

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING TO IMPROVE SEVENTH-GRADE STUDENTS' LEARNING INDEPENDENCE AT MTSN 1 MADIUN

Ahnaf Faiz Muhammad¹, Katni Katni², Sigit Dwi Laksana³, Intan Pinasti Wijareni⁴, Shefy Khoirunnisa⁵, Safira Hartiana Ramadhani⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5,6} Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo

email: ahnaf@gmail.com¹, katni@umpo.ac.id², sigitciovio@umpo.ac.id³, intanpi@gmail.com⁴, shefy@gmail.com⁵, safira@gmail.com⁶

Abstract

This study addresses the need for effective instructional strategies that promote active participation and learning independence in Fiqh education. It aims to examine the implementation of Project-Based Learning by Fiqh teachers, its impact on students' learning independence, and the supporting and inhibiting factors at MTs Negeri 1 Madiun. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design, the study collected data through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving Fiqh teachers, the Vice Principal for Curriculum, and students. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while source and technique triangulation ensured data credibility. The findings indicate that Project-Based Learning creates more effective learning by encouraging students to participate actively in the learning process. This implementation contributes to students' learning independence, reflected in increased learning activity, understanding, and motivation. Adequate learning facilities, parental support, and the surrounding environment further support implementation, although the study primarily identifies these factors as contextual conditions. The findings reinforce the practical relevance of Project-Based Learning as an instructional model for strengthening students' learning independence in Fiqh education.

Keywords : *Project-Based Learning; Learning Independence; Fiqh Education; Instructional Strategy; MTs Negeri 1 Madiun*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh kebutuhan akan strategi pembelajaran yang efektif untuk mendorong keaktifan dan kemandirian belajar siswa dalam pembelajaran Fiqih. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji implementasi model Project-Based Learning oleh guru Fiqih, dampaknya terhadap kemandirian belajar siswa, serta faktor pendukung dan penghambat penerapannya di MTs Negeri 1 Madiun. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan guru Fiqih, Wakil Kepala Madrasah bidang Kurikulum, dan siswa. Data dianalisis melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan, sedangkan keabsahan data diuji melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Project-Based Learning menciptakan pembelajaran yang lebih efektif dengan mendorong siswa berpartisipasi aktif dalam proses pembelajaran. Penerapan model tersebut berkontribusi terhadap kemandirian belajar siswa yang tercermin dalam peningkatan keaktifan, pemahaman, dan motivasi belajar. Fasilitas pembelajaran, dukungan orang tua, dan lingkungan sekitar turut mendukung penerapannya. Temuan ini memperkuat relevansi praktis Project-Based Learning sebagai model pembelajaran untuk meningkatkan kemandirian belajar siswa dalam pembelajaran Fiqih.

Kata Kunci: *Project-Based Learning; Kemandirian Belajar; Pembelajaran Fiqih; Strategi Pembelajaran; MTs Negeri 1 Madiun*

INTRODUCTION

Learning independence has become an important educational outcome because students are increasingly expected to regulate their learning, take initiative, manage responsibilities, and evaluate their own progress. These capacities are particularly important in student-centered learning, where learners

are not positioned merely as recipients of teacher-delivered information. Project-Based Learning (PjBL) offers a relevant instructional framework because students are required to formulate questions, plan activities, manage project schedules, investigate information, solve problems, and evaluate products. Recent research indicates that PjBL can encourage self-regulated learning by creating opportunities for learners to organize and monitor their own learning activities (Wu et al., 2024). Evidence from Indonesian educational contexts similarly indicates that project-based activities can strengthen learning independence when students assume greater responsibility for completing meaningful tasks (Purnomo & Ekantini, 2023).

Despite this potential, learning independence cannot be assumed to develop automatically through the use of PjBL. Students may still depend on teachers when determining learning strategies, managing time, finding information, and completing assignments. PjBL also requires adequate instructional planning, sustained student engagement, appropriate facilities, and teacher scaffolding. Recent research demonstrates that learners display different patterns of self-regulation during project-based activities, indicating that individual differences remain important even within student-centered learning environments (Wu et al., 2024). Moreover, PjBL requires teachers to balance instructional guidance with opportunities for independent investigation. Therefore, the central issue is not simply whether PjBL is associated with learning independence, but how teachers implement the model and create conditions that enable students to progressively assume responsibility for their learning.

Previous research provides evidence that PjBL can contribute to students' learning independence, but the findings vary according to educational level and learning context. Nurhamidah and Nurachadijat (2023), using a qualitative approach, found that PjBL provided students with opportunities to investigate problems, construct knowledge, and produce meaningful learning products, resulting in stronger learning independence than conventional instruction. Quantitative evidence from class VII students also confirms this relationship. Hidayat (2023) found a significant effect of PjBL on mathematical learning independence among seventh-grade students, while Purnomo and Ekantini (2023) reported that PjBL increased learning independence among seventh-grade students through individual project completion. These studies establish that PjBL can strengthen independent learning behavior, particularly through responsibility and active engagement. However, their emphasis remains

primarily on measurable effects or particular subject contexts rather than on how teachers implement PjBL and address contextual challenges in madrasah education.

Other recent studies extend this evidence by connecting PjBL with broader self-regulated learning processes. Utami (2023) found a positive and significant influence of PjBL on students' learning independence, including confidence, discipline, responsibility, initiative, and self-control. Similarly, Cao (2024) demonstrated that PjBL can promote self-regulated learning among learners by engaging them in project activities that require active regulation of their learning processes. These findings complement rather than contradict the Indonesian studies because they explain why PjBL can foster independence: project activities require learners to regulate goals, strategies, time, and learning behavior. Nevertheless, most existing studies examine quantitative effects or contexts outside Islamic junior secondary education. Consequently, limited attention has been given to the actual implementation of PjBL in a madrasah, particularly how teachers facilitate independence and what contextual factors support or constrain this process.

The present study addresses this gap by examining PjBL not merely as an instructional treatment but as an implementation process through which learning independence is developed in an authentic madrasah setting. Its specific contribution lies in connecting three dimensions that have often been examined separately: the teacher's implementation of PjBL, its perceived contribution to students' learning independence, and the contextual factors that facilitate or hinder its implementation. This perspective is particularly relevant because PjBL requires a balance between student autonomy and teacher guidance; excessive teacher control may reduce opportunities for independence, whereas insufficient scaffolding may leave students unable to manage project demands effectively (Wu et al., 2024). Investigating this balance at MTs Negeri 1 Madiun therefore provides contextual evidence that complements previous studies focused primarily on statistical relationships between PjBL and learning independence.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the implementation of Project-Based Learning in developing the learning independence of seventh-grade students at MTs Negeri 1 Madiun. Specifically, it examines how Fiqh teachers implement PjBL in classroom learning, how the implementation contributes to students' learning independence, and what supporting and inhibiting factors shape its application. By focusing on an Islamic junior secondary school context,

the study seeks to clarify how project-based instruction can be translated into concrete classroom practices that encourage students to become more active, responsible, and self-directed learners. The findings are expected to contribute practical evidence for teachers and madrasah administrators seeking to optimize PjBL while maintaining an appropriate balance between teacher scaffolding and student autonomy.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive case-study approach to examine the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Fiqh instruction and its contribution to seventh-grade students' learning independence at MTs Negeri 1 Madiun. The research was conducted at MTs Negeri 1 Madiun, East Java, with the Fiqh teacher, principal, curriculum vice-principal, and seventh-grade students serving as purposively selected informants based on their direct involvement and relevant knowledge. This qualitative design supports an in-depth examination of PjBL implementation within its natural educational context (Mutanga, 2024; Mustamin et al., 2024).

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, including learning plans and instructional records. Data analysis comprised data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Credibility was established through source, technique, and time triangulation, member checking, and referential adequacy. These strategies are consistent with qualitative PjBL research emphasizing observation, interviews, document analysis, thematic interpretation, and credibility procedures to capture implementation processes and contextual learning experiences (Mutanga, 2024; Mustamin et al., 2024).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Student Centered Project Implementation and Learning Responsibility

The findings show that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Grade VII at MTs Negeri 1 Madiun is implemented through problem identification, project planning, scheduling, project execution and monitoring, presentation of products, and evaluation and reflection. Throughout these stages, the teacher functions primarily as a facilitator, while students are encouraged to determine work procedures, search for information, distribute responsibilities, complete project tasks, and present their results. This pattern shifts classroom activity from teacher-dominated instruction toward active student participation and

responsibility. The finding is consistent with Purnomo and Ekantini (2023), who found that PjBL encouraged seventh-grade students to assume greater responsibility for completing individual projects and consequently strengthened learning independence. It also corresponds with Wu (2024), who demonstrated that PjBL creates conditions that facilitate self-regulated learning behaviors. However, the present finding extends this evidence by showing that independence emerges through the combined structure of planning, implementation, monitoring, and reflection rather than through project completion alone. Thus, PjBL at MTs Negeri 1 Madiun functions not simply as a method for producing learning products but as an organizational framework that gradually transfers responsibility for learning from teacher to student.

Project-Based Learning as a Mechanism for Developing Learning Independence

The implementation of PjBL was associated with observable indicators of learning independence, including students' initiative in completing assignments, ability to manage time and divide responsibilities, willingness to seek information from multiple sources, responsibility for assigned tasks, problem-solving efforts, and confidence in presenting project results. These behaviors suggest that independence develops because project activities require students to regulate aspects of their own learning rather than merely respond to teacher instructions. This interpretation is supported by Hidayat (2023), whose quasi-experimental study found a significant effect of PjBL on the mathematical learning independence of Grade VII students. Purnomo and Ekantini (2023) similarly reported increased learning independence among seventh-grade students engaged in project-based activities. At a broader theoretical level, Wu (2024) found that PjBL facilitates self-regulated learning behaviors and strengthens connections among different phases of learning regulation. The present study contributes a contextual explanation of these relationships: students' independence is expressed through concrete behaviors of initiating, organizing, searching, solving, presenting, and reflecting during projects. The finding therefore extends previous quantitative evidence by illustrating how learning independence is enacted within everyday classroom practices.

Teacher Scaffolding and the Limits of Student Autonomy

Although PjBL emphasizes student autonomy, the findings demonstrate that independence does not develop through the absence of teacher intervention. Students differed in their initiative, ability, responsibility, collaboration, and

capacity to determine appropriate project procedures; some therefore continued to require guidance during project completion. Teachers responded by providing directions, clarifying tasks, monitoring progress, and assisting students experiencing difficulties. This finding is particularly important because it challenges an overly simplified interpretation of student-centered learning in which teacher involvement is assumed to decrease as student independence increases. Wu (2024) found that learners demonstrate different self-regulated learning profiles in PjBL environments and emphasized the importance of scaffolding and support for developing learners' regulatory capacities. Similarly, Cao (2024) showed that PjBL can strengthen self-regulated learning when learners receive pedagogical support that enables them to manage project-based activities effectively. The MTs Negeri 1 Madiun findings therefore extend these studies by showing that teacher scaffolding and student autonomy are complementary rather than contradictory: structured guidance provides the conditions through which students can progressively assume greater responsibility for learning.

Contextual Constraints: Time, Student Diversity, and Learning Resources

The final theme concerns the contextual factors that influence PjBL implementation. The findings identify limited instructional time, differences in students' abilities and characteristics, limitations in project-related resources, and the need for continuous teacher supervision as the principal challenges. Project-based instruction requires more extensive planning and implementation time than conventional content-delivery lessons, while heterogeneous student abilities require differentiated guidance. These conditions indicate that PjBL cannot be evaluated independently of the institutional and classroom context in which it is implemented. This finding is consistent with Purnomo and Ekantini (2023), whose study demonstrates that project-based tasks require students to assume substantial responsibility during project completion, and with Wu (2024), who emphasizes individual differences in self-regulated learning within PjBL environments. However, the present study adds a specific insight from the madrasah context: the development of learning independence depends on teachers' ability to adapt project complexity, allocate responsibilities appropriately, monitor students continuously, and manage available instructional time. Consequently, the contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that effective PjBL requires a calibrated balance between project autonomy, teacher scaffolding, time management, and resource availability

rather than the simple transfer of responsibility to students.

CONCLUSION *(Written in bold capital letters, Buku Antiqua 12, with 1.3 spacing)*

This study concludes that the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Grade VII at MTsN 1 Madiun provides students with structured opportunities to participate actively and responsibly in learning through project planning, implementation, monitoring, presentation, evaluation, and reflection. The findings indicate that PjBL supports the development of learning independence, particularly in students' initiative, responsibility, time management, independent information seeking, problem-solving, and confidence in presenting their work. Theoretically, the study strengthens the relevance of PjBL as a student-centered learning model for developing learning independence, while practically emphasizing the importance of teacher facilitation, effective time management, clear task distribution, appropriate project selection, and proportional guidance. The study is limited by its qualitative case-study design and focus on a single madrasah context, which restricts the transferability of its findings to other educational settings. Future research should examine PjBL across multiple madrasahs with diverse student characteristics to further assess how project design and teacher scaffolding influence the development of learning independence.

REFERENCES

- Hidayat, A. T. (2023). Model Project Based Learning terhadap kemandirian matematis siswa pada materi bangun ruang. *JP3M (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan dan Pengajaran Matematika)*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.37058/jp3m.v9i2.8035>
- Nurhamidah, S., & Nurachadijat, K. (2023). Project Based Learning dalam meningkatkan kemandirian belajar siswa. *Jurnal Inovasi, Evaluasi dan Pengembangan Pembelajaran*, 3(2), 42-50. <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiepp.v3i2.272>
- Purnomo, A., & Ekantini, A. (2023). Improving student learning independence towards Project-Based Learning model: A case study in making herbarium name card products. *International Journal of Indonesian Education and Teaching*, 7(2), 271-282. <https://doi.org/10.24071/ijiet.v7i2.6447>
- Utami, A. P. (2023). Impact of project-based learning in the human reproductive system to the students self-regulated learning in SMA Negeri 1 Bantul. *Jurnal Kependidikan: Penelitian Inovasi Pembelajaran*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.21831/jk.v7i1.39778>

- Wu, X.-Y. (2024). Unveiling the dynamics of self-regulated learning in project-based learning environments. *Heliyon*, 10(5), e27335. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e27335>
- Mustamin, K., Wahdah, W., Intiardy, D., Jumrah, A. M., & Pattimura, P. J. (2024). The impact of project-based learning on students' collaboration skills in secondary schools. *International Journal of Educational Research Excellence*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.55299/ijere.v3i2.740>
- Mutanga, M. B. (2024). Students' perspectives and experiences in project-based learning: A qualitative study. *Trends in Higher Education*, 3(4), 903–911. <https://doi.org/10.3390/higheredu3040052>
- Cao, L. (2024). A study of project-based learning to intermediate EFL learners in reading class: Enhancing self-regulated learning of post-secondary students in Macao. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 9, Article 71. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-024-00298-6>
- Hidayat, A. T. (2023). Model Project Based Learning terhadap kemandirian matematis siswa pada materi bangun ruang. *JP3M (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan dan Pengajaran Matematika)*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.37058/jp3m.v9i2.8035>
- Purnomo, A., & Ekantini, A. (2023). Improving student learning independence towards project-based learning model: A case study in making herbarium name card products. *International Journal of Indonesian Education and Teaching*, 7(2), 271–282. <https://doi.org/10.24071/ijiet.v7i2.6447>
- Ishayati, M., Triyanto, T., & Rintayati, P. (2025). Project-based learning for enhancing student independence in civic education: A qualitative case study in elementary education. *Teknodika*, 23(2).
- Novalia, R., Marini, A., Bintoro, T., & Muawanah, U. (2025). Project-based learning: For higher education students' learning independence. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 11, 101530. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101530>
- Tang, K. S., McLure, F., Williams, J., & Donnelly, C. (2024). Investigating the role of self-selected STEM projects in fostering student autonomy and self-directed learning. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 51, 2355–2379. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-024-00696-2>