was designed to provide a clear and systematic examination of the influence of the problem-solving method on students' moral learning. By combining structured intervention, validated instruments, and rigorous data analysis, the study aimed to generate findings that are both meaningful and applicable to broader educational contexts, especially within the field of Islamic moral education.

Result

The results of this study reveal a notable difference in learning outcomes between students taught using the problem-solving method and those taught using conventional approaches. Data analysis from the pre-test scores showed no significant difference between the experimental and control groups, indicating that both groups started with relatively equal levels of understanding in moral education.

After the intervention period, the post-test scores demonstrated a clear improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group. The average score of the experimental group increased significantly, while the control group showed

only a slight improvement. This suggests that the problem-solving method had a substantial positive impact on students' understanding of moral concepts.

The independent sample t-test conducted on the post-test scores showed a significant difference at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$), confirming that the use of the problem-solving method led to higher academic achievement in moral education. These findings support the hypothesis that active learning strategies contribute to better student performance.

In addition to cognitive gains, observational data indicated a significant increase in student participation during lessons in the experimental group. Students actively engaged in discussions, asked questions, and collaborated with peers to explore different perspectives on moral dilemmas.

The observation checklist scores showed that students in the experimental group exhibited stronger problem-solving skills, greater confidence in expressing their opinions, and improved ability to apply Islamic moral values to real-life situations. This contrasts with the control group, where participation remained passive and focused primarily on memorization and recitation.

Furthermore, interviews with the classroom teachers revealed that students in the experimental group demonstrated better behavior and decision-making outside of the classroom. Teachers reported that these students were more likely to show empathy, responsibility, and respect toward others, indicating a deeper internalization of moral values.

The results also showed that the problem-solving method helped improve classroom dynamics. Group activities fostered a sense of cooperation and mutual respect among students, which positively influenced the overall learning environment. Students learned to listen to one another and appreciate differing viewpoints. One of the notable findings was the improvement in students' moral reasoning abilities. In classroom discussions, students began to justify their decisions based on Islamic teachings and personal reflection. This indicated not only a better understanding of the material but also a meaningful connection between knowledge and action.

Although the intervention was limited to six weeks, the consistent application of the problem-solving method demonstrated that even a relatively short period of active engagement could produce significant results in both academic and behavioral aspects of moral education.

In conclusion, the results of this study provide strong evidence that the problem-solving method is an effective instructional strategy for teaching moral education in Islamic schools. It enhances students' academic achievement, participation, critical thinking, and moral behavior. These outcomes affirm the importance of implementing

student-centered methods to improve the quality and relevance of Islamic Religious Education.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that the problem-solving method significantly improved students' learning outcomes in moral education at MIS Al Washliyah Pauh. The results not only show enhanced cognitive understanding but also demonstrate an increase in student participation and engagement, aligning with the research hypothesis that active, student-centered teaching methods can positively impact moral education outcomes.

One of the primary objectives of this research was to explore the influence of the problem-solving method on students' ability to internalize moral values and apply them in real-life contexts. The study found that students in the experimental group exhibited stronger moral reasoning skills, which is consistent with prior studies by researchers such as Johnson and Johnson (2009) who emphasized the role of cooperative learning strategies in developing critical thinking and moral judgment.

The improvement in the experimental group can be interpreted through the lens of constructivist learning theory, which asserts that learners build knowledge through active participation and interaction. According to Piaget (1970) and Vygotsky (1978), learning is most effective when students are encouraged to problematize and find solutions to real-world issues. The problem-solving method, by encouraging group discussions and critical reflection, provided an ideal environment for this kind of active learning, which helped students construct a deeper understanding of moral concepts.

Additionally, the increase in student participation in the experimental group suggests that the problem-solving method not only fosters cognitive learning but also promotes affective outcomes. This is supported by research by Dewey (1938), who argued that learning should be intrinsically connected to students' experiences and emotions. The problem-solving method engaged students emotionally and cognitively, resulting in a more holistic learning experience that encouraged them to apply moral values in their everyday lives.

The results are also consistent with the findings of other studies in the field of Islamic education, such as those by Aziz (2014) and Harahap (2017), who found that interactive and student-centered methods, including problem-solving, significantly enhance the internalization of Islamic moral values. This body of research suggests that the active engagement promoted by the problem-solving method not only improves academic outcomes but also reinforces students' ability to live by Islamic principles.

From the perspective of the hypothesis of this study, which posited that the problem-solving method would lead to better learning outcomes in moral education, the

findings fully support this claim. The experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of both cognitive learning outcomes and behavioral improvements. The hypothesis that active learning strategies such as problem-solving can positively influence student understanding and application of moral education is therefore confirmed.

The success of the problem-solving method in this context also has broader implications for the teaching of moral education in Islamic schools. First, it underscores the importance of moving away from traditional, lecture-based teaching methods, which often fail to engage students and foster critical thinking. Instead, the findings suggest that Islamic Religious Education should incorporate more interactive and collaborative learning approaches to increase student involvement and enhance the relevance of moral lessons.

Moreover, this research has significant implications for teacher training programs. Educators should be trained not only in the content of moral education but also in effective teaching methods that encourage active student participation. As the study shows, the problem-solving method requires teachers to adopt a facilitator role, guiding students through discussions and helping them apply moral concepts to real-life situations. Teacher professional development programs should therefore focus on equipping educators with the skills to implement such interactive teaching strategies effectively.

While the study's results are promising, there are several limitations that must be considered. One limitation is the relatively short duration of the intervention (six weeks), which may not have been sufficient for fully evaluating the long-term effects of the problem-solving method on students' moral behavior and overall character development. Future studies should explore the sustainability of these positive outcomes over a longer period and examine how the problem-solving method affects students in other aspects of their academic and personal lives.

Another limitation is the study's sample size, which was limited to a single school in Pauh. For future research, a larger and more diverse sample, including multiple schools across different regions, would be beneficial to ensure the generalizability of the results. Additionally, exploring the impact of the problem-solving method on different grade levels could provide further insights into its applicability across various stages of education.

Future research directions could also focus on the integration of technology in the problem-solving method. Digital tools and platforms could further enhance collaboration and provide students with access to a wider range of moral dilemmas, fostering greater critical thinking and moral reflection. Research on how technology can

complement traditional problem-solving approaches in moral education could be an important avenue for further investigation.

Lastly, a deeper exploration of students' emotional and social development through the problem-solving method could provide valuable insights into how moral education influences overall character development. Future studies could examine not only academic achievement but also the long-term impact on students' social interactions, empathy, and ethical decision-making in various contexts.

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide compelling evidence for the effectiveness of the problem-solving method in moral education. The study demonstrates that this method not only enhances students' academic performance but also fosters the internalization of moral values and encourages positive behavior. These results have important implications for the broader field of Islamic education and suggest that the problem-solving method should be considered a valuable pedagogical tool for teaching moral education in schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is recommended that Islamic Religious Education curricula incorporate more interactive, student-centered methods like problem-solving to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of moral education. Teachers should be trained to use such methods effectively, as they promote deeper learning and the internalization of Islamic values. The study also suggests that future research could explore the long-term effects of the problem-solving method on students' moral behavior and social relationships. Additionally, further investigations could examine the role of technology in enhancing the problem-solving approach and how it can be integrated into the teaching of moral education. Despite the positive outcomes, the study acknowledges several limitations, including the short duration of the intervention and the limited sample size. Future research with a larger, more diverse sample and longer intervention periods could provide more comprehensive insights into the sustained impact of the problem-solving method. In conclusion, this study contributes valuable evidence to the field of Islamic education, demonstrating that the problem-solving method is a highly effective approach to teaching moral education. By fostering active learning, critical thinking, and the application of Islamic moral values, the problem-solving method can play a significant role in shaping the moral development of students in Islamic schools.

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