Implementation of the Project Based Learning (PjBL) Model in Improving the Ability to Understand the Qur'an in the Independent Curriculum at MTsN 4 Tanah Datar

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze and describe the application of the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model to improve the ability to understand the Qur'an in the Merdeka curriculum. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type and a single case study type. This study was located at MTsN 4 Tanah Datar. Data were collected through participatory observation techniques, in-depth interviews and documentation studies. Data were analyzed using an analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman and Saldana. The implementation of project-based learning models can improve students' reading skills, especially in terms of tajwid and reading fluency. Project-based learning models are implemented by directing students to construct their own knowledge and understanding in understanding the Qur'an. Students' abilities in understanding the Qur'an, starting from understanding verse by verse, word by word, to the ability to understand the content of the interpretation of a verse and letter, can be improved because students implement it directly in a project. So that in the end, project-based learning models can be used to improve students' abilities in understanding the Qur'an, as evidenced by the increasing understanding of students regarding several verses taught in the Qur'an and Hadith subjects in the independent curriculum. The ability of students to understand the Qur'an, starting from understanding verse by verse, word by word, to the ability to understand lessons that can be absorbed can be improved by implementing a project-based learning model, but still under the supervision and direction of the facilitator.

Keywords: Implementation, Project-Based Learning Model, Ability to Understand the Qur'an, Independent Curriculum

Introduction

carried out directly and repeatedly. This is also related to learning in the world of education, where in learning students are taught directly about the material through practice, not just in theory (H. Mubarok, N. Sofiana, D. Kristina, 2022). In this learning process, students are required to make active efforts to search for, find, analyze, formulate, solve a problem related to the subject matter and draw a conclusion from the problem (A. E. Yolandha, R. Firdaus, 2023). Students are expected to be motivated and happy when carrying out learning activities, because directed learning can make students understand the material being studied, especially in the aspect of understanding the Qur'an (Rohman, 2022). Understanding the Qur'an is included in the category of abilities that are quite difficult to learn, because it covers many sciences and branches of knowledge. However, at the junior high school level, the ability to understand the Qur'an is a fairly basic ability and is at the initial development level. This ability must be possessed by students in junior high schools.

The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum provides freedom to students in learning, which encourages students to be active and participate (Nuryani, N. Ahyani, 2024). This curriculum is responsive to educational needs that emerged during the recovery period after the implementation of the emergency curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic (P. Sholihah Rosmana, S. Iskandar, F. Ayuni, F. Zalfa Hafizha, P. Fireli, 2023). The 2013 curriculum was used until 2022 when the Ministry of Education and Culture replaced it with the Independent Curriculum, now there are still several institutions that are adapting. Flexibility is one of the main principles of the Merdeka Curriculum (M. Suryaman, 2020). Schools can choose teaching materials, learning methods, and evaluations according to their wishes so that they best suit students' needs. This concept provides greater opportunities for teachers to be creative and innovative in delivering learning so that an interesting and effective learning environment is created (H. Legi, L. Samosir, 2023). This flexibility also helps to change according to different local conditions and cultures in various places. The independent curriculum places learning in the context of students' needs and situations, where they can begin to appreciate the relevance of what they are learning to their daily lives. This is important to increase student motivation and engagement in the learning process (H. Faiqoh Maulidah, H. Baharun, M. Tohet, 2023). It is hoped that through this process, students will gain not only knowledge but also skills that are relevant and can be used in their lives (N. C. Baity, G. Ghufronudin, 2023). The goal of the independent curriculum is to improve the quality of education in Indonesia and equip students to face future challenges by developing character, skills and knowledge holistically. Independent learning emphasizes freedom and creativity of thought (Nasir, 2025)

The role of learning models is very important in the teaching process because the success or failure of a learning activity depends greatly on the model used and its effectiveness during teaching. One of the innovative pedagogical approaches is Project Based Learning (PjBL) (A. Markula and M. Aksela, 2022). In education, the main focus is clearly on students, so it is called student-centered, with teachers considered as motivators and facilitators, where students are given the opportunity to work autonomously to build their own learning. This innovative instructional strategy called Project Based Learning, also known as PjBL, integrates projects into the instructional process (L. Hao, K. Tian, U. K. M. Salleh, C. H. Leng, S. Ge, 2024). Teachers play the role of facilitators in Project Based Learning by assigning students to explore, assess, and interpret to create learning outcomes(S. Amin and M. Shahnaz, 2023) .Students are allowed to study independently for a certain period, which is called independent study. A problem becomes the starting point that requires students to obtain information or data (Koumachi, 2024).

Through the explanation above, we can conclude that project based learning is a learning model that focuses on the activities of students to implement the concepts and principles they have learned, by conducting an in-depth analysis of an issue and finding solutions that are relevant to the issue. And students learn independently, and the results achieved from this learning are products (M. Lukitasari, R. Hasan, A. Sukri, 2021).Therefore, this Project Based Learning model is planned to be integrated in the use of instructors to deal with complex problems. So, in the implementation of this model, students must be observed and explored in depth and in innovative and more active learning conceptual inquiry through complex activities.

Therefore, this project-based learning model is very suitable to be applied to improve the ability to understand the Qur'an in MTsN 4 Tanah Datar students. MTsN 4 Tanah Datar is a fairly well-known junior high school and has a good image in the perspective of the wider community. This is proven by the many people who choose MTsN 4 Tanah Datar as a place of Islamic Education for their children. However, quite a lot of students have difficulty understanding the Qur'an because they come from different backgrounds. Therefore, researchers are trying to examine the application of the project-based learning model in improving students' ability to read the Qur'an

Method

The description to be given in this study is the application of the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model to improve the ability to understand the Qur'an in the Merdeka curriculum where the research is a qualitative approach with a type of case study that seeks to understand the case in depth and narrowly (Yin, 2018) so that an understanding is found that is not biased and focused on the problems of implementing the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model to improve the ability to understand the Qur'an in the Merdeka curriculum. This research is located at MTsN 4 Tanah Datar which has a uniqueness, namely that its students are quite able to understand the Qur'an both per lafadz, verses and the contents of the verses. This increase occurs in the learning process applied at MTsN 4 Tanah Datar.

Data related to the application of the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model to improve the ability to understand the Qur'an in the Merdeka curriculum were collected through in-depth interview techniques (Seidman, 2006), participatory observation and also documentation studies. In-depth interviews were conducted with the head of the madrasah and teachers who apply the project-based learning model. Participatory observation was conducted in the classroom when the teacher was teaching using a project-based learning model, especially in the subject of the Qur'an and Hadith. Documentation studies were used to explore data on the profile of the madrasah and so on.

The results of the study were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman and Saldana model analysis which applied data collection, data condensation, drawing conclusions and verifying the conclusions that had been produced. This model is quite effective for analyzing single case studies that are in accordance with those contained in this study. The data that has been taken is checked for credibility, namely by triangulating sources and triangulating techniques, transferability, (Creswell, 2014)namely by applying the results of the study in other places that have similarities, dependability, namely by discussing with fellow researchers or senior researchers, and also confirmability, namely by reconfirming the data obtained by returning to the research location.

Results and Discussion

In the implementation of the learning model, there are steps in implementing the learning of the Qur'an and Hadith using the project-based learning model, namely, determining learning objectives, designing project planning, preparing schedules, monitoring and evaluating students and the development of the project being run, evaluating experiences that are in accordance with the main material, namely understanding the Qur'an.

Based on the results of research conducted by researchers from the 6 steps that encourage students' creative thinking skills, namely project testing. Project testing in its implementation focuses on students, students are asked to create a project and present the results of the project that has been made. This has indirectly increased students' ability to understand the Qur'an in learning. In understanding the Qur'an, students do not only read the ability that is improved, but rather leads to the ability to understand per lafadz or per word or even per verse. The ability to understand the Qur'an is not only limited to the technical aspects of reading, but also includes understanding the meaning, contemplation, practice, and is influenced by internal and external factors. In the aspect of project testing, students must understand it themselves with the help of a dictionary and also Google translation, then in understanding the verses, students must read the Qur'an and its translation, then read the contents and be able to present it in front of their friends and teachers.

One of the models applied is project based learning. The reason for applying this model is to see how much the students' creative thinking skills have increased. The increase in question is from the students' thinking skills before the project based learning model is applied and after using this model.(Hart, n.d.) The application of project based learning usually and on average includes a cycle of

activities from observation, data collection, creation of works, exhibitions, and evaluation. (M. S. Ramadhan, 2024) Meanwhile, a large project should begin with long-term planning, and be accompanied by scheduling for various activities.(Aisya, 2021)

From the series of activities in the project based learning above, here students are expected to combine all ideas from groups formed in the class into one agreement, from this agreement a central premise will be formed. (L. Heny Nirmayani, N. Putu, 2021) Through this, they are also expected to be able to define the contents of the group statement through small discussions, with their group mates, in order to obtain a method or process to jointly maintain what is proposed in the central statement. The most important thing is the integration of the desires and ideas of students from each class.(N. Nursalam, S. Sulaeman, 2023)

This opinion is in line with the Al-Qur'an Hadith learning process at MTsN 4 Kota Datar, where project based learning has been applied. At this stage, it is specifically for teachers to carry out initial planning activities in the project based learning methodology related to the introductory discussion scheme which is a question that triggers a problem, or the teacher can invite students to discuss first. At this stage, the teacher divides students into several groups and provides an explanation of how to create a project. (P. Guo, N. Saab, L. S. Post, 2020) At this stage, students complete the project by accompanying friends in the group. At this step, the teacher monitors how active students are in completing the project and in this section, the teacher's job is to provide guidance if there are obstacles. At this step, students are asked to show others the results of the project they have completed, and the teacher provides an assessment. At this stage, the teacher provides an evaluation or useful suggestions as a follow-up to the student's project. The focus of learning lies on the core principles and concepts of the discipline, involving students in problem-solving investigations and other meaningful tasks, giving students the opportunity to work autonomously in constructing their own knowledge, and culminating in producing real products.

Project-based learning is a learning model that involves a project in the learning process. Projects worked on by students can be individual or group projects and are carried out within a certain period of time collaboratively, producing a product, the results of which will then be displayed or presented. The implementation of the project is carried out collaboratively and innovatively, uniquely, focusing on solving problems related to the lives of students. Project-based learning is part of the learner-centered instructional method.(Indarti, 2016). This model replaces the use of a learning model that is still teacher-centered which tends to make students more passive compared to teachers. This results in low student learning motivation so that their scientific performance decreases.

Project-based learning is a learning model that uses problems as the first step in integrating new knowledge based on real experiences.(C. Zhong and K. Lyu, 2022) Project-based learning is carried out systematically, involving students in learning attitudes, knowledge and skills through investigations in product design. Project-based learning is an innovative learning model, which emphasizes contextual learning through complex activities.

The implementation of project-based learning provides students with the opportunity to think critically and be able to develop their creativity through developing initiatives to produce real products in the form of goods or services. In project-based learning, students are actively involved in solving problems assigned by the teacher in the form of a project. Students actively manage their learning by working in real ways that produce real products. So the end result of the learning process is a product that can be meaningful and useful. Project-based learning can reduce competition in the classroom and direct students to be more collaborative than working alone. In addition, project-based learning can also be carried out independently by working to construct their learning through new knowledge and skills, and realizing it in real products.

According to Bie, project based learning is emphasized as: a learning model that focuses on concepts and principles as an integration of a discipline, including teaching discipline, facilitating

students in problem-solving activities, and other tasks that can be done that encourage students to work independently to learn with balance, and finally provide valuable and realistic student work products.(M. Fajra and R. Novalinda, 2020) The project-based learning model can foster a more orderly learning attitude in students and can make students more active and creative in learning. The project-based learning model also has great potential to create a more interesting and meaningful learning experience. In addition, the project-based model also facilitates students to investigate, solve problems, be student-centered, and produce real products in the form of project results.

So in this case the role of the teacher in learning the Project Based Learning method is as a controller of the learning process.(D. Nababan, A. K. , Marpaung, 2023) The teacher acts as a time keeper, mediates conflicts between students, encourages cooperation and group dynamics. Observer of group behavior in the learning process. The teacher encourages group interaction and the courage to express opinions, encourages students to develop and appreciate their abilities and realize their short comings.

The aspect of the ability to understand the Qur'an includes several important dimensions that are interrelated, both in terms of technical reading and understanding the meaning and practice. The following are the main aspects of the ability to understand the Qur'an:

1. Reading Ability (Technical)
   a. Includes the skill of pronouncing the hijaiyah letters correctly, understanding punctuation, and applying the rules of tajwid and makharijul huruf (where the letters come out).
   b. Reading with tartil, namely slowly, calmly, and paying attention to the rules of reading and the nature of the letters as recommended in QS. Al-Muzammil: 4

2. Understanding Meaning (Cognitive)
   a. Understanding the meaning of words and verses, both through translation and interpretation
   b. Understanding the context of the verse, the reason for its revelation (asbabun nuzul), and the message contained therein.
   c. Learning basic Arabic will be very helpful in understanding the original meaning of the verses of the Qur'an

3. Appreciation and Contemplation (Tadabbur)
   a. Reflecting on the contents and wisdom of the verses of the Qur'an and relating them to everyday life.
   b. Practicing the values that have been understood in behavior and attitudes

The ability to understand the Qur'an that can be improved for students at the MTsN level is at all levels, only the capacity is still quite basic and has not entered an advanced level of understanding and in-depth and detailed analysis.[38]This ability can be used by MTsN students to be able to pass the practical exam and the final exam level which is carried out in class IX

Conclusion

The Independent Curriculum provides freedom in implementing learning models, but it is expected that the approach used is a student-centered approach. The project-based learning model is one of the learning models that has a student-centered approach. The implementation of project-based learning models can improve students' reading skills, especially in terms of tajwid and reading fluency. Project-based learning models are implemented by directing students to construct their own knowledge and understanding in understanding the Qur'an. Students' abilities in understanding the Qur'an, starting from understanding verse by verse, word by word, to the ability to understand the content of the interpretation of a verse and letter, can be improved because students implement it directly in a project. So that in the end, project-based learning models can be used to improve students' abilities in understanding the Qur'an, as evidenced by the increasing understanding of students regarding several verses taught in the Qur'an and Hadith subjects in the merdeka curriculum. The ability of students to understand the Qur'an, starting from understanding verse by verse, word by word,

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