Journal of Innovative and Creativity
Journal Homepage: https://joecy.org/index.php/joecy
e-mail: journaljoecy@gmail.com

Faculty of Education
University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai
ISSN 2776-771X (Online)
ISSN 2962-570X (Printed)
6 (1) 2026, Page: 24267-24276

The Implementation of Problem-Based Learning Using Social Conflict Case Studies to Foster an Attitude of *Tasamuh* Among Students at SMK Aisyiyah South Bengkulu

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Published: April, 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) through social conflict case studies in fostering tasamuh (tolerance) attitudes among students at SMK Aisyiyah Bengkulu Selatan. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with an Islamic Religious Education teacher experienced in applying the PBL model. The findings reveal that the teacher perceives PBL as a problem-oriented model that positions real-life issues as the starting point of instruction, encouraging students to engage in critical analysis and collaborative problem-solving. The implementation follows a systematic sequence: presenting relevant social conflict cases, providing conceptual material, facilitating group discussions guided by student worksheets, and conducting class presentations. These activities enhance student participation, develop critical thinking skills, and cultivate mutual respect for diverse perspectives. The internalization of tasamuh values is achieved through collaborative experiences that allow students to express opinions openly while appreciating differing viewpoints. Despite challenges such as low student motivation and intensive classroom management demands, the teacher addresses these through continuous encouragement, contextualizing material with daily life, and providing individual guidance. The study concludes that PBL effectively integrates cognitive development with character education in Islamic Religious Education.

Keywords: *Problem-Based Learning; Tasamuh; Islamic Religious Education*

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INTRODUCTION

Education extends beyond the enhancement of academic competence; it fundamentally serves as a medium for cultivating character, attitudes, and life values essential for social coexistence. In increasingly pluralistic societies, educational institutions bear a strategic responsibility in shaping learners who can appreciate, respect, and embrace differences in background, thought, and belief (Isnaeni et al., 2025). Consequently, character education—particularly the inculcation of tolerance or *tasamuh*—must be consistently and systematically integrated into school-based learning activities to prepare students for harmonious social interaction (Hakim & Sumadi, 2026; Ihsan et al., 2024; Mulyadi et al., 2024).

Within the framework of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), *tasamuh* constitutes a fundamental value that fosters respect for diversity, discourages the imposition of one's will upon others, and promotes mutual appreciation in social life (Rahman et al., 2021; Zulfa et al., 2025). The implementation of this value is not confined to interfaith relations but is equally reflected in everyday school interactions, such as respecting differing opinions, collaborating in group activities, and resolving issues through deliberation. Thus, PAI functions not merely as a vehicle for transmitting religious knowledge but as a platform for character development that nurtures moral integrity, tolerant

dispositions, and the capacity to coexist within a pluralistic community (Ermida & Ismail, 2025; Erviani, 2024; Zainul et al., 2026).

However, the continued dominance of lecture-based instruction tends to position students as passive recipients of information, thereby limiting opportunities to develop critical thinking, articulate ideas, and explore alternative solutions to problems (Irnawati et al., 2021; Majola, 2026). Contemporary educational paradigms increasingly demand student-centered learning approaches that engage learners actively and cultivate Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has emerged as a pertinent model to address this need, as it utilises real-life issues as the starting point for learning, encouraging students to analyse problems, gather relevant information, exchange ideas through group discussion, and formulate solutions collaboratively (Isnaeni et al., 2025; Ji & Wong, 2025).

In the context of PAI, PBL can be effectively implemented through the use of social conflict case studies that are closely aligned with students' lived experiences. Presenting authentic cases compels learners to analyse situations critically, evaluate multiple perspectives, and make responsible decisions, thereby creating a participatory learning environment that nurtures tolerance incrementally (Lin, 2026). The success of this approach is heavily contingent upon the teacher's role as a facilitator who designs relevant problems, guides group dynamics, encourages active participation, and fosters a culture of mutual respect for every idea presented during the learning process (Rahman et al., 2021).

Preliminary interviews with the PAI teacher at SMK Aisyiyah Bengkulu Selatan revealed that PBL has been implemented by presenting social conflict cases, providing conceptual material, and organising group discussions guided by student worksheets (LKPD), followed by class presentations. Students demonstrated increased engagement, greater confidence in expressing opinions, and a growing habit of respecting diverse viewpoints. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the implementation of PBL through social conflict case studies as a strategy for fostering *tasamuh* among students at SMK Aisyiyah Bengkulu Selatan, encompassing the instructional process, perceived benefits, challenges encountered, and strategies employed to instil tolerance values through problem-based learning.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to gain a comprehensive overview of the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model—specifically utilizing social conflict case studies—in fostering *tasamuh* (tolerance) among students at SMK Aisyiyah South Bengkulu. This approach was selected for its ability to provide in-depth insight into the teachers' experiences, perspectives, and classroom practices regarding the PBL model. The research participants were Islamic Religious Education teachers experienced in implementing PBL in their instructional activities. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews by sixth-semester students from STIT Al-Quraniyah—Bob Belowo and Zamira Aziza—using ten questions covering teachers' understanding of the PBL concept, implementation stages, the use of social conflict case studies, student responses, strategies for instilling tolerance, challenges encountered, and the impact on students' attitudes (Sugiyono, 2023).

The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative analysis technique comprising three stages: data reduction (selecting and categorizing information based on themes), data presentation (narrative description), and drawing conclusions based on patterns emerging from the interview results (Sugiyono, 2023). Data validity was ensured through persistent observation—meticulously and repeatedly examining the information—and theoretical triangulation, which involved comparing interview findings with relevant scholarly references. The entire research process adhered to ethical principles; participants took part voluntarily after being informed of the study's objectives, and the authenticity and confidentiality of the collected data were strictly maintained.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Teachers' Conceptual Understanding of the Problem-Based Learning Model

The interview results reveal that the Islamic Religious Education teacher at SMK Aisyiyah Bengkulu Selatan understands Problem-Based Learning as a learning model that positions real problems as the central focus of classroom activity. According to the teacher, learning does not begin with a full explanation of the material but with the presentation of cases, conflicts, or real situations relevant to the topic being studied. The teacher stated, *"I start the lesson by presenting a social problem close to the students' lives so that they become curious and think about how to solve it."* These problems then serve as the basis for students to conduct analysis, engage in discussion, and formulate alternative solutions through the designed learning stages. Such a view indicates that the teacher has grasped the fundamental principle of PBL, in which knowledge is constructed by students through active learning experiences.

The teacher further explained that presenting problems at the initial stage aims to stimulate curiosity and encourage students to engage more deeply in the learning process. In this position, students are no longer passive recipients of information but are encouraged to explore knowledge, seek relevant sources, and construct solutions based on the material under study. *"Students are no longer mere listeners; they have become the main actors who ask questions, search for information, and defend their opinions,"* the teacher added. This finding indicates that the learning implemented has shifted toward a student-centered orientation. The teacher's role has accordingly transformed from a transmitter of information into a facilitator who guides, directs, and confirms students' thinking processes.

This conceptual understanding is important because the success of PBL implementation depends heavily on the teacher's perception of the model's philosophy. A teacher who views problems as the engine of learning will design cases that are contextual, thought-provoking, and relevant to students' lives. Conversely, a merely procedural understanding would reduce PBL to a routine group activity without meaningful analysis. Therefore, the teacher's understanding at this school can be regarded as an appropriate foundation for implementing PBL that cultivates both critical thinking and tolerant attitudes.

2. Implementation Stages of PBL in Islamic Religious Education Learning

Based on the interview results, the implementation of PBL in Islamic Religious Education learning follows a systematic series of stages. Learning begins with the presentation of a real problem or case illustration relevant to the topic under study in order to build students' initial understanding. Afterward, the teacher provides reinforcement of concepts as a foundation for identifying the roots of the problem, analyzing various perspectives, and formulating alternative solutions. Students are then divided into small groups, and each group receives a student worksheet (LKPD) containing guiding questions for the problem-solving process. Through discussion, students exchange ideas, explore information from various sources, and jointly formulate solutions. The discussion results are subsequently presented in front of the class so that each group can convey its analysis and receive responses from other groups.

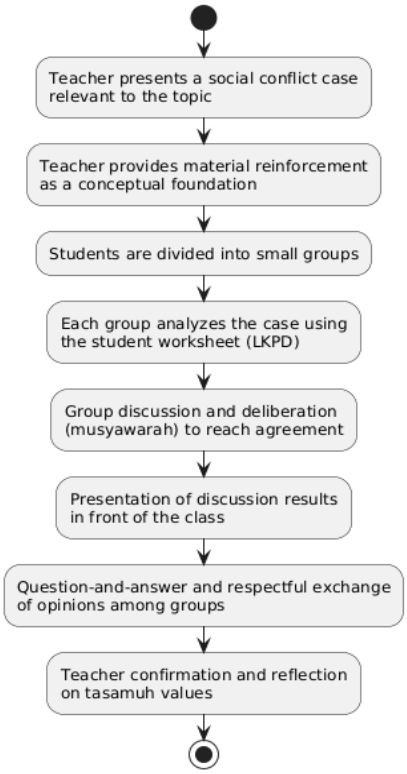


Figure 1. Stages of PBL Implementation in Islamic Religious Education Learning

Figure 1 illustrates the flow of PBL implementation practiced by the Islamic Religious Education teacher at SMK Aisyiyah Bengkulu Selatan. The flow begins with the presentation of a social conflict case and ends with reflection and the teacher's confirmation of values. Each stage is interconnected, so students pass through a complete learning experience from observing the problem to communicating the solution. The question-and-answer stage after the presentation provides space for differences of opinion to be expressed and respected in an orderly manner. This pattern shows that PBL implementation at this school follows the model's main syntax, namely orientation to the problem, group investigation, solution formulation, presentation, and evaluation.

3. Rationale for Using Social Conflict Case Studies

The teacher revealed that the selection of social conflict cases as learning material was based on the consideration that such cases sharpen students' critical thinking skills. Lecture-based learning tends to place students as recipients of information without much analysis, whereas cases require them to identify the roots of problems, evaluate alternative solutions, and put forward supporting arguments. *"When I raise a case of a quarrel or dispute that actually occurred among students, they immediately engage in the discussion because the problem feels close to them,"* the teacher explained. The use of cases has also succeeded in creating a more lively classroom atmosphere and encouraging active interaction among students. During the lessons, students appeared more confident in expressing ideas, asking questions, and responding to their peers' opinions.

In addition, social conflict is regarded as material close to students' real experiences, so it is easily understood and linked to conditions in the surrounding environment. Various problems that arise at school or in social life can be used as subjects of joint discussion in the classroom. Through this process, learning not only enriches students' understanding of the material but also shapes their ability to respond wisely to differences of opinion. The teacher emphasized that cases function as a bridge between religious concepts and the social reality faced by students. With such relevance, learning becomes contextual, and the values learned are more easily internalized into daily behavior.

4. Group Discussion Dynamics and the Practice of Tasamuh Values

The interview results show that group discussion is the main arena for cultivating the value of tasamuh in PBL implementation. After being given a problem, students work in groups to analyze and answer the questions on the worksheet, with each member having equal rights to express ideas and respond to peers' opinions. The teacher stated, *"When opinions differ, I direct students to resolve them through deliberation so that a joint agreement is reached, not through a win-lose contest."* This activity gives students the experience of expressing opinions politely while respecting the views of others. The teacher also acts as a facilitator by monitoring the discussion, providing guidance when needed, and ensuring that all students are actively involved.

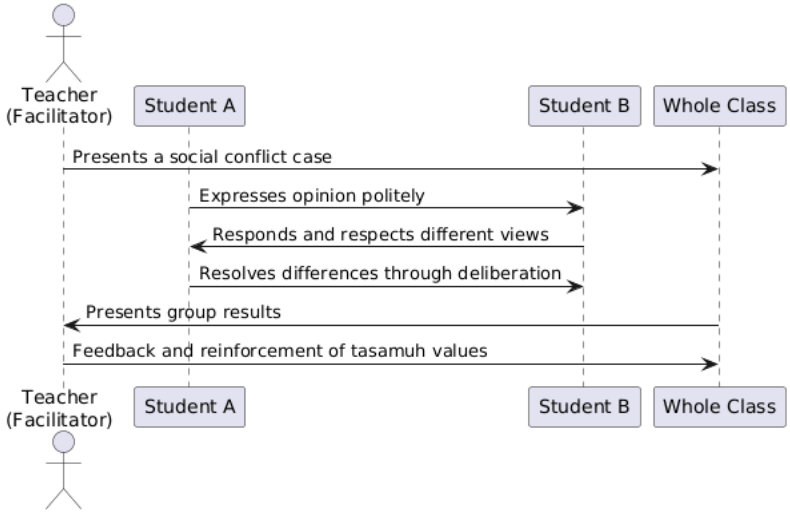


Figure 2. Interaction Pattern during Group Discussion and Presentation

Figure 2 describes the interaction pattern among the teacher and students during group discussion and presentation activities. The teacher opens the activity by presenting a case, after which students exchange opinions within the group in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Differences of opinion that arise are resolved through deliberation guided by the teacher as facilitator. The group's discussion results are then presented in front of the class, and the teacher provides feedback and reinforces the value of tolerance. This pattern shows that tasamuh is not taught as an abstract concept but is practiced directly through communicative and respectful learning interactions.

During the presentation, the teacher also opens space for other groups to ask questions and offer input in polite language. Students are trained to listen to the full explanation before giving a response, so that interactions remain orderly and conducive. This habituation fosters students' awareness that a problem can be viewed from various perspectives and that no view should be imposed on others. This awareness forms the foundation for the growth of the value of tasamuh within themselves during the learning process.

5. Student Responses and Active Participation in PBL Learning

The teacher revealed that the use of the PBL model received a very positive response from students. The classroom atmosphere became more lively because students showed increased interest, actively participated in each stage, and were more deeply involved than in previous lecture-based learning. *"Students who used to remain silent now dare to come forward and present their group's results,"* the teacher said. This change was influenced by each group's responsibility to present its discussion results, which encouraged all members to understand the material and contribute ideas. As a result, learning participation became more evenly distributed among students with different ability levels.

Table 1. Student Engagement Indicators during PBL Implementation at SMK Aisyiyah Bengkulu Selatan

No.	Engagement Indicator	Description of Observation
1	Expressing opinions	Students show increased confidence in conveying ideas during group discussion
2	Asking and responding to questions	Students actively ask questions and respond to peers' opinions

3	Group collaboration	Students cooperate in completing the LKPD and formulating joint solutions
4	Presenting results	Groups present discussion results in front of the class with good confidence
5	Respecting differences of opinion	Students listen to others' views and do not impose their own opinions

Table 1 summarizes the indicators of student engagement observed by the teacher during PBL implementation. The five indicators cover cognitive, affective, and social aspects that emerge through discussion and presentation activities. The most prominent change was seen in the indicator of expressing opinions, where previously passive students began to show confidence in participating. The indicator of respecting differences of opinion also indicates that the practice of tolerance is growing along with the habituation of orderly discussion. Overall, these indicators confirm that PBL creates a more open, interactive, and cooperative learning climate than conventional learning.

6. Development of Students' Critical Thinking Skills

The interview results reveal that the teacher considers PBL to make a positive contribution to the development of students' critical thinking skills. This assessment is based on a learning process that from the very beginning starts with the presentation of problems or case studies, so that students do not merely receive information passively. The teacher explained, *"Students are trained to trace the causes of a problem, discuss alternative solutions, and defend their analysis in front of the class."* This process trains students to construct logical arguments, provide reasons for each opinion, and take responsibility for their thinking based on facts and learned concepts. Thus, the assessment of learning outcomes is no longer limited to memorization but extends to the quality of analysis and argumentation.

The findings also show that PBL provides broader space for students to hone higher-order thinking skills through active learning. Learning is no longer oriented toward memorizing material but directs students to use their knowledge to identify, examine, and solve real problems. This approach makes the learning process more meaningful because students gain deeper, more complete, and contextual understanding. Changes in the learning pattern were visible as students began to habitually ask "why" and "how" about the cases presented. It can therefore be understood that PBL is a relevant and effective approach for developing critical thinking in Islamic Religious Education learning.

7. Implementation Challenges and Teachers' Coping Strategies

Despite the various positive impacts, the interview results reveal that the implementation of PBL still faces several challenges. The most frequently encountered obstacle is the low learning motivation of some students, which causes them to participate less in discussion, feel reluctant to express opinions, and perform suboptimally in group assignments. "There are still students who simply stay silent and leave the work to their more active friends," the teacher admitted. In addition, PBL requires more intensive preparation and involvement than lecture-based learning. During discussion, the teacher is required to actively supervise each group, guide students experiencing difficulties, and keep the discussion aligned with the learning objectives.

Table 2. Challenges and Teachers' Coping Strategies in PBL Implementation

No.	Challenge	Coping Strategy
1	Low learning motivation of some students	Providing continuous motivation and explaining the benefits of the material in daily life
2	Low student engagement	Personal approach through dialogue to identify the causes of passivity
3	Difficulty in analyzing cases	Providing guidance, direction, and additional explanation to groups experiencing difficulties
4	Need for intensive class management	Continuously monitoring discussions and ensuring equal participation opportunities for all students

Table 2 shows that each challenge identified by the teacher is addressed with a systematic coping strategy. The motivation and personal-approach strategies target the affective aspect of students, while guidance and monitoring target the technical aspect of learning management. This finding indicates that the effectiveness of PBL depends not only on students' enthusiasm but also on the teacher's competence in managing the learning process. The teacher's ability to guide, facilitate,

and coordinate activities is an important factor determining the achievement of learning objectives. Therefore, the coping strategies implemented reflect the teacher's dual role as both a motivator and a facilitator in the classroom.

8. Impact of PBL Implementation on Students' Tasamuh Attitudes

Based on the interview results, the teacher argues that changes in students' behavior and attitudes are influenced not only by the PBL model but also by the substance of the material studied. Islamic Religious Education material containing the values of tasamuh and respect for differences is considered easier to understand when learned through a problem-solving approach. *"Through cases, students not only know the value of tolerance but also feel and practice it directly during discussion,"* the teacher stated. The involvement of students in analyzing problems and formulating solutions makes the values learned more easily applied in daily life. Discussion, presentation, and collaborative solution-seeking activities provide meaningful learning experiences in respecting differences of opinion.

Figure 3 presents a map of the impacts of PBL implementation through social conflict case studies on students' learning. The four main branches, namely critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and tasamuh, show that the impact of this model is multidimensional. The tasamuh branch, which includes respecting differences of opinion, not imposing one's views, and deliberation, is the character core formed through the habituation of discussion and presentation. The interrelation of these branches indicates that the development of thinking skills and the formation of character proceed hand in hand within the same learning process. Overall, the implementation of PBL creates more participatory learning, strengthens collaboration, and supports the internalization of the value of tasamuh at SMK Aisyiyah Bengkulu Selatan.

Discussion

The findings of this study, which reveal that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) successfully shifts Islamic Religious Education (PAI) from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach, strongly align with recent conceptual syntheses in the field. Andrianto & Qodr (2025), Murniawaty et al (2025), and sulistyawati (2025) assert that PBL is a critical pedagogical strategy for developing 21st-century skills, particularly higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), by positioning real-world problems as the catalyst for knowledge construction. Furthermore, Andayani & Gunawan (2025) and Siregar (2025) categorizes PBL as an innovative learning model that inherently demands active student participation rather than the passive reception of information. Consequently, the current study empirically validates these theoretical frameworks by demonstrating how presenting social conflict cases actively stimulates students' curiosity and analytical reasoning in PAI classrooms.

In terms of improving student engagement and overall learning outcomes, the results of this research are highly consistent with several empirical studies conducted in various educational settings. For instance, Hilabi et al (2025), Husna et al (2023), Mazrur et al (2024), and Yuniati & Madiun (2024) demonstrated that the implementation of PBL significantly enhanced the PAI learning outcomes of high school students by fostering a more interactive and participatory classroom environment. Similarly, Syafii (2025) found that PBL effectively increases student competencies in PAI by encouraging them to explore concepts independently and collaboratively. These prior studies corroborate the current findings, confirming that when students are tasked with solving authentic problems through structured worksheets and group discussions, their cognitive engagement and mastery of religious concepts improve substantially.

The effectiveness of utilizing real-life scenarios, such as social conflicts, to make PAI more contextual is also widely supported by previous literature across different educational tiers. Afifah et al (2025) highlighted that connecting PAI materials to students' daily lives through problem-solving approaches yields a significant positive effect on learning outcomes. This is further reinforced by Hafizah et al (2024), who observed similar improvements in elementary school students, indicating that the contextual nature of PBL is universally beneficial regardless of the students' age group. By integrating social conflict cases, the current study builds upon these findings, illustrating that contextualized problems not only aid in cognitive comprehension but also serve as practical simulations for real-world social interactions.

While the majority of recent literature predominantly emphasizes the cognitive and academic benefits of PBL in PAI, the current study provides a crucial extension by highlighting its profound impact on affective character development, specifically *tasamuh* (tolerance). Studies such as those by Donohoo (2026) primarily measure success through academic learning outcomes and competency metrics, often overlooking the nuanced interpersonal dynamics cultivated during group deliberations. In contrast, this research demonstrates that the collaborative mechanisms of PBL—such as negotiating differing viewpoints and practicing respectful communication during presentations—serve as direct interventions for character education. Therefore, this study bridges a gap in the existing literature by proving that PBL is not merely a tool for cognitive advancement but also a vital medium for internalizing Islamic moral values in pluralistic environments.

Despite the proven benefits, the challenges identified in this study, particularly regarding low student motivation and the intensive demand on teacher facilitation, reflect the practical complexities of PBL noted in contemporary educational research. Azzahra & Nurkamto (2024) acknowledge that while PBL is ideal for modern learning, its success is heavily contingent upon the teacher's ability to manage classroom dynamics and guide complex problem-solving processes. The current findings echo this sentiment, revealing that without continuous motivation and personalized mentoring from the teacher, passive students may struggle to engage in the rigorous demands of PBL. Thus, both the current study and recent literature agree that the transition to PBL requires educators to evolve from mere information providers into skilled facilitators capable of sustaining student motivation and managing diverse classroom interactions.

CONCLUSIONS

Research conducted at SMK Aisyiyah South Bengkulu demonstrates that the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model—utilizing case studies on social conflict—is an effective instructional strategy for fostering an attitude of *tasamuh* (tolerance) among students. The learning process begins with the presentation of a relevant social conflict case, followed by content reinforcement to establish a conceptual foundation, group discussions using student worksheets, and finally, class presentations of the findings. Through this sequence of stages, students not only hone their skills in critical problem analysis and logical argumentation but also gain firsthand experience in expressing opinions, accepting diverse perspectives, and engaging in communicative collaboration. Regular discussion and presentation activities serve as a tangible means for internalizing the value of tolerance; students become accustomed to respecting diverse viewpoints, refraining from imposing their personal will, and resolving differences of opinion through deliberation.

Nevertheless, the implementation of PBL faces certain challenges, particularly the low learning motivation of some students and the need for more intensive classroom management during discussions. To address these obstacles, teachers employ various strategic measures, such as providing continuous motivation, linking learning material to real-life contexts, offering personal guidance to struggling students, and monitoring and mentoring each group to ensure they remain aligned with learning objectives. Overall, these research findings confirm that the PBL model merits consideration as a primary instructional approach for Islamic Religious Education. It effectively integrates the development of critical thinking skills with the cultivation of tolerant, collaborative, and virtuous character traits, thereby ensuring that students are not only intellectually capable but also prepared to coexist harmoniously within a pluralistic society.

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