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Problem-Based Learning in Al-Qur'an Hadith Classrooms: A Case Study of Seventh-Grade Students in an Indonesian Madrasah

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ABSTRACT

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) offers opportunities to connect religious teachings with authentic problems, yet its implementation in Al-Qur'an Hadith instruction within madrasahs remains insufficiently explored. This study examined PBL implementation, student responses, and supporting and inhibiting factors in seventh-grade Al-Qur'an Hadith classrooms. A qualitative single-case study was conducted at MTs Nururrodhiyah, Jambi, Indonesia, during the 2025–2026 academic year. Data were collected through six classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with one teacher and ten selected students, and analysis of instructional documents. Twenty-five students participated in the observed learning activities. Data were analyzed through condensation, thematic organization, and verification, with credibility supported by triangulation and member checking. The teacher implemented five PBL stages: problem orientation, group organization, investigation, presentation, and reflection. Most interviewed students (8 of 10) responded positively, particularly to discussions connecting Qur'anic and Hadith teachings with everyday experiences. However, participation varied across groups, and investigation and reflection were constrained by instructional time. Students also experienced difficulties locating relevant scriptural evidence and interpreting religious texts. Observations indicated emerging contextual understanding but provided insufficient evidence of higher-order critical thinking development. PBL provided opportunities for contextual and participatory Al-Qur'an Hadith learning, although implementation depended on teacher scaffolding, equitable group participation, and adequate reflection time. These findings offer context-specific guidance for PBL implementation in madrasahs; further research should examine learning outcomes using appropriate assessment instruments.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching of the Qur'an and Hadith in madrasahs plays a strategic role in shaping students' religious understanding and character. Ideally, this education should not only transfer textual knowledge but also equip students with the ability to connect Islamic teachings to the realities of daily life. However, teaching practices in the field are still dominated by a textual and teacher-centered approach, which places greater emphasis on memorization and theoretical explanations of verses or hadiths, without sufficient effort to relate them to students' social contexts. This situation results in monotonous learning that fails to develop higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis and problem-solving skills that are, in fact, the primary demands of 21st-century education (Mustakim et al., 2024) (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery, 2006).

In response to these challenges, one model considered relevant is Problem-Based Learning (PBL). This model uses authentic problems as the starting point for learning and encourages students to actively investigate, discuss, and reflect on solutions based on the concepts they have learned (Bashith & Amin, 2017). In the context of the Qur'an and Hadith, PBL offers students the opportunity to analyze moral, social, or spiritual issues faced by society and then relate them to Qur'anic values and the Hadith. This aligns with the objectives of religious education, which are not only cognitive but also affective and psychomotor.

Several studies have shown the positive impact of Problem-Based Learning on improving learning outcomes and critical thinking skills across various subjects (Dochy et al., 2003;Evendi & Verawati, 2021). However, research in the field of religious education, particularly in the teaching of the Qur'an and Hadith, remains very limited. Most existing research focuses on the influence of learning models on learning outcomes (e.g., improved test scores) or student motivation, but rarely examines in depth the process of implementing Problem-Based Learning in the classroom. In fact, understanding the process—from planning and implementation to evaluation—is key to determining how PBL contributes to changes in students' learning styles (Loyens et al., 2013;Khoiriyah & Roberts, 2025). More specifically, studies exploring the implementation of PBL in the Qur'an and Hadith subject at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level are virtually nonexistent, resulting in a significant research gap between pedagogical needs and the availability of empirical evidence in the field.

Furthermore, the characteristics of madrasahs as Islamic educational institutions with a strong religious culture also influence the effectiveness and dynamics of PBL implementation. Madrasah students are accustomed to doctrinal and rote-learning approaches, so the transition to a problem-based approach requires specific adaptation from both teachers and students (Zamsiswaya et al., 2024). Therefore, a study that specifically explores the implementation of PBL in the madrasah setting becomes. Therefore, a study that specifically examines the implementation of PBL in madrasah settings is urgently needed to generate contextual and practical recommendations.

This study aims to holistically analyze the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning model in Al-Qur'an and Hadith instruction in the 7th-grade class at MTs Nururrodhiyah, Jambi City. The primary focus includes the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes carried out by teachers, as well as the challenges and adaptation efforts within the madrasah context. The novelty of this study lies in three aspects. First, this study is one of the first empirical studies to deeply explore the implementation of PBL in the Qur'an and Hadith subject at the MTs level, whereas similar research has primarily been conducted in science, mathematics, or general education subjects (Yew & Goh, 2016; Amir et al., 2022). Second, this study does not focus solely on learning outcomes but also reveals the comprehensive implementation process—including planning, execution, and evaluation—thereby providing a complete picture of how PBL is adapted within the madrasah context. This differs from previous studies, which have primarily measured the impact of PBL on quantitative variables such as improved grades or motivation (Dochy et al., 2003;Evendi & Verawati, 2021).

Third, this study offers an analysis of the specific challenges in implementing PBL in a madrasah setting with a strong culture of rote memorization, as well as the adaptation efforts made by teachers, so that the results can serve as a practical reference for the development of religious education in madrasahs. As noted by (Sockalingam & Schmidt, 2011), the success of PBL depends heavily on the institutional context and the readiness of both teachers and students; therefore, contextual studies such as this are essential for enriching the PBL literature in the field of religious education.

In practical terms, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a guide for religious education teachers and curriculum developers in designing more innovative Qur'an and Hadith instruction that is responsive to students' needs in the modern era. The research questions to be answered are: (1) How are the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Qur'an and Hadith instruction using the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model carried out at MTs Nururrodhiyah? (2) What challenges are encountered in implementing PBL, and how are these challenges addressed? (3) How do students respond to the PBL model in Qur'an and Hadith instruction?

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive single-case study design to investigate the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in seventh-grade Al-Qur'an Hadith instruction. A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because the research sought to understand instructional practices, student experiences, and contextual factors influencing PBL implementation within a specific educational setting. Rather than measuring the causal effects of PBL on learning achievement, the study focused on how the instructional model was planned, implemented, and evaluated in an authentic classroom environment. The single-case design enabled an in-depth examination of the interactions between instructional procedures, teacher facilitation, student participation, and institutional conditions (Yin, 2018).

2.2 Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at MTs Nururrodhiyah, Jambi City, Indonesia, between September 2025 and January 2026. The research setting was selected purposively because the madrasah had implemented PBL in Al-Qur'an Hadith instruction for at least one semester and provided access to classroom activities and relevant instructional documents. The study involved one Al-Qur'an Hadith teacher and 25 seventh-grade students who participated in the observed learning activities. The teacher served as the primary informant regarding instructional planning, implementation, and evaluation. Ten students were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews to explore their learning experiences, perceptions of PBL, and challenges encountered during classroom activities. Thus, the 25 students constituted the observed classroom group, whereas the ten selected students served as interview informants. The study examined a context-specific instructional case rather than a statistically representative sample of madrasahs.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to obtain complementary evidence regarding PBL implementation. Classroom observations were conducted across six instructional sessions, each lasting 80 minutes. The researcher observed the teaching and learning process without participating directly in classroom instruction. An observation protocol was used to document the five stages of PBL: problem orientation, organization of learning activities, investigation, presentation of solutions, and reflection. Field notes also recorded teacher–student

interactions, student participation, group collaboration, instructional adaptations, and challenges arising during learning activities.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Al-Qur'an Hadith teacher and ten selected students. The teacher participated in three interview sessions lasting approximately 45–60 minutes each, while student interviews lasted approximately 20–30 minutes. The interview questions explored lesson planning, instructional implementation, students' experiences, perceived learning benefits, and obstacles to participation. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to pursue relevant issues emerging from classroom observations while maintaining consistency across the principal interview topics.

Document analysis complemented the observational and interview data. The documents examined included lesson plans, teaching materials, student worksheets, learning modules, teacher reflection notes, and available student assignments or portfolios. These materials were reviewed to examine the alignment between planned instruction and observed classroom practices, particularly regarding the integration of contextual problems and the five PBL stages. Combining these sources enabled the researcher to compare participants' accounts with instructional practices and documentary evidence.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative analysis framework involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Sugiyono, 2020). First, interview transcripts, observation notes, and relevant documents were organized and reviewed to identify information associated with the research questions. The data were then condensed through coding to identify recurring patterns related to instructional planning, implementation of PBL stages, student responses, supporting factors, and implementation challenges. Related codes were grouped into broader analytical categories and themes.

Second, the coded data were organized into descriptive narratives and thematic matrices to facilitate comparisons across observations, interviews, and documents. This process enabled the researcher to identify similarities, differences, and relationships among participants' experiences and observed instructional practices. Third, preliminary interpretations were examined against the available evidence to develop and verify the study findings. NVivo 14 was used to assist with organizing and managing the qualitative data. The software supported data management, while interpretation and theme development remained the responsibility of the researcher.

2.5. Trustworthiness of the Findings

Several strategies were employed to strengthen the credibility and dependability of the findings. Source and method triangulation involved comparing information obtained from the teacher, students, classroom observations, and instructional documents. This process was used to examine the consistency of reported experiences and observed instructional practices. Member checking was conducted by sharing interview transcripts and preliminary interpretations with relevant participants to confirm the accuracy of their statements and clarify potential misunderstandings.

Repeated classroom observations provided opportunities to examine instructional practices across different learning sessions rather than relying on a single observation. In addition, an audit trail consisting of field notes, reflective records, and documentation of analytical decisions was maintained to support transparency in the research process. These procedures were intended to strengthen the credibility of the interpretations while acknowledging the context-specific nature of the single-case study.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted after obtaining research permission from the relevant educational authorities and the participating madrasah. Participants and their parents or guardians were informed about the study objectives, data collection procedures, and voluntary nature of participation. Written

informed consent was obtained in accordance with the procedures reported for the study. Participant identifiers were used when presenting student interview excerpts, and research materials were stored on a password-protected device accessible only to the researchers. These measures were intended to protect participant confidentiality and ensure responsible management of the collected data.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the qualitative case study examining the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in seventh-grade Al-Qur'an Hadith instruction at MTs Nururrodhiyah, Jambi City. Drawing on classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with the teacher and selected students, and instructional document analysis, the findings are organized into five interconnected themes: instructional planning, classroom implementation of PBL, student responses, supporting factors, and implementation challenges. Each theme is presented using relevant observational evidence and participant accounts to illustrate how PBL was implemented within the madrasah context. The subsequent discussion interprets these findings in relation to existing literature, emphasizing the role of teacher facilitation, contextual learning experiences, student participation, and instructional constraints in shaping PBL implementation.

3.1 Findings

3.1.1 Instructional Planning

Based on interviews with the Al-Qur'an and Hadith teacher, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) instructional planning began with the development of a Lesson Plan (RPP) that integrated PBL syntax into the Al-Qur'an and Hadith curriculum. The teacher stated that he designed contextual problems relevant to students' daily lives—such as honesty, responsibility, and mutual aid—and then linked them to relevant Qur'anic verses and hadiths. The analyzed RPP documents show that each session is designed with a time allocation of two class periods (2 × 40 minutes) and covers all five stages of PBL: problem orientation, student organization, investigation, solution development, and reflection.

The teacher explained the planning process as follows:

> *"I do tailor my lesson plans to the PBL steps. The issues I raise are usually ones that are relevant to the children—for example, honesty—because they often encounter such situations at school. Then I look for a suitable verse or hadith so they can see for themselves that the Qur'an addresses real-life situations."* (Teacher Interview, November 18, 2025)

However, the teacher acknowledged that she often had to adjust the time allocation in the classroom due to limited class hours:

> *"Ideally, two hours would be enough, but sometimes the discussion runs over, so I have to be smart about managing time. Sometimes I shorten the reflection or combine it with the conclusion at the end."* (Teacher Interview, November 18, 2025)

3.1.2 Implementation of PBL in the Classroom

Classroom observations conducted over six sessions showed that the teacher implemented Problem-Based Learning (PBL) through the following five stages:

Stage 1: Problem Orientation. The teacher began the lesson by stating the learning objectives and providing a general overview of the material. He then presented a real-life problem, such as dishonest behavior in the school environment, and linked it to Q.S. Al-Maidah verse 8 and hadiths concerning honesty. Observations on November 10, 2025, noted that most students appeared enthusiastic when the

teacher connected the problem to their everyday experiences. One student expressed:

> *"I like it when the teacher tells a story about a problem I have experienced, so I start thinking, oh, this is what the verse means."* (Student S1 Interview, November 15, 2025)

Stage 2: Organizing for Learning. The teacher divided students into five groups, each consisting of five members. Each group was given 15 minutes to discuss the problem and find evidence (dalil) from the Qur'an or hadith. Observations on November 17, 2025, revealed that two groups engaged in active discussions, while one group tended to be passive and was dominated by one or two students. The teacher circulated among the groups, providing guidance to those experiencing difficulties. The teacher explained his strategy:

> *"I divide the groups heterogeneously, mixing high-achieving students with those who still need guidance. The aim is for them to help each other."* (Teacher Interview, November 18, 2025)

Stage 3: Investigation and Information Gathering. Students used the Qur'an and collections of hadiths to find relevant verses or hadiths. Based on observations on November 24, 2025, some students experienced difficulties in identifying the right keywords for finding evidence, so the teacher provided additional guidance in the form of thematic keywords. One student acknowledged this difficulty:

> *"I was a bit confused looking for the verse. Sometimes I know the content but forget where the surah is. Then the teacher gave us keywords, so it became easier."* (Student S4 Interview, November 24, 2025)

The teacher also added:

> *"Students are still accustomed to being told directly. So when they were asked to find it themselves, they were a bit surprised. But after some guidance, they started to manage."* (Teacher Interview, November 25, 2025)

Stage 4: Presentation of Results. Each group presented its discussion results in front of the class. Observations on December 1, 2025, noted that three out of five groups presented their findings reasonably well, while the other two were still hesitant and required the teacher's assistance in articulating their arguments. The teacher provided reinforcement and corrected misunderstandings, particularly regarding the contextual interpretation of verses. One student shared their experience:

> *"During the presentation I was nervous, but the teacher said what matters is that we understand the meaning of the verse, not just memorize it."* (Student S2 Interview, December 1, 2025)

Stage 5: Reflection. The teacher led a reflection session by asking about the benefits of the lesson and how students could apply the values they had learned. Observations on December 8, 2025, indicated that approximately 60% of students were able to mention one or two applications of the value of honesty in their lives. One student stated:

> *"I now remember that honesty is commanded by Allah. So I must be brave to be honest even when it is difficult."* (Student S6 Interview, December 8, 2025)

The teacher also reflected on this process:

> *"I think this reflection stage is important because I can see how much they understand and are willing to practice. Even though time is limited, I always try to include reflection."* (Teacher Interview, December 9, 2025)

3.1.3 Student Responses to Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

Interviews with 10 students revealed that the majority (8 students) responded positively to PBL because they found it easier to understand the connection between the teachings of the Qur'an and hadith

with real life. One student stated:

> *"I now understand that the verses are not just to be read, but they have a connection to our everyday problems."* (Student S3 Interview, November 15, 2025)

Another student added:

> *"Learning becomes more fun because we have discussions, not just listen to the teacher. I also get to know my friends' opinions."* (Student S8 Interview, November 22, 2025)

However, two students admitted they were still more comfortable with the lecture method because discussions required extra effort to find evidence. One student commented:

> *"I am sometimes confused about finding the verses, so it is easier if the teacher explains directly."* (Student S7 Interview, December 4, 2025)

Another student also expressed:

> *"With lectures, I just listen and take notes. With discussions, I have to think and search on my own, which is more tiring."* (Student S9 Interview, December 4, 2025)

Although students reported better conceptual understanding, observations did not provide direct evidence that PBL significantly improved their critical thinking skills, as discussions remained limited to finding evidence without in-depth analysis of contextual relevance. The teacher also acknowledged that he had not systematically measured critical thinking skills, focusing instead on understanding the content of verses and the application of values:

> *"I do not yet have a specific instrument to measure critical thinking. What I observe is more about their understanding and their attitudes after learning."* (Teacher Interview, December 9, 2025)

3.1.4 Supporting Factors

Observations and interviews identified three main supporting factors:

First, student motivation increased when the problems presented were close to their experiences. One student expressed:

> *"I am more enthusiastic about learning if the problem is something I have experienced, so I become curious."* (Student S5 Interview, November 15, 2025)

Second, the teacher's role as a facilitator was very helpful, particularly in providing guidance and reinforcement. The teacher stated:

> *"I try to be a good facilitator, not giving direct answers, but providing clues about which direction they should explore."* (Teacher Interview, November 25, 2025)

Third, the availability of learning resources such as the Qur'an and books of hadith enabled students to conduct independent investigations. One student said:

> *"Fortunately, there are Qur'ans and hadith books in the classroom, so we can search on our own."* (Student S10 Interview, November 24, 2025)

3.1.5 Implementation Challenges

Three main challenges were identified:

First, the time allocation (2 × 40 minutes) was insufficient to complete all PBL stages optimally; the teacher often shortened the investigation or reflection stages. The teacher explained:

> *"Time is the biggest constraint. Sometimes the discussion is not finished but the bell has already rung. I am*

forced to cut the reflection stage, even though it is important." (Teacher Interview, December 2, 2025)

Second, students' abilities to understand the text of verses and hadiths varied, so some required extra guidance. The teacher expressed:

"There are students who are already fluent in reading and understanding, but there are also those who still struggle. I have to divide my attention equally." (Teacher Interview, December 2, 2025)

One student also acknowledged:

"I find it difficult to understand verses with somewhat elevated language, so the teacher has to explain them again." (Student S7 Interview, December 4, 2025)

Third, student participation in discussions was uneven, with 2-3 students per group dominating the conversation. The teacher observed:

"In every group, there are always some who dominate and some who remain silent. I always remind them to contribute, but sometimes they are shy." (Teacher Interview, December 2, 2025)

A student who tended to be passive revealed:

"I actually know the answer, but I am embarrassed if I am wrong, so I just stay quiet." (Student S7 Interview, December 4, 2025)

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) was implemented through five interconnected stages in seventh-grade Al-Qur'an Hadith instruction: problem orientation, organization of learning activities, investigation, presentation of solutions, and reflection. Although these stages were incorporated into classroom instruction, their implementation was influenced by instructional time, students' readiness for independent inquiry, and the teacher's facilitative practices. This finding supports the understanding that PBL involves more than the procedural application of instructional stages; its educational value depends on how students engage with meaningful problems and construct knowledge through inquiry and collaboration. Yew and Goh (2016) emphasized the importance of problem-centered learning processes in promoting active knowledge construction, while Sockalingam and Schmidt (2011) highlighted the significance of problem characteristics in shaping students' learning experiences. In the present study, contextual problems involving honesty, responsibility, and mutual assistance provided opportunities for students to connect religious teachings with situations encountered in everyday life.

A significant finding concerns the relationship between contextual problem orientation and students' understanding of Qur'anic and Hadith teachings. Classroom observations and interviews indicated that students responded positively when instructional problems reflected familiar social experiences. Eight of the ten interviewed students expressed favorable perceptions of PBL, particularly because classroom discussions helped them recognize the relevance of religious values to daily activities. This finding suggests that contextual problems may facilitate students' transition from memorizing religious texts toward interpreting their practical significance. The result is consistent with the theoretical perspective of Hmelo-Silver (2004), who explained that PBL encourages learners to construct understanding through engagement with authentic problems. Similarly, Savery (2006) emphasized the importance of learner-centered inquiry in developing meaningful understanding. Nevertheless, positive student perceptions should not be interpreted as direct evidence of improved learning achievement, because the present study did not employ standardized achievement measures or a comparative instructional design.

The teacher's facilitative role emerged as another important factor influencing PBL implementation.

During investigation activities, several students experienced difficulties identifying relevant Qur'anic verses and Hadith references, particularly when they were required to search for scriptural evidence independently. The teacher responded by providing thematic keywords, guiding discussions, and clarifying misunderstandings without immediately supplying complete answers. These practices illustrate the importance of instructional scaffolding in supporting learners who are transitioning from teacher-directed instruction to more independent inquiry. Yew and Goh (2016) described facilitation as a central component of PBL, while Loyens et al. (2013) examined how students' approaches to learning relate to their participation in problem-based educational environments. The present findings extend these perspectives to Al-Qur'an Hadith instruction by showing that effective facilitation may require support not only for problem-solving processes but also for locating, understanding, and interpreting religious sources.

Despite generally positive student responses, participation in collaborative learning activities remained uneven. Classroom observations revealed that some students actively contributed to discussions, whereas others remained hesitant or relied on more confident group members. Interview evidence further suggested that fear of providing incorrect answers and unfamiliarity with independent investigation contributed to students' reluctance to participate. These findings indicate that organizing students into groups does not automatically ensure equitable engagement. Sockalingam and Schmidt (2011) highlighted the relationship between problem characteristics and students' learning experiences, suggesting that the accessibility and perceived difficulty of learning tasks warrant attention when designing PBL activities. In the madrasah context, Zamsiswaya et al. (2024) examined teacher identity and project-based learning practices, offering a related perspective on how institutional and pedagogical contexts influence student-centered learning. However, because their study addressed project-based rather than problem-based learning, the comparison should be understood as contextual rather than evidence of identical instructional processes. The present findings suggest that assigning group responsibilities, providing structured discussion prompts, and creating opportunities for quieter students to contribute may help address participation inequalities.

Another important finding concerns the limitations of PBL in fostering higher-order thinking when investigation and reflection remain insufficiently developed. Although students demonstrated an emerging ability to connect religious values with everyday experiences, the observed discussions largely focused on identifying relevant verses and explaining their basic meanings. The teacher also acknowledged that critical thinking had not been assessed using a specific instrument. Consequently, the findings cannot establish whether PBL improved students' critical thinking skills. This distinction is important because the theoretical potential of PBL does not necessarily translate into demonstrable higher-order learning outcomes. Dochy et al. (2003) examined learning outcomes associated with PBL, while Mustakim et al. (2024) discussed the design and implementation of PBL to promote higher-order thinking skills. In relation to these studies, the present findings suggest that teachers need to move beyond information retrieval by incorporating questions that require students to compare interpretations, justify arguments, evaluate alternative responses, and apply religious principles to complex situations.

Instructional time also shaped the quality of PBL implementation. Although lesson plans included all five stages, the teacher frequently shortened investigation or reflection activities to accommodate the available 80-minute sessions. This adjustment enabled the lesson to proceed but potentially reduced opportunities for students to examine alternative interpretations and consolidate their learning. Reflection is particularly relevant to Al-Qur'an Hadith instruction because students are expected not only to understand religious concepts but also to consider their implications for personal conduct and social responsibility. Savery (2006) identified reflection and self-directed learning as important features of problem-centered instruction. The present findings therefore suggest that teachers should allocate sufficient time for students to explain what they have learned, reconsider their initial assumptions, and relate religious principles to authentic situations. However, the study did not directly measure the effects

of shortened reflection on students' understanding or behavior.

The findings contribute to discussions of student-centered pedagogy in Islamic education by illustrating the contextual adaptations required when PBL is implemented in Al-Qur'an Hadith classrooms. Rather than demonstrating the superiority of PBL over conventional instruction, this case study identifies instructional conditions that appear to support or constrain its implementation. These include the relevance of contextual problems, the teacher's guidance in interpreting religious sources, students' confidence in collaborative inquiry, and the availability of time for meaningful reflection. The findings also complement Zulfa (2024), who examined PBL implementation in Al-Qur'an Hadith learning at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level, by providing a process-oriented account of classroom practices and implementation challenges.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. The study involved one teacher and a single class of 25 students in one madrasah, with ten students participating in interviews. Consequently, the findings are context-specific and cannot be assumed to represent PBL implementation across different madrasahs. Furthermore, the study relied on observations, interviews, and instructional documents without standardized measures of critical thinking or longitudinal evidence of behavioral change. Future studies should examine PBL implementation across multiple madrasahs, investigate how teacher scaffolding and group participation influence learning processes, and integrate appropriate assessment instruments to evaluate conceptual understanding and higher-order thinking. Overall, this study demonstrates that meaningful PBL implementation in Al-Qur'an Hadith instruction requires attention not only to instructional procedures but also to the quality of inquiry, equitable participation, and opportunities for reflective engagement.

4. CONCLUSION

This study revealed that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) was implemented in seventh-grade Al-Qur'an Hadith instruction through five interconnected stages: problem orientation, organization of learning activities, investigation, presentation of solutions, and reflection. The findings indicated that contextual problems related to students' everyday experiences encouraged classroom participation and helped students connect Qur'anic and Hadith teachings with practical situations. However, the implementation of PBL was constrained by limited instructional time, differences in students' abilities to interpret religious texts, and unequal participation in group discussions. Although most interviewed students expressed positive perceptions of PBL, the observed learning activities primarily demonstrated basic conceptual understanding rather than clear evidence of higher-order critical thinking development. These findings highlight the importance of teacher scaffolding, structured collaborative activities, and adequate opportunities for reflection in supporting meaningful PBL implementation within madrasah classrooms. Nevertheless, this study was limited by its single-case design involving one teacher and 25 seventh-grade students at one madrasah, with only ten students participating in interviews. Furthermore, the absence of standardized assessments and longitudinal observations restricted the ability to evaluate changes in students' critical thinking skills and the sustained application of religious values. Future research should involve multiple madrasahs with diverse educational characteristics, employ mixed-methods or longitudinal designs, and incorporate validated assessment instruments to examine students' conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and application of religious values. Further investigation into teacher facilitation strategies, group interaction patterns, and the role of structured reflection is also recommended to identify instructional practices that can strengthen the implementation of PBL in Al-Qur'an Hadith education.

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