



Internalizing Moral Values Through Project-Based Learning in Islamic Religious Education: A Case Study at SMAN 2 Probolinggo City

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Abstract

This study explores how Project-Based Learning (PjBL) facilitates the internalization of moral values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo. While previous studies have examined PjBL in PAI primarily in relation to learning outcomes, student engagement, and project implementation, less attention has been given to the process through which project-based learning facilitates the internalization of moral values through students' learning experiences. This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-exploratory design. Data were collected through classroom and project observations, semi-structured interviews with PAI teachers and students, and documentation of teaching modules, student worksheets (LKPD), and project products. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, supported by source, method, and theoretical triangulation. The findings show that PjBL is implemented across grades X, XI, and XII through contextual projects, including educational posters, campaign videos, digital da'wah, social activities, and observation reports. More importantly, the findings indicate that moral-value internalization is facilitated through students' direct involvement in project activities, collaborative interaction, habituation, and reflection, enabling students to connect PAI concepts with concrete practices in their learning and social environments. The process was particularly reflected in the development and practice of responsibility, cooperation, honesty, discipline, social concern, tolerance, and confidence. However, the process remains constrained by limited instructional time, unequal participation in group work, insufficiently structured reflection, and the lack of systematic affective assessment instruments. The study contributes to PAI scholarship by highlighting PjBL not merely as a project-based instructional model but as a learning process that can bridge conceptual understanding and the experiential practice of moral values.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning, Islamic Religious Education, Moral Values, Value Internalization, Qualitative Research



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1. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in secondary schools is not only aimed at mastering religious knowledge but also at developing students' ability to understand, internalize, and practice Islamic values in their daily lives. Thus, a key issue in PAI instruction is not merely how moral values are conveyed as normative knowledge, but how students can experience and embody these values in real-life situations. This complexity becomes increasingly apparent when students interact with social and digital environments that present a variety of information, values, and situations requiring ethical decision-making. Ressi et al., (2024), for example, frame educational morality not only within the context of individual behavior but also in terms of social responsibility regarding technology use. Meanwhile, Saridudin (2025), points out that the development of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Society 5.0 broadens students' exposure to diverse values; consequently, religious education must connect religious understanding with the ability to apply it in daily life.

In this context, Islamic Education (PAI) requires learning experiences that enable students to connect their knowledge of moral values with real-life practices. Learning that confines moral values to the realm of conceptual understanding is insufficient to explain how students develop habits and attitudes based on those values. Therefore, a learning process is needed that provides space for students to actively engage, collaborate, address real-world problems, take responsibility, and reflect on their learning experiences.

One approach that embodies these characteristics is Project-Based Learning (PjBL). PjBL positions students as active participants in the process of planning, implementing, completing, and presenting a project. In this process, learning occurs not only through the presentation of material but also through hands-on experience, social interaction, problem-solving, collaboration, and reflection. In Islamic Education (PAI) instruction, these characteristics open opportunities to connect Islamic concepts with the practice of values in students' daily lives. Values such as responsibility, cooperation, honesty, discipline, tolerance, and social concern, for example, can emerge during the process of task allocation, group decision-making, project completion, and reflection on the experiences gained. The social constructivist perspective also views interaction and collaboration as essential components in the process of knowledge construction and learning experiences (Elsa Syafila et al., 2024).

However, the mere existence of project activities does not in itself indicate that moral values have been internalized by the students. There is a more complex process involving knowing values, experiencing values, practicing values, interacting based on values, internalizing values, and reflecting on values. Therefore, research on PjBL in Islamic



Education must go beyond simply examining the existence of projects, student engagement, or the resulting products. It is necessary to understand how the experiences during the project process provide a space for students to experience and practice moral values, as well as how teachers facilitate this process.

A number of previous studies have demonstrated the relevance of PjBL in religious education and character education, though they have different focuses. The study by Silmi et al., (2022), for example, examines the application of PjBL in Islamic Education (PAI) with a focus on students' learning outcomes, engagement, motivation, and critical thinking skills. Research in the madrasah context also indicates that PjBL can be used in Aqidah Akhlak instruction and provides opportunities for student engagement in learning activities, as demonstrated by Saputri et al., (2025) and Safitri and Muizzudin (2025). Meanwhile, Rusyda, (2025) research has linked project experiences to moral dimensions through moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. These various studies are important because they demonstrate that PjBL possesses pedagogical characteristics that facilitate active engagement and the development of values.

Nevertheless, these studies have not fully explained how the process of internalizing moral values takes place through PjBL experiences in Islamic Education (PAI) learning. The focus on learning outcomes, student engagement, character, or the development of moral dimensions has not specifically elaborated on the process by which students experience values, practice them in social interactions, build habits, and reflect on those experiences. Consequently, there is a research gap regarding the process itself, rather than merely the existence or outcomes of PjBL implementation.

This gap becomes increasingly relevant in the context of public secondary schools. Unlike educational institutions with a specifically religious orientation, public schools have a more heterogeneous educational environment in terms of students' backgrounds, religious experiences, social interactions, and learning experiences. In this context, the internalization of moral values through PAI instruction cannot be understood solely based on academic achievement or project outcomes. This process must be viewed through the lens of students' experiences during the project, the forms of interaction and collaboration that occur, the practice of values in activities, and the reflections conducted on those experiences.

This context is evident in PAI instruction at SMAN 2 Probolinggo City. Based on initial observations during the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, PjBL has been implemented in PAI instruction through various activities such as values-based projects, group discussions, presentations, and reflective activities that connect instructional content to students' lives. Its implementation was also observed across various grade levels in the form of diverse projects. These findings indicate that PjBL is not merely an approach planned for implementation but has become an integral part of PAI teaching practices at this school.



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Nevertheless, this implementation also revealed a number of issues that require deeper understanding. Students' experiences in project-based activities are not always uniform; their involvement in groups can vary, opportunities for reflection are not always structured, and the affective aspects related to the development of values have not been fully documented through systematic assessment instruments. These conditions indicate that the existence of PjBL does not automatically account for the process of value internalization. Rather, these variations in experience provide a crucial rationale for exploring how teachers design and facilitate projects, how students experience and practice values during the learning process, and what factors support or hinder this process.

Based on this discussion, this study views PjBL not merely as a method whose effectiveness needs to be measured, but as a pedagogical space where students gain experiences to understand, experience, practice, interact with, and reflect on moral values in Islamic Education (PAI) learning. With this perspective, this study aims to understand the process of value internalization through project-based learning experiences, including how values such as responsibility, discipline, cooperation, honesty, tolerance, and social concern emerge and are practiced in learning activities.

Thus, the novelty of this study lies not merely in its research location at SMAN 2 Probolinggo City, but in its empirical and analytical focus on the process of internalizing moral values through PjBL experiences in PAI instruction within the context of a heterogeneous public high school. Public schools provide a unique context because moral value internalization occurs in a learning environment where students come from diverse social and religious backgrounds, making the process different from religious-based institutions such as madrasahs or Islamic boarding schools. Empirically, this study explores how students experience, practice, and reflect on moral values during project activities. Conceptually, this study positions PjBL as a learning space that connects cognitive understanding of Islamic values with social experiences, real-world practices, habit formation, and reflection. This perspective broadens the study of PjBL in Islamic Religious Education, which has traditionally focused more on learning outcomes, student engagement, project implementation, or character development.

Therefore, this study aims to explore how Project-Based Learning facilitates the process of internalizing moral values in Islamic Religious Education at SMAN 2 Probolinggo City, focusing on the implementation of PjBL, students' experiences in encountering and practicing moral values, and the challenges that arise in this process.

1.1 Identification of Problems

Based on this background, the research problems can be identified as follows:

- a. Islamic Education (PAI) learning is not only related to a conceptual understanding of Islamic values but also to how students experience and practice those values in real life.



- b. Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has been implemented in Islamic Education at SMAN 2 Probolinggo through various project activities; however, the process linking project experiences to the internalization of moral values has not yet been thoroughly understood.
- c. Students' experiences in project activities show variations in engagement, cooperation, responsibility, and reflection on the values being learned.
- d. The process of reflecting on project experiences has not always been structured; consequently, it remains unclear how students interpret these experiences in relation to moral values.
- e. The affective and behavioral aspects related to the internalization of values have not been fully documented through a systematic assessment process.
- f. The implementation of PjBL faces a number of challenges, including limited learning time, varying levels of student participation, the need for teacher guidance, and the need to strengthen learning tools and reflection.

Thus, the main research question is not to determine whether PjBL is "effective" or "ineffective," but to understand how the process of internalizing moral values takes place through project-based learning experiences, as well as the conditions that facilitate and hinder this process.

1.2 Restricting the Problems

To maintain the focus of the study, this research is limited to exploring the process of internalizing moral values through Project-Based Learning in Islamic Religious Education at SMAN 2 in Probolinggo City.

The study focuses on three main aspects, namely: (1) the implementation of PjBL in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction, (2) students' experiences in understanding, experiencing, practicing, and reflecting on moral values during project activities, and (3) the challenges that arise in facilitating this internalization process.

The moral values of interest in this study include responsibility, discipline, cooperation, honesty, tolerance, and social concern as they emerge in the context of learning activities. This study is not intended to measure improvements in academic achievement, compare PjBL with other teaching methods, or quantitatively determine the effectiveness of PjBL.

1.3 Formulation of the Problems

Based on this research focus, the research questions were revised as follows:

- a. How is Project-Based Learning (PjBL) implemented in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMAN 2 Probolinggo City to facilitate the internalization of moral values?



- b. How does the process of internalizing moral values take place through project-based learning experiences in PAI instruction at SMAN 2 Probolinggo City?
- c. What challenges are encountered in facilitating the process of internalizing moral values through Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Islamic Religious Education at SMAN 2 Probolinggo City?

1.4 Research Purpose

Based on this research question, the objectives of this study are:

- a. To explore the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Islamic Religious Education as a context for facilitating the internalization of moral values at SMAN 2 in Probolinggo City.
- b. To explore how students experience, practice, and reflect on moral values through project-based learning activities in Islamic Religious Education.
- c. To identify and explain the various challenges faced in facilitating the process of internalizing moral values through Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Islamic Religious Education.

1.5 Benefit of Research

a. Theoretical Benefits

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of research in Islamic Religious Education, particularly regarding the relationship between Project-Based Learning and the process of internalizing moral values. This study views PjBL not merely as a learning model that produces outcomes or enhances student engagement, but as a pedagogical space that enables students to connect their understanding of Islamic values with real-life experiences, social interactions, practices, habit formation, and reflection.

The research findings are expected to enrich the discussion on Islamic Religious Education (IRE) that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions and provide an empirical perspective on the process of value internalization in the context of a heterogeneous public high school.

b. Practical Benefits

1. For PAI Teachers

This study is expected to provide insights into how PjBL can be used to create learning experiences that enable students to practice and reflect on moral values. The research findings can also serve as a basis for designing projects, reflective activities, and student mentoring.

2. For Schools



The research results can provide information regarding practices, needs, and challenges in implementing PjBL to facilitate the internalization of moral values. This information can be used to develop more contextual and reflective PAI instruction.

3. For Future Researchers

This study can serve as an empirical reference for future research on PjBL, character education, the internalization of values, and PAI instruction, whether through qualitative or other research approaches.

1.6 Originality of Research (State of the Art)

Studies on Project-Based Learning in Islamic Education have evolved with diverse focuses. However, previous research has shown differences in terms of research focus, educational context, and the depth of analysis regarding the process of value internalization.

The study by Silmi et al., (2022), for example, examined the implementation of PjBL in PAI instruction with a focus on student learning outcomes, engagement, motivation, and critical thinking skills. This study provides insights into PjBL's contribution to student engagement and the learning process but does not specifically explain how project experiences facilitate the internalization of moral values.

Other studies in the madrasah context, such as those by Firda and Pamungkas (2022) and Safitri and Muizzudin (2025), demonstrate the use of PjBL in Aqidah Akhlak instruction. This context shows that project-based learning can provide space for students to engage in activities related to values and character. However, the context of madrasahs as religious educational institutions has distinct characteristics compared to public secondary schools that offer Islamic Education (PAI) within a general education setting.

Meanwhile, Rusyda, (2025) research focuses more closely on the moral dimension through the concepts of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. This study shows that project-based learning experiences can be linked to the understanding of values, moral appreciation, and moral practice. Nevertheless, further in-depth research is needed to explore how these processes unfold in students' learning experiences, particularly when moral values are practiced through interaction, shared responsibility, collaboration, task completion, and reflection during the project.

Thus, previous research has provided an important foundation regarding the potential of PjBL in PAI learning, student engagement, contextual learning, and character development. However, there remains room for research to understand the process of internalizing moral values as a gradual experience through project activities. In this study, internalization is understood not merely as observable behavioral changes in the



final outcomes, but as a process in which students gain experiences, practice values, interact with others, build habits, and reflect on the meaning of those experiences.

This study addresses that gap. It empirically explores how PjBL is implemented in PAI instruction and how project experiences facilitate the process of internalizing values such as responsibility, discipline, cooperation, honesty, tolerance, and social concern. The study also identifies challenges that arise during this process.

Conceptually, this study offers the perspective that PjBL is not merely a model for producing learning outcomes but can serve as a pedagogical space that brings together values-based knowledge, real-world experiences, social interaction, moral practices, habit formation, and reflection. This perspective constitutes the study's contribution to expanding the body of research on PjBL in Islamic Education, particularly within the context of public high schools characterized by heterogeneous learning environments.

Thus, the originality of this study does not lie in the claim that SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo is a previously unexplored location, but rather in the study's focus on the process of internalizing moral values through PjBL experiences in PAI instruction within a public school setting. This position also distinguishes this study from research that is more oriented toward learning outcomes, motivation, engagement, project implementation, or the effectiveness of PjBL.

2. Literature Review

The purpose of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is essentially to shape individuals who are faithful, pious, and have noble character. In this context, constructivism theory is an important foundation because it emphasizes that knowledge and values cannot be passively transferred from teacher to student but must be actively constructed through learning experiences. Constructivism emphasizes that students are actively involved in the process of constructing knowledge rather than passively receiving information (Alfiyah & Hariyadi, 2022). Piaget (1970) explained that students construct their knowledge through the process of assimilation and accommodation of their experiences. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, constructivism emphasizes the importance of direct student involvement in the process of internalizing Islamic values through meaningful activities, not just through lectures or memorization (A. Kohnstamm, 2017).

In the context of Islamic education, numerous studies highlight the importance of a student-centered approach that fosters understanding through dialogue, reflection, and experiential learning (MF Solichin et al., 2024). Consistent with the aforementioned statement, Ahmad Suryadi, in his book, states that constructivism can also be defined as an approach that encourages students to take initiative, providing insights and perspectives on the concepts they are learning (Mayer et al., 2020).



In this study, constructivism is not positioned as the primary analytical theory, but rather as a philosophical foundation that explains that knowledge and moral values cannot be passively transferred from teachers to students. Moral values need to be built through students' active engagement in meaningful learning experiences. However, the constructivist perspective does not fully explain how these learning experiences develop into moral practices in students' lives. Therefore, another theoretical perspective is needed that can explain the process by which experiences are transformed into moral understanding, actions, and habits.

In line with this, the experiential learning theory *proposed* by David Kolb (1984) provides a concrete framework for understanding how students can internalize moral values through active engagement. This theory emphasizes four main stages: concrete experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, this cycle enables students not only to cognitively understand moral teachings but also to experience them in concrete actions, for example through social projects, sharing activities, or digital ethics campaigns (Kumari, 2024) . Thus, the learning process becomes more contextual and relevant to students' lives.

In the context of this study, Experiential Learning Theory is used as the primary analytical framework because the research focuses on how students' experiences during PjBL activities contribute to the process of internalizing moral values. Through a cycle of concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation, students not only understand the concept of values cognitively but also experience the process of connecting those values to concrete actions in project activities.

This method also has a systematic structure starting from determining *the driving question* , project planning, implementation, to reflection and presentation of results that pedagogically encourage deep learning and internalization of values. This is in accordance with the research findings of Jamal et al. (2023) that the application of PjBL in Islamic Religious Education learning significantly increases emotional engagement, critical thinking skills, and social awareness of students through meaningful collaborative activities. PjBL also provides space for teachers to act as facilitators of values, not just conveyors of material, so that learning becomes more contextual and oriented towards moral experiences.

The PjBL method is seen as aligned with the policy direction of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes project-based learning to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly in the dimensions of "faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character." Through PjBL, students not only acquire collaboration and communication skills but also develop empathy, responsibility, and spiritual awareness. Thus, the application of PjBL in Islamic Religious Education learning at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo is not only methodologically relevant but also strategic in addressing the challenges of character building in the digital and multicultural era.



Furthermore, the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method is rooted in Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, which emphasizes that effective learning occurs through social interaction and collaboration (Elsa Syafila et al., 2024). PjBL provides space for students to learn collaboratively, develop empathy, and take responsibility for completing projects with social and moral value. The main principles of PjBL, such as *driving questions*, *collaborative learning*, and *reflection*, align with Islamic values that encourage students to think critically, work together, and do good for their environment (Jamal et al., 2023). Therefore, PjBL serves as a bridge between mastering religious knowledge and developing noble character.

The social constructivism perspective reinforces the explanation of the social dimension in the process of value internalization. In PjBL activities, students do not engage in the learning process individually but through interactions with peers, task sharing, collaborative problem-solving, and group decision-making. Thus, social interaction provides a space for students to understand, test, and practice moral values such as responsibility, cooperation, tolerance, and social concern.

From the perspective of Islamic Religious Education, the process of internalizing moral values can also be explained through the Value Internalization Theory, which emphasizes three stages: value transformation, value transaction, and value transinternalization. In the transformation stage, teachers convey values through knowledge; in the transaction stage, a two-way interaction occurs in which students assess the relevance of these values; and in the transinternalization stage, the values are internalized and manifested in real behavior (Rahayu, 2025). The application of the PjBL method has the potential to accelerate these stages because students not only hear or discuss values, but also practice them directly in real social contexts.

Therefore, the Value Internalization Theory is used as a supporting perspective to explain how values acquired through learning experiences can become an integral part of students' behavior. This theory complements the Experiential Learning Theory by explaining the stages of value change, ranging from initial understanding, through the process of interacting with values, to the application of values in real-world actions.

Based on the integration of these theoretical perspectives, this study positions Experiential Learning Theory as the primary analytical lens for understanding how Project-Based Learning facilitates the internalization of moral values. Constructivism provides the philosophical foundation that students actively construct meaning through learning experiences, while Social Constructivism explains the role of interaction and collaboration in value formation. Furthermore, Value Internalization Theory explains how values acquired through experiences and social interactions develop into moral understanding, habits, and behavior.

Therefore, this theoretical framework views PjBL not merely as a learning model for producing project outcomes but as a pedagogical process that enables students to

understand, experience, practice, and reflect on moral values within Islamic Religious Education.

2. 1. Previous Research

Table 1 Comparison Table of Previous Researchers

Researcher	Research Context	Focus of the Study	Key Findings	Limitations	Position of This Research
Silmi et al. (2022)	Islamic Religious Education	Implementation of PjBL, motivation, engagement, critical thinking skills	PjBL improves student engagement and supports the learning process.	The study does not explain how PjBL experiences facilitate moral value internalization.	This study focuses on the process of moral value internalization through PjBL experiences.
Firda & Pamungkas (2022)	Madrasah	PjBL implementation in Aqidah Akhlak learning	PjBL provides opportunities for students to develop character values through learning activities.	The research was conducted in a religious educational institution with a different context from public schools.	This study examines PAI learning in a public school with a heterogeneous student background.
Safitri and Muizzudin (2025)	Madrasah	Project-based learning activities in Aqidah Akhlak learning	PjBL supports student participation and character development.	The study does not deeply explore students' experiences in forming moral values.	This study explores students' experiences in understanding, practicing, and reflecting on moral values.
Rusyda (2025)	Islamic Education	Moral dimensions through moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action	PjBL experiences can support students' understanding and practice of moral values.	The study does not specifically explain the process of value internalization during project activities.	This study analyzes how project experiences facilitate the internalization process of moral values.

Researcher	Research Context	Focus of the Study	Key Findings	Limitations	Position of This Research
Nurhasanah, (2025)	Islamic Religious Education (ISE)	The application of constructivist theory in Islamic Religious Education learning to support student-centered learning processes.	The constructivist approach encourages active student participation and improves understanding through discussion, reflection, and active involvement in learning activities.	The study focuses on the learning process in higher education and does not specifically examine Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as a medium for internalizing moral values.	This study extends the discussion by examining how PjBL experiences facilitate the process of moral value internalization in Islamic Religious Education at the public high school level.
MF Solichin et al., (2024)	Islamic Religious Learning	The implementation of a constructivist approach to improve students' understanding and character development in Islamic Religious Education.	The constructivist approach supports active participation, critical thinking, and the development of positive character values such as responsibility, tolerance, and honesty.	The study emphasizes the contribution of constructivism to learning and character development but does not deeply explore how moral values are internalized through students' project experiences.	This study focuses on the experiential process of value internalization through PjBL, including students' experiences, social interactions, practices, and reflections.

Based on this comparison of previous studies, it is evident that prior research has made significant contributions to explaining the benefits of PjBL on student engagement, learning outcomes, and character development. However, most studies still frame PjBL as a learning approach or a strategy for improving specific outcomes. There has not been much research that specifically explains how experiences during the PjBL process enable



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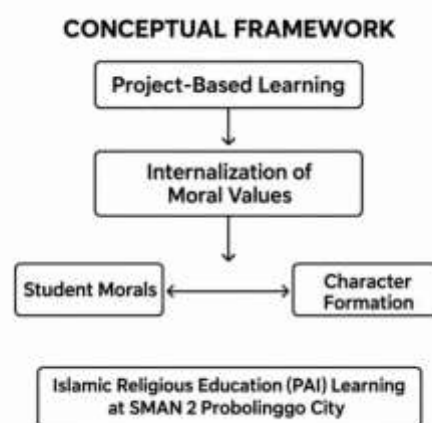
students to experience, practice, and reflect on moral values to the point that they become part of the process of internalizing those values.

Previous research related to Islamic Religious Education (PAI), constructivist approaches, and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) provides an important foundation for understanding how active learning approaches contribute to student engagement, character development, and value formation. This review aims to critically examine similarities, differences, and limitations of previous studies in order to identify the research gap addressed by this study.

Based on the comparison of previous studies, it can be identified that previous research has contributed to understanding the role of constructivist approaches and Project-Based Learning in improving student engagement, learning outcomes, and character development. However, these studies have predominantly examined the effectiveness of learning models or learning outcomes rather than explaining the process through which students internalize moral values during project activities. Furthermore, previous studies have focused more on improving student learning outcomes, motivation, and participation, but have not specifically examined the process of internalizing moral values that occurs through the implementation of PjBL, particularly in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). However, the process of internalizing values is a crucial aspect encompassing the affective, reflective, and psychomotor domains, which determines the success of developing a student's complete character.

Therefore, the originality of this study does not primarily rely on the research location at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo, but on its analytical focus on how moral values are internalized through Project-Based Learning experiences in Islamic Religious Education within a public school context. Unlike previous studies that mainly examine PjBL effectiveness, student engagement, or character outcomes, this study explores the processes through which students experience, practice, and reflect on moral values through project activities. Thus, this study contributes to expanding understanding of PjBL as a pedagogical space that connects Islamic value knowledge with real-life practices, social interaction, and moral reflection.

2. 2. Thinking Framework / Conceptual Framework



3. Research Method

Research methods consist of: (1) research approach, (2) types of research data, (3) research data sources, (4) techniques for determining informants or respondents, (5) research instruments, (6) data collection techniques, (7) framework theory (framework) used, (8) data analysis techniques and (9) data credibility.

This study uses a qualitative approach because it aims to explore in depth how the application of the PjBL method in Islamic Religious Education learning can internalize moral values in students in the school environment. A qualitative approach allows researchers to gain a rich understanding of the processes, meanings, and experiences of actors (teachers, students, principals) in a real-life context. In the context of educational practice, qualitative research results can be used to design policies, improve curricula, and enhance the quality of learning and educator competencies. On the other hand, theoretically, this approach helps form new theories that are in line with local realities. Therefore, researchers, educators, and policymakers need to be more open and trained in using qualitative approaches. Educational research needs to be not only results-oriented but also appreciate the processes and meanings behind the ever-evolving educational phenomena (Annasthasya et al., 2025).

In terms of research type, this research is a case study *because* it focuses on a specific institution, namely SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo, as a contextually limited "case." The type of case study used is a descriptive case study, a descriptive case study applied with the aim of analyzing the sequence of events that occurred in the past. The purpose of this method is to compare new theories or discoveries with existing theories and discoveries in the same field. This way, the most correct can be determined by analyzing the sequence of events (Poltak & Widjaja, 2024).



The qualitative theory used is that of John W. Creswell. According to him, data collection is stopped when the information obtained is repetitive and no new findings emerge. Furthermore, according to Creswell, the general range for qualitative case study research is 4 to 10 informants. This allows researchers to flexibly determine the number of interviews based on the depth of the data.

Case studies allow researchers to holistically explore the phenomenon of internalization of values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning using the PjBL method in a general high school context, a topic that has not been widely explored. This case study approach is supported by literature stating that case studies are appropriate when the phenomenon occurs in a real-life context and the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not completely separate.

3.1. Research Location and Subjects

This research was conducted at SMA Negeri 2 Kota Probolinggo, located in East Java Province, Indonesia. This school is one of the leading high schools in the Probolinggo City area with diverse student characteristics in terms of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. This diversity makes this school a representative context for studying the learning process of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), particularly in the application of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method that emphasizes collaboration, reflection, and character development. In addition, the PAI teachers at this school are known to be open to innovation and modern learning approaches oriented towards the formation of moral values, thus supporting the optimal implementation of the research. The research subjects in this study consisted of PAI teachers and students.

3.2. Data Source

In this study, data were collected from two main sources: primary and secondary data. These two types of data complement each other to gain a comprehensive understanding of the application of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method in the process of internalizing moral values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo. The use of various data sources aligns with Creswell's (2018) perspective, which emphasizes the importance of combining various types of data to increase the depth and validity of qualitative research results (Ramadhan & Lestari, 2023).

Primary data were obtained directly from the field through various data collection techniques. First, in-depth (semi-structured) interviews were conducted with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, students, and the principal or vice principal of curriculum to explore their experiences, perceptions, and views regarding the implementation of project-based learning in the context of PAI. Second, researchers conducted classroom observations and PjBL project activities, which included the



planning, implementation, reflection, and presentation stages of the project results. Through these observations, researchers were able to directly observe the interactions between teachers and students, the dynamics of learning, and the process of internalizing moral values that occurred within the subjects. Third, documentation was collected in the form of activity photos, field notes, student project products such as reports or works, and various school documents related to the implementation of PjBL in PAI subjects.

Furthermore, this study utilized secondary data to strengthen and enrich the field findings. This secondary data included literature in the form of books and relevant learning theories, such as constructivism theory, the PjBL model, and the concept of value internalization in religious education. Scientific journals and previous research related to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning innovations and the application of PjBL in the context of character education were also used. Furthermore, the researcher reviewed various school documents, such as syllabi, PAI Learning Implementation Plans (RPP), project implementation guidelines, and archives of previous learning activities. The use of secondary data aims to provide a strong theoretical framework and support the interpretation of empirical data obtained in the field.

3.3. Data Collection Technique

As an integral part of this research, data collection was conducted through several complementary primary techniques to obtain an in-depth and contextual picture of the process of implementing the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and how moral values are internalized. The first technique is observation, which can be conducted in participatory or non-participatory forms. Participatory observation allows researchers to be directly involved in classroom activities or student projects, while non-participatory observation allows researchers to be outside observers who record interactions and processes without getting involved. Supporters of the literature state that observation is the “lifeblood” of qualitative research that focuses on real practices and behaviors (Hurst, n.d.).

The second technique is in-depth (semi-structured) interviews with Islamic Education teachers and students. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to ask open-ended questions while remaining flexible in responding to answers and tracking emerging meanings. This technique is very common in qualitative research as a way to explore the perceptions, experiences, and values held by subjects (Barroga et al., 2023).

The third technique is documentation, which includes collecting photographs of classroom activities or projects, field notes, student products (such as project reports, student work), and school documents (syllabi, lesson plans, PjBL guides). This documentation serves to provide concrete empirical evidence and serves as a secondary data source that supports understanding of the learning process. Documentation methods or studies, in the past, were rarely considered in qualitative research methodology. Today, document studies have become an important and inseparable part



of qualitative research methodology. This is due to a growing awareness and understanding among researchers that so much data is stored in the form of documents and artifacts. This makes data source exploration through document studies a complement to the qualitative research process (Natalina Nilamsari, 2014)

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

After the data is collected, the analysis process is carried out using the classic model from Matthew B. Miles & A. Michael Huberman, which consists of three main stages. The first is data reduction, followed by data presentation (*display*), and the third is drawing conclusions/verification. First, data reduction means filtering, selecting, and focusing data relevant to the research question. Then, the data display stage consists of presentation in the form of narratives, tables, matrices, or diagrams that facilitate understanding of patterns and relationships between variables. Finally, drawing conclusions/verification is carried out to determine the implications of the data and check the validity of the findings. (Miles, 2019) .

3.5. Data Validity Check (Triangulation)

The validity or *trustworthiness* of data in qualitative research is crucial to ensuring that the results are reliable and relevant. Therefore, this study applies triangulation in three dimensions:

- a. Source triangulation,
Data was collected from various informants (teachers, students, principals) so that different points of view could complement each other.
- b. Triangulation method,
Using observation, interviews, and documentation so that the process and facts of PjBL learning and internalization of values can be seen from various data collection techniques.
- c. Triangulation of theory,
Linking findings with various theories such as constructivism, PjBL, and internalization of values so that interpretations do not stand alone but are within a solid theoretical framework.

The literature states that the use of triangulation increases the credibility and transferability of qualitative research (Johnson et al., 2020)

3.6. Research Stages

This research will be carried out through several systematic stages as follows:

- a. Pre-field,
Includes preparations such as obtaining research permits, selecting locations and informants, preparing instruments (interview guides, observation sheets,



documentation formats), as well as pilot studies or small trials to validate the instruments.

b. Field implementation,

Conducting classroom observations and PjBL projects at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo, conducting interviews with teachers, students, principals , and collecting project documentation and school documents.

c. Data analysis,

Applying the Miles & Huberman model; performing data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions as well as checking validity with triangulation.

d. Reporting,

Compiling research results, formulating main findings, implications, recommendations and writing a complete thesis report with discussion, conclusions and suggestions.

3.7. Research Schedule

Table 2. Research Schedule Information

No	Activity	1 st Month	2 nd Month	3 rd Month	Information
1	Preparation and licensing	✓			
2	Data collection		✓		
3	Data analysis		✓	✓	
4	Preparation of report			✓	

4. Result

4.1 Brief Description of Research Location

This research was conducted at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo, one of the state senior high schools in Probolinggo City which is committed to developing learning oriented towards strengthening academic competence, student character, and curriculum implementation. In implementing this curriculum, schools provide teachers with the opportunity to develop various innovative, student - *centered learning models* , one of which is through the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method. This policy is part of the school's efforts to create a learning process that is not only oriented towards achieving knowledge competencies, but also towards character development, critical thinking skills, creativity, collaboration, and social awareness in students.



In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo has integrated a project-based learning approach into the teaching tools used by teachers, both in the form of teaching modules, Student Worksheets (LKPD), and project activities tailored to learning outcomes at each phase. Based on the results of documentation studies on learning tools and the results of observations during the research, the implementation of PjBL has been applied to several PAI materials in grades X, XI, and XII through project activities that encourage students to connect religious concepts with the realities of everyday life. So in this case PAI learning does not only emphasize conceptual mastery of the material, but also provides contextual, collaborative, and reflective learning experiences.

The selection of SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo as the research location was based on the consideration that this school has implemented the Project-Based Learning method in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in a real way, thus providing an appropriate context to explore the process of internalizing moral values through project-based learning activities. In addition to being supported by school policies that provide flexibility for teachers in developing learning innovations, Islamic Religious Education teachers at this school have also developed learning tools that integrate the PjBL syntax with the learning objectives of Islamic Religious Education. These conditions provide an opportunity for researchers to obtain comprehensive data regarding the implementation process, impacts, and various challenges that arise during the implementation of PjBL in Islamic Religious Education learning.

Overall, the characteristics of SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo indicate that this school has a learning environment that supports the implementation of innovative learning models while being relevant to the research focus. Given these findings, this research is not directed at assessing the school's success in implementing PjBL, but rather to explore in depth how the method is implemented in Islamic Religious Education learning, how the process of internalizing moral values takes place during project activities, and the factors that support and hinder its implementation. This overview serves as an initial foundation for understanding the research findings presented in the following section.

4.2 Implementation of Project Based Learning

Table 3. Source: Results of analysis of the PAI Teaching Module and LKPD of SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo (2026)

No.	Class	Islamic Religious Education Material	Project Form	Project Products	Developed Moral Values
1.	X	Avoid promiscuity and	Educational campaign about	Digital posters, educational	Responsibility,

		adultery to protect human dignity	the dangers of promiscuity through group work	videos, and group presentations	maintaining self-respect, cooperation, discipline, social awareness
2.	X	The Essence of Loving Allah SWT, Khauf, Raja', and Tawakkal to Him	Creating a project to reflect on spiritual experiences in everyday life	Reflection journals, inspirational videos, and group portfolios	Faith, honesty, sense of responsibility, optimistic attitude, and piety
3.	XI	Avoiding Student Fights, Alcohol, and Drugs	Healthy school and anti-drug campaign project	Campaign media, posters, socialization videos, and activity reports	Caring, self-control, responsibility, cooperation, and discipline
4.	XI	Spreading Islam with Politeness and Peace Through Da'wah, Sermons, and Tablig	Simulation of preaching and conveying Islamic messages through various media	Preaching videos, sermon scripts, presentations, and activity documentation	Polite, tolerant, good communication, self-confidence, and responsibility
5.	XII	Love for the Homeland and Religious Moderation	Project to strengthen religious moderation through social activities and national discussions	Project reports, presentations, activity documentation, and reflective articles	Tolerance, love of the homeland, respect for differences, mutual cooperation, and a moderate attitude



Based on the results of documentation studies on learning tools, observations of the learning process, and interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers, it was found that the Project-Based Learning method has been integrated into Islamic Religious Education learning through various materials in grades X, XI, and XII. This implementation is reflected in the preparation of teaching modules that contain PjBL syntax starting from determining basic questions (essential questions), preparing project plans, implementing activities, monitoring, presenting project results, to learning reflection. Each project is designed so that students not only understand religious material conceptually, but also implement Islamic values through real activities related to everyday life.

Based on the results of interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers, the implementation of the PjBL method has become part of the learning strategy designed to activate student engagement. The teacher stated that: *"Learning with projects makes students more active, they not only listen, but also directly involved in creating works related to moral values"* (T1). This statement shows that the use of PjBL not only functions as a method variation, but also as an effort to change the learning paradigm from teacher-centered to student-centered. On the other hand, the teacher also stated that: *"In every specific material we do use Project-Based Learning. The projects given are always tried to be related to the lives of students, so that they not only understand the material, but also practice Islamic values in the project activities"* (T2). The teacher's statement shows that some materials in Islamic Religious Education have used PjBL as a variation of the learning method, so that students not only understand the material but also directly relate to real examples in everyday life taken from learning projects.

The results of the documentation study on the results of learning projects, observations of the learning project creation process, and interviews with students in grades X, XI, and XII found that the Project-Based Learning method that has been integrated into Islamic Religious Education learning through various materials can help them to understand more easily the understanding and concrete examples in everyday life both in the school community and the home community. Students stated that: *"If we learn using projects, we understand the material more easily because we are directly practicing it. For example, creating a social media ethics campaign, so we learn and apply it at the same time"* (S1).

In an interview, another student said: *"I think project-based learning is more interesting because we can discuss, collaborate, and convey ideas directly. Through the religious moderation project, I learned to appreciate differences more and be more careful in expressing opinions to others"* (S2). Although the implementation of PjBL has shown an integration between learning materials and project-based activities, this study does not only focus on the implementation process. A more important aspect to be studied is how the application of this method affects the process of internalizing moral values in students, so the following discussion will describe the impact of the application of



Project-Based Learning on the process and results of internalizing moral values of students at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo.

4.3 Impact on internalization of moral values

Table 4. Source: Results of researcher observations and interviews (2026)

Moral Values	Activity Form	Indicators that Appear
Responsibility	Completion of group projects	Complete tasks according to targets and be responsible for the roles assigned
Cooperation	Group Discussion	Help each other, share tasks, and appreciate the contributions of group members
Honesty	Preparation of project reports	Delivering information according to the facts, not committing plagiarism, and being responsible for the results of the work
Discipline	Project presentation	Arrive on time, adhere to schedules, and follow project stages consistently
Social care	Social project activities	Actively participate in activities that are beneficial to the environment
Tolerance	Discussion and presentation	Respecting differences of opinion and accepting diversity within the group
Self-confident	Presentation of project result	Dare to convey ideas, opinions and work results in front of the class

Independence	Completion of individual tasks within the project	Able to make decisions and complete tasks without depending on others
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Based on observations and interviews, the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo shows changes in student behavior that lead to strengthening moral values. These changes are visible throughout the learning process, from the planning stage, implementation, to project completion. Research findings indicate that project-based learning activities provide opportunities for students to actualize moral values through more contextual learning experiences.

The research also shows that the process of internalizing values occurs not only through the delivery of material in the classroom, but also through student involvement in various learning activities. The experience of working in groups, completing assignments together, compiling reports, and presenting project results provides opportunities for students to develop various positive attitudes that support character development. These findings are supported by the results of interviews with students who stated that project-based learning made it easier for them to understand the material and apply it in their daily lives.

In general, the data in Table 5.2.2 shows that the implementation of PjBL in Islamic Religious Education learning not only contributes to improving students' understanding but also impacts the process of internalizing moral values. These findings indicate that project-based learning can be an effective means of connecting cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in Islamic Religious Education learning at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo.

4.4 Challenges and obstacles

Table 5. Source: Results of teacher interviews and researcher observations (2026)

Aspect	Findings
Time management	Project implementation requires more time than conventional learning, so teachers must adjust the material to the available time allocation.
Student participation	The level of student involvement in groups is not yet completely even because there are still students who are more dominant than other group members.

Reflection process	Reflection activities have not been implemented optimally because most of the learning time is used to complete projects and make presentations.
Affective assessment	Teachers still experience difficulties in developing instruments to systematically measure the process of internalizing moral values.
Development of learning tools	teaching modules and LKPD based on PjBL requires more detailed planning so that each stage of the project can be integrated with indicators of achieving moral values.
Teacher mentoring	Teachers need to provide more intensive guidance so that all students can participate actively during the learning process.
Sustainability of the program	Internalization of moral values through PjBL requires ongoing support from the school so that the values that have been built through the project can continue to be practiced in everyday life.

The implementation of Project-Based Learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo has generally been successful and has had a positive impact on the internalization of moral values. However, this study found several challenges that remain in its implementation. These challenges are not related to student acceptance of the learning method, but rather to technical aspects, learning management, and the evaluation process. As stated by one of the PAI teachers at the school, *"In general, the PjBL method has been running well and students appear more active. However, the challenge we still face is time management because each project requires quite a long stage. In addition, assessment of changes in student attitudes also still needs to be developed so that the results are more measurable"* (T1).

The interview results from the students' perspectives were: *"In my opinion, learning using projects is more interesting than regular learning because we can discuss and collaborate with friends. However, sometimes the time given to complete the project feels insufficient, especially when having to divide tasks, search for information, and prepare presentations. There are still some less active members in the group, so more of the work falls to certain members. Even so, I feel like this kind of activity still helps us learn responsibility and teamwork."* (S1)



Research findings show that time management is one of the most common obstacles faced by teachers. Project-based learning requires more time because each activity must go through the stages of planning, implementation, presentation, and reflection. Furthermore, student participation within groups was not entirely balanced. Although most students demonstrated high levels of engagement, some still tended to be passive during the learning process.

Interviews with students indicate that challenges in implementing PjBL do not reduce the effectiveness of learning but instead serve as evaluation material to improve its implementation. This finding indicates that the success of PjBL is not only determined by project implementation, but also influenced by time management, the involvement of all group members, the implementation of reflection, and an evaluation system that can measure the development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner.

Another factor, and reinforced by the results of student interviews, stated: *"Through project-based learning, I understand the material more easily because I not only listen to the teacher's explanation but also directly practice it. However, in my opinion, the post-project reflection activity is still unclear. Usually we discuss more about the project results. Furthermore, the assessments given also focus more on the final project results. However, the collaborative process, discipline, and responsibility during the project should also be part of the assessment"* (S2).

additional finding indicates that the process of reflection and assessment of affective aspects still requires further development. Teachers have attempted to integrate moral values into each learning project, but instruments to systematically measure the success of internalizing these values are not yet available. Therefore, strengthening the planning, mentoring, and evaluation aspects is necessary to ensure optimal and sustainable implementation of PjBL in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning.

Based on these three research findings, it can be interpreted that the implementation of Project-Based Learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo has been able to encourage the internalization of moral values through contextual and meaningful learning experiences. However, several aspects, such as time management, equitable student participation, and the development of evaluation instruments, still need to be refined so that the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) can take place more effectively. Furthermore, these various findings will analyzed in more depth in the discussion sub-chapter by linking it to previous theories and research results.



5. Discussion

5.1 Project-Based Learning as an Experiential Space for Moral Value Development

The research findings indicate that the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMAN 2 Probolinggo is evident not only in the availability of project-based learning materials but also in how these projects create learning experiences that enable students to actively engage in the process of understanding and applying moral values. PjBL was implemented through the development of instructional materials such as teaching modules, worksheets, and project-based assessments applied to various learning materials in grades X, XI, and XII.

Various project activities such as educational posters, campaign videos, digital da'wah, social activities, and observation reports demonstrate that PjBL provides students with opportunities to connect religious concepts to real-life experiences. Thus, the shift from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning not only reflects a change in teaching methods but also signifies a shift in the students' role as active participants who experience, practice, and reflect on values throughout the learning process.

These findings are consistent with the constructivist perspective, which holds that knowledge and values cannot be passively transferred from teachers to students, but are constructed through experience, interaction, and reflection (Nurjamilah et al., 2025). In the context of Islamic Education (PAI) learning, project-based learning provides students with the opportunity to construct an understanding of religious values through direct engagement in meaningful learning situations.

However, constructivism not only explains that students construct knowledge but also demonstrates that the learning process requires real-world experiences so that understood concepts can be linked to action. Therefore, the implementation of PjBL in this study can be understood not only as an active learning strategy but also as a space for experience that enables students to begin recognizing and practicing moral values.

According to Piaget in Helyanan's research (2026), the learning process occurs through assimilation and accommodation mechanisms that allow students to build their knowledge based on the experiences gained. In the context of Islamic Religious Education learning, the constructivism approach positions students as subjects who actively build an understanding of religious values through direct involvement in the learning process. Learning experiences obtained through project activities become an effective means to connect religious concepts with the realities of students' lives.

The implementation of PjBL in this study is also consistent with the concept of Project-Based Learning proposed by John W. Thomas, namely learner-centered learning through exploration, problem-solving, decision-making, collaboration, and the creation of products as part of the learning process (Arantika, 2026). In this study, the PjBL stages



carried out by the Islamic Education teacher included determining the theme, planning the project, assigning tasks, conducting activities, developing the product, presenting, and reflecting.

These stages indicate that students' learning experiences do not end with the completion of a product but continue through a series of activities involving responsibility, communication, cooperation, and decision-making. Thus, the PjBL process serves as a pedagogical context that enables moral values to emerge through real-world activities during project completion.

The results of this study are consistent with Ramadhani (2026), who demonstrated that project-based Islamic Education (PAI) learning can enhance student engagement through engaging and contextual learning experiences. However, this study expands upon that understanding by showing that student engagement in projects is not only linked to increased interest in learning but also serves as an initial process in the formation of moral experiences through real-world activities.

These findings also align with the research by Junita et al., (2023) which showed that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) can foster social attitudes such as cooperation, tolerance, empathy, and social concern. The difference is that this study does not merely view these values as learning outcomes but analyzes how they emerge through task distribution, group interactions, problem-solving, and reflection during the project process. Thus, previous research has shown that PjBL has the potential to enhance students' engagement and character, while this study contributes by explaining the experiential mechanisms that link project activities to the process of internalizing moral values.

The findings of this study also align with the research by Fika Rahayu Astuti et al., (2024) , at SMPN 1 Sungai Sariak, which found that the implementation of Project-Based Learning in Islamic Religious Education can strengthen students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. That study showed that PjBL not only supports the understanding of religious concepts but also fosters the development of critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and student engagement in the learning process.

Similar findings were observed in a study at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo, where the implementation of PjBL also provided space for students to actively engage in project activities and develop moral values through learning experiences. However, this study placed a different emphasis: it not only examined improvements in the quality of learning but also analyzed how project experiences served as a space for students to experience, practice, and reflect on moral values. Furthermore, this study also identified challenges such as time constraints, teacher readiness, and learning resources. This indicates that the process of internalizing values through PjBL does not solely depend on the use of the learning model but is also influenced by teachers' ability to design project experiences, manage student interactions, and provide opportunities for reflection during the learning process.



From an educational policy perspective, the implementation of PjBL at SMAN 2 in Probolinggo City is also consistent with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes experience-based learning, competency building, and character development. However, the findings of this study indicate that character development occurs not only through the existence of projects but also through the process by which students experience, practice, and reflect on the values that emerge during learning activities.

Based on the results of this analysis, the implementation of PjBL in Islamic Education (PAI) at SMAN 2 Probolinggo City can be understood as a learning process that provides space for students to gain real-world experiences, engage in social interactions, and reflect on moral values through project activities. The success of PjBL implementation is determined not only by the existence of projects but also by how teachers design learning experiences, facilitate interactions, and provide opportunities for reflection so that values such as responsibility, cooperation, and social awareness can develop during the learning process.

5.2 The Process of Moral Value Internalization through Project Experiences

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Islamic Religious Education at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo provides a learning environment that facilitates the process of moral value internalization. The internalization process was reflected through students' involvement in project activities that required them to experience, practice, and reflect on moral values such as responsibility, honesty, discipline, cooperation, social awareness, tolerance, and politeness.

These values were not formed merely through the delivery of moral concepts by teachers, but through students' direct experiences during project activities. The process of planning projects, dividing tasks, completing responsibilities, interacting with group members, and reflecting on learning experiences became important stages through which students connected Islamic values with real-life practices.

This finding is consistent with Thomas Lickona's perspective on character formation, which explains that moral development involves three interconnected dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. In this study, students' understanding of moral values represents the cognitive dimension, while their willingness to accept, appreciate, and practice these values during project activities reflects the affective and behavioral dimensions. Therefore, the internalization of moral values through PjBL cannot be understood only from students' ability to explain religious concepts, but also from how students experience these values in social situations and transform them into actions during project implementation.



Interview findings indicate that students perceived project activities as providing a deeper learning experience compared to conventional classroom activities. Students explained that involvement in educational videos, campaign media, social activities, and da'wah projects helped them understand the relationship between Islamic teachings and everyday situations. These findings demonstrate that students did not merely receive moral values as theoretical knowledge but encountered situations requiring them to apply these values. For example, cooperation developed when students coordinated tasks within groups, responsibility emerged when students completed assigned roles, and social awareness appeared when students participated in projects related to community issues. This process shows that moral value internalization occurred through repeated experiences, social interaction, habituation, and reflection, rather than through direct instruction alone.

One student said:

"With this kind of learning, we can grow closer and get to know our classmates' personalities and strengths better. So we're not just completing assignments—we're also supporting one another so that our work can be finished accurately and on schedule."

This statement shows that the students are beginning to understand that responsibility isn't just about completing assignments, but also about contributing to the success of group activities.

This finding is also supported by Widodo et al., (2025) who emphasized that Islamic Religious Education in the Society 5.0 era requires contextual learning approaches that connect religious values with students' social realities. Their study highlights that teachers function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as facilitators who guide students in practicing and reflecting on moral values. This perspective is relevant to the findings at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo, where teachers played an important role in designing project activities and creating learning situations that enabled students to experience moral values directly.

Furthermore, Agustriwita et al.'s (2026) research, explained that responsibility development in PAI learning through PjBL occurs gradually, beginning from value understanding, project involvement, and reflection on learning experiences. This finding strengthens the present study because responsibility observed among students at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo was not viewed as an immediate outcome, but as a process developed through repeated participation in project activities.

Similarly, Aldam et al. (2026) found that integrating PjBL into Islamic Religious Education can strengthen students' emotional engagement and encourage authentic value development through meaningful experiences. The findings support this study by showing that students are more likely to practice moral values when learning activities provide real situations that require empathy, cooperation, and responsibility.

Overall, the findings indicate that moral value internalization through PjBL at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo occurs through a gradual process involving experience, interaction,



practice, and reflection. The development of responsibility, cooperation, discipline, honesty, and social awareness was not simply the result of completing project tasks, but emerged through students' involvement in meaningful learning situations.

Therefore, PjBL can be understood not merely as a method for delivering Islamic Religious Education content, but as a pedagogical space that connects moral knowledge with real-life practice. This finding reinforces the importance of experiential and reflective learning approaches in supporting the development of students' moral character.

5.3 Challenges in Facilitating Moral Value Internalization through Project-Based Learning

Although Project-Based Learning (PjBL) provides opportunities for students to experience and practice moral values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, its implementation still faces several challenges that influence the process of value internalization. The findings of this study identified several challenges, including limited time allocation, unequal student participation, insufficient reflection activities, development of affective assessment instruments, and sustainability of project-based learning implementation. These findings were obtained through classroom observations, analysis of learning documents, and interviews with teachers and students. These challenges indicate that moral value internalization through PjBL does not occur automatically through project completion. Instead, it requires a learning process that provides sufficient opportunities for students to participate, interact, reflect, and connect project experiences with moral meanings.

Time management was identified as one of the main challenges in facilitating moral value internalization through PjBL. Teachers explained that project-based learning requires a longer process because students must go through several stages, including planning, implementation, presentation, and reflection. The limited time allocation often affects the depth of reflection activities, even though reflection is an important stage in transforming project experiences into moral understanding.

This finding is consistent with Thomas' perspective cited by Saputri et al., (2025) , which explains that the effectiveness of PjBL depends not only on the final product but also on the quality of the learning process involving investigation, collaboration, reflection, and evaluation. Therefore, limited time does not only affect project completion but may also reduce opportunities for students to interpret the moral values experienced during the learning process.

Another challenge identified in this study was unequal participation among students during group projects. Although most students showed enthusiasm, some students tended to become passive and relied on more active group members. This condition resulted in differences in learning experiences among students because not all



participants received the same opportunity to practice responsibility, cooperation, and decision-making.

This finding is supported by Khatimah, (2024) , who explained that differences in student characteristics can influence participation levels in PjBL activities. However, this study further highlights that unequal participation is not only a challenge for project completion but also affects the process of moral value formation because values such as responsibility and cooperation are developed through active involvement in social interactions.

The assessment of moral values was another challenge found in this study. Teachers explained that evaluation activities were still primarily focused on project outcomes, while systematic instruments for assessing students' moral development were limited. This condition shows that measuring value internalization remains challenging because moral changes are reflected not only through students' knowledge but also through attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes.

This finding is consistent with Agustriwita et al. (2026) , who stated that character assessment in PAI learning through PjBL remains challenging due to difficulties in developing indicators that can objectively measure behavioral changes. Therefore, assessment in PjBL-based PAI learning needs to integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions to capture the process of moral value internalization more comprehensively.

Furthermore, the sustainability of PjBL implementation depends on teacher readiness and institutional support. Teachers are required not only to master Islamic Religious Education content but also to design meaningful projects, develop contextual learning materials, facilitate collaboration, and guide students in reflecting on their experiences. These findings indicate that the internalization of moral values through PjBL is a collective process that requires cooperation between teachers, students, and schools. Teacher readiness and school support determine whether project activities can become meaningful learning experiences or merely become task-oriented activities.

The finding is supported by Kurniawan (2025) who emphasized that the internalization of faith and moral values through PjBL is influenced by structured reflection, teacher role models, and institutional support. These factors are relevant to the findings at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo, where successful value internalization requires not only project activities but also guidance and reflection that help students understand the moral meanings behind their experiences.

Overall, the challenges identified in this study do not indicate failure in implementing PjBL but reveal important conditions that influence the success of moral value internalization. Limited time, unequal participation, insufficient reflection, assessment difficulties, and institutional support are factors that determine whether students can transform project experiences into moral understanding and behavior.



Therefore, PjBL should not be viewed only as a method for completing learning projects, but as a learning process that requires careful planning, meaningful interaction, and structured reflection. When these elements are supported, PjBL has greater potential to function as a pedagogical space for developing students' moral values in Islamic Religious Education.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMAN 2 Kota Probolinggo functions as a pedagogical space that facilitates the process of moral value internalization through meaningful learning experiences. The implementation of PjBL was carried out through various contextual projects across grades X, XI, and XII, including educational posters, campaign videos, digital da'wah projects, social activities, and observation reports. These projects provided opportunities for students to actively engage in planning, collaboration, problem-solving, project completion, and reflection activities.

The findings further reveal that the internalization of moral values does not occur merely through the delivery of Islamic concepts but through students' direct experiences during project activities. Through interaction, habituation, responsibility sharing, and reflection, students gradually experienced and practiced values such as responsibility, cooperation, honesty, discipline, tolerance, social concern, and confidence. This process demonstrates that PjBL connects students' cognitive understanding of Islamic values with their affective experiences and concrete moral practices in everyday learning environments.

Furthermore, this study identifies several challenges that influence the process of facilitating moral value internalization through PjBL. These challenges include limited instructional time, unequal student participation in group activities, insufficiently structured reflection processes, and the lack of systematic affective assessment instruments. These findings indicate that the success of value internalization through PjBL requires not only project activities but also effective teacher facilitation, meaningful reflection, and institutional support.

The contribution of this study lies in positioning PjBL not merely as a learning model for producing project outcomes, but as a learning process that enables students to understand, experience, practice, and reflect on moral values within Islamic Religious Education. By highlighting the process of value internalization in the context of a public high school with diverse student backgrounds, this study provides a broader perspective on how project-based experiences can support moral education in contemporary educational settings.



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