

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Muhammad Amin

UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan
muhammadamin@uinsyahada.ac.id

Hamidah

UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan
hamidah@uinsyahada.ac.id

Dame Siregar

UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan
damesiregar03@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to systematically review the effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in developing students' critical thinking skills. The study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify, screen, and synthesize relevant empirical and conceptual studies from major academic databases, including Scopus, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, ERIC, and Google Scholar. The selected studies were analyzed using content analysis and thematic synthesis, focusing on research characteristics, educational level, PBL implementation, critical-thinking indicators, learning outcomes, and contextual factors that influence effectiveness. The findings indicate that PBL generally contributes positively to students' critical thinking by encouraging problem identification, inquiry, information evaluation, collaborative discussion, argumentation, reflection, and decision making. In the context of Islamic Religious Education, PBL is particularly relevant because it enables students to connect Islamic knowledge with authentic social and religious issues, thereby promoting contextual understanding and reflective reasoning. The synthesis also reveals that the effectiveness of PBL is influenced by the quality of problem design, teacher facilitation, student engagement, group interaction, duration of intervention, information sources, and assessment strategies. Conceptually, the study proposes a mechanism of Authentic Islamic Problems → Inquiry and Information Seeking → Source and Evidence Evaluation → Collaborative Argumentation → Islamic Value-Based Reflection → Problem Solving and Decision Making → Critical Thinking Skills. The study concludes that PBL is a promising pedagogical approach for strengthening critical thinking in Islamic Religious Education. Future research should employ broader samples, longitudinal and mixed-methods designs, and develop critical-thinking instruments that are more contextually aligned with Islamic Religious Education.

Keywords: Problem Based Learning, Islamic Religious Education, critical thinking, systematic literature review, students