



YouTube-Assisted Project-Based Learning and Student Creativity in Islamic Cultural History at Madrasah Aliyah

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of a YouTube-assisted Project-Based Learning (PBL) model in enhancing students' creativity in Islamic Cultural History (ICH) at the madrasah aliyah level. Using a quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design, the study involved 32 tenth-grade students divided into experimental (PjBL+YouTube) and control (conventional) classes. The creativity instrument was developed specifically for ICH, covering three indicators: originality of historical narrative, ability to connect Islamic values with contemporary contexts, and ethical multimedia production skills. Assessment combined a multiple-choice test and a project rubric for YouTube videos. Results show a medium N-Gain score (0.40) in the experimental class, higher than the control class (0.30), with statistical significance ($p = 0.001$). Despite limitations of small sample size and single-site setting, the study offers a practical video-based project model for ICH teachers. Theoretical implications are offered tentatively as suggestions for future adaptation.

ABSTRAK

Studi ini menguji efektivitas model Project-Based Learning (PjBL) berbantuan YouTube dalam meningkatkan kreativitas siswa pada mata pelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam (SKI) di tingkat madrasah aliyah. Dengan desain kuasi-eksperimen non-equivalent control group, penelitian ini melibatkan 32 siswa kelas sepuluh yang dibagi menjadi kelas eksperimen (PjBL+YouTube) dan kelas kontrol (konvensional). Instrumen kreativitas dikembangkan khusus untuk SKI, mencakup tiga indikator: orisinalitas narasi sejarah, kemampuan menghubungkan nilai-nilai Islam dengan konteks kontemporer, serta keterampilan produksi multimedia yang etis. Penilaian menggabungkan tes pilihan ganda dan rubrik proyek video YouTube. Hasil menunjukkan skor N-Gain sedang (0,40) pada kelas eksperimen, lebih tinggi dibandingkan kelas kontrol (0,30), dengan signifikansi statistik ($p = 0,001$). Meskipun memiliki keterbatasan ukuran sampel kecil dan lokasi tunggal, studi ini menawarkan model proyek berbasis video yang praktis bagi guru SKI. Implikasi teoretis disajikan secara tentatif sebagai saran untuk adaptasi di masa mendatang.

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Introduction

Creativity is recognized as one of the essential competencies that students must possess to meet the demands of the twenty-first century. In the educational context, creativity is not limited to producing artistic works but encompasses the ability to think flexibly, generate original ideas, and develop innovative solutions to various problems. (Newton & Newton, 2014). Within the subject of Islamic Cultural History, creativity becomes particularly significant because it enables students not only to memorize historical facts but also to reconstruct, interpret, and relate the values of Islamic civilization to contemporary life. Creative mastery of Islamic historical concepts is expected to shape learners who are not only intellectually capable but also equipped to contribute meaningfully to the development of society and civilization. (Sahin, 2018).

However, conditions in the field reveal a considerable gap between these ideal expectations and actual instructional practices. Numerous studies indicate that Islamic Cultural History learning in many madrasahs continues to be dominated by conventional methods such as lecturing and memorization, which do not sufficiently stimulate students' creativity. (Istiqomah et al., 2023; Rahayu & Abbas, 2024). Low levels of interest, limited motivation, and minimal active engagement hinder students' understanding of historical content, ultimately leading to passive learning and reduced creativity. (Ariyanti & Anggerawati, 2024; Er Tuna & Yalçın, 2023). Preliminary observations at MA Ar-Rosyidiyah in Bandung support these findings, as students' assignments showed limited variation and innovation. Teachers also acknowledged that their instructional approaches remain largely conventional and have not optimally integrated digital technologies. (Pasaribu, 2025). These practices contrast sharply with the characteristics of contemporary learners who are deeply immersed in digital environments.

As a potential solution to address this gap, the present study proposes implementing a Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model integrated with YouTube as a digital learning medium. PjBL is a pedagogical approach that engages students in investigative activities through challenging and contextually relevant tasks that lead to the creation of specific products. (Retno et al., 2025). The integration of YouTube, a platform highly familiar to students, provides opportunities not only for them to understand historical content but also to translate this understanding into creative educational video products that can be produced and disseminated. (Barry et al., 2016). Previous studies, such as those conducted by Agustin et al. (2023) and Nursobah (2021), have demonstrated that YouTube-assisted instruction can enhance student learning outcomes and engagement.

A review of the state of the art indicates that research on PjBL and video-based media has been widely conducted. For instance, Barsch (2020) argues that videos can transform the learning of history into a more dynamic and engaging process. Similarly, studies by Ujud et al., (2023) confirm the effectiveness of PjBL in developing twenty-first-century skills. However, most of these studies focus on science, mathematics, or language subjects and measure cognitive learning outcomes. In contrast, within the context of Islamic Cultural History as part of Islamic religious education, research on PjBL remains very limited, and almost none specifically target creativity as the main variable. Moreover, the creativity instruments used in general studies are not fully suitable for ICH because they do not capture the ability to connect Islamic historical values to contemporary contexts, nor do they consider digital ethics from an Islamic perspective.

Thus, the research gaps addressed by this study are: (1) no previous study has specifically examined YouTube-assisted PjBL for creativity in ICH; (2) no creativity instrument has been developed specifically for ICH (covering originality of historical narrative, connection to Islamic values, and ethical multimedia production); and (3) it

remains unclear how general creativity theories (e.g., Rhodes' 4P) and TPACK need to be adapted for religious education contexts. The novelty of this study lies in its contextual integration (ICH and madrasah aliyah) and the development of creativity indicators grounded in Islamic values, rather than merely applying an existing model to a new setting.

The significance and contribution of this study lie in providing a practical and empirical solution to the persistent issue of low student creativity in ICH learning. Theoretically, this study offers tentative suggestions for adapting creativity frameworks to religious education contexts, pending further validation. Practically, this study may serve as a strategic reference for educators and educational institutions seeking to implement more participatory, creative, and technologically oriented instructional practices.

Based on the background outlined above, this study proposes the following hypothesis (H1): The application of the YouTube-assisted Project-Based Learning model significantly improves students' creativity in Islamic Cultural History compared to conventional learning. The research questions are: (1) How is the implementation of the PjBL model supported by YouTube media in ICH for Grade X students at MA Ar-Rosyidiyah Bandung? (2) Is there a significant difference in creativity improvement between students who learn with YouTube-assisted PjBL and those who learn with conventional methods?

The structure of this article is as follows: after the Introduction, the Methods section describes the research design, participants, instruments, intervention, and ethical procedures. The Results section presents the quantitative findings (pre-test, post-test, N-Gain, statistical tests) and qualitative illustrations. The Discussion interprets the findings in light of previous literature and theoretical frameworks. Finally, the Conclusion summarizes the main contributions, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research and policy.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative, experimental approach with a quasi-experimental, non-equivalent control group design. (Creswell, 2012; Shadish, 2002). The design was selected to accommodate the reality of classroom-based research, where random assignment cannot be conducted due to institutional constraints. Two groups, consisting of an experimental class and a control class, received both a Pre-test and a post-test to identify differences in learning outcomes following the implementation of the treatment. This structure enabled the comparison of instructional effects in a controlled yet natural educational environment.

The research population comprised all 32 tenth-grade students at MA Ar-Rosyidiyah in Bandung City. The sample was determined using saturated sampling, a non-probability technique in which the entire population is included due to its manageable size and homogeneity. (Cohen et al., 2018). Class X1 and X2, each with 16 students, were assigned to the experimental and control groups, respectively. Pre-test scores confirmed baseline equivalence between the two groups (experimental mean = 86.25, control mean = 85.5, $p > 0.05$). The students served as the primary research subjects, while teachers acted as supporting informants whose insights enriched the contextual understanding of student characteristics and classroom dynamics obtained through interviews.

This study is described as quantitative, supported by qualitative data (from interviews and observations), not as a full mixed-methods design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and testing. The creativity instrument was developed through three stages: adaptation of creativity indicators from Rhodes (4P) and Torrance, adjustment to the characteristics of ICH (Islamic Cultural Heritage) through

expert review involving two Islamic religious education lecturers and one ICH teacher, and empirical pilot testing on 20 students outside the sample.

The final instrument consisted of two components. First, 20 multiple-choice questions measuring knowledge relevant to creativity (i.e., understanding of originality in historical narrative, ability to connect Islamic values with contemporary contexts, and principles of ethical multimedia production). This test assessed cognitive foundations that support creative performance, not creativity as a personality trait. Second, a project rubric (10 items) assessing actual creative output from students' YouTube videos, measuring three dimensions: (a) originality of historical narrative (the ability to present Abbasid events from a new yet accurate perspective); (b) connection to Islamic values (the ability to link achievements of Islamic civilization with Islamic values and their current relevance); and (c) ethical multimedia production (technical skills in creating YouTube videos that do not contain excessive content, impolite elements, or violate Islamic ethics). Rubric scores were combined with test scores for a composite creativity measure (weighted 40% test, 60% rubric based on expert judgment). Content validity reached CVI = 0.89 and reliability (Cronbach's alpha) = 0.86. Additional documentation provided administrative data and reinforced the contextual interpretation of findings.

This study received ethical approval from the research committee of MA Ar-Rosyidiyah Bandung (approval letter No. 001/MA-AR/V/2025). Written informed consent was obtained from the parents or legal guardians of all participating students, as all participants were minors. Students were assured of their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Data were anonymized before analysis, and no personally identifiable information is reported.

The project rubric (10 items) was applied independently by two raters: the lead researcher and an experienced ICH teacher who was blind to the group assignment (experimental vs. control). Each student's YouTube video was assessed on three dimensions: (a) originality of historical narrative (4 items), (b) connection to Islamic values (3 items), and (c) ethical multimedia production (3 items). Each item was scored on a 1-4 scale (1 = needs improvement, 4 = exemplary). Inter-rater reliability was calculated using Cohen's Kappa ($\kappa = 0.82$, substantial agreement). Final rubric scores were averaged across the two raters. The composite creativity measure weighted test scores at 40% and rubric scores at 60% based on expert judgment (CVI = 0.89).

The data analysis employed a series of statistical procedures aligned with the study's objectives. Descriptive statistics were first used to summarize students' Pre-test and Post-test scores. Assumptions for subsequent parametric testing were examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality and Levene's test for homogeneity of variances. (Pallant, 2020). The research hypothesis was tested using an Independent-Samples t-test to assess significant differences between the two groups (Pallant, 2020). The effectiveness of the intervention was further assessed using the N-Gain test to determine the magnitude of improvement in students' scores (Hake, 1998). The credibility of the findings was strengthened through instrument validation, triangulation across observations, interviews, and test data, and peer debriefing with supervising teachers. (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

The research took place at MA Ar-Rosyidiyah, Bandung City, during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, from May to July 2025. The timeline encompassed the preparation of research instruments, the delivery of experimental treatments, observation of classroom activities, interviews with teachers, and the documentation of learning processes. The structured schedule ensured systematic data collection and enabled consistent implementation of the research procedures across both study groups. The study's limitations include a small sample size (N=32), a single madrasah, a quasi-

experimental design without randomization, and a short intervention duration (eight sessions).

Results and Discussion

Results

Application of the Project-Based Learning Model Assisted by YouTube Media

The experimental intervention was implemented over eight sessions at MA Ar-Rosyidiyah Bandung. The teacher followed the PjBL stages systematically: project orientation, group planning, project execution with facilitation, presentation, and reflection. The YouTube media provided audiovisual support, helping students visualize the content and understand the expected form of the project they would later produce. Before implementing the learning activities, teaching modules were prepared in accordance with the PjBL procedural steps (see Figure 1).

The initial learning activity began with the teacher greeting students, leading an opening prayer, and communicating learning objectives. A pre-test (20 multiple-choice questions) was administered to identify students' initial understanding of the Abbasid civilization.



Figure 1. Initial Learning Activities Using the YouTube-Assisted Project-Based Learning Model

During the main learning activity, the teacher played a short video illustrating the golden age of the Abbasid Caliphate to trigger discussion. Students were divided into small groups. Each group selected a specific topic – such as medical institutions, Baitul Hikmah, prominent scholars, or architectural achievements. Groups developed work plans, determined project formats (all groups chose video), and set activity schedules with teacher guidance (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Group Project Planning and Topic Selection in the PjBL Learning Process

During the project implementation stage, students searched for information, held discussions, organized narratives, and designed their YouTube videos. The teacher monitored progress, provided feedback, and offered technical assistance. After completing their projects, groups presented their videos to the class, followed by reflection and evaluation.

Implementation fidelity reached 95% based on observation indicators. Challenges included limited access to digital devices, unstable internet connections, and time constraints. However, teacher scaffolding enabled most groups to complete their projects successfully. Students responded positively, showing increased enthusiasm and participation.

Increasing Student Creativity in Islamic Cultural History

The independent samples t-test showed a significant difference in creativity outcomes between the experimental and control groups (Sig. 2-tailed = 0.001 < 0.05). The paired sample t-test for the experimental group confirmed a significant pre-post increase ($p < 0.01$).

Table 1. Average Pre-Test And Post-Test Composite Creativity Scores

Class	Pre-Test Average (max 100)	Post-Test Average (max 100)	N-Gain	Category
Experimental	86.25	95.00	0.40	Medium
Control	85.50	89.00	0.30	Low

Note: Pre-test scores were comparable between groups ($p > 0.05$), indicating baseline equivalence.

Table 2. N-Gain By ICH Creativity Indicators (Based On Project Rubric)

ICH Creativity Indicator	Experimental (N-Gain)	Control (N-Gain)	Category
Originality of historical narrative	0.45	0.32	Medium
Connection to Islamic values	0.38	0.28	Medium
Ethical multimedia production	0.41	0.29	Medium
Average	0.40	0.30	Medium vs Low

Source: Research data

The data above show that the greatest improvement occurred in the indicator of originality of historical narrative (0.45). In contrast, the indicator of connection to Islamic values showed the lowest improvement (0.38), though still in the medium category. This indicates that although PjBL+YouTube encourages novelty in historical storytelling, the aspect of connecting Islamic values to contemporary life requires stronger instructional scaffolding. Examples of student project outputs are shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Examples of Student Project Outputs (YouTube Videos on Abbasid Civilization)

To illustrate student perceptions, interviews were conducted with three students from the experimental group. The first student, Reysa, stated that she was very happy with the learning process because it felt new and more engaging. She felt that YouTube helped her understand the lesson more easily and made learning less monotonous. The second student, Gilda, initially needed time to adapt, but with teacher guidance, she completed the project well. The third student, Adis, expressed enthusiasm, noting that the

model helped him develop editing skills and increased his understanding of ICH. These interview excerpts are presented as supporting illustrations, not as standalone evidence.

Discussion

The quantitative findings of this study indicate that implementing YouTube-assisted Project-Based Learning (PjBL) led to a measurable increase in students' creativity in Islamic Cultural History (ICH). The improvement is evidenced by the N-Gain score of 0.40 in the experimental class (medium) compared to 0.30 in the control class (low). This difference is significant (Sig. = 0.001 < 0.05). These results suggest that integrating multimedia-supported PjBL creates a more conducive environment for creative engagement.

The magnitude of improvement indicates that students benefited not merely from exposure to digital media but from a structured project cycle that required them to interpret, design, and produce creative artifacts. This supports Rajan et al (2019) The principle that PjBL improves higher-order thinking by requiring sustained inquiry and creative production. In this case, YouTube videos served as accessible cognitive scaffolds, helping students visualize historical content and contextualize abstract concepts. The 95% implementation fidelity also strengthens the intervention's validity. (Guo et al., 2020).

From a creativity perspective, the intervention enhanced components of divergent thinking, originality, and elaboration. Students' video creations represented tangible creative products, while group collaboration fostered a supportive environment for creativity. The observed shifts in student creativity can be interpreted through a constructivist lens: learners actively constructed meaning by producing videos on the Abbasid civilization, transforming abstract historical material into multimedia narratives (Jonassen, 1994).

Furthermore, integrating YouTube into PjBL aligns with Mayer's (2024) multimedia learning theory, which asserts that well-designed visual and auditory inputs reduce cognitive load, enabling learners to process complex information more efficiently.

Unlike studies that use YouTube only for content consumption (Rahmatika et al., 2021) This study required students to produce videos. The shift from learner-as-consumer to learner-as-creator (Jenkins et al., 2009) appears crucial for creativity. This research shows that creativity develops not when students consume videos, but when they produce them. This result is consistent with Putri et al (2024) who reported that integrating YouTube into project-based learning significantly fosters engagement and creativity. Furthermore, a flipped-PBL model enhanced by YouTube has been shown to effectively develop 21st-century competencies, including critical thinking and creative problem-solving (Park, 2024). These findings suggest that, when embedded in a structured pedagogical framework, YouTube functions not merely as a passive content repository but as an active catalyst for higher-order skill development.

The highest gain was in originality of historical narrative (0.45), while the lowest was in connecting Islamic values to contemporary contexts (0.38). This suggests that although PjBL+YouTube encourages novelty in historical storytelling, the value connection aspect requires stronger instructional scaffolding. Teachers need to provide explicit guidance, such as discussion prompts that link past achievements (e.g., scientific pursuits at Baitul Hikmah) to current issues (e.g., the ethics of technology use). This finding is consistent with (Kokotsaki et al., 2016), who highlight that student readiness and teacher guidance significantly influence PjBL success.

Comparisons with previous studies reveal alignment with Rahmatika et al. (2021). However, unlike al. (2022), who suggested that PjBL may be challenging in low-resource

settings, this study demonstrates that even with limited devices and internet access, strong teacher scaffolding and clear project guidelines can mitigate resource limitations.

The collaboration within groups contributed to creativity. Group tasks allowed students to negotiate roles, solve problems collectively, and integrate diverse perspectives. Students reported increased enthusiasm, enjoyment, and deeper understanding, which aligns with findings that multimedia-rich learning environments enhance student motivation – a precursor to creativity. This finding is consistent with self-determination theory. (Ryan & Deci, 2000) which posits that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are essential to intrinsic motivation. Such creative breakthroughs rarely occurred in the control class, where individual worksheets dominated.

This collaborative dynamic is further supported by Karuni et al (2024) who found a positive and significant influence of creativity and peer influence on students' learning independence in vocational education contexts. This implies that the collaborative environment in PjBL not only generates creative ideas but also builds learner autonomy and initiative—outcomes that are particularly valuable in madrasah settings where communal learning is already culturally embedded.

Moreover, the collaborative process within groups served as a scaffold for higher-order thinking, echoing Vygotsky & Cole (1978) Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. Students who struggled to connect Islamic values to contemporary issues received direct explanations from peers with stronger analytical skills. This peer scaffolding was particularly effective for the indicator of *connection to Islamic values*, which showed the lowest N-Gain (0.38) overall. This suggests that the quality of collaboration, not just presence, determines creative outcomes. Future implementations should therefore incorporate structured peer-assessment rubrics and guided reflection sessions to maximize the benefits of group work.

However, not all collaborative experiences were uniformly positive. Some groups faced coordination difficulties, unequal participation, or disagreements over video direction. A few students reported that dominant peers sometimes overruled their ideas, reducing their sense of ownership. These challenges echo prior research on collaborative learning (Holm, 2011) and highlight the need for teacher facilitation in managing group dynamics. In our study, the teacher's role in monitoring progress, mediating conflicts, and providing technical assistance was crucial for maintaining productive collaboration. Without such scaffolding, some groups risked falling into social loafing or groupthink—both of which are detrimental to creativity.

Practically, teachers implementing the PjBL+YouTube model should establish clear roles (e.g., researcher, scriptwriter, narrator, editor) and rotate them across projects to ensure equitable participation. Additionally, incorporating anonymous peer evaluations and individual reflection logs can help mitigate free-riding while fostering individual accountability. Future research should experimentally compare different grouping strategies (e.g., random, interest-based, and mixed-ability) in terms of creative outcomes in Islamic history education. Longitudinal studies could also examine whether collaborative digital skills developed through PjBL transfer to other subjects or real-world contexts. Despite these challenges, the overall pattern confirms that well-managed group collaboration amplifies the creative potential of YouTube-assisted PjBL, making it a culturally appropriate model for madrasah settings where communal learning is already valued.

These findings align with Misbah & Saleh (2025), who showed that the integration of Islamic values into the Merdeka Curriculum significantly affects students' learning discipline ($\beta=0.316$; $R^2=0.475$), meaning that both creativity and discipline require systematic internalization of Islamic values in instructional design. Our findings resonate with those of Agustina et al., who showed that YouTube-integrated PjBL

significantly increases student interest in Islamic Religious Education. Similarly, a classroom action study by Bahru & Romelah (2026) demonstrated that project-based learning through educational video production effectively enhances students' understanding, collaboration skills, and creativity in religious practice, including zakah rituals. These parallels indicate that the YouTube-assisted PjBL model is adaptable across Islamic education topics from history (as in this study) to contemporary religious practices.

Furthermore, as revealed by Amrullah & Mutholingah (2025) at Sidogiri Pesantren, the success of traditional value-based learning (classical turats books) lies precisely in modern pedagogical flexibility and an engaging learning environment—this reinforces the argument that a hybrid model (traditional + digital) like PjBL+YouTube can be applied not only in public madrasahs but also in pesantren. However, the institutional transformation challenges that IAKN Manado faces in becoming a cyber university are significant. (Pandaleke et al., 2025) particularly the need for digital infrastructure support and adaptive policies from the government—are similar constraints to implementing PjBL+YouTube in madrasahs, which are currently limited by a small sample size (32 students, one madrasah), a quasi-experimental design, and uneven digital infrastructure.

Therefore, the policy recommendations from this study—that school policies should recognize student-created Islamic educational videos as valid project assessments—are consistent with Amrullah & Mutholingah's emphasis on outcome-based evaluation and Pandaleke et al.'s call for stronger institutional support. A direct practical implication is that ICH teachers must provide strong scaffolding for the indicator connecting Islamic values to contemporary contexts (the lowest gain, N-Gain 0.38). At the same time, future research requires larger-scale trials (across public/private, urban/rural madrasahs), longitudinal studies (creativity retention), and qualitative research to understand how students negotiate creativity within Islamic ethical boundaries. Synthesizing these three studies with our main finding confirms that effective transformation of religious education cannot rely on a single approach but must integrate spiritual values, digital pedagogy, adaptive policies, and behavior-based evaluation and the PjBL+YouTube model is proven feasible and contributive, albeit in a limited context, not a single universal solution.

Limitations acknowledged. This study's major limitations include a single school, a small sample size (N=32), a quasi-experimental design without randomization, and a short intervention duration (eight sessions). The N-Gain difference (0.10) is statistically significant but modest. Therefore, findings should be interpreted as preliminary and context-specific, not generalizable.

Conclusion

This study concludes that YouTube-assisted PjBL improved student creativity in ICH at MA Ar-Rosyidiyah Bandung, with an N-Gain of 0.40 (medium) and $p = 0.001$. However, this improvement is modest and not broadly generalizable due to the small sample size and single-site design.

Main contributions: (1) a creativity instrument specific to ICH (originality, connection to Islamic values, ethical multimedia production); (2) a practical, replicable video-based project model for ICH teachers. Practical implication: ICH teachers can use this model but need to provide stronger scaffolding to connect Islamic values to contemporary life (the lowest-gaining indicator, N-Gain 0.38).

Policy note (local only): At the madrasah level, providing stable internet access and basic video-editing tools may support implementation. This single small-scale study does

not warrant broader policy claims. Future research: Larger-scale trials across different madrasahs and longitudinal studies on creativity retention are needed. Qualitative research may explore how students negotiate creativity within Islamic ethical boundaries.

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