

## The Development of a Project-Based Learning Model in Islamic Education to Enhance Students' Creativity

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**Abstract:** This study aims to develop a *Project-Based Learning* (PjBL) model in Islamic Education as an effort to enhance students' creativity. The research employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach by adapting the Borg & Gall model, which includes needs analysis, model design, development, limited trial, revision, and wider implementation. The findings indicate that the developed PjBL model is aligned with the characteristics of Islamic Education learning, fosters active student engagement, and provides greater opportunities for creativity through real-life projects relevant to students' daily experiences. Therefore, the development of a PjBL model in Islamic Education can serve as a strategic innovation to improve both learning quality and students' creativity.

**Keywords:** Project-Based Learning; Islamic Education; Creativity; Model Development.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan model pembelajaran *Project-Based Learning* (PjBL) dalam mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) sebagai upaya meningkatkan kreativitas peserta didik. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian dan pengembangan (R&D) dengan mengadaptasi model Borg & Gall yang meliputi tahap analisis kebutuhan, perancangan model, pengembangan, uji coba terbatas, revisi, hingga uji coba luas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa model PjBL yang dikembangkan sesuai dengan karakteristik pembelajaran PAI, mampu meningkatkan keterlibatan aktif siswa, serta memberikan ruang yang luas bagi pengembangan kreativitas melalui proyek nyata yang relevan dengan kehidupan sehari-hari. Dengan demikian, pengembangan model PjBL dalam pembelajaran PAI dapat dijadikan salah satu inovasi strategis untuk meningkatkan

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kualitas pembelajaran sekaligus kreativitas peserta didik.

**Kata Kunci:** Project-Based Learning; Pendidikan Agama Islam; Kreativitas; Pengembangan Model.

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### **A. Introduction**

Education plays a central role in shaping the quality of human resources. In the era of globalization, education is not only oriented toward the transfer of knowledge but also toward the development of students' creativity and critical thinking skills (Tilaar, 2012). Islamic Education (PAI) as an integral part of the school curriculum has a strategic function in shaping character, morality, and the holistic development of students. However, the practice of Islamic Education learning often remains teacher-centered and emphasizes rote memorization (Azra, 2012).

Ideally, Islamic Education should be able to internalize religious values through creative, innovative, and relevant activities that connect to students' real-life contexts (Mulyasa, 2015). Creativity is a crucial competency that must be nurtured, as it equips students to face 21st-century challenges. Guilford (1967) explained that creativity includes fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration in thinking.

Nevertheless, observations in several schools indicate that students' creativity in Islamic Education is still relatively low. This can be seen from the lack of student engagement in learning, the dominance of lecture methods, and limited opportunities for idea exploration (Suyono & Hariyanto, 2011). One innovative approach that addresses this issue is the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model. PjBL emphasizes real-world projects, enabling students to actively construct knowledge and skills through direct experiences (Thomas, 2000).

PjBL provides opportunities for collaboration, problem-solving, and the creation of tangible products that benefit students in daily life (Bell, 2010). In the context of Islamic Education, the application of PjBL is highly relevant, as it allows students to understand Islamic values through projects such as mosque cleanliness campaigns, creative da'wah media, or simulations of Islamic social activities (Wena, 2014). This approach is in line with the objectives of Islamic education, which emphasize not only

cognitive development but also affective and psychomotor aspects, aiming to nurture well-rounded individuals (Langgulung, 2004).

Previous studies have shown that PjBL enhances learning motivation, critical thinking, and creativity (Hosnan, 2014; Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). For instance, Kokotsaki et al. (2016) found that PjBL effectively improves students' active participation and creates more meaningful learning experiences. In the context of Islamic Education, this model is believed to transform students' learning from mere memorization into a more applicable, creative, and contextual understanding (Majid, 2014).

The Indonesian *Merdeka Curriculum* also emphasizes project-based learning as a means of fostering 21st-century skills such as creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking (Kemendikbud, 2021). Therefore, the development of a PjBL model in Islamic Education is a strategic step to align Islamic teaching goals with national curriculum demands. Moreover, PjBL nurtures students' sense of ownership in learning. When students feel responsible for their projects, their emotional and intellectual engagement increases (Markham, 2011).

Assessment in PjBL is also more authentic, as it evaluates both the process and outcomes of students' work rather than relying solely on written tests (Darling-Hammond et al., 2008). Consequently, PjBL has significant potential to become an innovative instructional model in Islamic Education that enhances creativity, motivation, and social competence. However, the implementation of PjBL in Islamic Education has not been widely studied in depth, highlighting the need for research and development to design a model suited to the characteristics of this subject.

This study is therefore important to provide theoretical contributions in developing PjBL strategies for Islamic Education and practical contributions for teachers in designing creative and meaningful instruction. Based on this rationale, the research focuses on the development of a Project-Based Learning model in Islamic Education to enhance students' creativity, with the hope that it may serve as an innovative solution for improving the quality of Islamic Education in schools.

## **B. Research Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a project-based learning (PjBL) model design in the context of Islamic education. The qualitative method was chosen because it allows researchers to explore deeply the processes, experiences, and meanings behind students' engagement in learning activities. Through this approach, the study aimed to investigate how the implementation of PjBL in Islamic education can enhance students' creativity both in cognitive and practical dimensions. The research was conducted in a natural classroom setting to ensure authentic data representation (Creswell, 2014).

The research design followed a descriptive qualitative framework, which focused on describing and analyzing phenomena as they occurred. This design was considered appropriate to capture the dynamics of classroom interactions, the role of teachers, and the responses of students during the learning process. Project-based learning activities in this study included projects that integrated Islamic values with creative problem-solving tasks. By documenting the process, the researcher was able to analyze how creativity emerges in students through various stages of project development (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

The participants in this study were students of Islamic education at the junior secondary level, selected using purposive sampling. This sampling technique was employed to ensure that participants represented the characteristics needed for the research, particularly students who were actively engaged in classroom learning. Teachers of Islamic education were also involved as key informants to provide insights into the instructional design, challenges, and opportunities of implementing the PjBL model. The involvement of both students and teachers enriched the data and provided a holistic view of the implementation.

Data collection techniques consisted of observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was carried out to record the real-time implementation of project-based learning, focusing on student participation, interaction, and creative output. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both students and teachers to gain deeper perspectives on their experiences, challenges, and perceived benefits of the

model. Documentation, such as students' project results, teachers' lesson plans, and reflective journals, was also collected to support triangulation and strengthen the validity of the findings (Patton, 2015).

The data analysis process followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data were first organized and coded to identify emerging themes related to creativity and the learning process. These themes were then analyzed to determine patterns and relationships between project-based activities and the development of students' creative abilities. Triangulation of data sources—through observation, interviews, and documentation—was carried out to ensure reliability and credibility of the results.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were applied, including prolonged engagement, member checking, and peer debriefing. Prolonged engagement allowed the researcher to build rapport and gain deeper understanding of the classroom context. Member checking was conducted by sharing interpretations and findings with participants to validate accuracy. Peer debriefing involved discussing the research process and results with fellow researchers to minimize bias. Through these methodological steps, the study ensured rigor in exploring the development of a project-based learning model in Islamic education to enhance students' creativity.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate that the development of a project-based learning (PjBL) model in Islamic Education significantly contributes to enhancing students' creativity. Data gathered from classroom observations, student project outcomes, and interviews with teachers and learners show consistent evidence that the application of PjBL creates a more dynamic and engaging learning environment. Students become more active participants in their learning process, which allows them to apply Islamic values in creative and meaningful ways.

One of the key results observed is the improvement in students' ability to generate original ideas. When students were encouraged to create projects such as posters, digital

storytelling, and community-based activities related to Islamic themes, they demonstrated a higher level of originality compared to traditional lecture-based classes. This suggests that the PjBL model fosters divergent thinking, which is essential for creativity.

Another important finding relates to problem-solving skills. The PjBL approach required students to identify issues within their school or community that could be addressed using Islamic teachings. For example, some students designed campaigns about environmental awareness inspired by Qur'anic verses, while others initiated peer-support groups to improve prayer discipline. These projects illustrate how creativity in Islamic education extends beyond abstract knowledge into practical applications.

The research also highlights the role of collaboration in fostering creativity. Students working in groups showed improved communication, negotiation, and teamwork skills. Group-based projects encouraged them to combine ideas, refine concepts, and present innovative solutions together. Teachers noted that collaborative work helped even less confident students contribute creative inputs, thus democratizing the learning process.

Teachers themselves reported a significant change in classroom dynamics. They shifted from being the central source of knowledge to becoming facilitators who guide and support students' creative endeavors. This role transition aligns with constructivist principles, which emphasize student-centered learning. By mentoring students rather than dictating information, teachers allowed learners to explore multiple interpretations of Islamic teachings in innovative ways.

Quantitative analysis of creativity assessment tools used in this study also supports the effectiveness of the PjBL model. Scores measuring fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration showed consistent improvement after the implementation of project-based activities. These findings confirm that structured yet open-ended projects stimulate creativity more effectively than rote memorization or passive learning strategies.

The study also uncovered that students' motivation significantly increased. Learners expressed greater enthusiasm for Islamic education classes when they had the

opportunity to design tangible projects. This heightened motivation is directly connected to creativity because motivated students are more likely to invest time and effort in producing high-quality, original work.

Another significant result is the integration of Islamic values into everyday problem-solving. Students reported that engaging in projects allowed them to see the relevance of Islamic teachings in contemporary contexts. For instance, they applied the principle of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) in designing peer mentoring programs and the value of *amanah* (responsibility) in community service projects. This integration demonstrates that PjBL not only enhances creativity but also strengthens character education.

Furthermore, the projects encouraged cross-disciplinary learning, combining Islamic knowledge with skills from other fields such as technology, art, and social sciences. This interdisciplinary approach enriched students' learning experiences and expanded their creativity beyond the boundaries of traditional Islamic education. For example, students used digital platforms to present Qur'anic interpretations in innovative multimedia formats.

The findings also reveal challenges in implementing the PjBL model. Some teachers initially faced difficulties in designing projects that were both creative and aligned with curriculum standards. Additionally, time management was a concern, as projects often required more class hours than traditional lessons. These challenges, however, were mitigated through teacher training and careful planning.

Another limitation observed was the varying levels of student participation. While many students thrived in the PjBL environment, others struggled with taking initiative or expressing creative ideas. Teachers addressed this issue by providing differentiated support and assigning roles within groups according to students' strengths. This ensured that all learners could contribute meaningfully to the project outcomes.

The discussion further emphasizes the importance of assessment strategies in project-based learning. Traditional exams may not adequately capture creativity; therefore, rubrics assessing originality, collaboration, and application of Islamic values were introduced. This shift in assessment practice provided a more comprehensive picture of students' creative growth.



Comparing the results of this study with previous literature, it becomes evident that the application of PjBL in Islamic education aligns with global trends in promoting 21st-century skills. Similar studies in general education contexts have highlighted PjBL as an effective method for fostering creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. This research confirms that the model is equally beneficial within Islamic educational frameworks.

The results also suggest that the development of PjBL in Islamic education has the potential to address broader educational goals, including preparing students for real-world challenges. By encouraging learners to engage with authentic problems through the lens of Islamic values, the model cultivates not only creativity but also ethical responsibility.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings demonstrate that project-based learning supports multiple learning styles. Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners all found opportunities to express their creativity through projects. This inclusivity strengthens the case for PjBL as a holistic and student-centered approach in Islamic education.

Moreover, the study found that students' confidence in expressing themselves improved significantly. Presenting projects in front of peers, teachers, and sometimes community members helped students develop communication skills alongside creativity. This confidence is crucial for empowering students to become active contributors in society.

The discussion also points to the sustainability of creativity through PjBL. Unlike short-term memorization, creative projects leave lasting impressions on students because they are tied to personal experiences and active engagement. Students are more likely to retain knowledge and skills gained through such projects.

In addition, the findings highlight the alignment of PjBL with Islamic pedagogical traditions. Historically, Islamic education emphasized experiential learning through practices such as *halaqah* and community service. The PjBL model resonates with these traditions, showing that creativity and innovation have always been integral to Islamic pedagogy.



Finally, the overall findings affirm that the development of a project-based learning model in Islamic education effectively enhances students' creativity across multiple dimensions: originality, problem-solving, collaboration, motivation, and value integration. The results suggest that with proper support, teacher training, and curriculum alignment, PjBL can serve as a transformative approach in modern Islamic education.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the development of a Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model in Islamic education has a significant positive impact on enhancing students' creativity. The implementation of PjBL allowed students to engage in real-life problem solving, collaborate in groups, and produce innovative projects related to Islamic education. This process not only deepened their understanding of Islamic values and teachings but also fostered essential creative skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and originality.

The research revealed that students became more active and motivated when learning was structured around meaningful projects rather than traditional teacher-centered methods. By connecting Islamic education with practical activities, students were encouraged to integrate knowledge, values, and creativity in their learning journey. This alignment strengthened the relevance of Islamic education in addressing contemporary challenges faced by learners.

In addition, the application of PjBL in Islamic education created a supportive learning environment where students were encouraged to express their ideas freely, collaborate effectively, and reflect critically on the learning outcomes. Teachers played a crucial role as facilitators, guiding students in project development while ensuring that the projects were grounded in Islamic principles.

Overall, this study confirms that the Project-Based Learning model can serve as an effective pedagogical approach in Islamic education to nurture creative, critical, and value-oriented learners. The findings highlight the importance of innovation in teaching methods to ensure that Islamic education remains dynamic, engaging, and relevant to

the needs of 21st-century learners. Future research is recommended to expand the scope of PjBL in different educational contexts and explore its long-term effects on students' creativity and character development.

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