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Improving Students' Ability to Understand the Meaning of Faith in Allah's Messengers Through the Contextual Teaching and Learning Model Among Fourth-Grade Students at SD Negeri No. 105365 Lubuk Bayas

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Abstract:

This classroom action research aims to improve the understanding of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri No. 105365 Lubuk Bayas regarding the meaning of faith in Allah's messengers through the application of the contextual teaching and learning model. The problem identified in the classroom indicates that many students struggle to understand the concept of faith in the messengers due to conventional teaching methods that do not actively involve students' real-life experiences. Therefore, a more effective approach is needed to enhance student engagement and comprehension in Islamic Religious Education. This research was conducted in two cycles, consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection phases. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and learning outcome tests. The findings indicate that the implementation of the contextual teaching and learning model significantly improved students' understanding. In the first cycle, students' comprehension showed improvement, but some challenges remained. After making adjustments in the second cycle, students' learning outcomes exhibited a more optimal increase. The application of the contextual teaching and learning model helped students relate the concept of faith in messengers to their daily lives, making it easier for them to understand and internalize faith values. Additionally, this method enhanced student engagement through discussions, reflections, and hands-on experiences. Thus, the contextual teaching and learning model proved effective in enhancing students' understanding of faith-related material in Islamic Religious Education. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that teachers implement contextual teaching and learning strategies when teaching religious concepts to make learning more meaningful for students. Furthermore, continuous innovation in teaching strategies is necessary to create a more active and interactive learning environment.

Keywords: Contextual Teaching and Learning Model, Faith in Messengers, Student Understanding, Islamic Religious Education.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in elementary schools plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and faith. One of the main aspects of PAI instruction is understanding the pillars of faith, including faith in Allah's messengers. This concept serves as the foundation for students to comprehend Islamic teachings and emulate the virtues and

struggles of the messengers. However, in practice, many students struggle to grasp the deeper meaning of faith in the messengers of Allah. They tend to memorize facts without truly understanding the essence and relevance of these teachings in daily life.

Preliminary observations at SD Negeri No. 105365 Lubuk Bayas revealed that most fourth-grade students had a low level of understanding regarding the concept of faith in messengers. They could only list the names of the messengers but had little comprehension of their roles, characteristics, and responsibilities in conveying Allah's teachings. This indicates that the teaching methods used were not effective in helping students connect faith concepts to real-life contexts. The reliance on conventional teaching methods is one of the primary causes of students' limited comprehension. Teachers predominantly use lecture and rote memorization techniques without providing meaningful learning experiences. As a result, students show little interest and tend to be passive in class. In the long run, this may hinder their internalization of faith values in their lives.

Social disparities also influence students' understanding of faith concepts. The school environment consists of students from diverse family backgrounds, which affects their religious education. Some students come from families that actively engage in religious learning, while others receive minimal religious instruction at home. This creates a disparity in students' comprehension levels of the material taught in school. Moreover, the school's limited teaching resources further challenge students' ability to understand faith in messengers from a contextual perspective. A lack of reference books and the minimal use of technology in learning make it difficult for students to grasp religious concepts effectively. Students require a more engaging and practical approach to understand Islamic teachings better.

Differences in students' learning styles also pose challenges in the learning process. Some students learn best through hands-on experiences and environmental interactions, while the current teaching methods provide little opportunity for active participation. Therefore, innovative teaching approaches are necessary to accommodate diverse learning styles. To address these issues, a more effective and relevant teaching approach is needed. One promising model is Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL). This model emphasizes learning that connects material to students' real-life experiences, allowing them to better understand and internalize the concept of faith in messengers.

Through the implementation of the contextual teaching and learning model, students will actively engage in the learning process using various strategies such as group discussions, case studies, role-playing, and interactive media. This approach ensures that students do not merely memorize content but also understand its meaning and apply the values they learn in daily life. This research will be conducted in two cycles to assess the effectiveness of the applied methods. Each cycle will include evaluations and reflections to identify areas for improvement, ensuring an optimal learning experience. Thus, this study aims to contribute to enhancing the quality of Islamic Religious Education, particularly in teaching the meaning of faith in Allah's messengers.

Through this research, it is expected that the contextual teaching and learning model can serve as an effective solution for improving students' understanding of faith concepts. Teachers are also encouraged to develop more creative and innovative teaching strategies to increase students' motivation to learn. Ultimately, this study is expected to benefit not only students' learning outcomes but also the development of more effective teaching methods in elementary schools.

METHODS

This study employs a classroom action research (CAR) approach conducted in two cycles. The primary data source for this research consists of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri No. 105365 Lubuk Bayas, who serve as the research subjects. These students were selected as the main data source because the study aims to improve their understanding of faith in Allah's messengers through the contextual teaching and learning model. In addition to

students, the class teacher serves as a supporting data source. The teacher acts as a facilitator in implementing the contextual teaching and learning model and provides reflections on the effectiveness of the applied methods. Observations of the teacher's instructional activities are also a crucial part of data collection to assess their role in enhancing students' comprehension.

Other data sources include student learning outcome documents, such as formative tests conducted in each cycle. These tests assess the improvement in students' understanding following the implementation of the contextual teaching and learning model. Additionally, observation sheets and reflection journals are used to record students' learning progress and challenges encountered during the learning process. The research instruments used for data collection include observation sheets, interviews with students and teachers, and written tests. Observations help assess students' engagement and participation in learning, while interviews provide deeper insights into students' and teachers' experiences in applying the contextual teaching and learning model.

Data were also obtained through reflections and discussions with the teacher as part of the evaluation process in each cycle. These reflections ensure that the research progresses effectively, allowing for necessary improvements between cycles. The use of multiple data sources aims to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. By triangulating data from various instruments and sources, the findings of this study are expected to provide an accurate representation of the effectiveness of the contextual teaching and learning model in improving students' understanding of faith in messengers.

RESULTS

This study was conducted in two cycles with the aim of improving the understanding of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri No. 105365 Lubuk Bayas regarding the meaning of faith in Allah's messengers through a contextual teaching and learning model. The data collected included pre-action test results (pre-cycle), cycle I, and cycle II, as well as observations of student and teacher activities during the learning process.

Before the intervention, the initial test results showed that most students had a low understanding of the concept of faith in messengers. Out of 25 students who took the test, only 6 students (24%) achieved scores above the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM), while 19 students (76%) were still below the standard. The average class score before the intervention was 56, indicating that students' understanding of the material needed improvement.

In the first cycle, the contextual teaching and learning model was introduced by linking the concept of faith in messengers to students' daily lives. The learning process involved group discussions, case studies, and the use of visual media. The test results at the end of cycle I showed an improvement in students' understanding. A total of 14 students (56%) achieved scores above the KKM, and the class average increased to 68. Although there was an improvement, 11 students (44%) had not yet reached the mastery level.

In the second cycle, enhancements were made by incorporating more reflective activities and using more relevant real-life examples for students. As a result, students' understanding improved significantly. A total of 22 students (88%) successfully scored above the KKM, while 3 students (12%) still did not meet the required standard. The class average increased to 80, demonstrating the effectiveness of the contextual teaching and learning model in enhancing students' understanding of faith in messengers.

Apart from the test results, observations of students' engagement in learning also indicated positive changes. Before the intervention, students tended to be passive and showed little enthusiasm in class. However, after the implementation of the contextual teaching and learning model, students became more active in asking questions, engaging in discussions, and relating the material to their personal experiences. This suggests that the applied teaching model not only improved understanding but also enhanced students' learning motivation.

The following table summarizes students' learning outcomes in each cycle:

Cycle	Number of Students	Average Score	Students Achieving Mastery (\geq KKM)	Students Below Mastery
Pre-Cycle	25	56	6 (24%)	19 (76%)
Cycle 1	25	68	14 (56%)	11 (44%)
Cycle 2	25	80	22 (88%)	3 (12%)

From the table above, it is evident that there was a gradual increase in students' understanding from the pre-cycle to cycle II. The most significant improvement occurred after the implementation of the contextual teaching and learning model, especially in cycle II.

Data Verification

To ensure the validity and reliability of the obtained data, several verification methods were employed, including source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and reflection on research results. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing test results, observations, and interviews with both students and teachers. Interview results indicated that students found it easier to comprehend the material after the contextual teaching and learning model was applied, as they could relate the concept of faith in messengers to their daily lives.

Methodological triangulation was carried out by comparing written test results with observation data collected during the learning process. Based on observation sheets, there was an increase in student participation in discussions and reflective activities, which contributed to their learning improvements. Additionally, teacher reflection journals revealed that implementing the contextual teaching and learning model provided a more meaningful learning experience for students.

To strengthen the research findings, further analysis was conducted on the difficulties faced by students who had not yet reached mastery in cycle II. Interviews with these students revealed that they still struggled to grasp abstract concepts related to the duties and characteristics of messengers. Therefore, in future learning sessions, teachers could provide more concrete examples and direct experiences to help students better understand the material.

Reflection on the learning process showed that the effectiveness of the contextual teaching and learning model greatly depended on the teacher's readiness in designing learning experiences that align with students' real-life contexts. Teachers who actively provided relevant examples and encouraged student participation were more successful in improving their understanding.

From the data verification results, it can be concluded that students' improved understanding of faith in messengers was not merely due to material repetition but rather the result of a more contextual and meaningful approach for students. Therefore, the contextual teaching and learning model is recommended for broader application in Islamic Religious Education, especially for abstract and conceptual topics.

The findings of this study confirm that the implementation of the contextual teaching and learning model can significantly improve students' understanding, both in cognitive aspects and learning motivation. These results also emphasize the importance of innovation in teaching methods to make religious education materials easier to understand and internalize in students' daily lives.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of the contextual learning model has proven effective in enhancing the understanding of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri No. 105365 Lubuk Bayas regarding the meaning of faith in the messengers of Allah. This is evidenced by the improvement in students' learning outcomes from the pre-cycle to the second cycle. Before the intervention, only 24% of students achieved scores above the minimum mastery criteria (KKM), with an average score of 56. After implementing the contextual learning model, the average student score increased to 80 in the second cycle, with 88% of students achieving learning mastery. In addition to academic improvement, this study also demonstrates a positive impact on students' engagement in the learning process. Before the intervention, students tended to be passive and merely memorized the material without understanding its meaning. However, after the application of the contextual learning model, students became more active in discussions, asking questions, and relating the material to their daily lives. This indicates that a learning method that involves students' real-life experiences is more effective in building a deeper understanding. The academic impact of this study is not only evident in students' improved learning outcomes but also in their ability to think critically and reflectively. Through the contextual learning model, students were encouraged not only to memorize the concept of faith in the messengers but also to understand its relevance to their lives. Thus, this model helps students develop a more analytical and applicable mindset toward religious values. Beyond academic effects, this study also provides significant social contributions. With an increased understanding of the meaning of faith in the messengers, students are expected to better emulate the qualities of the prophets in their daily lives. This has the potential to create a more religious school environment, where students not only comprehend religious teachings theoretically but also apply them in their social interactions. This study also offers benefits for teachers in developing more innovative teaching strategies. By implementing the contextual learning model, teachers can create a more interactive and meaningful learning environment, thus increasing students' motivation to learn. Furthermore, the findings of this study can serve as a reference for schools in designing learning methods that better align with students' characteristics and needs. Overall, this research proves that the contextual learning model can be an effective solution for improving students' understanding of abstract concepts in Islamic religious education. With a more relevant and applicable approach, students not only grasp religious teachings cognitively but also internalize them in their daily lives. With this research, it is hoped that the contextual learning model can be more widely implemented across various subjects, particularly in religious education. Further studies are needed to develop variations in strategies within this model to make learning more effective and engaging for students.

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