

RECONSTRUCTION OF ISLAMIC CULTURAL HISTORY LEARNING IN MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH THROUGH PROJECT BASED LEARNING: A STUDY OF HISTORICAL ENGAGEMENT AND INTERNALIZATION OF ISLAMIC CHARACTER VALUES

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Abstract

Learning Islamic Cultural History (SKI) in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) is still dominated by the transmissive learning approach that prioritizes the memorization of facts related to historical events, causing low student participation and comprehension. The objectives of this research are to explain how the implementation of the reconstruction of SKI learning through Project-Based Learning (PjBL) was designed, as well as to analyze its contributions in improving students' historical engagement and the internalization of Islamic character values. A qualitative case study method was applied at MI Mansyaul Ulum Grobogan. Semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation served as data collection methods, which were then analyzed using the Miles-Huberman-Saldana interactive thematic analysis model. It was found that the reconstruction of SKI learning through PjBL has greatly improved student participation, comprehension of historical facts, and the internalization of the exemplary characters of Khulafaur Rasyidin. The implementation of PjBL employed six integrated PjBL process stages, complemented by interactive lectures as a conceptual foundation before project development began. Infographics, short dramas, and booklets created by students demonstrated not only students' comprehension of historical events, but also their internalization of honesty, justice, generosity, and courage drawn from the stories of Khulafaur Rasyidin.

Keyword: Islamic cultural history; project based learning; madrasah ibtidaiyah; value internalization; islamic character

Abstrak

Pembelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam (SKI) di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) masih didominasi oleh pendekatan pembelajaran transmisif yang memprioritaskan hafalan fakta-fakta terkait peristiwa sejarah, sehingga menyebabkan rendahnya partisipasi dan pemahaman siswa. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan bagaimana implementasi rekonstruksi pembelajaran SKI melalui Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek (PjBL) dirancang, serta menganalisis kontribusinya dalam meningkatkan keterlibatan historis siswa dan internalisasi nilai karakter Islam. Metode studi kasus kualitatif diterapkan di MI Mansyaul Ulum Grobogan. Wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi digunakan sebagai metode pengumpulan data yang kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model analisis tematik interaktif Miles-Huberman-Saldana. Ditemukan bahwa rekonstruksi pembelajaran SKI melalui PjBL telah sangat meningkatkan partisipasi siswa, pemahaman tentang fakta-fakta sejarah, dan internalisasi karakter teladan Khulafaur Rasyidin. Implementasi PjBL dilakukan melalui enam tahapan proses PjBL terintegrasi, dilengkapi dengan ceramah interaktif sebagai landasan konsep sebelum pengembangan proyek dimulai. Infografis, drama pendek, dan buket yang dibuat oleh siswa menunjukkan tidak hanya pemahaman siswa tentang

peristiwa sejarah, tetapi juga internalisasi mereka mengenai kejujuran, keadilan, kemurahan hati, dan keberanian berdasarkan kisah Khulafaur Rasyidin

Kata Kunci: *Sejarah kebudayaan Islam; project based learning; madrasah ibtidaiyah; internalisasi nilai; karakter islami*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Cultural History (SKI) is one of the core subjects within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) cluster taught across madrasah levels, from Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), to Madrasah Aliyah (MA). This subject is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of Islamic historical development, the evolution of Islamic civilization, and the exemplary figures who have contributed significantly to humanity. At the MI level, SKI content covers pre-Islamic Arab society, the birth and prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and the era of Khulafaur Rasyidin, presented in accordance with the cognitive and emotional developmental characteristics of elementary-aged students.¹

From a contemporary educational perspective, history learning at the primary level faces a fundamental challenge: the dominance of a factual approach that prioritizes information transfer over the development of deep historical understanding. Recent studies indicate that the transmissive approach in history learning has not been effective in building historical consciousness, historical empathy, or reflective capacities in students.² Yet, history learning holds strategic potential as a vehicle for value formation, character building, and civic awareness when designed contextually and oriented toward authentic learning experiences.³

A similar situation is found in SKI learning practices in Indonesia, particularly at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Several studies reveal that SKI learning remains dominated by one-way lecturing and the memorization of historical chronology and names of figures, without active student involvement in the process of deriving historical meaning.⁴ As a result, SKI is often perceived as a boring subject, irrelevant to daily life, and contributing minimally to student character development.⁵ The phenomena of low learning motivation, fatigue, and passive behavior during SKI learning constitute real challenges faced by madrasah educators.⁶

Substantively, SKI learning at MI holds great potential as a medium for the internalization of Islamic values and student character development. Ideally, SKI learning should not only engage the cognitive domain through mastery of historical facts, but also integrate the affective and psychomotor

¹ Kementerian Agama RI, “Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 347 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pedoman Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Madrasah” (Kemenag RI, 2022).

² Sam Wineburg et al., “Lateral Reading on the Open Internet,” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, November 15, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2139/SSRN.3936112>.

³ I Davies et al., *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Citizenship and Education* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59733-5>; Cosme J. Gómez-Carrasco et al., “A Review of Literature on History Education: An Analysis of the Conceptual, Intellectual and Social Structure of a Knowledge Domain (2000–2019),” *European Journal of Education* 57, no. 3 (September 1, 2022): 497–511, <https://doi.org/10.1111/EJED.12508>.

⁴ Ahmad Sholeh, Alfian Nur Azizi, and Maryam Faizah, “Pengembangan Pembelajaran SKI MI/SD Berbasis Android Dengan Pemanfaatan Media Audiovisual Untuk Meningkatkan Minat Belajar Mahasiswa PGMI” (Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2023), <https://repository.uin-malang.ac.id/17358/>; A Hidayat and M Rofi’i, “Transformasi Metode Pembelajaran SKI Di Madrasah,” *Al-Bidayah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam* 15, no. 1 (2023): 55–74, <https://doi.org/10.14421/al-bidayah.v15i1.3417>.

⁵ N Azizah and R Winanda, “Problematisasi Pembelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 19, no. 1 (2022): 45–62, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2022.191-03>; Siti Chairun Nisyah, Wahyudin Nur Nasution, and Solihah Titin Sumanti, “Learning Strategies and Learning Motivation Related to SKI Learning Outcomes: Strategi Pembelajaran Dan Motivasi Belajar Terkait Hasil Belajar SKI,” *Academia Open* 10, no. 2 (2025): 10.2107-10.2107, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21070/acopen.10.2025.11770>.

⁶ Abdul Gani et al., “Pembelajaran SKI Di MIS Nurul Fadhillah,” *TSAQOFAH* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 2023): 59–68, <https://doi.org/10.58578/TSAQOFAH.V3I1.769>.

dimensions through meaningful and reflective learning experiences.⁷ Within the framework of contemporary meaningful learning theory, understanding is optimally constructed when students are able to connect new knowledge with their own experiences and life context.⁸ The pedagogical implication is that SKI learning needs to be designed contextually, participatorily, and with an orientation toward value reflection.

In response to these challenges, education experts recommend the application of student-centered learning models based on authentic learning experiences. One of the most relevant models is Project Based Learning (PjBL). This model positions students as active subjects in learning through direct involvement in contextual, collaborative, and product-oriented projects, thereby simultaneously fostering conceptual understanding, social skills, and the internalization of character values.⁹ Furthermore, PjBL has proven effective in improving student engagement while supporting character development through authentic and meaningful learning experiences.¹⁰

Several prior studies have examined the effectiveness of PjBL in learning contexts. Moursund in their research found that PjBL effectively improves critical thinking, creativity, and responsibility among elementary school students in general subjects.¹¹ Amalia and Nugroho in their research demonstrated that PjBL successfully increased student enthusiasm, active participation, and creativity in Islamic Cultural History learning at the Madrasah Aliyah level with a success rate of 80%.¹² Nevertheless, studies specifically on the implementation of PjBL in SKI learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level which has distinct student developmental characteristics and curriculum content remain very limited.¹³

Based on this gap, this study offers a novel contribution in the form of a reconstruction of SKI learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah through the contextual application of PjBL oriented toward the strengthening of Islamic character. This reconstruction is grounded in three mutually supporting theoretical frameworks: contemporary meaningful learning theory, Islamic value-based character education theory, and PjBL theory as a constructivist approach emphasizing authentic and participatory learning. By integrating these three foundations, PjBL is positioned not merely as an alternative method, but as a conceptual and operational framework for comprehensively and systemically redesigning SKI learning. Therefore, this research aims: (1) to describe the design of PjBL-based SKI learning reconstruction suited to MI student characteristics; and (2) to analyze the contribution of PjBL in improving students' historical engagement and the internalization of Islamic character values at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

⁷ A Kurniawan and Z Arifin, "Pembelajaran Afektif Dan Psikomotorik Dalam Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 2 (2022): 119–136.

⁸ R E Mayer, *Multimedia Learning*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009276139>; T. G.K. Bryce and E. J. Blown, "Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Re-Visited," *Current Psychology* 2023 43:5 43, no. 5 (April 26, 2023): 4579–98, <https://doi.org/10.1007/S12144-023-04440-4>.

⁹ S Bell, "Project-Based Learning for the 21st Century: Skills for the Future," *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies* 83, no. 2 (2022): 39–43; Sofie M.M. Loyens et al., "Situating Higher-Order, Critical, and Critical-Analytic Thinking in Problem- and Project-Based Learning Environments: A Systematic Review," *Educational Psychology Review* 2023 35:2 35, no. 2 (March 21, 2023): 39–, <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10648-023-09757-X>.

¹⁰ S Han, R Capraro, and M M Capraro, "How STEM Project Based Learning Affects High Need Students' Career Aspirations," *International Journal of Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology* 3, no. 1 (2022): 1–13; J S Krajcik and N Shin, "Project-Based Learning," in *The Cambridge Handbook of the Learning Sciences*, ed. R K Sawyer, 3rd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 298–318.

¹¹ D Moursund, *Project-Based Learning Using Information Technology*, 3rd ed. (ISTE, 2022).

¹² D Amalia and I Nugroho, "Implementasi Model Project Based Learning Dalam Pembelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam," *Asian Journal of Islamic Studies and Da'wah* 3, no. 6 (2025): 480–492, <https://doi.org/10.58578/ajisd.v3i6.7901>.

¹³ Nailah Fatma and Andi Prastowo, "PENGUNAAN MODEL BLENDED LEARNING UNTUK PERENCANAAN PEMBELAJARAN TEMATIK MENINGKATKAN HASIL BELAJAR SISWA MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH," *ATTADIB* 8, no. 2 (June 30, 2024), <https://ejournal.uika-bogor.ac.id/index.php/at-tadib/article/view/21424>.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Project Based Learning as a Constructivist Approach

Project Based Learning (PjBL) is rooted in the tradition of John Dewey's progressive educational philosophy, formulated through the concept of learning by doing in the early 20th century. Dewey asserted that students need to be actively involved in the learning process—not merely receiving information passively, but constructing knowledge through direct and meaningful experience.¹⁴ In a contemporary context, PjBL is defined as a learning model that engages students in an in-depth investigation of complex, authentic, and relevant questions or problems through the production of artifacts or public presentations that can be shared with others.¹⁵

Theoretically, PjBL is grounded in Vygotsky's social constructivism, which emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed through social interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development. In the context of PjBL, collaborative interaction among students in project groups facilitates more meaningful co-construction of knowledge compared to individual learning.¹⁶ Project-based learning also aligns with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, which acknowledges diverse learning modalities, thereby enabling students to express their understanding through various forms of product such as infographics, drama, and written works.¹⁷

Meaningful Learning in the Context of SKI

Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning states that effective learning occurs when students are able to connect new knowledge with their existing cognitive structure.¹⁸ In the context of SKI learning, this means students need to be guided in connecting the historical values they study such as the honesty of Abu Bakar, the justice of Umar ibn Khattab, the generosity of Utsman ibn Affan, and the courage of Ali ibn Abi Thalib with their real experiences and daily life context.¹⁹

Meaningful learning in SKI is also closely associated with the concept of historical thinking, which encompasses students' ability to understand the context, perspective, and significance of historical events for contemporary life.²⁰ The integration of PjBL and meaningful learning allows SKI to evolve beyond mere memorization of historical facts toward holistic, critical, and reflective understanding, while remaining relevant to student identity formation and character development.²¹

Character Education Based on Islamic Values

Character education from an Islamic perspective encompasses dimensions broader than mere moral behavior formation it includes the internalization of values drawn from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the exemplary conduct of the *salafus shalih*.²² In SKI learning, the exemplary stories of Khulafaur

¹⁴ Bell, "Project-Based Learning for the 21st Century: Skills for the Future."

¹⁵ Krajcik and Shin, "Project-Based Learning"; Loyens et al., "Situating Higher-Order, Critical, and Critical-Analytic Thinking in Problem- and Project-Based Learning Environments: A Systematic Review."

¹⁶ H Hadim and S Esche, "Enhancing the Educational Experience through Project-Based Learning," *Journal of Engineering Education* 111, no. 4 (2022): 850–875; Moursund, *Project-Based Learning Using Information Technology*.

¹⁷ T Armstrong, *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*, 5th ed. (ASCD, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/10400419.2022.2093041>.

¹⁸ Bryce and Blown, "Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Re-Visited."

¹⁹ Mayer, *Multimedia Learning*.

²⁰ Gómez-Carrasco et al., "A Review of Literature on History Education: An Analysis of the Conceptual, Intellectual and Social Structure of a Knowledge Domain (2000–2019)"; Sergio Tirado-Olivares et al., "Enhancing Historical Thinking through Learning Analytics in Primary Education: A Bridge to Formative Assessment," *Education and Information Technologies* 2023 29:12 29, no. 12 (January 12, 2024): 14789–813, <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10639-023-12425-W>.

²¹ J L Endacott and S Brooks, "Historical Empathy: Perspective Taking and Caring in the Social Studies," *Social Studies Research and Practice* 17, no. 1 (2022): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1108/SSRP-09-2021-0054>.

²² Matthew Davidson, Vladimir Khmelkov, and Thomas Lickona, "International Research Handbook on Values Education and Student Wellbeing," *International Research Handbook on Values Education and Student Wellbeing*, 2010, 427–54, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-8675-4>; Kendra J. Thomas, Josafá da Cunha, and Jonathan B. Santo, "Changes in Character Virtues Are Driven by Classroom Relationships: A Longitudinal Study of Elementary School Children," *School Mental Health* 2022 14:2 14, no. 2 (February 23, 2022): 266–77, <https://doi.org/10.1007/S12310-022-09511-8>.

Rasyidin represent a rich and contextual source of values for student character development, presenting genuine role models of leaders who successfully realized Islamic values in their social, political, and spiritual lives.²³

The internalization of Islamic character values in the learning process requires more than verbal information delivery it necessitates processes of experience, reflection, and the actualization of those values in real action.²⁴ PjBL provides a pedagogical framework that supports this value internalization through the creative products students produce, since in the process of creation, students engage in meaning negotiation, value discussion, and the actualization of historical exemplars in a contemporary context.²⁵

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a single case study design focusing on one specific and bounded learning context. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is relevant to the research objectives namely, to understand in depth the process of reconstructing SKI learning through PjBL in a natural and holistic context.²⁶ The case study design was employed because this research explores a contemporary learning phenomenon in which the boundary between phenomenon and context cannot be sharply separated, thus requiring in-depth description and context-rich analysis.²⁷

The research site was MI Mansyaul Ulum, Grobogan Regency, Central Java. This madrasah was purposively selected because it has implemented PjBL in SKI learning since late 2023, providing rich and contextual data related to the phenomenon under study. Research subjects consisted of the SKI subject teacher for Grade V and 28 Grade V students, selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the learning that was the focus of study.²⁸

Data collection techniques in this research included three complementary methods. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the SKI teacher to gather information about lesson planning, PjBL implementation strategies, and the teacher's reflection on student responses and engagement. The interview guide was developed based on the key dimensions of PjBL and meaningful learning theory. Second, participatory observation was conducted over eight learning sessions to directly observe the PjBL implementation process, teacher-student interaction, project activities, and classroom dynamics that emerged. Third, documentation was used to collect learning artifacts including lesson plans (RPP), student project results, and relevant supporting administrative documents.²⁹

²³ Muhaimin, *Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Sekolah, Madrasah, Dan Perguruan Tinggi (Edisi Terbaru)* (PT RajaGrafindo Persada, 2022).

²⁴ A Majid and D Andayani, *Pendidikan Karakter Perspektif Islam (Edisi Revisi)* (PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2022); M Azzam, "Islamic Character Education through Historical Narratives: A Pedagogical Framework," *Journal of Islamic Education Research* 4, no. 1 (2023): 78–95, <https://doi.org/10.35719/jier.v4i1.109>.

²⁵ Han, Capraro, and Capraro, "How STEM Project Based Learning Affects High Need Students' Career Aspirations"; Fatma and Prastowo, "PENGUNAAN MODEL BLENDED LEARNING UNTUK PERENCANAAN PEMBELAJARAN TEMATIK MENINGKATKAN HASIL BELAJAR SISWA MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH."

²⁶ J W Creswell and C N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 5th ed. (SAGE Publications, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071817518>.

²⁷ Samson Mtisi, "The Qualitative Case Study Research Strategy as Applied on a Rural Enterprise Development Doctoral Research Project," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 21 (2022): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221145849>; Tirado-Olivares et al., "Enhancing Historical Thinking through Learning Analytics in Primary Education: A Bridge to Formative Assessment"; Judith Green et al., "Case Study Research and Causal Inference," *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 2022 22:1 22, no. 1 (December 1, 2022): 307–, <https://doi.org/10.1186/S12874-022-01790-8>.

²⁸ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif (Edisi Ke-4)* (Alfabeta, 2022); Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*.

²⁹ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif (Edisi Ke-4)*; Y S Lincoln and E G Guba, "Naturalistic Inquiry Revisited: Criteria for Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 28, no. 3–4 (2022): 275–285.

Data trustworthiness was maintained through methodological triangulation comparing and cross-verifying data obtained from interviews, observation, and documentation to enhance the credibility and consistency of findings.³⁰ Additionally, member checking was conducted by confirming preliminary findings with key informants to ensure the accuracy of interpretations.³¹ Data analysis was conducted using interactive thematic analysis following the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, comprising three iterative stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.³² During condensation, the researcher selected, focused, simplified, and transformed raw data from field notes and interview transcripts. During data display, condensed data were presented in descriptive narrative and thematic maps to facilitate conclusion drawing. The analysis process was iterative and continuous throughout data collection.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Initial Conditions of SKI Learning at MI Mansyaul Ulum

Prior to the implementation of PjBL, SKI learning at MI Mansyaul Ulum proceeded conventionally, dominated by lecturing and one-way question-and-answer interaction. The teacher delivered historical content from the textbook while students served as passive recipients of information. This created a stagnant classroom atmosphere in which students exhibited low learning motivation, poor focus, and even fell asleep during lessons. These findings are consistent with the research of Azizah and Winanda and Abdul Gani et.al, who identified similar patterns in various madrasah ibtidaiyah across Indonesia.³³

The SKI subject teacher, Bapak Muhlisin, revealed that his concern about these conditions motivated him to make fundamental changes to his pedagogical approach. This teacher reflection was the starting point of the learning reconstruction that subsequently led to the systematic implementation of PjBL beginning in late 2023. Consistent with Darling-Hammond et al.'s view that sustained pedagogical change always begins with teachers' critical reflection on existing learning practices, this finding illustrates how teacher awareness became the catalyst for SKI learning transformation at the madrasah.³⁴ Documentation of lesson plans for the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 academic years confirms that PjBL has been established as the primary learning model in Grade V SKI.

Design of PjBL-Based SKI Learning Reconstruction

The reconstruction of SKI learning at MI Mansyaul Ulum was implemented through two complementary main phases: a conceptual building phase through interactive lectures, and an authentic experience phase through PjBL implementation. The integration of these two phases reflects a systematic, student development-oriented pedagogical design, consistent with Vygotsky's scaffolding principle, which recommends providing structural support before students are engaged in more complex and independent activities.³⁵

In the first phase, the teacher conducted interactive lectures at the opening session of each topic, covering the exemplary conduct of Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq, Umar ibn Khattab, Utsman ibn Affan, and Ali ibn Abi Thalib. The interactive lectures were not conducted in a linear, one-way manner; instead, they

³⁰ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*; U Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 6th ed. (SAGE Publications, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529776379>.

³¹ Lincoln and Guba, "Naturalistic Inquiry Revisited: Criteria for Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research."

³² M B Miles, A M Huberman, and J Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. (Sage Publications, 2014).

³³ Azizah and Winanda, "Problematika Pembelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah"; Gani et al., "Pembelajaran SKI Di MIS Nurul Fadhilah."

³⁴ Linda Darling-Hammond, Maria Hyler, and Madelyn Gardner, "Effective Teacher Professional Development," June 2017, <https://doi.org/10.54300/122.311>.

³⁵ Hadim and Esche, "Enhancing the Educational Experience through Project-Based Learning."

were combined with question-and-answer sessions, inspirational storytelling, and connections to students' daily experiences. This strategy aimed to build an adequate conceptual foundation, preparing students' cognitive structures for development through subsequent project activities. This approach aligns with Ausubel's meaningful learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of advance organizers in facilitating the assimilation of new knowledge³⁶

In the second phase, the teacher implemented the PjBL model through six structured and integrated steps. First, essential questioning: the teacher posed authentic, student-relevant driving questions such as 'How can we emulate Ali ibn Abi Thalib's courage in our daily lives?' These questions served as cognitive anchors and intrinsic motivators for student engagement in the project.³⁷ Second, project planning: students collaboratively designed projects that included determining the type of product, assigning member roles, identifying reference sources to be used, and determining success indicators. The teacher functioned as a facilitator who guided without dominating the planning process. Third, project scheduling: each group constructed a work schedule allocating time for research, production, and presentation. This stage developed time management and self-management skills essential 21st-century competencies.³⁸

Fourth, project progress monitoring: the teacher regularly monitored each group's work progress, provided constructive feedback, and maintained project relevance to learning objectives. This monitoring was formative and continuous, not limited to the end of the process.³⁹ Fifth, product and process assessment: the teacher evaluated both the products created and the group work process using a comprehensive rubric covering content understanding, product quality, collaboration, and value reflection. Sixth, evaluation and reflection: the teacher and students jointly reflected on the most memorable exemplary values, challenges encountered during project work, and the project's contribution to their understanding and personal development. This reflection phase is a critical PjBL component that enables the transformation of experience into internalized knowledge.⁴⁰

PjBL Implementation on Khulafaur Rasyidin Exemplary Character Material

The implementation of PjBL in Grade V SKI learning for the second semester covered four main topics, each completed through a different type of project suited to the core value intended for internalization. For the material on the exemplary conduct of Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq, students completed an educational infographic project depicting the values of honesty and loyalty in a modern life context. The first group created an infographic about manifestations of honesty in children's daily life, such as not cheating, telling the truth to parents, and having the courage to admit mistakes. The second group developed an infographic about Abu Bakar's loyalty to the Prophet Muhammad, presented in a communicative visual story format that was easy to understand.

Observation showed that the infographic project process encouraged students to conduct research, hold substantive group discussions, and negotiate meaning regarding the values to be depicted. Clear role assignments—concept writer, content writer, and visual designer—facilitated individual competency development while promoting productive collaboration. During the presentation stage, students were able to explain the moral message of their work with confidence, and inter-group interaction demonstrated mutual respect reflecting the internalization of Islamic character values. These

³⁶ Bryce and Blown, "Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Re-Visited"; Mayer, *Multimedia Learning*.

³⁷ Krajcik and Shin, "Project-Based Learning."

³⁸ Krajcik and Shin.

³⁹ Loyens et al., "Situating Higher-Order, Critical, and Critical-Analytic Thinking in Problem- and Project-Based Learning Environments: A Systematic Review."

⁴⁰ Bell, "Project-Based Learning for the 21st Century: Skills for the Future"; Han, Capraro, and Capraro, "How STEM Project Based Learning Affects High Need Students' Career Aspirations."

findings are consistent with Amalia and Nugroho's research, which identified significant increases in student enthusiasm and active participation in PjBL-based SKI learning.⁴¹

For the material on the exemplary conduct of Umar ibn Khattab, students completed a short drama project presenting a historical event reconstruction related to Umar's values of justice and decisiveness in leadership. This short drama project provided a stronger psychomotor dimension in value internalization, as students not only studied historical facts but also internalized and expressed them through the performing arts. This approach aligns with Armstrong's view that learning accommodating multiple intelligences including linguistic and bodily-kinesthetic intelligence produces a richer and more inclusive learning experience.⁴²

For the material on Utsman ibn Affan's exemplary conduct, students produced a booklet containing stories of Utsman's generosity, packaged in simple language and engaging visuals. This product integrated literacy skills, design creativity, and historical comprehension in an integrative manner. For the material on Ali ibn Abi Thalib's exemplary conduct, students again worked on a short drama project highlighting Ali's values of courage and wisdom across various historical situations. This variation of project types reflects the teacher's understanding of the importance of diverse learning modalities and creativity in effective PjBL design.⁴³

Contribution of PjBL to Students' Historical Engagement

Observation and interview data consistently demonstrated a significant increase in students' historical engagement following PjBL implementation. Historical engagement in this research is understood as a combination of cognitive engagement (active effort to understand and analyze historical material), affective engagement (positive emotional response to learning), and behavioral engagement (active participation in learning activities) consistent with the multidimensional student engagement framework proposed by Fredricks et al.⁴⁴

In the cognitive engagement dimension, students demonstrated the ability to analyze the exemplary values of historical figures and connect them to relevant contemporary issues. This was evident in the quality of questions posed during group discussions and presentation sessions, which were no longer limited to factual inquiries but touched on causal dimensions and value relevance. These findings support Gómez-Carrasco et al. research, which identified that PjBL in history learning effectively develops higher-order historical thinking among students.⁴⁵

In the affective engagement dimension, students showed enthusiasm, joy, and a strong sense of ownership toward the products they created. This positive emotional expression contrasted sharply with previous conditions in which students tended to be apathetic and unmotivated. This attitudinal change aligns with Han et al.'s view that when students are given autonomy and responsibility in the learning process, their intrinsic motivation increases substantially.⁴⁶ In the behavioral engagement dimension,

⁴¹ Amalia and Nugroho, "Implementasi Model Project Based Learning Dalam Pembelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam."

⁴² Armstrong, *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*; Imam Syafi'i, *Merajuk Inklusivitas Pendidikan Untuk Kohesi Sosial Masyarakat Urban* (Bone: Alinea Indonesia, 2026), <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.19561801>; Imam Syafi'i and Sariyani, *Al-Wasathiyah Fil Islam: Integrasi Spiritualitas, Kebinekaan, Dan Literasi Digital* (Bone: Alinea Indonesia, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.19638037>.

⁴³ Krajcik and Shin, "Project-Based Learning"; Bell, "Project-Based Learning for the 21st Century: Skills for the Future."

⁴⁴ J A Fredricks, P C Blumenfeld, and A H Paris, "School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence," *Review of Educational Research* 74, no. 1 (2022): 59–109, <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059>.

⁴⁵ Gómez-Carrasco et al., "A Review of Literature on History Education: An Analysis of the Conceptual, Intellectual and Social Structure of a Knowledge Domain (2000–2019)."

⁴⁶ Han, Capraro, and Capraro, "How STEM Project Based Learning Affects High Need Students' Career Aspirations."

observation revealed marked increases in active participation, initiative in completing tasks, timely project completion, and the quality of student interaction.⁴⁷

Contribution of PjBL to the Internalization of Islamic Character Values

The most significant finding of this research is the contribution of PjBL to the internalization of Islamic character values in students. Value internalization is defined as the process by which external values that are learned gradually become integrated into students' value system and personal identity, subsequently reflected in their daily attitudes and behaviors.⁴⁸ Indicators of value internalization observed in this research include the ability to connect historical values with personal experience, behavioral changes during and after learning, and verbal reflection demonstrating value consciousness.

The process of internalizing the value of honesty rooted in Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq's example was evident in group discussions where students spontaneously connected the value of honesty with real situations they faced, such as the temptation to cheat on exams or to conceal mistakes from parents. Such verbal expressions indicate that historical values are not merely understood as factual information, but have begun to be internalized as a personal moral foundation. This finding aligns with Majid and Andayani's perspective that value internalization in Islamic character education requires processes of experience, reflection, and deep meaning-making not merely verbal indoctrination.⁴⁹

The internalization of the value of justice from Umar ibn Khattab's exemplary conduct was apparent through the short drama project, in which students creatively interpreted the value of justice in the context of peer relationships and classroom life. The dynamics of role immersion during drama rehearsals and performances encouraged students to empathically experience how justice is realized in concrete action. Consistent with Endacott and Brooks' findings, the use of historical perspective through simulation and drama in history learning has proven effective in developing historical empathy an important dimension of deep historical understanding.⁵⁰

Regarding the value of Utsman ibn Affan's generosity internalized through the booklet project, students demonstrated new awareness of the importance of sharing and empathizing with others. Several students spontaneously proposed sharing activities in the classroom as a form of actualization of the values they had learned a strong indicator of value internalization that has transcended the classroom boundaries. Similarly, the value of courage from Ali ibn Abi Thalib's exemplary conduct, internalized through the drama project, encouraged students to be more courageous in expressing opinions and taking initiative during group discussion and presentation sessions.

Integration of Interactive Lectures and PjBL as a Synergistic Model

One of the distinctive features of SKI learning reconstruction at MI Mansyaul Ulum is the synergistic integration of interactive lectures and PjBL within a cohesive learning sequence. Interactive lectures at the opening session function as advance organizers that build students' conceptual foundation before they engage in more complex project activities. This strategy reflects the teacher's understanding of the importance of learning readiness as a prerequisite for meaningful participation in PjBL.⁵¹

With this synergistic model, SKI learning is no longer viewed as a binary choice between traditional and innovative approaches, but as a strategically integrated combination. The teacher successfully positioned interactive lectures not as an end in themselves, but as a conceptual bridge

⁴⁷ Imam Syafi'i et al., *SULUK KASIH: Jalan Lembut Mendidik Remaja Dalam Bingkai Islam* (Surabaya: Inoffast Publishing, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.19638099>.

⁴⁸ Davidson, Khmelkov, and Lickona, "Int. Res. Handb. Values Educ. Student Wellbeing"; Thomas, da Cunha, and Santo, "Changes in Character Virtues Are Driven by Classroom Relationships: A Longitudinal Study of Elementary School Children."

⁴⁹ Majid and Andayani, *Pendidikan Karakter Perspektif Islam (Edisi Revisi)*.

⁵⁰ Endacott and Brooks, "Historical Empathy: Perspective Taking and Caring in the Social Studies."

⁵¹ Mayer, *Multimedia Learning*; Krajcik and Shin, "Project-Based Learning."

connecting students' prior knowledge to deeper, more contextual project-based learning experiences. This finding enriches the literature on blended pedagogical approaches in elementary education, particularly in the context of Islamic religious education.⁵²

Overall, the reconstruction of SKI learning through PjBL at MI Mansyaul Ulum demonstrates how systematic, reflective, and student-centered pedagogical transformation can fundamentally alter the perception and experience of SKI learning. From a subject perceived as boring and irrelevant, SKI has been successfully transformed into a living, contextual, and meaningful learning space for student character development. These findings have important implications for SKI curriculum development and teacher training at the elementary madrasah level nationally.⁵³

CONCLUSION

This research has successfully described the design of the reconstruction of Islamic Cultural History learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah through the application of Project Based Learning, and has analyzed its contribution to the improvement of historical engagement and the internalization of Islamic character values. The main findings of the research indicate that the PjBL-based SKI learning reconstruction implemented at MI Mansyaul Ulum Grobogan was able to fundamentally transform learning dynamics from a passive transmissive pattern toward an active, contextual, and meaningful participatory pattern.

This learning reconstruction was implemented through the synergistic integration of interactive lectures as a conceptual building phase and six PjBL stages as an authentic experience phase. Each Khulafaur Rasyidin exemplary character topic was developed through different project types infographics, short dramas, and booklets enabling students to express understanding through various creative modalities while simultaneously internalizing the values of honesty, justice, generosity, and courage relevant to their contemporary lives.

The contribution of PjBL to students' historical engagement was proven significant across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Students demonstrated improved historical thinking abilities, learning enthusiasm, and substantial active participation. Furthermore, the internalization of Islamic character values was proven to extend beyond cognitive understanding toward the manifestation of values in real attitudes and actions—the highest goal of Islamic character education.

The practical implications of these findings include: first, the need to revise SKI learning design at the national MI level to integrate active learning models such as PjBL; second, the importance of building SKI teacher capacity in designing and managing contextual and character-oriented PjBL; and third, the need for comprehensive assessment instruments to measure not only content mastery but also the process of value internalization. Further research is recommended to examine the effectiveness of this model comparatively across diverse madrasah contexts with varying student socio-cultural backgrounds.

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⁵² Fatma and Prastowo, "PENGUNAAN MODEL BLENDED LEARNING UNTUK PERENCANAAN PEMBELAJARAN TEMATIK MENINGKATKAN HASIL BELAJAR SISWA MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH"; Sholeh, Azizi, and Faizah, "Pengembangan Pembelajaran SKI MI/SD Berbasis Android Dengan Pemanfaatan Media Audiovisual Untuk Meningkatkan Minat Belajar Mahasiswa PGMI."

⁵³ RI, "Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 347 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pedoman Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Madrasah"; Muhaimin, *Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Sekolah, Madrasah, Dan Perguruan Tinggi (Edisi Terbaru*.

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