

THE PHENOMENON OF TEACHERS IN APPLYING THE PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING MODEL TO STUDENTS AT MI MIFTAHUL ULUM

Zakia Rohalia¹, Imro Atus Soliha²
Ahmad Dahlan Institute Probolinggo¹²
rohaliyakia@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the meaning and application of Problem Based Learning (PBL) by teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Miftahul Ulum, Probolinggo Regency, as an effort to integrate Islamic values into the learning process. With a descriptive qualitative method, data was collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observations, as well as analysis of the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) and teacher evaluation notes. The findings show that teachers use PBL as a contextual space to instill the principles of ta'awun, tawakkal, honesty, and responsibility in each stage of problem-solving that is close to the student's experience. Reflective approaches and dialogical discussions accompanied by the integration of Qur'anic verses and hadith have been proven to improve students' critical thinking skills while strengthening their spiritual awareness. The main obstacles identified are limited technological facilities and infrastructure, high administrative burden, and lack of special training for teachers. This study also highlights the active role of students in designing solutions and the influence of PBL on their learning motivation. Therefore, it is recommended to provide continuous intensive training for educators, adjust curriculum policies more flexibly, improve supporting facilities, and establish a community of practice between teachers. This step is expected to support the consistency of PBL implementation, improve the quality of learning outcomes, and form students' religious character holistically. The results of the research are expected to support the development of a more contextual madrasah curriculum.

Keywords: Problem Based Learning, Descriptive Qualitative, Integration of Islamic Values.

INTRODUCTION

Education in general can be defined as a structured process for transferring knowledge, skills, and values from one generation to the next. This process involves interaction between educators and learners, where educators act as facilitators who assist learners in understanding and internalizing information and experiences gained (Wasitohadi, 2014). Education is not only limited to formal contexts such as schools, but also includes non-formal and informal education that takes place in a variety of social settings (Qomarrullah, 2024). In the context of education, there are several goals to be achieved, including holistic individual development, improving critical thinking skills, and character building (Aditya, 2024). Education aims to prepare individuals to be able to adapt to changes and challenges faced in daily life, as well as make a positive contribution to society (Pare & Sihotang, 2023). Therefore, education must be able to accommodate the needs and potential of each individual, as well as take into account the social and economic context in which the education takes place (Mesiono, Fauzi, & Rahmah, 2024).

Education also plays an important role in creating a knowledgeable and cultured society. Through education, individuals are taught to understand and appreciate local cultural values, which in turn can strengthen identity and a sense of community (Wirasasmita & Hendriawan, 2020). In addition, education also serves as a tool to develop social awareness and individual responsibility towards the environment and society (Suroso, 2022). In the era of globalization, education faces complex new challenges. Globalization has a significant impact on the education system, both in

terms of curriculum, teaching methods, and the values taught (Hidayat, 2024) . Therefore, it is important for the education system to adapt and develop approaches that are relevant to the times, so that education remains effective and able to meet the changing needs of society (Manurung & Rahmadi, 2017). One of the learning models that teachers can use to encourage students to think creatively is the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model.

A literature review shows that a number of international studies have studied PBL at the primary education level, focusing on the learning effectiveness and cognitive development of students (Hung, Jonassen, & Liu, 2008). (Purwati, 2022) emphasizing that the cultural context and institutional support have a significant influence on the success of PBL. In a national context, research by (Septiana, Nurjanah, & Riyadi, 2022) explained that the implementation of PBL in MI in Central Java province improves academic achievement and affective attitudes of students, but there are still variations in teachers' understanding of problem design in accordance with the madrasah syllabus. Meanwhile, research (Hanifah, Nugraha, & Fitri, 2021) shows that the biggest obstacle is the lack of special training for MI teachers in preparing PBL-oriented Learning Implementation Plans (RPP). From this study, there is no research that explores in depth the knowledge of teachers in implementing PBL in MI, because most of the previous studies were quantitative-descriptive and have not revealed the subjective meaning of teachers in the context of this religious education institution. This condition shows that although there is a study on PBL in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, there has not been a study that specifically explores the phenomenon of PBL application through the perspective of teachers in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Based on the description of the background, this study aims to reveal in depth the phenomenon of the application of the Problem Based Learning model by teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Miftahul Ulum.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive design to reveal the experience of teachers in implementing Problem Based Learning (PBL) at MI Miftahul Ulum, Probolinggo Regency. The phenomenological approach was chosen so that the researcher can understand the subjective meaning of the teacher's experience in the social, cultural, and religious context of the madrasah (Pohan et., al 2023). The descriptive design allows researchers to describe the stages and dynamics of PBL without directly intervening in the learning process. The focus of the research is directed at identifying implementation challenges, teacher adaptation strategies, and the integration of Islamic values that emerge during learning activities. Thus, the results of the study are expected to be comprehensive and in accordance with the standards of reputable national journals.

The research participants consisted of MI Miftahul Ulum teachers who had implemented PBL at least six months before the implementation of the study. The selection of informants was carried out by purposive sampling based on the criteria of direct experience using PBL and willingness to participate in depth (Fig. 2025). The determination of the number of participants follows the principle of data saturation, which is when the theme and pattern of findings are repeated without adding meaningful new information. This approach ensures the representation of diverse perspectives of teachers related to the implementation of PBL in madrasahs. Thus, the reliability of the data can be maintained.

Data were collected through three main instruments: semistructured in-depth interviews, limited

participatory observations, and documentation studies. The interviews were directed to open-ended questions to explore teachers' perceptions, challenges, and the meaning of integrating Islamic values, then recorded and transcribed verbatim (Andreani & Gunansyah, 2023). Participatory observation recorded student interactions, PBL facilitation strategies, and student responses, and was documented in systematic field records. The documentation study included the analysis of the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) and teacher evaluation notes to complement the field findings. In addition, the researcher specifically recorded the moment of integration of religious values in each stage of PBL.

Data analysis follows an interactive cycle: collection, reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions (Aidah & Nurafni, 2022). Data reduction is carried out by sorting, summarizing, and grouping findings into main themes, then presented through descriptive narratives and thematic tables. Conclusions are drawn based on teachers' experience patterns, adaptation strategies, and Islamic value integration practices. Data validity is strengthened through triangulation of sources (interviews, observations, documents), member checking, and trail audits to ensure credibility, dependability, and transferability (Mulyana et al., 2024). With this procedure, the research meets the criteria of methodological rigor recognized in reputable national journals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal three important findings based on teachers' experience in implementing the Problem Based Learning (PBL) learning model at MI Miftahul Ulum, namely: first, the meaning of PBL as a contextual learning medium that contains Islamic values; second, teachers' strategies in integrating Islamic values into the PBL process; and third, structural and pedagogical challenges in the implementation of PBL at the madrasah level. To clarify these findings, it can be seen in Table 1 below.

This study involved eight MI Miftahul Ulum teachers who were selected because they had implemented PBL for at least six months. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, as well as analysis of lesson plans and teacher evaluation notes. Preliminary results show that internal school training helps teachers better understand the stages of PBL. As one of the teachers expressed, *"Now it is easier for me to formulate problems that can stimulate students' critical thinking"* (G2, June 12, 2025). These findings confirm the importance of peer group discussions in strengthening teachers' understanding. The second finding highlights the limitations of facilities and networks that force teachers to divide classes into small groups. The G1 teacher recounted, *"Because there was only one laptop, I divided the students into three groups alternately, and it turned out that this strengthened their cooperation"* (July 01, 2025). To overcome these obstacles, teachers use simple interactive printed materials and whiteboards. This approach not only simplifies the learning process, but also improves communication between students. Observations also noted that groups with a maximum of five members were effective.

Students' attitudes towards PBL are getting more positive, especially during the solution presentation session. Field records show many students are actively asking questions about problem-solving steps. Another teacher said, *"Pupils who are usually quiet now dare to come up with ideas"* (G4, July 10, 2025). Although at first students depend on the teacher's direction, this dependence slowly decreases as the guidance progresses. These findings show that PBL is able to

effectively increase student participation and courage.

The integration of Islamic values is also strong in every step of PBL in this madrasah. The teacher recorded the moment of help-help (ta'awun) when students helped each other solve problems. In the reflection stage, a teacher added, "I always end the discussion with a joint prayer and ask students to write down the wisdom they have gained" (G5, July 13, 2025). In addition, the RPP document shows the insertion of tawakkal values in each activity. The integration of these values occurs naturally without reducing the focus on the academic aspect.

Overall, the teachers emphasized the need for ongoing support so that PBL can be implemented consistently. They proposed further training and regular forums to share experiences. "We need a forum to discuss and strengthen each other so that PBL continues to develop," said G3 (July 13, 2025). Research recommendations include the creation of PBL modules tailored to local values and inter-teacher mentoring programs. That way, the implementation of PBL is expected to be more effective and have an impact on the quality of learning.

Educators at MI Miftahul Ulum consider Problem Based Learning (PBL) as a learning method that places students at the center of activities, where they are faced with real-world situations to be solved independently. For teachers, PBL is not just a teaching strategy, but a means to hone students' critical and creative thinking skills by relating the subject matter to the context of daily life (Siswono, 2016). In practice, teachers develop problem scenarios that are relevant to local conditions so that students feel challenged to find solutions. This process fosters the responsibility of students, because they are in charge of collecting information, collaborating, and formulating conclusions together. With this approach, PBL is seen as able to bring learning closer to reality and empower students as active learners.

In each stage of PBL, MI Miftahul Ulum teachers apply Islamic values by emphasizing the principles of help (ta'awun) and tawakkal. At the problem formulation stage, students are directed to help each other to foster a sense of community and empathy (Ananda & Agusta, 2023). During the data exploration phase, the teacher inserts relevant Qur'anic verses and hadiths, so that the problem-solving process is also rooted in spiritual foundations. At the end of each PBL cycle, the reflection session is closed with a joint prayer and wisdom discussion, so that students learn to associate academic achievement with the value of faith. The integration of these values makes PBL not only focus on the cognitive aspect, but also support the development of students' religious character.

Obstacles to facilities and infrastructure are the main challenges in the implementation of PBL in this madrasah. The limited number of digital devices and fluctuations in the quality of the internet network force teachers to divide classes into small groups and take turns using one device (Wahyuddin et al., 2023). In addition, the tendency of students in the early stages to be passive requires extra effort from the teacher in motivating and guiding the group discussion. As a result, teachers' preparation time increases as they have to design problem scenarios that are authentic and in accordance with the curriculum. The absence of advanced training is also an obstacle, so some teachers feel less confident to explore more complex PBL variants.

The consistent and sustainable implementation of Problem Based Learning (PBL) requires systematic support to ensure its effectiveness in the long term. For this reason, the implementation of periodic training and practical training on the implementation of PBL is significant in increasing the professional capacity of educators, especially in designing and facilitating problem-based

learning processes (Hendrik Dewantara, 2024). Increasing the availability of technological devices and adequate internet access will reduce technical barriers. The development of PBL modules that are tailored to local values and madrasah culture can help teachers in developing contextual scenarios. In addition, the formation of a community of practice between teachers allows for the exchange of experiences and strategies, so that these learning innovations can continue to develop and improve the quality of student learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Educators at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Miftahul Ulum see Problem Based Learning (PBL) as more than just a teaching technique; they interpret it as a medium to channel Islamic values in an integrated manner. For them, PBL is not only a series of learning steps, but also a meeting space between academic materials and religious principles. Through the PBL framework, teachers strive to link each stage of problem-solving with relevant Islamic teachings. Thus, the learning process becomes an effective means to form the religious character of students. This kind of approach also creates a harmonious and meaningful classroom atmosphere.

In practice, teachers present daily problems that are close to students' experiences, such as environmental cleanliness issues and cooperation in social activities. These contextual cases are chosen so that students feel that the problem is real and urgent to solve. As students process problems, they are naturally invited to associate the solution with Islamic values, such as responsibility, honesty, and concern for others. This model bridges the gap between the development of critical thinking skills and the strengthening of spiritual awareness. As a result, students are not only proficient in analysis, but also more sensitive to the moral and religious dimensions.

In implementing the PBL strategy, teachers combine an intense reflective and dialogical approach, for example by inserting Qur'anic verses or related hadiths into worksheets and class discussions. In this way, the subject matter that is logical and empirical in nature is enriched by religious foundations, so that the discussion runs more meaningfully. However, a number of obstacles often arise, such as limited learning time, high administrative burden, and lack of opportunities for teachers to take part in Islamic values-based PBL training. These obstacles can reduce the quality of PBL implementation and reduce the enthusiasm of teachers and students. Therefore, concrete solutions are indispensable to bridge the gap between expectations and practices on the ground.

As a step to improve, madrasahs need to organize intensive training that focuses on the integration of PBL and Islamic values to improve teacher competence. In addition, curriculum policies should be made more flexible, providing sufficient time space to implement PBL optimally. Facility and infrastructure support, such as the availability of digital devices and contextual teaching materials, are also important factors that should not be ignored. A culture of collaborative learning between teachers and students needs to be strengthened through regular activities, such as workshops or learning communities. With these steps, PBL at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Miftahul Ulum is expected to maximize learning outcomes as well as form students' religious personalities as a whole.

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