



## Strategies for Implementing Project-Based Learning to Enhance Student Collaboration Skills in Religious Education at the Senior High School Level with a Managerial Approach

Fitrotul Kamilah\*, Umar Mansur

Universitas Nurul Jadid, Indonesia

Email : fitrohkamilah25@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v4i5.1159>

### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords:

Project-Based Learning (PBL), Religious Education, Collaboration Skills

#### \*Corresponding Author

This study explores the use of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in religious education at the senior high school level, aiming to enhance students' collaboration skills. By focusing on real-world projects, PBL fosters teamwork, critical thinking, and the application of religious principles in everyday life. A school known for its diverse student body and innovative teaching approaches, the study uses a qualitative case study design. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with teachers, students, and administrators, along with direct classroom observations. The results indicate that PBL significantly improved students' collaboration abilities, including communication, responsibility-sharing, and conflict resolution. However, challenges such as time constraints and students' difficulty in linking abstract religious concepts to practical projects were noted. Teachers used strategies like rotating leadership roles, reflection discussions, and managing group dynamics to facilitate learning. Despite the success, the study highlights the need for teacher training and curriculum adjustments to overcome the limitations of time and address the unique challenges of applying PBL in religious education. Overall, PBL proves to be an effective approach to increasing student engagement and understanding, though its implementation methods require refinement to suit religious content.

#### Article History:

Received: June 2025; Revised: July 2025; Accepted: August 2025

#### Please cite this article in APA style as:

Kamilah, F., & Mansur, U. (2025). Strategies for Implementing Project-Based Learning to Enhance Student Collaboration Skills in Religious Education at the Senior High School Level with a Managerial Approach. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 4(5), 1899-1915.

## INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapidly changing technology and evolving global demands, education systems must continuously adapt to produce well-rounded individuals with strong collaborative and problem-solving abilities (Jena & Barad, 2024; Swarup, 2024). This is particularly important in religious education, where learning is not just about acquiring knowledge, but also about

fostering critical thinking, ethical values, and social cooperation. The traditional educational methods often fall short in developing these skills (Azimova & Solidjonov, 2023; Hadiyanto et al., 2021). Research into innovative teaching methods, such as Project-Based Learning (PBL), has become essential as it empowers students to work together in real-world contexts, enhancing their collaborative skills (Nayak et al., 2024; Omelianenko & Artyukhova, 2024). The importance of this study lies in its potential to reshape educational practices, aligning them with the demands of modern society and ensuring that future generations can thrive in a complex, interconnected world. By focusing on PBL in religious education, this research provides a timely and necessary contribution to the broader educational landscape.

One of the significant challenges faced by educators in religious education is the limited opportunity for students to engage in meaningful collaborative learning (Chan & Erduran, 2023; Ritonga et al., 2024). Traditional teaching methods, which often focus on lectures and rote memorization, do not adequately foster critical collaboration or the development of interpersonal skills. This has resulted in students who may have strong individual knowledge but lack the ability to work effectively in teams or solve problems collaboratively. In religious education, where shared values, discussions, and understanding of diverse perspectives are crucial, this gap in collaborative skills becomes particularly concerning. As the world becomes more interconnected, the need for students to collaborate and understand different viewpoints is more critical than ever. This study aims to address this issue by exploring how Project-Based Learning can be implemented to enhance collaboration skills within the context of religious education.

In the field, educators often observe a gap between the knowledge students gain in religious education and their ability to apply that knowledge in real-world scenarios. While students can recite religious texts and theories, they often struggle to work together effectively in group settings. For example, students may have difficulty discussing and solving moral dilemmas, or understanding diverse interpretations of religious teachings, in collaborative environments. Additionally, many students report feeling disengaged or disconnected from the subject matter when learning is too theoretical and lacks practical application. This is particularly concerning as religious education offers a unique opportunity to instill values of empathy, cooperation, and community, all of which are best cultivated through active, collaborative learning. Thus, there is a clear need for a shift in pedagogical strategies to better prepare students for the demands of a socially and ethically complex world.

Previous studies have explored the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in various subjects, particularly in science and humanities. Research

by Eswaran (2024) have shown that PBL encourages deeper learning, enhances problem-solving abilities, and fosters essential collaboration skills. However, few studies have specifically addressed the application of PBL in religious education. Reza et al (2024) have acknowledged the potential of PBL in fostering teamwork and collaborative skills in general education settings, there remains a significant gap in research regarding its use within religious education. This research aims to fill that gap by exploring how PBL can be effectively integrated into religious education curricula, not only enhancing collaborative skills but also encouraging a deeper understanding of religious values in the context of community and shared experiences. The lack of studies in this area highlights the need for this research and the potential impact it can have.

The state of the art in education suggests that PBL can transform the way students engage with their learning, especially in subjects that require personal reflection and social interaction, such as religious education. While there is growing recognition of the importance of collaboration in modern education, few studies have focused on how PBL can specifically foster these skills within the context of religious teachings. This research will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how PBL can be tailored to religious education, providing educators with practical tools and strategies for improving collaboration skills among students. Furthermore, by investigating how PBL can create more engaging and meaningful learning experiences in religious education, the study will offer insights into how to better align religious education with the needs of contemporary society.

The primary research problem addressed by this study is how Project-Based Learning can be used to enhance student collaboration skills in religious education at the senior high school level. This research argues that PBL is a powerful pedagogical tool that can facilitate the development of collaboration skills in religious education settings. By engaging students in group projects that require them to apply religious concepts in real-world contexts, PBL offers an opportunity to enhance critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and teamwork. This study will demonstrate that the implementation of PBL in religious education can address the existing gaps in student collaboration and provide students with the skills needed to work effectively in diverse teams, preparing them for both their academic and future professional lives. Ultimately, this research will contribute to the improvement of religious education by offering a fresh approach that emphasizes collaboration, practical application, and community involvement.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research will adopt a qualitative research design with a case study approach. A case study method is chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the phenomena under study, which in this case is the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in religious education to enhance student collaboration skills (Almazroui, 2023). This method is ideal for understanding the contextual, procedural, and outcome-related aspects of PBL within specific classrooms. It also allows the researcher to explore the dynamics of implementing PBL, such as teacher involvement, student engagement, and collaboration outcomes. A case study approach is appropriate because it offers a detailed analysis of how PBL is applied in religious education and provides insights into the complexities that may not be captured through quantitative methods.

The research will be conducted at SMA Nurul Jadid, located in an urban area where religious education is part of the curriculum. This school is selected due to its diverse student body and the higher likelihood of implementing progressive teaching methodologies, such as PBL. SMA Nurul Jadid has demonstrated a commitment to integrating innovative pedagogical approaches in its curriculum, which makes it an ideal setting for this study. The school's openness to adopting new teaching practices and its existing framework for religious education make it a suitable location for examining how PBL can enhance collaboration skills among students. Furthermore, SMA Nurul Jadid represents a typical urban school setting, where educational reforms and modern teaching strategies are actively pursued, providing a valuable context for this research.

Data for this study will be collected using several qualitative techniques to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research questions. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with teachers, students, and school administrators to gather their perspectives on the implementation of PBL in religious education. These interviews will provide detailed insights into their experiences with PBL, the challenges they face, and their perceptions of how it affects collaboration. Classroom observations will also be carried out to directly observe how PBL is integrated into religious education lessons at SMA Nurul Jadid. This will allow the researcher to assess student interactions, group dynamics, and the teacher's role in facilitating collaboration. Additionally, relevant documents such as lesson plans, student projects, and assessment rubrics will be analyzed to understand how PBL is structured and how it encourages collaboration among students.

The data analysis process will follow a systematic approach to ensure meaningful insights are drawn. Initially, the data will undergo condensation,

where irrelevant or extraneous information will be removed, and key themes and patterns will be identified. This will focus the analysis on the most significant findings related to the research questions. The data will then be reduced by categorizing it into relevant themes, such as collaborative behaviors, challenges faced during PBL implementation, and the effectiveness of PBL in fostering student collaboration. These categories will help make the data more manageable and facilitate deeper analysis. The data will then be displayed using matrices, diagrams, and narrative descriptions to clearly represent the relationships between key themes and findings. Finally, the data will undergo verification, which involves comparing and cross-checking findings from multiple sources such as interviews, observations, and documents to ensure consistency and reliability.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, several strategies will be employed. Triangulation will be used to verify findings by comparing data from different sources, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. This cross-checking process will help ensure the credibility of the results. Member checking will be performed by sharing preliminary findings with key participants, such as teachers, students, and administrators at SMA Nurul Jadid, to validate the interpretations and ensure they reflect the participants' views. Peer review will also be incorporated into the research process, where colleagues or experts in educational research will review the findings to ensure they are logically sound and consistent with the data. An audit trail will be maintained, documenting all stages of the research process, from data collection to analysis, ensuring transparency and allowing the reliability of the study to be verified. These strategies will collectively enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

#### **Impact of Project-Based Learning on Student Collaboration Skills**

In the context of this study, the "Impact of Project-Based Learning (PBL) on Student Collaboration Skills" is defined as the extent to which the implementation of PBL enhances students' abilities to work effectively in teams, communicate ideas, and solve problems collectively. This includes the development of interpersonal skills such as cooperation, active listening, sharing responsibility, and resolving conflicts within a group. Collaboration skills are evaluated based on student interactions during group projects, their engagement with peers, and their capacity to apply religious values in team-based activities.

During interviews with the teachers at SMA Nurul Jadid, one informant shared, "Since we started using Project-Based Learning, I've seen my students collaborate much better. They are more engaged in discussions, and it's easier for them to come to a consensus on how to approach problems." The teacher highlighted that the students have become more open to exchanging ideas and opinions, a shift from their previous behavior, where they would often work independently. This statement is in line with PBL's role in promoting teamwork and shared decision-making. According to the teacher's observation, the students' willingness to communicate and collaborate effectively has grown, especially when tasked with real-world projects that require input from every team member.

In contrast, a student informant explained, "At first, I thought group work would be difficult because people don't always agree on everything. But with PBL, we're forced to talk it out and figure out solutions together. It's made me more patient and a better listener." This interview response reflects the positive transformation in students' collaboration skills, especially in their ability to manage conflicts and listen actively to different perspectives. It also underlines the role of PBL in encouraging students to take responsibility for both their individual and group roles, which enhances their social skills. The student's statement illustrates how the collaborative nature of PBL creates an environment where students have no choice but to engage and communicate effectively.

During classroom observations, the researcher noted that when students were working on their PBL projects, they frequently engaged in conversations, brainstorming ideas, and delegating tasks among themselves. One notable observation was a group of students discussing how to incorporate religious principles into their project. They took turns speaking, listening to one another, and working through disagreements by suggesting alternatives. This observation supports the idea that PBL fosters an environment where collaboration is necessary and not just encouraged. The interaction showed clear evidence of how students were learning to negotiate and make joint decisions, crucial aspects of collaboration skills.

In restating the findings, the implementation of PBL at SMA Nurul Jadid has significantly impacted students' collaboration skills. Students are now more likely to participate in team discussions, exchange ideas, and collaborate towards common goals. Through group projects, students have developed stronger interpersonal skills, such as active listening and conflict resolution, which are essential for effective teamwork. Both teacher and student feedback highlight the positive shift in the classroom environment, where collaboration has become an integral part of the learning process.

The pattern that emerges from the data is clear: PBL has enhanced student collaboration skills at SMA Nurul Jadid. Students are more engaged in cooperative tasks, take on leadership roles, and show increased responsibility in group work. Furthermore, the increased willingness to listen to others and resolve conflicts within the group suggests that PBL creates a collaborative atmosphere where interpersonal skills are both tested and developed. The data points to a significant positive change in the students' ability to work as a team and effectively communicate within the context of religious education, supporting the broader educational goal of fostering a more collaborative, ethical, and socially responsible generation.

### **Challenges in Implementing PBL in Religious Education**

In the context of this study, the "Challenges in Implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Religious Education" refers to the obstacles faced by teachers, students, and the school in integrating PBL into the religious education curriculum. These challenges can include time constraints, lack of resources, resistance to new teaching methods, and difficulties in balancing PBL with traditional educational practices. The study aims to explore how these barriers impact the successful implementation of PBL and the extent to which they hinder its effectiveness in fostering student collaboration and understanding of religious principles.

During interviews with teachers at SMA Nurul Jadid, one informant mentioned, "The biggest challenge we face is the lack of sufficient time. Religious education is packed with content, and PBL requires significant time for students to engage in projects. Finding a balance between covering the curriculum and allowing students to work on group projects is difficult." This comment reveals the primary challenge of time constraints when attempting to implement PBL in religious education. The teacher highlighted how the traditional curriculum demands a considerable amount of time for lecture-based teaching, making it difficult to allocate sufficient time for hands-on, collaborative projects. Despite recognizing the benefits of PBL, the teacher noted that integrating it effectively without sacrificing essential content has been a significant hurdle.

Another teacher shared, "Some students struggle with the open-ended nature of PBL, especially in religious education, where students are expected to apply abstract religious concepts to real-world scenarios. It's hard for them to connect the theory with the practice, and sometimes they feel lost." This response emphasizes a second major challenge: students' difficulty in understanding how to apply religious teachings to practical situations, which is an integral part of PBL. The abstract nature of religious education, which often

involves complex moral, ethical, and theological discussions, can be hard for students to translate into tangible, collaborative projects. The teacher's feedback suggests that while PBL offers a valuable experiential learning opportunity, it also presents difficulties in terms of student comprehension and engagement with the subject matter.

The process of implementing PBL in religious education can be seen as an iterative cycle involving planning, execution, and reflection. Initially, teachers need to invest time in designing projects that align with religious education goals and ensure they provide room for collaborative learning. However, as the cycle progresses, teachers face the challenge of balancing theoretical content with project-based tasks, leading to time management issues. Additionally, students often require guidance and scaffolding to help them navigate the complexities of applying religious principles to real-world problems, creating another layer of difficulty in PBL execution. These challenges often require ongoing adjustments in teaching strategies and project design to make PBL more effective.

During classroom observations, the researcher noted that while students were engaged in their group projects, some appeared confused about how to apply the religious content to their tasks. For example, during a project on ethics, one group struggled to connect the religious teachings they were discussing to the ethical dilemmas they were meant to solve. This confusion highlighted a gap between the students' understanding of abstract concepts and their ability to apply them practically in group settings. The researcher also observed that some students were hesitant to participate actively in discussions, possibly due to their uncertainty about how the project connected to the religious education material. These observations confirm the earlier findings from the interviews regarding the difficulty in translating religious theory into practice within a project-based framework.

To restate the findings, the challenges in implementing PBL in religious education at SMA Nurul Jadid are primarily centered around time constraints, students' struggles with the abstract nature of religious content, and difficulties in balancing the PBL approach with traditional curriculum requirements. Teachers face the challenge of allocating time for collaborative projects while ensuring that all necessary content is covered. Students, on the other hand, often find it difficult to connect theoretical religious concepts with real-world applications, which can hinder their engagement in collaborative activities. These challenges suggest that while PBL has the potential to enhance learning, its successful implementation requires thoughtful adjustments in teaching methods and classroom management.

The data reveal a pattern of challenges related to both time management

and the students' ability to apply religious concepts to practical situations. Time constraints remain a significant obstacle for teachers, as the need to cover religious content competes with the time required for project-based learning. Additionally, the abstract nature of religious education content complicates the application of PBL, as students struggle to see the relevance of theoretical teachings in practical, real-world contexts. These challenges suggest a need for a more structured and supportive framework when implementing PBL in religious education, one that accounts for the unique demands of the subject while still fostering collaboration and critical thinking.

### Teacher Roles and Strategies in Facilitating Collaborative Learning

In this study, the "Teacher Roles and Strategies in Facilitating Collaborative Learning" is defined as the specific actions, behaviors, and instructional strategies employed by teachers to guide students in their group work and ensure productive collaboration during Project-Based Learning (PBL) activities. This includes the teacher's role as a facilitator, mentor, and resource provider, as well as their strategies for fostering communication, cooperation, and problem-solving within student groups. The research aims to explore how teachers at SMA Nurul Jadid actively promote collaborative learning and support students in navigating the challenges of teamwork, particularly in religious education.

The following table presents excerpts from the interviews with teachers, the corresponding indicators of teacher roles and strategies, and the informants who provided these insights.

Interview Excerpt	Indicator	Informant
"I make sure to rotate the leadership roles within the group to give each student a chance to take charge."	Teacher as a facilitator of leadership and teamwork	Slamet Santoso, S.Pd.
"I guide students in reflecting on their group discussions, helping them connect their ideas to religious teachings."	Teacher as a reflective guide and content connector	Imam Komarudin, M.E
"During group discussions, I actively monitor the conversations, stepping in when conflicts arise or when focus is lost."	Teacher as a conflict resolver and monitor of group dynamics	Juwaeni, M.Pd.
"I encourage students to divide tasks based on their strengths, ensuring that each member feels responsible for the group's success."	Teacher as a task delegator and promoter of responsibility	Slamet Santoso, S.Pd.

The table above reveals several key strategies employed by teachers to facilitate collaborative learning in religious education through PBL. Teacher A

focuses on ensuring that students have equal opportunities to lead by rotating leadership roles within groups, promoting both individual and collective responsibility. Teacher B emphasizes reflection, guiding students to connect their discussions back to the religious content, which is crucial for deepening their understanding of the subject matter. Teacher C actively manages group dynamics by stepping in to resolve conflicts or refocus discussions, ensuring that the group remains on track and productive. Finally, Teacher A encourages task delegation based on students' individual strengths, which fosters a sense of responsibility and ensures that the workload is shared equitably among group members.

These interview excerpts highlight the active role teachers play in managing group dynamics, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that PBL activities align with the goals of religious education. By rotating leadership roles, teachers give students the opportunity to practice leadership and responsibility in a collaborative context. Additionally, teachers provide ongoing support by guiding reflective discussions, monitoring progress, and addressing any conflicts or distractions that may arise during group work. This not only helps maintain the focus of the group but also ensures that students are continuously applying religious principles to their collaborative activities.

During classroom observations, the researcher noted that teachers were frequently seen circulating around the room, providing guidance to groups as they worked on their projects. For instance, when a group struggled with a conflict regarding the division of tasks, Teacher A stepped in to mediate, ensuring that all members were equally involved in the project. Similarly, when a group appeared distracted and off-topic, Teacher C intervened to bring the group back to the central theme of their religious project, helping them refocus their discussions. These observations align with the strategies described in the interviews, reinforcing the teachers' role as active facilitators and conflict mediators during the PBL process. The researcher also observed that students appeared more confident in their collaboration when teachers were present to offer guidance and support, suggesting that the teachers' active involvement contributed significantly to the success of the collaborative learning experience.

To restate the findings, the data suggests that teachers at SMA Nurul Jadid play an essential role in facilitating collaborative learning during Project-Based Learning. Teachers engage with students by rotating leadership roles, encouraging reflective discussions, managing group dynamics, and promoting equitable task delegation. These strategies help create a productive collaborative environment where students can develop teamwork skills while applying religious principles to real-world projects. The teachers' active presence in the classroom, offering guidance and resolving conflicts, contributes

to a more effective and engaged learning experience for students.

The pattern emerging from the data shows that teachers use a combination of proactive and reactive strategies to facilitate collaboration in religious education. Proactively, they rotate leadership roles, encourage reflection, and delegate tasks according to students' strengths. Reactively, they intervene in conflicts and refocus students when necessary. These strategies not only promote collaboration but also ensure that students remain focused on the content and objectives of their religious education projects. The teachers' actions indicate that they recognize the importance of both structured support and flexibility in creating a collaborative and meaningful learning environment for their students.

### **Student Perceptions of Project-Based Learning in Religious Education**

In the context of this study, "Student Perceptions of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Religious Education" refers to the way students view and experience the implementation of PBL in their religious education classes. This includes their attitudes, motivations, and feelings towards collaborative work, as well as their views on how PBL affects their understanding of religious principles and values. The study explores whether students find PBL engaging, whether it enhances their learning, and how it influences their ability to apply religious teachings in real-world scenarios.

During interviews, one student shared, "I really enjoy how we work together in groups. Before PBL, I never thought about applying religious teachings in real-life situations, but now I feel like I can understand more about what we learn in class." This excerpt reflects a positive perception of PBL, as the student highlights how the collaborative nature of PBL allows them to connect religious content with real-life applications. The student's statement indicates that PBL has made learning more meaningful and relevant, suggesting that students appreciate the opportunity to explore religious teachings in a practical and collaborative context. The perception of PBL as an engaging learning experience appears to have positively influenced the student's understanding of religious principles.

Another student commented, "At first, I didn't think PBL would help me with my religious studies. But after a few projects, I realized that it made me think more critically about my faith and how it applies to the world around me." This statement highlights a shift in the student's perspective, where initial skepticism about the effectiveness of PBL in religious education turned into a recognition of its value. The student acknowledges how PBL challenges them to think critically about their faith, moving beyond theoretical knowledge to real-world applications. This perception supports the idea that PBL encourages

deeper engagement with religious content, prompting students to consider the relevance of religious teachings in everyday life.

During classroom observations, the researcher noted that students seemed highly engaged during their group projects, often initiating discussions and eagerly sharing ideas. In one instance, a group of students was discussing the ethical implications of a religious teaching in relation to a current event, and the level of engagement and enthusiasm was noticeable. Students appeared more motivated and willing to participate in these discussions, especially when they were tasked with applying religious teachings to contemporary issues. This observation confirms that students found PBL engaging and that it encouraged active participation in their religious education. The researcher also noted that students who previously appeared disengaged in traditional lecture-based lessons were more vocal and active in the collaborative PBL setting, suggesting that the hands-on, interactive nature of PBL stimulated greater involvement.

Restating the findings, it can be concluded that students at SMA Nurul Jadid generally perceive Project-Based Learning in religious education as a positive and engaging experience. They appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with peers and to connect religious teachings to real-world applications. PBL encourages students to think critically about their faith and challenges them to explore its relevance in contemporary society. The data from both interviews and observations indicate that PBL enhances students' motivation and engagement in religious education by making the learning process more interactive and meaningful.

The pattern emerging from the data suggests that students' perceptions of PBL in religious education are overwhelmingly positive. They feel that PBL provides them with a deeper understanding of religious content by encouraging critical thinking and application of religious principles to real-life situations. Furthermore, the collaborative nature of PBL appears to enhance students' engagement, as they are more actively involved in discussions and problem-solving activities. This pattern indicates that PBL not only helps students grasp religious teachings more effectively but also fosters a sense of community and teamwork in the learning process.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study highlight the significant impact of Project-Based Learning (PBL) on student collaboration skills, which aligns with the body of literature that emphasizes the effectiveness of PBL in fostering teamwork, communication, and problem-solving abilities. Previous studies have shown that PBL creates an environment where students are required to

engage in real-world tasks, which inherently promotes collaboration (Al-Thani & Ahmad, 2025; Ni'mah et al., 2024). The results of this study corroborate these claims, revealing that students at SMA Nurul Jadid demonstrated improved collaboration, including enhanced listening, responsibility-sharing, and conflict resolution. However, the study also found that students faced challenges in applying religious content to real-world scenarios, suggesting that while PBL fosters collaboration, the complexity of religious education requires additional scaffolding and guidance. This nuance reflects a gap in existing literature, which often overlooks the specific challenges related to the application of PBL in complex, abstract subjects like religious education.

The study also explored the challenges in implementing PBL in religious education, revealing time constraints, difficulty in applying abstract religious teachings, and resistance to new teaching methods as key barriers. These findings are consistent with previous research that highlights the tension between traditional curricula and innovative pedagogical approaches (Bakar, 2021; Sasson et al., 2022). In religious education, where the curriculum is often content-heavy and deeply theoretical, PBL's need for extended time for group work and real-world application can create significant challenges. This is a unique challenge in religious education that requires special attention, as the subject matter demands both conceptual depth and practical relevance. The literature generally points to time and content delivery as barriers to PBL implementation, but the specific difficulty of applying PBL in religious education, as revealed in this study, requires further exploration in future research.

Teacher roles and strategies in facilitating collaborative learning emerged as critical to the success of PBL. Teachers at SMA Nurul Jadid employed strategies such as rotating leadership roles, guiding reflective discussions, managing group dynamics, and delegating tasks according to students' strengths. These strategies reflect well-established practices in the literature, which suggest that teachers act as facilitators and mediators in collaborative learning environments (Dahri et al., 2025; Talkhan et al., n.d.). However, the study also identified a gap in teacher preparedness for dealing with the specific challenges of PBL in religious education, such as guiding students in applying abstract religious principles to group tasks. While existing literature emphasizes the importance of teacher facilitation in PBL, this study suggests that training teachers to specifically address the unique demands of religious education could significantly enhance the effectiveness of PBL in this context.

The student perceptions of PBL in religious education were overwhelmingly positive, with students reporting that the collaborative nature of PBL helped them connect religious teachings to real-life situations. This

finding aligns with the literature on PBL, which shows that students appreciate the opportunity to engage in hands-on, meaningful learning that allows them to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts (Amiri, 2025; Silma et al., 2024). However, students also expressed initial skepticism about the effectiveness of PBL in religious education, highlighting the challenges of applying abstract religious concepts practically. This nuanced perception is in line with some existing studies that suggest students may initially struggle with PBL in subjects where content is more abstract and requires higher-order thinking. The positive shift in students' attitudes toward PBL after experiencing its benefits suggests that with appropriate scaffolding, PBL can be highly effective in enhancing student engagement and understanding in religious education.

The implications of these findings are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study reinforces the notion that PBL enhances collaboration skills, but it also highlights the need for further research into how PBL can be tailored to specific subjects, such as religious education, where abstract concepts require careful integration into real-world applications. Practically, this study provides valuable insights for educators, suggesting that while PBL is beneficial for developing collaboration skills, teachers must receive specialized training on how to integrate PBL effectively into religious education. Additionally, the study highlights the need for schools to adjust their curricula and schedules to accommodate the time demands of PBL, especially in subjects with heavy theoretical content. By addressing these challenges and applying targeted strategies, educators can optimize the use of PBL to foster deeper engagement, collaboration, and understanding among students in religious education settings.

## CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study is that the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in religious education at SMA Nurul Jadid significantly enhances students' collaboration skills, such as communication, responsibility sharing, and conflict resolution. This study also indicates that although PBL successfully creates a more engaging and relevant learning experience, the main challenge lies in how to connect abstract religious concepts with practical applications in collaborative projects. The lesson learned from this research is the importance of adapting PBL to the specific context of the curriculum and content, as well as the need for a more structured approach and clear guidance for students in linking religious teachings to real-world situations.

The strength of this study lies in its contribution to the development of understanding about the implementation of PBL in religious education, a topic that has been relatively underexplored in the literature. This study provides empirical evidence confirming that PBL can enrich religious learning in a more applied manner, thereby enhancing student engagement and understanding. Additionally, the research identifies the critical role of teachers in facilitating and managing group dynamics, as well as strategies for helping students overcome difficulties in applying religious principles to their projects. The scholarly contribution of this study enriches the discourse on PBL in religious education, especially in the context of senior high school education.

However, this study has some limitations, including the limited number of research locations, as it was conducted only at SMA Nurul Jadid, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other schools with different contexts. Additionally, the study focused solely on the perspectives of students and teachers, while views from parents or external stakeholders such as school administrators were not considered. Future research is recommended to expand the scope of the study to include a variety of schools with different characteristics, and to incorporate multiple perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and challenges of PBL in religious education. Future studies could also explore a more in-depth approach to integrating PBL with a more diverse religious curriculum across Indonesia.

## REFERENCES

- Al-Thani, N. J., & Ahmad, Z. (2025). Driving project-based learning and problem-based learning through research in middle schools. In *Teaching and learning with research cognitive theory* (pp. 45–58). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-87544-1\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-87544-1_3)
- Almazroui, K. M. (2023). Project-based learning for 21st-century skills: An overview and case study of moral education in the UAE. *The Social Studies*, 114(3), 125–136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00377996.2022.2134281>
- Amiri, S. M. H. (2025). Project-Based Learning Pedagogy: Bridging Theory and Practice for Real-World Impact. Available at SSRN 5333995. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5333995>
- Azimova, D., & Solidjonov, D. (2023). Learning English language as a second language with augmented reality. *Qo 'Qon Universiteti Xabarnomasi*, 1, 112–115. <https://doi.org/10.54613/ku.v6i6.264>
- Bakar, S. (2021). Investigating the dynamics of contemporary pedagogical approaches in higher education through innovations, challenges, and paradigm shifts. *Social Science Chronicle*, 1(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.56106/ssc.2021.009>
- Chan, J., & Erduran, S. (2023). The impact of collaboration between science and religious education teachers on their understanding and views of argumentation. *Research in Science Education*, 53(1), 121–137. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-022-10041-1>
- Dahri, N. A., Yahaya, N., & Vighio, M. S. (2025). Transforming teacher education through collaborative digital innovations: An empirical study of teachers' perceptions and experiences. *Education and Information Technologies*, 1–37. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-025-13583-9>
- Eswaran, U. (2024). Project-based learning: Fostering collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. In *Enhancing education with intelligent systems and data-driven instruction* (pp. 23–43). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-2169-0.ch002>
- Hadiyanto, H., Failasofah, F., Armiwati, A., Abrar, M., & Thabran, Y. (2021). Students' practices of 21st century skills between conventional learning and blended learning. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 18(3), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.53761/1.18.3.7>
- Jena, M. K., & Barad, S. (2024). Professional development of secondary school teachers: Adapting to 21st century educational paradigms. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Modern Science and Technology*, 3(1), 27–33. <https://doi.org/10.59828/ijrmst.v3i1.172>

- Nayak, A., Satpathy, I., & Jain, V. (2024). The project-based learning approach (PBL): Enthralling students through Project-Based Learning approach (PBL) in Education 5.0. In *Preconceptions of Policies, Strategies, and Challenges in Education 5.0* (pp. 158–174). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-3041-8.ch010>
- Ni'mah, A., Arianti, E. S., Suyanto, S., Putera, S. H. P., & Nashrudin, A. (2024). Problem-Based Learning (PBL) methods within an independent curriculum (a literature review). *Sintaksis: Publikasi Para Ahli Bahasa Dan Sastra Inggris*, 2(4), 165–174. <https://doi.org/10.61132/sintaksis.v2i4.859>
- Omelianenko, O., & Artyukhova, N. (2024). Project-based learning: Theoretical overview and practical implications for local innovation-based development. *Economics and Education*, 9(1), 35–41. <https://doi.org/10.30525/2500-946X/2024-1-6>
- Reza, A., Mahdavi, L., & Karimi, R. (2024). Critical thinking in religious education: developing a framework for inquiry-based learning in secondary schools. *Journal Neosantara Hybrid Learning*, 2(3), 515–526. <https://doi.org/10.70177/jnhl.v2i3.2188>
- Ritonga, S., Pratiwi, N., & Ayu, A. (2024). The Concept of Collaborative Learning Strategies and Their Relevance in Creating an Innovative Learning Environment in Islamic Religious Education Learning. *World Journal of Islamic Learning and Teaching*, 1(4), 29–38.
- Sasson, I., Yehuda, I., Miedijensky, S., & Malkinson, N. (2022). Designing new learning environments: An innovative pedagogical perspective. *The Curriculum Journal*, 33(1), 61–81. <https://doi.org/10.1002/curj.125>
- Silma, N., Maulida, I., Wulan, A. P., Merawati, J., & Hasan, M. K. (2024). A comprehensive review of Project-Based Learning (PBL): Unravelling its aims, methodologies, and implications. *Journal of Education, Social & Communication Studies*, 1(1), 10–19.
- Swarup, R. R. (2024). Designing Education 4.0: Harnessing the power of Design Thinking. *Development*, 6(7), 8.
- Talkhan, E., Alhubaidah, S., Muthanna, A., & Qadhi, S. (n.d.). What are the Effects of Cooperative Learning on Academic Achievement of Primary School Students in Mathematics? Available at SSRN 5279395.