**ALLIMNA: JURNAL PENDIDIKAN PROFESI GURU**
Volume 04 Nomor 02 2025, pp 13-24
*P-ISSN:2964-0105; E-ISSN: 2962-1909;*
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.30762/allimna.v4i02.4814

# Enhancing Students' Understanding of the Islamic Golden Age during the Abbasid Caliphate through Problem-Based Learning

**Haizatul Masnaiyah[1*], Iwan Marwan[2]**

*[1] SMP NU Sabilil Huda, Kediri, Indonesia*
*[2] Tadris Bahasa Indonesia,UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri, Kediri, Indonesia*
**Corresponding author: [1] haizatulmasnaiyah@gmail.com*

## Abstract:

This classroom action research describes how problem-based learning improves students' understanding of the Golden History of Islam during the Abbasid Daulah (750 to 1258 AD) at NU Sabilil Huda Junior High School. The study involved 19 grade VIII A students at NU Sabilil Huda Junior High School, Kediri. The research adopted the Kemmis and Taggart model, using observation, interviews, and questionnaires, and the data were analyzed descriptively. The research was conducted in two cycles, each comprising planning, action, observation, and reflection. The results show that problem-based learning significantly improved students' understanding of the Golden History of Islam during the Abbasid period. This improvement is evidenced by an increase in the average test score from 75.6 in Cycle 1 to 82.1 in Cycle 2, as well as an increase in student mastery from 47.4% to 84%. Students also demonstrated an improved ability to analyze the relationships among art, science, and civilization. Thus, it can be concluded that problem-based learning is effective in improving students' understanding of Islamic Golden Age history and can be recommended for similar historical materials in Islamic Religious Education to enhance students' critical thinking and conceptual understanding.
**Keywords:** PBL, Students' Understanding Level, Abbasid Daulah

## Abstrak:

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan implementasi pembelajaran berbasis masalah dalam meningkatkan pemahaman siswa terhadap materi sejarah keemasan Islam masa Daulah Abbasiyah (750-1258 M) di SMP NU Sabilil Huda. Jenis penelitian yaitu penelitian tindakan kelas dari Kemmis dan Taggart, dengan metode observasi, wawancara, angket dan dianalisis secara deskriptif. Penelitian dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus, dan masing-masing siklus terdiri dari perencanaan, tindakan, pengamatan, dan refleksi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran berbasis masalah terbukti secara signifikan mampu meningkatkan pemahaman siswa terhadap materi sejarah keemasan Islam masa Daulah Abbasiyah. Hal ini dibuktikan dari peningkatan rata-rata nilai tes dari 75,6 pada siklus 1 menjadi 82,1 pada siklus 2, serta peningkatan tingkat ketuntasan siswa dari 47,4% menjadi 84%. Siswa juga lebih mampu menganalisis hubungan antara seni, ilmu pengetahuan, dan peradaban di masa tersebut. Sehingga dapat disimpulkan bahwa PBL ini mampu meningkatkan pemahaman siswa SMP NU Sabilil Huda terhadap materi sejarah keemasan Islam masa Daulah Abbasiyah.
**Kata kunci:** PBL, Tingkat Pemahaman Siswa, Daulah Abbasiyah

**History:**
Received: 26 01 2025
Revised: 04 07 2025
Accepted: 18 10 2025
Published: 25 11 2025

**Publisher:** LPTK IAIN Kediri
**Licensed:** This work is licensed under
a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License

## INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia continues to develop significantly, particularly in efforts to improve learning quality at various levels. The curriculum, as the primary learning guideline, has undergone several changes to adapt to the needs of the times (Paramita et al, 2025). Currently, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum provides space for teachers to be more creative in designing student-centered learning processes (Zulaiha et al, 2023). However, challenges in implementing classroom learning remain an issue that requires special attention.

As digital technology advances, students born and raised in this era, often referred to as the digital native generation, have distinct characteristics. They tend to quickly become bored with conventional learning methods and are more drawn to interactive, technology-based learning (Suwatno, 2022). This presents a challenge for educators to create learning strategies that are relevant, interesting, and able to improve students' understanding of the subject matter.

At NU Sabilil Huda Junior High School, particularly in class VIII A, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subject, which focuses on the Golden Age of Islam during the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258 CE), presents significant challenges. Based on initial observations, students have difficulty understanding the material. This may be due to a lack of student interest in history learning, which tends to be narrative and less contextual. It seems that history material is always related to theory and involves memorizing chronological events. This lack of interest has an impact on low student learning outcomes, particularly in conceptual understanding.

As a solution, innovation is needed in learning strategies that actively engage students and foster their interest in the material being taught. Among the various learning methods available, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an attractive option. This is because it allows students to develop higher-order thinking skills and understand concepts more deeply through the exploration of relevant problems and collaboration with classmates. Thus, through this method, students' understanding

will increase, as will their motivation to learn, because the learning they undertake is highly relevant to their lives (Mallu et al, 2024).

This method was chosen not only for theoretical reasons but also based on previous research showing that PBL strategies have proven effective in improving students' conceptual understanding. Furthermore, PBL methods have also been shown to foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Amaliati, 2023). By implementing PBL, it is hoped that students can be more actively involved in learning, understand the historical context more deeply, and connect it to contemporary life.

By implementing the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) method, it is hoped that students will not only understand the material on the golden age of Islam during the Abbasid Caliphate in greater depth but also relate this knowledge to everyday life and understand Islamic values that can be applied in their daily lives. This method is also expected to improve students' critical thinking and analytical skills, as well as teamwork, which are essential skills in today's digital age (Muliana et al., 2024).

Through an active learning approach that positions students as discoverers of knowledge, the PBL method can foster greater student engagement, build self-confidence, and enhance their interest in learning, particularly in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Thus, the learning process is not merely a transfer of knowledge but also a contextual, collaborative, and relevant learning experience. This aligns with the principles of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasize competency-based, creative, and adaptive learning tailored to students' characteristics in the fast-paced and dynamic digital era.

Building on this background, the researchers carried out a classroom action research titled "Implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Method to Enhance Students' Understanding of the History of the Golden Age of Islam during the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258 CE)."

## RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research is Classroom Action Research (CAR), which aims to improve the quality of the learning process in the classroom (Pahleviannur et al.,

2022). Teachers who conduct classroom action research have a dual role, namely as teachers and as researchers.

This research was conducted at NU Sabilil Huda Junior High School, located on Jl. Sabilil Huda Islamic Boarding School, Bukaan Hamlet, Keling Village, Kepung District, Kediri Regency. The subjects were 19 students in grade VIII A. Of these 19 students, 12 were male and 7 were female.

Data sources for this study were obtained from students and teachers/colleagues at NU Sabilil Huda Junior High School, as well as observations of student attitudes, learning conditions, student achievement, and other supporting documents. Data were collected using observation techniques, questionnaires, tests, interviews, and documentation.

Data on student understanding levels collected during the observations were analyzed by comparing pre-test and post-test scores using the following formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum Y}{m}$$

with

$X$ = average class score

$\sum Y$ = total student test scores

$m$ = number of students taking the test

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

where

$P$ = Percentage number

$f$ = Frequency whose percentage is being sought

$N$ = number of frequencies/number of individuals

Meanwhile, data from observations and questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive analysis based on observation and reflection. This classroom action research was considered successful if 75% of Class VIII A students achieved PAI learning outcomes above 74. This research used the action research model from Kemmis and Taggart, in a spiral form from one cycle to the next, as follows (Ginting et al., 2024).

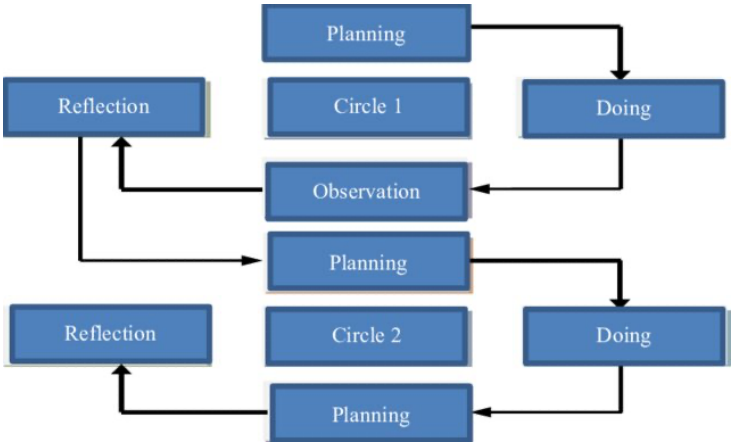



Figure 1. Classroom Action Research Flow

This Classroom Action Research was conducted in four stages in each cycle: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. These stages can be repeated in the next cycle if the research remains unsuccessful (Chamidah et al., 2021). To analyze the collected data, the researcher analyzed the data obtained in cycle I. Then, a reflection was conducted to determine whether the learning objectives had been achieved and what needed to be improved in the next cycle. In cycle II, the researcher implemented learning according to the improvement plan from cycle I. Furthermore, the researcher used the data obtained from cycle II to compare it with the data obtained in cycle I to determine whether there were differences in student test results after being given certain treatments in cycle II.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. *Description of Action Results in Cycle 1*

a. Action Planning

At this stage, researchers develop teaching modules, create learning videos, prepare assessment instruments, student worksheets, and observation sheets. Teachers also prepare digital tools such as Quizizz and live worksheets to support interactive learning.

b. Implementation of Actions

Learning is carried out in two meetings with PBL steps:

1) Problem Orientation: The teacher asks a provocative question.
2) Organizing Students: Students are divided into small groups.

3) Independent Investigation: Students seek information from various sources.
4) Discussion and Collaboration: Students discuss in groups.
5) Evaluation and Reflection: Students summarize the discussion and share their individual reflections.

c. Observation Results

Based on the researcher's observations in Cycle I, the student activity indicator was 54.7%, which is considered adequate. Data analysis showed that some students were still not actively involved in group discussions and presentations.

Meanwhile, the results of the student understanding test showed an average score of 75.6 and a completion rate of 47.4%. Data analysis of the student understanding questionnaire indicated that the majority of students still had adequate understanding. Teacher activity in Cycle I was considered adequate, but several aspects still needed improvement, namely the presentation of results and problem analysis.

d. Cycle 1 Reflection

Based on observations in Cycle I, several problems emerged, including student engagement falling short of targets, students not using available learning resources, and ineffective group discussions due to some students' inactivity. Furthermore, the results of the student comprehension test also did not meet the success criteria. Based on these reflections, the researcher planned several improvements to be implemented in Cycle II. These improvements are:

1) Develop more engaging learning modules.
2) Increase the variety of learning resources.
3) Design more focused group discussions with assigned roles.
4) Improve evaluation instruments.

*2. Description of Action Results in Cycle 2*

a. Planning

At this stage, the researcher improved the learning plan based on the reflection from cycle 1 by compiling more engaging modules and materials, designing group discussion assignments with clear guidelines, and preparing presentation media that support interactive learning.

b. Implementation

Implementation of cycle 2 is carried out in one meeting with the following PBL syntax:

1) Problem Orientation: The teacher poses questions about the relevance of the spirit of learning during the Abbasid era.
2) Group Organization: Students are divided into groups with clear roles.
3) Independent Investigation: Students seek information from the sources provided.
4) Solution Development and Delivery: Groups develop solutions based on the results of the discussion.
5) Presentation of Discussion Results: Groups present the results of their analysis.
6) Analysis and Synthesis: The teacher guides students in concluding the learning outcomes.

c. Observation Results

Based on the researcher's observations in cycle 2, many aspects showed significant improvement. One of these was student activity. In cycle 2, student activity increased compared to cycle 1. The percentage of student activity reached 71.43%. In cycle 2, the majority of students were actively involved in providing opinions and asking questions. In fact, all students were seen to be involved in the presentation process, although some still lacked confidence. Likewise, in terms of media utilization, students were seen actively using various learning resources to seek information. In cycle 2, the majority of students showed enthusiasm in completing group assignments.

In addition to active participation, student understanding also increased significantly. This was evident in the student test results, which showed an average score of 82.1 and a completion rate of 84%. The student

understanding questionnaire also showed an average score of 37.9, indicating a good level of understanding.

A similar improvement was observed in teacher activity in Cycle 2. This was reflected in increased student engagement during the lesson. Discussions also appeared more effective due to improved management. The material presented used more engaging and varied media.

d. Cycle 2 Reflection

Based on the observations, the following reflections were obtained:

1) The PBL method successfully increased student engagement and understanding.
2) The use of varied learning media proved effective in attracting student interest.
3) Some students were still less active in group discussions.
4) Further reinforcement is needed in guiding students who still have difficulty understanding the material.

From these reflections, the following follow-up actions the researcher needs to take are:

1) Pay special attention to less active students through intensive mentoring.
2) Develop more creative learning strategies to maintain the positive results from cycle 2.

**Interpretation of Research Findings**

*1. Student Activity*

In the first cycle, observations showed that student engagement was in the "sufficient" category, with a percentage of 54.7%. Indicators of engagement included group discussions, asking questions, enthusiasm for learning, and sharing ideas within the group. Several challenges emerged, including:

a. Only a few students actively asked questions or offered opinions.
b. Students tended to focus on one learning resource even though various resources were provided.
c. Not all group members actively participated in the discussion.

In the second cycle, student engagement increased to 71.43% (in the "good" category). Efforts made, such as providing clearer group discussion guidelines, using a wider variety of learning media (videos, infographics, interactive quizzes), and providing additional motivation for students, successfully increased their engagement. More focused group discussions also contributed to this success.

These results align with research by Amaliati (2023), which found that gradually implementing PBL can increase student engagement, particularly through strategy improvements in the second cycle. In her study, the level of student activity and completion increased from 58% in the first cycle to 89% in the second cycle, demonstrating the success of the interactive approach in fostering student engagement (Amaliati, 2023). Furthermore, research by Febiwanti et al. (2023) also supports this finding, showing that students who were initially less active became more involved through the implementation of the structured PBL method (Febiwanti et al., 2023).

2. *Student Understanding Level*

In the first cycle, the average student comprehension test score was 75.6, with a completion rate of only 47.4%. Students' main difficulty was analyzing and understanding the relationships among the factors supporting Islamic progress during the Abbasid era. Furthermore, the learning materials used did not fully engage students.

In the second cycle, the average student score increased to 82.1, and the completion rate was 84%. This improvement was due to the use of more engaging learning media and an interactive learning approach. Students were also better able to analyze the factors supporting Islamic progress during the Abbasid era and the relationship between art and science.

Research by Aminah (2023) reported similar results, showing that student comprehension increased from 46% in the first cycle to 93.3% in the second cycle after implementing the PBL method with improved media and guidance. This research confirms that the interactive PBL approach can encourage students to understand the material more deeply (Aminah, 2023).

Hasby's (2023) research also supports this finding, reporting that students' completion rate increased from 61% to 100% through the implementation of PBL, which emphasizes problem analysis and collaborative discussion (Dm, 2023).

3. *Teacher Activities*

In the first cycle, teacher activity during learning was assessed as quite good in the problem orientation and student organization stages, with an average score of 75. However, in the development and presentation of results, as well as in the analysis and evaluation stages, scores remained low (50-62.5). Teachers needed to provide clearer guidance to students during presentations and evaluations.

In the second cycle, teacher activity improved significantly, particularly in the development and presentation of results, as well as in the analysis and evaluation stages. Teachers were more active in providing feedback to students and engaging them in collaborative evaluations, which improved the quality of learning. Research by Febiwanti et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of teachers' roles in facilitating discussions and providing feedback to enhance student understanding (Febiwanti et al., 2023). This aligns with the steps taken in this study to improve teacher activity. The following table compares the results from cycles 1 and 2.

| **Aspect** | **Cycle 1** | **Cycle 2** |
|---|---|---|
| Student Activity | 54.7% (sufficient) | 71.43% (good) |
| Test Average | 75.6 | 82.1% |
| Percentage of Students Completing | 47.4% | 84% |
| Comprehension Category | Sufficient | Good |

Table 1. Comparison of Results of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

Thus, it can be concluded that the application of the Problem-Based Learning method to the material on the Golden Age of Islam during the Abbasid Caliphate demonstrated a significant increase in student engagement and understanding from cycle 1 to cycle 2. Improvements in planning, the use of

varied learning media, and interactive evaluation methods proved effective in improving student learning outcomes.

These results are consistent with previous research, strengthening the argument that PBL is an effective learning method for material that requires in-depth analysis and active student engagement. However, ongoing monitoring is necessary to maintain consistent student learning outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning method on the material of the golden age of Islam during the Abbasid Caliphate successfully improved the quality of the learning process and outcomes. The implementation of the stages of problem orientation, investigation, group discussion, and reflection encouraged students to be more active, collaborative, and think critically. Although in the first cycle there were still obstacles in managing discussions and student engagement, improvements in strategies, the use of more varied media, and strengthening teacher facilitation in the second cycle showed significant improvements. This is evident in the increase in average test scores from 75.6 to 82.1 and an increase in learning completeness from 47.4% to 84%. Students also demonstrated better analytical skills in understanding the relationship between art, science, and the development of Islamic civilization. Therefore, the PBL method is recommended to continue to be implemented and developed through improving teacher competency in facilitating discussions, optimizing active student participation, and school support through training and the provision of adequate learning facilities to strengthen critical thinking skills in various subjects.

## REFERENCES

Amaliati, S. (2023). Model Pembelajaran Problem Based Learning Untuk Meningkatkan Pemahaman Peserta Didik Kelas X Pada Mata Pelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam Materi Khulafaur Rasyidin di MA Maarif NU Sidomukti Gresik. *An-Nafah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keislaman*, *3*(1), Article 1.

Aminah, S. (2023). Penerapan Metode Problem Based Learning (pbl) Untuk Meningkatkan Pemahaman Peserta Didik Pada Materi Dakwah Nabi

Muhammad Saw Mata Pelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam. *Al-Muhtarif: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, *1*(2), Article 2.

Chamidah, D., Hasyda, S., Saraswati, S., Muhsam, J., Yanuarto, W. N., & Maiza, M. (2021). *Panduan Lengkap Dan Praktis*.

Dm, M. H. T. (2023). Upaya Meningkatkan Pemahaman Peserta Didik Materi Keberhasilan Dakwah Rasulullah Saw Di Madinah Melalui Metode Problem Based Learning Kelas V Min Timor Tengah Utara. *Al-Mihnah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Keguruan*, *1*(4), Article 4.

Febiwanti, R., Rahayu, G. D. S., & Nurfurqon, F. F. (2023). Penggunaan Model Problem Based Learning Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Pemahaman Konsep Ips Pada Siswa Kelas V Sekolah Dasar. *P2M STKIP Siliwangi*, *10*(2), 111–119. https://doi.org/10.22460/p2m.v10i2.4225

Ginting, R. F., Ramadhani, S., & Juniarti, I. (2024). Menyiasati Tantangan Pelaksanaan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas. *Sindoro: Cendikia Pendidikan*, *3*(8), Article 8. https://doi.org/10.9644/sindoro.v3i8.2475

Mallu, S., Effendi, E., Z, U. I., Jahring, J., Yulianti, R., Salam, S., Soraya, S., Rulanggi, R., Kurniawati, I., Hidayah, S. N., Warma, A., P, I. S., Siregar, M., Sarmidi, S., Hasanah, U., Hilyana, F. S., Djerubu, D., Effendi, H., & Jaya, I. (2024). Problem-Based Learning dalam Kurikulum Merdeka. *Penerbit Mifandi Mandiri Digital*, *1*(01), Article 01. https://jurnal.mifandimandiri.com/index.php/penerbitmmd/article/view/58

Muliana, Fonna, M., & Nufus, H. (2024). Pengaruh Penerapan Problem Based Learning (PBL) Terhadap Keterampilan Abad 21. *Ar-Riyadhiyyat: Journal of Mathematics Education*, *5*(1), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.47766/arriyadhiyyat.v5i1.2900

Pahleviannur, M. R., Mudrikah, S., Mulyono, H., Bano, V. O., Rizqi, M., Syahrul, M., Latif, N., Prihastari, E. B., Aini, K., Zakaria, & Hidayati. (2022). *Penelitian Tindakan Kelas*. Pradina Pustaka.

Paramita, E., Aminullah, A., Ratnasari, D., & Husna, A. (2025). Transformasi Perkembangan Kurikulum di Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Indonesia (JPPI)*, *5*(1), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.53299/jppi.v5i1.976

Suwatno. (2022, Januari 14). *Komunikasi Pendidikan & Pembelajaran Digital Bagi Generasi Z – Berita Upi*. https://berita.upi.edu/komunikasi-pendidikan-pembelajaran-digital-bagi-generasi-z/

Zulaiha, S., Meisin, M., & Meldina, T. (2023). Problematika Guru dalam Menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. *Terampil: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Dasar*, *9*(2), 163–177. https://doi.org/10.24042/terampil.v9i2.13974