

Project-Based Islamic Education Learning to Increase Students' Creativity

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ABSTRACT

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is an innovative approach that fosters the creativity and skills of students within Islamic education. This study examines the implementation of PjBL strategies in the context of Islamic education as an effort to enhance students' creativity. Employing a qualitative approach through library research, this study reviews relevant literature. The findings reveal that PjBL is not only effective in cultivating students' creativity and active engagement but also strengthens spiritual, moral, and social dimensions through the integration of contextual projects. The implementation of PjBL highlights the shift in the teacher's role from being a source of information to a facilitator, thereby promoting learning that is more participatory, collaborative, and connected to real-life contexts. Despite challenges such as limited resources, teacher readiness, and curriculum support, this study affirms that PjBL has the potential to serve as a strategic model for shaping visionary, adaptive, and ethically grounded Muslim generations. Thus, this research contributes theoretically by integrating Islamic values

into the PjBL framework, and practically by offering guidance for educators in designing meaningful learning experiences that nurture both creativity and noble character.

Introduction

The creativity of students in Islamic education is still a challenge that needs serious attention. Learning that is oriented to memorization and traditional lecture methods is often not able to foster the critical, collaborative, and innovative thinking skills that are needed in the 21st-century era (Qoidul, 2024). As a result, the process of internalizing Islamic values tends to take place passively and is less contextual with the real lives of students (Ningsih, 2025). An innovative and student-oriented learning approach, one of which is Project-Based Learning (PjBL), which offers contextual, collaborative, and applicative learning experiences (Aldi et al., 2024). Through this strategy, students are invited to actively explore Islamic concepts while developing creativity and life skills (Mariska, 2025). This has an impact on the low involvement of students and the limited internalization of Islamic values in real life (Aminah & Fathoni, 2022). The success of PjBL in Islamic education is significantly influenced by the ability of teachers to develop projects that are in accordance with the context of students' lives, and are in line with the learning goals of Islamic morality and spirituality (Pasi, 2025).

In the world of Islamic education that continues to develop, it is important to be able to teach with innovative learning methods,

especially in an effort to foster students' creativity. Using Project-Based Learning (PjBL), students will foster creativity and be actively involved, students will also be able to hone critical thinking skills (Saputra, 2023). The context of PjBL Islamic education can create an interactive and contextual learning atmosphere, increase motivation, and direct students to master deeper and applicable Islamic values (Faisal et al., 2023). The results of the development of the PjBL module show the effectiveness of this approach in increasing student activity, learning completeness, and positive response, so it can be concluded that PjBL has high validity, practicality, and effectiveness in supporting the learning process. However, its application in Islamic educational institutions such as madrassas still faces challenges, especially in the aspects of resources, teacher training, and time management (Barus et al., 2023).

Previous studies have shown that the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) consistently contributes to increasing students' creativity in various contexts, including Islamic education. Triantoro found in his research that the PjBL-based modules developed were able to increase students' creative thinking and meet the criteria for validity, practicality, and effectiveness (Triantoro, 2022). Hermansyah emphasized that PjBL increases the involvement and creativity of students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, even though they still face resource constraints and teacher training (Haratua et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Firmansyah proved that the application of PjBL in Islamic education

learning is able to grow students to be more active, critical, and creative in understanding Islamic values, with reinforcement on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Lahudin et al., 2024). The support of educators as facilitators and the conducive management of the learning environment are the keys to the successful implementation of this strategy. Emira added that through the PjBL approach, it not only improves students' creative thinking skills but also fosters a positive attitude towards learning (Irawan et al., 2023).

Although various research findings have shown the effectiveness of project-based learning (PjBL) in increasing students' creativity, there are still limitations and gaps that need to be considered in the context of its application to Islamic education. Most of the studies, such as those that have been conducted, focus more on the development of modules and their impact on creativity in general, without elaborating specifically on Islamic values in the projects applied. On the other hand, research conducted in the context of Islamic education has not explored much in depth between religious content and project design that is contextual and applicable in the lives of students (Adnyana et al., 2017). In addition, there are still gaps in terms of teacher training, resource availability, and holistic creativity evaluation strategies in the Islamic education environment (Rahmayana, 2024).

A review of the previous research's focus and objectives confirms that the application of project-based learning (PjBL) has been widely studied in terms of its effectiveness in increasing student creativity, both

in general education and in the context of Islamic education. The main focus of these studies is on module development, increasing learning motivation, and students' active attachment to the collaborative and contextual learning process. However, these goals are still general and have not specifically explored how PjBL can be used to build students' creativity through an integrated approach to Islamic values at each stage of the project (Suryani et al., 2022). Although the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has proven to be effective in fostering students' creativity, major challenges are still faced in the context of Islamic education, especially related to the lack of deep integration of Islamic values in contextual and applicative project design (Fikri & Shobahiya, 2024). This research is important to analyze how the concept of creativity in Islamic education can be integrated into the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach to develop the quality of learning that is not only oriented to intellectual intelligence, but also by strengthening the spiritual, moral, and social dimensions of students.

The potential contribution of research on the application of project-based learning (PjBL) in Islamic education to enhance students' creativity lies in the innovative integration of constructivist pedagogical approaches with holistic Islamic values (Fauzi & Nazib, 2024). This research has the potential to enrich the scientific treasures in the field of Islamic education by offering a learning model that not only emphasizes cognitive outcomes but also character development, creativity, and 21st-century skills. In addition, this research can be a practical reference for

educators and policymakers in designing learning that is contextual and relevant to the needs of the times, without overriding the foundation of spiritual values that are at the core of Islamic education. Thus, this research not only contributes to theoretical, but also applicative contributions in strengthening transformative and competitive Islamic education practices, and this research is very important in developing students' creativity, because in essence, project-based learning in religious education and students' creativity are two aspects that are mutually sustainable. If these two things are applied at the same time, it will create a more memorable and meaningful religious education learning process for students. This research has a focus of discussion, which includes: how to apply project-based learning in Islamic education to increase students' creativity.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with the library research method. The selection of this approach is based on the focus of the research is to examine in depth the concept, implementation, and potential of the application of Project-Based Learning in Islamic education to increase students' creativity through relevant literature sources. This study analyzes various results of previous research, textbooks, scientific journals, and articles related to PjBL, creativity, and Islamic education.

The data collection technique was carried out by searching available libraries, both in print and digitally, from various academic databases

such as Google Scholar, SciSpace, and other online libraries. The search focus is directed to literature published in the last five to ten years, in order to obtain contextual and up-to-date data. The resulting data was then analyzed using content analysis techniques by tracing the main themes, emerging patterns, and gaps in the implementation of PjBL in the context of Islamic education. This technique is used by researchers to draw conclusions based on the interpretation and comparison of various findings from the literature studied. The validity of the data in this study is strengthened by the source triangulation technique, which involves comparing findings from various references to obtain a more comprehensive synthesis of understanding. The results of this literature study are expected to provide a strong theoretical picture of the potential and challenges of the application of PjBL in building students' creativity in learning Islamic education.

Result and Discussions

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is an active learning approach that puts learners at the center of the learning process by encouraging them to identify, design, and complete real projects within a certain period of time until they develop a deep understanding, 21st-century skills such as creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, and communication (Sinaga, 2025). In the context of Islamic education, PjBL is applied to strengthen religious understanding contextually and increase learning motivation: for example, Astuti notes that in Islamic Religious Education learning, PjBL is effective in fostering creativity, student

involvement, as well as affective and psychomotor aspects, although it is limited by resources and teacher readiness (Fithri et al., 2025). Project-based learning is a learning method based on the development of projects where students can plan, implement, and evaluate learning outcomes that have real applications outside the classroom. Through the stages of design, calculation, implementation, and evaluation, students are given space to create, innovate, and collaborate (Naila et al., 2025). Thus, PjBL is not just a modern method, but can be seen as a medium for strengthening the concept of creativity in Islamic education, because the creativity that is born is not only oriented to academic products, but also spiritual, ethical, and religious values that are the basis of Islamic education (Ulum et al., 2021).

The Concept of Creativity in Islamic Education

Creativity from an Islamic educational perspective is not just the ability to generate new ideas or create innovations, but it is a manifestation of human nature as intelligent beings who are endowed with the ability to think critically by Allah SWT (Rashed, 2023). In an Islamic perspective, creativity is always tied to high spiritual values, so every form of innovation or creation of works must be in harmony with sharia principles and oriented towards the benefit of the ummah (Hayatinnufus, 2021). Thus, creativity in Islamic education is an active process of students in processing science and religious values innovatively to produce works with academic and spiritual value. This creativity is not only an intellectual tool, but also a form of actualization

of monotheism as a life consciousness that unites the mind and heart. Therefore, creativity is not enough to be understood as a new product, but also as an *ijtihad* process that reflects maximum effort in understanding and applying religious teachings in a contextual and relevant, manner.

In Islamic education, creativity has a strategic position because it supports the achievement of the main goal of education, namely the development of human potential as a whole, including intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions (Andriyani et al., 2022). In practice, creativity is an important provision for students to be able to solve life's problems with an innovative and valuable approach (Aldi, 2024). Creatively designed learning processes can create a more interesting, fun, and meaningful learning experience, which in turn increases students' motivation and active participation (Fikri & Munfarida, 2023). Creativity in Islamic education is also built on several fundamental principles: first, the ability to think critically and analytically, which allows students not only to passively receive information but also to develop and evaluate new ideas. Second, active involvement in learning through discussions, projects, and practical activities that encourage the creation of creative ideas. Third, creativity must remain within the corridor of Islamic values such as honesty, justice, and responsibility, thereby ensuring moral integrity in every creative expression (Munthe & Kesumawati, 2025).

The development of students' creativity requires a pedagogical

approach that is relevant and applicable. One method that has proven effective is Project-Based Learning (PjBL), which challenges students to think critically, work collaboratively, and produce concrete solutions to real problems (Sarbani et al., 2024). In addition, activities such as discussions, debates, and exploration of digital technology can strengthen creative thinking skills while expanding students' Islamic insights in the modern context (Pasi, 2025). Technology in this case, is not only a tool, but also an important medium in shaping an innovative learning experience that is responsive to the times. Therefore, Islamic education that accommodates creativity is not only an option but an urgent need to produce a generation that is resilient, visionary, and ready to face the complexities of global life (Pratiwi et al., 2024).

Islamic education with creativity can place character formation with basic values as a top priority, namely making students not only intellectually intelligent, but also noble in character and have high social concern. In this framework, creativity plays an important role, among others: arousing the spirit of active and exploratory learning as exemplified by the Prophet PBUH, who emphasized the importance of pursuing knowledge with curiosity (Jakandar et al., 2025). Strengthening the concept of monotheism and ukhuwah in creative works that strengthen human relationships with Allah and others, and encouraging the application of moral values in contemporary contexts through works such as Islamic art, environmentally friendly technology, and social solutions based on sharia values. In this view, Islamic

education that is integrated with creativity will produce students who are not only passive followers, but also active agents of change who are able to convey and revive Islamic values in a relevant and solutive way to the challenges of the times.

In the disruptive digital and globalization era, Islamic education is faced with a major challenge to produce an adaptive, innovative, and critically thinking generation. 21st-century skills, including creativity, are key competencies that must be possessed so that students are able to face social change, technological advances, and increasingly fierce global competition (Reistanti et al., 2025). In this context, creativity needs to be trained through contextual and participatory learning approaches such as Project-Based Learning, which facilitates students in designing and implementing concrete solutions that are in line with Islamic values (Farhan et al., 2024). Through this approach, students will foster the ability to think out of the box in solving religious and social problems, increase their independence and responsibility as caliphs on earth, and foster awareness to maintain a balance between scientific progress and spiritual values (Jauhari & Thelma, 2023). More than that, creativity also serves as an antidote to the stagnation of thought that can endanger the dynamics of Islamic civilization. With a creative approach, Islamic education is not only a forum for knowledge transfer, but also a space for the actualization of values that are alive, contextual, and able to answer the problems of the times without losing the roots of their principles (Mardatillah et al., 2025). Therefore, creativity in Islamic

education is not just an additional attribute, but a strategic foundation in building an intelligent, moral, and contributing generation of Muslims in the midst of a global society.

Project Based Learning in the Perspective of Islamic Education

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is an innovative learning approach that emphasizes active, collaborative, and problem-solving learning experiences (As'ari et al., 2023). In the context of Islamic education, PjBL is not only relevant but also very promising in order to produce students who excel in intellectual intelligence as well as being strong in spiritual, social, and moral aspects (Juwanti, 2024). This is in accordance with the orientation of Islamic education, which focuses on the formation of plenary persons (*insan kāmīl*) by integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor intelligence based on the values of *fitrah*, mandate as a caliph on earth, and the practice of noble morals (Ghofar, 2025). Thus, the application of PjBL in Islamic education can be a bridge between the demands of the 21st century and the holistic spiritual mission of Islam.

The main principles of PjBL, namely student-centered, collaboration, and inquiry-based, are its characteristics as well as advantages. Student-centered learning allows students to become active subjects, not only recipients of knowledge, but also seekers of solutions to problems relevant to real life (Suryani, 2023). Collaboration in PjBL provides space for students to work together, foster a sense of collective responsibility, and build *ukhuwah* and mutual cooperation in accordance with Islamic values. Meanwhile, the principle of inquiry-

based learning fosters curiosity, critical thinking skills, and a research culture that is relevant to Allah's command to perform tadabbur and tafakkur to His creation, as stated in QS. Ali Imran: 190–191 (Husain & Khairuddin, 2022). With this principle, PjBL not only focuses on academic achievement, but also trains students to think deeply and reflectively.

The integration of Islamic values in PjBL is a crucial aspect, because learning is not only directed at technical skills, but also spiritual and moral strengthening (Fadil et al., 2025). The value of trust and responsibility, for example, is reflected in the division of roles of each group member. This is in accordance with QS. Al-Ahzab: 72 which affirms that trust is a great responsibility that must be maintained. In addition, the principles of ukhuwah and mutual cooperation instilled through collaboration reflect the Islamic values practiced by the Prophet PBUH in building the community of Medina. In fact, muhasabah as a reflective part of PjBL is in line with QS. Al-Hasyr: 18, which reminds Muslims to observe what has been done for tomorrow (Hidayat, 2024). Thus, each stage of PjBL can be enriched with an Islamic dimension that gives a deeper meaning to students.

The real application of PjBL in Islamic education can be realized through contextual projects. For example, the social campaign "Stop Mosque Waste" which not only fosters environmental awareness, but also instills the values of faith, cleanliness, and responsibility (Sitinjak et al., 2022). The creation of noble moral education videos allows students

to preach through digital media in a creative and ethical way (Dharmayadi, 2021). In addition, the simulation of sharia mini-business is a space for Islamic economic practice based on the principles of honesty and justice (Putri & Hidayat, 2022). Literacy projects such as the creation of daily prayer pocket books can strengthen students' spirituality and religious literacy skills. In fact, eco-friendly school gardens are a real means to internalize the concept of humans as fil-ardh caliphs. These projects show how PjBL is not only a learning method, but a vehicle for the formation of Islamic character.

With these various potentials, the application of PjBL in Islamic education can be seen as a pedagogical strategy that is in line with the demands of the times while maintaining the spirit of spirituality. PjBL not only supports the mastery of 21st-century competencies such as creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking, but also facilitates the strengthening of fundamental Islamic values (Nugraha et al., 2023). Students are not just seekers of knowledge, but internalize values that are able to apply Islamic teachings in real life creatively, independently, and responsibly (Mahmud, 2020). Therefore, the implementation of PjBL can be positioned as an answer to the need for adaptive, contextual, and meaningful Islamic education.

Implications in Increasing Creativity

Creativity is one of the core skills of the 21st century that is not only important in the realm of education, but also in social and professional life (Nuraini et al., 2024). The implications of increasing creativity can

be seen in the ability of individuals to face complex global challenges, demanding innovative and adaptive solutions (Suyuti, 2024). Education that emphasizes creativity is able to give birth to a generation that not only masters knowledge, but is able to create new ideas and turn this knowledge into useful innovations (Jalinus & Syah, 2023). Therefore, teachers and educational institutions are required to provide space for exploration, problem-solving, and project-based learning approaches. In the context of learning, increasing creativity has implications for changing the pedagogical approach from teacher-centered to student-centered. Learners are no longer considered passive recipients of information, but rather as active subjects who play a role in building knowledge and finding solutions (Mustamin et al., 2024). Innovative learning models such as Project-Based Learning (PjBL) or Problem-Based Learning (PBL) provide great opportunities for students to develop creativity through exploration, collaboration, and reflection activities. Creativity can flourish optimally when the learning environment provides sufficient freedom, challenge, and support. Thus, creativity is an indicator of learning quality that is able to increase student motivation and involvement.

Furthermore, in the world of work, creativity is not just an additional skill but a key requirement for adapting to technological developments, digitalization, and global competition (Ding & Hong, 2025). Companies that instill a creative culture in the organization are better able to innovate, produce new products, and increase

competitiveness. The implication is that education and training institutions must adapt the curriculum to be relevant to the needs of creative industries, technology, and the knowledge-based economy (Van Laar et al., 2019). Economic growth in the 21st century is greatly influenced by the creative class, which is a group of people who rely on creativity, innovation, and knowledge as their main capital. In addition, increasing creativity also has important implications for the formation of students' character (Zhang et al., 2023). Creativity fosters the value of independence, the courage to take risks, and the attitude of never giving up in the face of failure. Creativity also encourages open thinking and tolerance for differences of ideas, thus positively impacting the formation of inclusive social attitudes (Zhang et al., 2023). Creativity is closely related to cognitive flexibility and openness of experience, which are important parts of the formation of superior character. Thus, creative education not only produces intelligent students but also has strong character.

A further implication of increasing creativity is the overall transformation of the educational paradigm. The curriculum needs to be designed not only to pursue academic achievement, but also to foster creative and innovative thinking skills (Hopfenbeck et al., 2022). Teachers are required to play the role of facilitators as well as supervisors in stimulating students' new ideas. Digital technology must also be optimized to provide a space for expression, collaboration, and innovation (Rawlings & Cutting, 2024). Education that fails to develop

creativity is tantamount to ignoring the greatest potential of humanity. Therefore, increasing creativity has major implications for the shift in the educational paradigm towards a system that is more humanistic, adaptive, and relevant to global challenges.

Application Project Based Learning in Islamic Education

The application of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Islamic Religious Education should ideally begin with a driving question that connects Qur'anic verses or hadith with contextual social problems in the student environment, such as zakat literacy at the village level, digital adab campaigns, or environmental conservation movements as a form of practicing human mandate as caliphs on earth (Saharuddin et al., 2024). A number of studies have shown that the PjBL-based Qur'an Hadith learning tool at the tsanawiyah madrasah level has been tested and validated, indicating that the Islamic Religious Education PjBL tool can be prepared systematically and rigorously according to the demands of the curriculum and the needs of students (Nurlaelah et al., 2024). Furthermore, the results of mapping the factors that support and hinder implementation, including teacher readiness, time management, the availability of learning resources, and collaborative culture in schools, are crucial aspects that determine the success of project-based learning planning and implementation (Husaini et al., 2023). At the same time, the integration of Qur'an and hadith values serves as a pedagogical anchor, so that the projects produced by students do not stop at products alone, but also contain social worship values that are

able to foster noble morals and strengthen the dimension of spirituality in the educational process (Deriansyah, 2025).

As a result, a number of studies in the last five years have shown that PjBL contributes significantly to improving creative thinking skills, independence, learning engagement, and leadership of madrasah teachers when implemented consistently (Deriansyah, 2025). In PAI classes at the junior high school level, for example, community-based projects have been shown to strengthen students' social awareness, ethical reasoning, independence, and critical thinking skills (Sihabudin & Sukandar, 2025). Other research specifically confirms that the application of PjBL is able to improve creative thinking skills in PAI learning, making it relevant to encourage responsible religious creativity (Nico, 2024). At the teacher level, the increase in the implementation of PjBL in aliyah madrasah is also correlated with strengthening instructional leadership competencies, which has an impact on improving the quality of planning, facilitation, and learning evaluation (Amin, 2025).

Digital transformation has enriched the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) ecosystem in Islamic Religious Education. Research on Ubiquitous Project-Based Learning (UPjBL) shows that instructional design based on the ADDIE model is able to facilitate collaboration across space and time, so that Islamic projects such as mapping local zakat services, developing digital museums of morals, and making vlogs of alms movements can be carried out in a sustainable manner

(Zainuddin et al., 2020). Other research findings confirm that the integration of digital literacy within the framework of PjBL contributes significantly to increasing student participation, fostering learning autonomy, and honing higher order thinking skills, which are essential competencies for students in critically and ethically studying religious sources in the digital space (Kokotsaki et al., 2021). Practically, schools and madrassas can optimize learning management systems (LMS), online collaboration tools, and curation of credible Islamic sources, so that the resulting projects still have scientific validity as well as sharia validity (Hidayat, 2024).

The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) still faces a number of challenges, including teacher workload, authentic assessment mechanisms, limited learning resources, and project time management (Al-Husaini et al., 2023). There are various obstacles that can be overcome through systematic strategies, such as teacher training related to performance assessment and the preparation of rubrics that are integrated with Islamic values, strengthening partnerships with mosques, amil zakat institutions, and community communities as authentic learning resources, as well as the implementation of a project schedule block system to increase the effectiveness of implementation (Situmorang, 2025). Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Islamic Religious Education is not only feasible to implement but also proven to be effective in improving learning outcomes and student involvement, especially when supported by

consistent academic supervision and a collaborative culture in schools (Deriansyah, 2024). Thus, the success of the implementation of PjBL in Islamic education is highly determined by three main factors, namely the preparation of valid learning tools and according to curriculum needs, adequate institutional support, and close connection with the surrounding community as an authentic learning resource (Nurlaelah et al., 2024). The synergy of these three aspects emphasizes that PjBL is not just a learning method, but a pedagogical movement oriented towards the humanization of Islamic education, the strengthening of noble morals, and the formation of adaptive and competitive 21st-century competencies (Rijal, 2024).

Conclusion

The results of this study confirm that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is not only an effective pedagogical approach to increase students' creativity in Islamic education, but also a strategic model for integrating intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social values into learning practices. By placing students as active subjects and teachers as facilitators, PjBL encourages critical thinking skills, collaboration, and contextual engagement with Islamic teachings, thereby shifting the learning paradigm from teacher-centered to student-centered. The integration of Islamic values in PjBL ensures that creativity develops within the framework of responsibility, ethics, and spirituality, making it highly relevant to the challenges of the 21st century.

Despite the challenges of limited resources, teacher readiness, and

curriculum support, this study shows that PjBL has strong potential to be applied systematically in Islamic educational institutions. Theoretically, this research contributes by offering a framework that blends constructivist pedagogy with Islamic values. Practically, this research provides a reference for educators in designing meaningful, participatory, and value-based learning. Therefore, the application of PjBL in Islamic education is a strategic need to form a generation of Muslims who are visionary, adaptive, and noble, and able to contribute effectively in the global context.

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