

Problem-Based Learning in Aqidah and Akhlaq Education at MTs Muhammadiyah 04 Blagung

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of problem-based learning (PBL) in Aqidah and Akhlaq education as an instructional approach to address students' learning and moral development challenges at MTs Muhammadiyah 04 Blagung. The purpose of this research is to analyze how problem-based learning is designed and applied in Aqidah and Akhlaq instruction, to identify the types of student problems addressed through this approach, and to explore its impact on students' understanding, attitudes, and moral behavior. The main research questions focus on: (1) how problem-based learning is implemented in Aqidah and Akhlaq education, (2) what learning and moral problems are encountered by students, and (3) how problem-based learning contributes to the development of students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. This study employs a qualitative research design using a case study approach. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, and document analysis of lesson plans and learning materials. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with data validity ensured through triangulation of sources and methods. The findings indicate that problem-based learning in Aqidah and Akhlaq education encourages active student engagement, critical thinking, and reflective moral reasoning. Students demonstrate improved understanding of Islamic values, increased responsibility in addressing real-life moral problems, and more positive behavioral changes. The study concludes that problem-based learning is an effective pedagogical strategy for integrating cognitive understanding and moral practice in Aqidah and Akhlaq education, and it offers meaningful implications for the development of innovative Islamic education learning models.

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Introduction

Aqidah and Akhlaq education plays a strategic role in shaping students' personalities at the junior secondary education level. This subject is not only oriented toward the mastery of faith concepts and moral values, but is also directed toward the internalization of Islamic values in students' daily lives. The effectiveness of Aqidah and Akhlaq learning is largely determined by pedagogical approaches that are able to connect instructional content with the realities of students' lived experiences.

Empirical conditions in schools indicate that Aqidah and Akhlaq learning is still frequently implemented through conventional approaches that emphasize memorization of concepts and verbal transmission of knowledge. Such instructional patterns tend to provide limited opportunities for students to understand the moral problems they encounter in social life. This situation has implications for students' low ability to apply Aqidah and Akhlaq values in a contextual manner.

Moral and behavioral issues among students in the madrasah environment continue to attract the attention of educators and researchers. Phenomena such as low discipline, weak sense of responsibility, and limited social awareness are often found in students' daily behavior. These conditions require learning approaches that encourage students to think critically and reflectively about the real problems they experience.

Problem-based learning is regarded as one of the approaches that is relevant to addressing these challenges. This approach positions real-life problems as the starting point of learning, thereby encouraging students to analyze situations, seek solutions, and make decisions based on the values they have learned. In the context of Islamic education, this approach enables Aqidah and Akhlaq values to be understood in an applied and meaningful manner.

A number of previous studies have shown that problem-based learning is capable of improving students' critical thinking skills, active participation, and conceptual understanding. Research conducted by Arends emphasizes that problem-based learning is effective in developing problem-solving skills and meaningful learning experiences among students (Arends, 2012: 397). These findings provide a theoretical foundation for the application of similar approaches in Aqidah and Akhlaq learning.

Studies within the context of Islamic education also demonstrate similar trends. Research by Nata explains that contextual Islamic religious education learning encourages students to understand religious teachings more deeply and relate them to their social lives (Nata, 2016: 214). Problem-based learning aligns with these contextual learning principles.

Another study conducted by Muhaimin highlights the importance of innovation in Islamic religious education learning so that it does not remain confined to purely normative and doctrinal approaches. Problem-based learning is considered capable of integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner (Muhaimin, 2017: 88). These findings further strengthen the relevance of problem-solving approaches in Aqidah and Akhlaq education.

Although several studies have discussed problem-based learning and Islamic religious education, research that specifically links Aqidah and Akhlaq learning with student problem-solving at the madrasah tsanawiyah level remains limited. Many existing studies tend to focus on cognitive learning outcomes and provide limited analysis of learning processes and their impact on students' moral behavior in a comprehensive manner.

These limitations indicate the existence of a research gap that needs to be addressed. There is a need for in-depth studies that examine how problem-based Aqidah and Akhlaq learning is designed, implemented, and internalized within the real context of madrasah education. Such research is important for understanding the dynamics of contextual learning processes that occur in the classroom.

MTs Muhammadiyah 04 Blagung is one of the Islamic educational institutions that seeks

to develop innovative Aqidah and Akhlaq learning practices. This madrasah faces various student-related issues concerning attitudes, behavior, and understanding of Islamic values. These conditions make MTs Muhammadiyah 04 Blagung a relevant context for examining the implementation of problem-based learning.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the integration of problem-based learning in Aqidah and Akhlaq education that directly originates from students' real-life problems. This research not only examines the effectiveness of the approach, but also describes the process of internalizing Aqidah and Akhlaq values through problem-solving activities.

This approach offers a new perspective in Islamic education learning, particularly in connecting normative values with students' everyday practices. Aqidah and Akhlaq education is not positioned merely as a theoretical subject, but as a means of fostering moral awareness through reflective and participatory learning experiences.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in enriching the body of knowledge on Islamic education pedagogy, particularly regarding the application of problem-based learning in Aqidah and Akhlaq education. The findings are expected to strengthen the conceptual foundation concerning the importance of contextual and problem-based approaches in values education.

The practical contribution of this research is directed toward teachers, madrasah principals, and policymakers in Islamic education. The findings may serve as a reference in designing more innovative Aqidah and Akhlaq learning strategies that are relevant to students' needs. This approach may also be used as an alternative model in the development of Islamic education curricula.

Based on this discussion, the present study is directed toward examining problem-based Aqidah and Akhlaq education at MTs Muhammadiyah 04 Blagung. This study is expected to provide both academic and practical contributions to the development of Islamic education learning that is oriented toward character formation and the resolution of students' real-life problems..

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the learning process of Aqidah and Akhlaq education based on students' problem-solving, including its planning, implementation, and the meanings constructed by teachers and students within the learning context. Qualitative research emphasizes a holistic understanding of phenomena based on naturalistic data obtained directly from the field (Moleong, 2019: 6).

The research was conducted at MTs Muhammadiyah 04 Blagung. The selection of this site was based on the consideration that the madrasah implements Aqidah and Akhlaq education by linking instructional materials to real-life problems faced by students. The study was carried out during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year over a period of approximately three months, covering the stages of preparation, data collection, and data analysis.

The data sources in this study consisted of primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained from Aqidah and Akhlaq teachers, students who served as the research subjects, and the madrasah principal. Secondary data included instructional documents such as lesson plans, syllabi, teaching materials, evaluation records, and other supporting

documents relevant to Aqidah and Akhlaq education learning. These data sources were used to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of problem-based learning (Sugiyono, 2020: 225).

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. Observation was employed to directly examine the Aqidah and Akhlaq learning process, teacher-student interactions, and students' involvement in solving learning problems. In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers, students, and the madrasah principal to obtain data related to lesson planning, problem-solving strategies, and students' responses to the learning process. Documentation was used to collect written data that supported the findings from observations and interviews.

The research instruments consisted of observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and documentation sheets. These instruments were developed based on the research focus and were flexibly adjusted to the dynamics encountered in the field (Sarosa, 2021: 94).

Data trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing data obtained from teachers, students, and the madrasah principal. Method triangulation was conducted by comparing data derived from observations, interviews, and documentation. The researcher also performed member checking by reconfirming the data with informants to ensure consistency between the collected data and actual field conditions. These procedures aimed to enhance the credibility and reliability of the research findings (Moleong, 2019: 330).

Data analysis was conducted from the beginning of data collection until the completion of the study. The data analysis technique followed an interactive analysis model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives. Data display was presented in the form of systematic narrative descriptions to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions were drawn based on patterns and meanings that emerged from the in-depth data analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014: 12)..

Result

This study examines problem-solving-based learning in Aqidah and Akhlak Education at MTs Muhammadiyah 04 Blagung using the CIPP evaluation model (Context, Input, Process, Product). Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach supported by quantitative reinforcement in the form of evaluation scores.

1. Context Evaluation

The context evaluation was conducted to assess the alignment of problem-solving-based Aqidah and Akhlak learning with the madrasah's vision, students' needs, and institutional policies. The findings indicate that the learning design addresses real-life problems encountered by students in their daily lives, particularly those related to the formation of religious attitudes and commendable moral conduct.

The principal and teachers emphasized that the problem-solving approach was selected to enable students to internalize aqidah and akhlak values contextually. This learning approach is also consistent with the madrasah's vision of developing students who are faithful, morally upright, and capable of critical thinking.

Table 1. Context Evaluation Component Scores

Context Component	Assessment Indicator	Score (%)	Category
Alignment with madrasah vision and mission	Relevance of learning to institutional vision	85	Very Good
Institutional policy support	Supporting regulations and programs	82	Good
Relevance to student needs	Suitability of material to student problems	86	Very Good
School environmental support	Religious climate and school culture	84	Very Good
Context Average		84.25	Very Good

2. Input Evaluation

The input evaluation covered the readiness of human resources, student characteristics, curriculum, and learning support facilities. Aqidah and Akhlak teachers possess relevant educational backgrounds and demonstrate an understanding of problem-solving-based instructional strategies.

Students show a strong readiness to participate actively in learning activities. The madrasah curriculum has integrated the problem-solving approach into lesson plans. Supporting facilities are available at a sufficient level, although further optimization is required.

Table 2. Input Evaluation Component Scores

Input Component	Assessment Indicator	Score (%)	Category
Teacher competence	Mastery of subject matter and methods	85	Very Good
Student readiness	Supporting regulations and programs	83	Good
Curriculum support	Integration of problem-solving approach	82	Good
Facilities and infrastructure	Availability of learning media and classrooms	78	Fair

Managerial support	Role of the madrasah principal	80	Good
Input Average		81.6	Good

3. Process Evaluation

The process evaluation assessed classroom implementation, teacher–student interaction, application of the problem-solving method, and the learning evaluation system. Learning activities were conducted actively through case discussions, experience-based problem-solving, and reflection on moral values.

Teachers acted as facilitators who guided students in identifying problems, analyzing causes, and formulating solutions based on Islamic teachings. The main challenges involved limited instructional time and variations in students’ cognitive abilities.

Table 3. Process Evaluation Component Scores

Process Component	Assessment Indicator	Score (%)	Category
Learning implementation	Alignment with lesson plans	82	Good
Application of problem-solving methods	Student engagement and discussion	81	Good
Teacher–student interaction	Guidance and communication	80	Good
Learning evaluation	Assessment of attitudes and understanding	79	Fair
Time management	Effectiveness of learning duration	76	Fair
Process Average		79.6	Good

4. Product Evaluation

Product evaluation focused on learning outcomes, including changes in attitudes, understanding of aqidah concepts, and students’ moral behavior. The findings indicate improvements in religious awareness, discipline, responsibility, and students’ ability to resolve moral problems.

Problem-solving–based learning contributes positively to the application of moral values in school life and students’ social environments.

Table 4. Product Evaluation Component Scores

Product Component	Assessment Indicator	Score (%)	Category
Aqidah understanding	Mastery of concepts and beliefs	83	Good

Moral behavior	Discipline and responsibility	85	Very Good
Problem-solving ability	Value-based analysis and solutions	81	Good
Learning impact	Application of values in daily life	84	Very Good
Product Average		83.25	Very Good

5. Recapitulation of CIPP Evaluation Results

Table 5. Recapitulation of CIPP Evaluation Scores

Component	Average Score (%)	Category
Context	84.25	Very Good
Input	81.6	Good
Process	79.6	Good
Product	83.25	Very Good
Overall Average	82.17	Good

Discussion

Problem-solving-based Aqidah and Akhlak learning at MTs Muhammadiyah 04 Blagung is categorized as good. This approach effectively connects instructional content with students' real-life experiences and contributes to deeper moral development and a stronger understanding of aqidah. By engaging students in identifying, analyzing, and solving real-life problems, the learning process becomes more meaningful and encourages active participation.

The evaluation results indicate that the context component is in the very good category. The learning objectives are aligned with the institution's vision and educational goals, and the implementation of problem-solving strategies is relevant to the needs of students. This alignment provides a strong foundation for fostering both religious understanding and positive character development.

The input component shows generally positive results, although several aspects still require improvement. Learning resources, instructional media, and supporting facilities should be enhanced to maximize the effectiveness of the learning process. In addition, continuous professional development for teachers can further strengthen the implementation of problem-solving-based instruction.

The process component also demonstrates satisfactory performance; however, improvements are needed in classroom time management and the organization of learning activities. More effective allocation of instructional time would allow students to engage more deeply in discussion, reflection, and problem-solving activities, thereby improving learning outcomes.

Finally, the product component achieves a very good level of performance. Students demonstrate improved understanding of aqidah concepts, better moral awareness, and greater ability to apply Islamic values in everyday life. Overall, the findings suggest that problem-

solving-based Aqidah and Akhlak learning has been implemented effectively, while continued improvements in learning facilities and instructional management will further enhance its quality and sustainability.

Conclusion

The context evaluation confirms that the learning approach aligns with the madrasah's vision and students' needs. This finding supports Stufflebeam's view that context evaluation ensures educational programs address genuine institutional and learner needs.

Input evaluation highlights teacher competence as a crucial factor in the success of value-based learning. This result aligns with Ananda's assertion that the quality of human resources determines the effectiveness of character education.

In the process component, the application of problem-solving strategies encourages students to think critically and reflectively. This finding is consistent with constructivist theory, which positions students as active participants in the learning process. Time constraints indicate the need for adjustments in classroom management strategies.

Product evaluation demonstrates the positive impact of learning on students' religious attitudes and moral behavior. This finding reinforces Nata's perspective that Aqidah and Akhlak education plays a strategic role in shaping holistic Islamic character.

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