Teacher identity, Islamic behavior, and project-based learning methods for madrasah teachers: A phenomenological approach

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ABSTRACT

A project-based learning method is required to develop students' scientific thinking in *akidah akhlak* (moral theology). This study employed a phenomenological approach to investigate whether and to what extent identity processes and Islamic behavior are developing project-based learning methods for madrasah aliyah teachers of moral theology. It involved twenty moral theology teachers and in-depth interviews to reveal the narrative of teachers' practice in using project-based learning methods. Thematic analysis of twenty teachers' two-group interviews showed that teachers' personal beliefs provided a religiously motivated narrative framework that aided in interpreting one's experiences. Individual Islamic behavior, religiosity, and identity creativity play a role in developing project-based learning methods for moral theology. In addition to attributing creativity from a God-given personality to learning in moral theology, the primary bond in developing project-based learning methods is the application of Islamic principles and Islamic behavior. Following the learning of moral theology, students' identities, Islamic behavior, and scientific thinking, the use of project-based learning methods by madrasah teachers experienced a significant increase in quality. Finally, the findings of this exploratory study indicate that Islamic behavior and personal identity can enhance project-based learning methods. Large-scale research could provide more evidence to reconsider the role of religious education in teacher training as an essential factor in developing project-based learning methods for moral theology teachers.

Keywords: Islamic behavior, identity process, moral theology, project-based learning method.

INTRODUCTION

Madrasah Aliyah's (senior high school) education aims to help students develop the skills, knowledge, and values required for higher-order scientific thinking (Retnawati et al., 2018; Susilowati & Suyatno, 2021). While developing abilities that allow students to think science-based higher order with project-based learning methods is one of the neglected areas in madrasah aliyah, it is found to be an essential factor in increasing teaching professionalism (Lu et al., 2021; Garca-Carmona, 2020; Lameras et al., 2021; Ro, 2020).

Even though evidence shows that project-based learning methods in madrasah can influence the teachers' quality, teachers still encounter several challenges in effectively applying them (Wijnia et al., 2024; Alemneh & Gebrie, 2024). Madrasah teachers need assistance in implementing strategies to improve the quality of learning using project-based learning methods

(Ozkan, 2023; Rajamurugu, 2024). In fact, research has concentrated chiefly on program assessment to enhance students' quality learning strategies, with little attention paid to teachers' project-based methods in madrasah learning (Lu et al., 2021; Yustina et al., 2020). In this case, madrasah aliyah teachers' project-based learning methods may be an essential resource in addressing the quality of learning and mastery of students' akidah akhlak (moral theology) learning materials because they have a positive effect on the development of learning quality and the success of understanding the material, as well as increasing students' Islamic behavior (Ulya et al., 2020; Simonton et al., 2021; Tanak, 2020; Suhirman & Muliadi, 2020). However, it is unclear how the teacher's project-based learning methods can contribute to enhancing the quality of learning, the quality of students' learning, and the growth of students' scientific mindsets, all of which contribute to the advancement of Islamic behavior and righteousness (Guo et al., 2020; Maros et al., 2023; Almazroui, 2023).

This research fills a knowledge gap by qualitatively investigating the narrative accounts of moral theology madrasah aliyah teachers. It seeks to investigate their individual experiences with project-based learning methods and their relationship to Islamic behavior and identity processes in the realm of professionalism. It presents a comprehensive review of project-based learning methods in teaching moral theology at madrasahs, emphasizing the influence of madrasah aliyah teachers' Islamic behavior and identity in a professional setting from an individual viewpoint. Teaching high-quality project-based learning methods in moral theology has been regarded as a difficult task (Al Arood et al., 2020; Ulya et al., 2020; Dehraj & Mahersar, 2018; Ritonga et al., 2019). Because the learning material in this discipline (moral theology) is connected to metaphysical questions of Islamic conduct, morality, and divinity, teachers prefer to be cautious in their teaching related to the divine word; if it is improper to teach, it will give rise to a deviant creed (Al Arood et al., 2020; Mansir & Purnomo, 2020; Amri et al., 2019; Zakariya, 2019). The quantity and severity of student-teacher clashes contribute to learners' quality and harm teachers (Wu et al., 2024; Garca-Carmona, 2020). According to the research, the poorer the project-based learning method employed, the greater the danger of expanding scientific mentality, comprehension of Islam and creed, students' morality, Islamic conduct, and learning quality (Ritonga et al., 2019; Al Arood et al., 2020; Farida et al., 2017). Teachers who did not establish project-based learning approaches were shown to have worse knowledge stagnation for teaching failure and poor professionalism than other groups of failing teachers (Susilowati & Suyatno, 2021; Garca-Carmona, 2020). As a result, adopting project-based learning methods is critical for sustaining high-level scientific thinking abilities, developing students' Islamic conduct, and improving classroom learning quality. This is closely tied to the teacher's innate inventiveness (Simonton et al., 2021; Farida et al., 2017; Yustina et al., 2020). This research aims to analyze how madrasah aliyah teachers might establish project-based learning methods in the field of moral theology study, as well as the extent to which human creativity may be incorporated into this process. This research will contribute to previous knowledge by determining how and to what extent the process of using a project-based learning method in moral theology studies affects the development of learning quality, the success of students' higher-order thinking, Islamic behavior, and religious practice.

The term "project-based learning methods" for studying moral theology in madrasah aliyah initially describes an individual's creative potential to teach science-based information (Al Arood et al., 2020; Chua & Islam, 2020). According to a recent study, project-based learning is a complicated, dynamic interaction between scientific ideas and mastery aspects of method execution rather than a property of human creativity (Farida et al., 2017; Moubarez, 2020; Eissa & Khalid, 2019). While scientific aptitude in children has been widely researched, little empirical research has been conducted on project-based learning methods. According to evidence from research on madrasah aliyah teacher project-based learning methods, different aspects are involved in creating teachers' teaching methods. Extrinsic elements are ignored in research that discusses studies exploring the link between teachers' knowledge, efficacy, and project-based learning methods (Kurniawan et al., 2020; Faiz et al., 2020; McKay & Sappa, 2020; Mondro et al., 2020). On the other hand, administrative support, individual values, leadership style, social support, and meaningful connections were vital in the development of teacher project-based

learning methods (Kurniawan et al., 2020; Simonton et al., 2021). However, while religion has been linked to project-based learning methods in a variety of circumstances, including teaching competency, the role of a teacher's Islamic behavior in the development of project-based learning methods in the learning of moral theology has not been studied so far (Parrado-Martinez & Sánchez-Andjar, 2020; Tambak & Sukenti, 2020; Ferreira et al., 2020; Tambak et al., 2018). This is problematic since personal views and religion may be a time- and cost-effective strategy to increase students' scientific thinking, higher-order thinking, comprehension of divinity, and the quality of learning in the domain of aqidah and morals.

The favorable impact of project-based learning methods on learning quality may be connected to the process of identity formation among madrasah aliyah teachers. According to Crocetti et al. (2023) and Gong et al. (2023), the experiences a person has as part of the identity process facilitate the development of a person's identity, thus raising challenges in teaching creativity. When the principles of creativity in teacher identity are compromised, teacher identity processes intensify, and a reaction against the concept of structural models of innovation develops (Breakwell & Jaspal, 2022; Jaspal et al., 2020). The experimentally discovered and established principles that underpin the development of identity are identity continuity (continuity between past and current self-concepts, i.e., recognizing oneself as God's creation), personal uniqueness (specificity, i.e., intentionally created), self-confidence and control over one's life (self-efficacy, i.e., the ability to change events through prayer), personal values (self-worth, i.e., being loved by and justified by God), feelings of closeness and acceptance by others (belonging to; i.e., belonging to the church), and finding meaning and purpose in one's life (meaning; i.e., having a God-given purpose) (Breakwell & Jaspal, 2022; Jaspal et al., 2020). According to Breakwell & Jaspal (2022), the six fundamental principles underpinning this identity's formation enable one to retain a positive sense of oneself. According to a recent study, personal Islamic conduct, and religion (Tambak & Sukenti, 2024a) can protect identity by irrevocably responding to these six fundamental principles of identity processes (Jaspal et al., 2020; Breakwell & Jaspal, 2022), creating a positive perspective of oneself even in times of pain and struggle. However, while it is well known that religion, specifically Islam, responds to the principle of identity construction and promotes quality learning activities, including the use of quality learning methods, previous research has not examined the underlying process of identity maintenance in madrasah teacher project-based learning methods (Ritonga et al., 2019; Tambak & Sukenti, 2024b; Almazroui, 2023). Personal attitudes and project-based learning methods of madrasah teachers regarding the growth of learning quality and student performance are explored as critical triggers of underdevelopment that contribute to lower rates and creativity among madrasah aliyah teachers in this study.

This study fills information gaps by using a phenomenology approach that focuses on two main areas: first, whether and to what extent Islamic behavior can develop project-based learning methods for madrasah aliyah teachers of moral theology, and *second,* whether and to what extent identity processes can be used to develop project-based learning methods for madrasah aliyah teachers of moral theology.

METHOD

The study employs qualitative methodology with a phenomenological approach (Lundh, 2020). It investigates whether and to what extent Islamic behavior is developing project-based learning methods and explores whether and to what extent identity processes can be used to create project-based learning methods for madrasah aliyah teachers of moral theology in Pekanbaru, Indonesia. Twenty active madrasah aliyah teachers with professional certifications, a minimum of a bachelor's degree, and more than five years of teaching experience are willing to become research informants. This sample size is typically regarded as enough for an in-depth exploration of patterns and comprehension of psychological thought using theme analysis (Groenewald, 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2019). Although there are no hard-and-fast guidelines, theme analysis of qualitative research typically deems twelve to twenty-five people to be a sufficient sample size for assessing subjective experience (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Purposive and modified snowball sampling (Lundh, 2020; Groenewald, 2018) were employed to recruit research informants after getting ethical permission from the university. Initially, twenty madrasah aliyah moral theology teachers in Pekanbaru, Indonesia, agreed to take part in the study. Then, to recruit a varied sample, a modified snowball method was applied (e.g., differences in culture, denomination, age, length of teaching, and gender). As a result, the selection was broadened by inviting participants to invite friends to participate in the study (Lundh, 2020). This method resulted in the recruitment of twenty informants, aged 29 to 58, who identify as Muslims with deep Islamic conduct and have been certified professional teachers.

A semi-structured interview was employed to obtain accounts of the informants' first-hand experiences and reactions to those encounters. Conversations with twenty informants lasted 100 and 170 minutes, respectively. The interview was divided into two sub-sessions. Participants were invited to speak openly about their views and coping mechanisms throughout the first stage. The first question attempts to initiate a discussion by encouraging informants to openly discuss their experiences with Islamic conduct about building a project-based learning method for studying moral theology. As a result, the opening question is worded explicitly to generate critical conversation across numerous groups. Following the original inquiry, follow-up questions are asked to direct the debate. These follow-up questions are built on the direct responses of the participants.

Interviews were taped, transcribed, and translated into English from Indonesian. Participants were allowed to examine the transcribed interviews. All names were anonymized once the participant made minor modifications and returned the revised form. 'Thematic analysis' was used to examine each transcript independently (Braun & Clarke, 2019) because itis considered the best technique to explore the holistic meaning of occurrences by describing subjective experiences (Aşdelen et al., 2019). To get as accurate a story as possible, the transcripts were read aloud multiple times after the qualitative data transcription. The qualitative data analysis software NVivo 13 captured initial concepts on prominent subjects and potential themes. The data is then reread and examined to find potential vital recurring concepts. Many mind maps were built to properly comprehend nodes' interaction and contextual linkages. The nodes are then integrated into the initial code in the next stage. The resultant code is meant to identify the meaning under the semantic surface of the data by considering the node's contextual information. The data is coded at this step by classifying the interview extracts and detecting potential linkages with the identity creativity process (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Selvi, 2008). The initial topics have been selected and specified. However, because one of the complaints of the thematic analysis was that the researcher sought only the identified topics, the initial coding and characterization of themes were also carried out independently of the researcher by undergraduate students of Islamic religious education. Coding concordance and difference are contrasted. The inter-rater reliability of the classification of interview excerpts of researchers and graduates of Islamic religious education and the formulation of themes is excellent. The lead investigator and students categorized 76% of the interview excerpts as precise (both raters describe the text as exact) or equal (both raters categorize the text as including clear, accurate text) to the same two emerging themes. Researchers and undergraduate students of Islamic religious education identified and defined two themes: "application of Islamic principles and virtue as a strategy for developing a project-based learning method" and "creativity attribution of God-given personality as a strategy for developing project-based learning methods." During the data analysis process, neither the researchers nor the students found any other themes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The results demonstrated that, particularly in the project-based learning method, teachers' Islamic conduct and religiosity enabled them to foster the creative attitude of science and Islamic behavior in students. Personal values are linked to developing project-based learning methods in two ways. On the one hand, the informants applied the concepts of their thoughts to the topic "Application of Islamic Principles and Virtue as a Strategy for Developing Project-Based

Learning Methods." Conversely, participants see their profession as a vocation and expect to have a divinely given personality that shields them from overpowering creativity stagnation behavior. This perspective is on the topic of 'God-given Attribution of Personality Creativity as a Strategy for Developing Project-Based Learning Methods'. However, interview extracts were discovered to react to both topics' six principles of identity and creative building. In this scenario, elements of belief and religion aided creative activity by employing methodologies and a positive attitude toward one's work. While teaching creativity through project-based learning methods is seen as noble labor, personal Islamic conduct and religion provide an understanding of one's experience by putting Islamic behavior into a narrative framework. This framework gives significance by allowing events to be classified as part of a greater divine purpose for one's life and the surrounding world.

Applying Islamic principles in project-based learning methods

According to the findings, all twenty moral theology teachers at madrasah aliyah report that student-teacher creativity is the foundation of teaching and learning. Creativity is sometimes tricky to apply, especially in project-based learning methods in moral theology. Teachers and students must collaborate to develop this higher-order thinking strategy to promote Islamic conduct. On the other hand, all madrasa teachers use Islamic conduct and religious beliefs to build unique learning techniques at high escalation levels. T1 elaborates:

"Learning to determine essential questions must be done, but one student, Salsa, needs to be more capable of doing so. She needs help articulating critical queries on Aqidah material. I instructed her to investigate the issues with the subject being examined. However, she stated that she lacked the necessary abilities and requested that I provide an example from the content taught. When I tried to explain and grab her hand, she reacted adversely, said it was difficult, and muttered about her stupidity. I wanted to comprehend and express it politely and quietly as the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Salsa eventually cooled down and performed gently."

This comment shows students' failure to create basic or crucial questions in moral learning using the science-based project method. The teacher replied adversely while attempting to calm the student by depending on his beliefs. Embracing Islamic beliefs enables him to respond patiently and accept the circumstances. In this sense, teachers believe that by surviving conflict and working in their current situation, they will be doing God's will. Assuming that teaching is a form of devotion that will be useful in the hereafter. T14 and T16 elaborate:

"Then, there was a student who needed to pay more attention. When I asked him to create a project plan based on his study content, he said, 'I find it tough; please assist me in following this lesson!' I was astounded and believed that many students still needed to put this learning style into practice. Applying the new method to students is difficult, especially in moral theology. But I'm working on managing my emotions. I held a recitation with the majlis ta'lim participants a few days ago, as we do weekly in the mosque with the Ustadz. I'm trying to be a better person who doesn't get irritated easily. I told him and the other students to form groups and determine how they would complete their assignments. That's what I mean when I say my intense Islamic conduct makes me a better teacher."

This extract discusses how, by applying creativity, using personal convictions in constructing project plans on the moral theology material being studied may strengthen the stability of self-esteem and identity (Jaspal et al., 2020; Fielding & Hornsey, 2016). Complex events are viewed as chances to improve one's Islamic qualities. In this view, success is characterized by one's ability to regulate emotions. Personal successes are situations where critical thought and applying personal Islamic conduct norms override quick and dynamic responses. It leads to self-efficacy, a sense of control over one's life and position, and self-esteem, defining personal progress in Islam as individual achievement. As T4 suggests, harsh conditions might endure even without instant gratification.

"'Please help, sir!' said Ahmad. As a result, I serve with patience and kindness! I invented discourse. Teaching is my calling; it is what I must do. It's not always easy

dealing with students, but when I get home and make time for prayer, I know I'm on the right track—because I can improve people's lives. It also motivated me to continue providing science-based Islamic behavior materials to students to enhance their Islamic conduct. So, I keep teaching the students how to establish a schedule. Although project-based learning allows students to be creative in how their projects are conceived and performed, they must develop a program that successfully uses time to finish the goal. This is where I develop students' critical thinking abilities and teach them how to estimate what they need to accomplish for preparation and manufacturing so that their projects may be completed on time and without being delayed by the teacher's deadline."

This remark shows how to use Islamic behavior principles to monitor project progress, assess learning processes and outcomes, evaluate project-making experiences, or carry out projects in project-based learning methods theology. Teaching is associated with finding meaning and purpose in one's life. This enables the development of project-based learning methods by comprehending them from a superordinate, third-level perspective. Teaching becomes more than a profession; it becomes a calling, responding to meaning as the basic principle of identity development (Sternisko et al., 2020; Jaspal et al., 2020).

Assertive Islamic behavior is the primary requirement for teachers to develop project-based learning methods and moral theology to transform students' understanding of Islamic conduct and Aqidah based on science. T20 discovered the following when designing a project-based learning strategy to boost students' higher-order thinking:

"My students and I (student groups) must keep track of the progress of the projects they are working on. Has everything gone according to plan? What challenges did you face? So, what can be done to combat it? I must continue monitoring the project's development to give extra support if necessary. I don't think about being fatigued or squandering time; it's just part of the infaq of time and ideas that may be kind."

This quotation reveals that Islamic teacher conduct is heavily involved in developing project-based learning methods through monitoring project progress. Furthermore, the teacher regards the objective of teaching as a charitable act that is done, and it is used in activities to develop students' scientific thinking. T19 and 18 revealed:

"I test (evaluate) the learning process and outcomes during the student's project execution and at the end of the project while using the project-based learning technique. Both are critical, so I may subsequently provide feedback, reinforcement, support, facilitation, and other services. Then, I must assess how students' learning outcomes, in terms of attitudes, abilities, and knowledge, have progressed. I also assist students with self-reflection to instill the habit of regularly analyzing their project learning. At the end of the lesson, in addition to my assessment (testing the process and learning outcomes) in terms of attitudes, skills, and knowledge, the teacher also helps students think about and remember what they were able to do while working on a project, as well as what items still need to be improved so that future projects that they will implement run more smoothly and successfully. I do my task as instructed by Islam."

God-given identity in project-based learning strategy

Understanding oneself as 'selected to teach' (T8) allows one to perceive one's challenges as having a purpose. In this scenario, employing one's religious identity's creativity helps to keep a good picture of oneself and one's job. For instance, T7 mentioned:

"Solving difficulties with students using a project-based learning method requires a lot of time and energy, and it can be challenging sometimes. It takes a particular person to get along with children. It saves you time. But that's another thing I enjoy about him: his God-given personality enables us to teach high-level, scientifically based methodologies in the classroom, particularly moral theology."

This quotation demonstrates how perceiving oneself as distinct from others and having fundamentally distinct developed features may be used to design project-based learning methods.

Strategies for perceiving oneself as having different characteristics that allow for developing project-based learning methods in the classroom may have been developed in response to the uniqueness of the underlying identity principle (Jaspal et al., 2020). This is also evident in T13's account:

> *"There was once a significant disagreement that only I could handle. It all started on a Monday morning when two classmates began bickering. Other students attempted to meditate to keep the conversation between the two from becoming heated, but they began to dispute. I prayed to God for them to listen, and then I reconciled. They heard me, and there was an unbelievable moment. I look them in the eyes, and they look into mine, and they stop disputing, and we can talk about it. Sitting down and having a long conversation with them was more complicated. I lead their conversation—I'm patient, so it's beneficial! I felt good about myself and my abilities after that day."*

This quotation shows how perception contributes uniquely and beneficially to developing students' project-based learning methods and positive self-perception. In this way, scientific thinking in moral theology benefits students' scientific thinking. On the other hand, contributing to the scientific growth of Islamic conduct is regarded as a personal success and is tied to one's distinctive personality. Interestingly, considering identity as a supernatural prenatal gift relates to the idea of personality in this context. The following comment demonstrates how this personality paradigm may help with identity continuity (Jaspal et al., 2020). T11 stated:

> *"When I started teaching, I always used scientific thought to teach values. I want this content to be prepared not only orthodoxly but also scientifically. I regularly encourage my teacher colleagues to do it, so my students become more Islamic and scientific. Colleagues and teachers are eager to discuss this with me, and we do so regularly. I've always been that way—I could continually develop scientific-creative approaches. Indeed, I developed this talent further, but it was always present to some extent. It's just a part of me; it always has been. Yes. It makes me happy because I can create a more pleasant environment, and it also makes me feel special."*

This comment shows how, rather than perceiving the individual as a teacher, becoming a teacher becomes an expression of individual personality. This allows for allocating techniques for generating superior project-based learning methods that are particular to the teacher's character, which can promote self-esteem and self-efficacy. As a result, anticipating certain innate features as professional conditions might resonate with the continuity of fundamental identity and, as a result, give self-esteem-enhancing logic (Jaspal et al., 2020). Individuals can also develop a sense of belonging by categorizing others into intrinsically distinct "types" and identifying themselves with these categories. This transforms group membership into an inherent right that fosters group cohesion, especially while promoting creativity through project-based learning methods. T15 elucidated:

> *"Teachers get along well because we all think the same way. Getting along well and being a part of our team, our group of teachers is what matters most. As creators and architects of excellent project-based learning methods, we are mindful of each other. For example, when a student struggles to understand the lesson! We are collaborating in the teacher's room to find answers. This serves to highlight the benefits of teamwork."*

This comment is consistent with earlier research indicating that social support is essential in developing a teacher's project-based learning methods (Ozório et al., 2021). This quotation demonstrates how having as the core concept of identity formation is critical for building project-based learning methods (Shpeizer, 2019; Rapoport & Yemini, 2020). In addition to offering security, belonging to a group predicts similarities in personality and cognitive processes, which helps with the attribution of cohesiveness. It is also feasible to distinguish past teachers who pursued other professional goals and left school. T16 elaborates:

> *"But then there are teachers like Yahya. Yahya is not suitable for the classroom. He is a good man and an excellent Islamist, but he is not ideal for teaching. His class, the less imaginative classmates, and frequent complaints overwhelmed him. He*

lacked the personality for it; he completed the training but could not perform in the actual world. So, he's been gone for a long time, tired or so, with no school or the appropriate location, and now he becomes a manager somewhere."

This quotation demonstrates that the projected lack of a particular teacher's personality supports a mismatch for this function. In this view, teacher education in necessary skills might be decreased. On the other hand, if a teacher does not acquire the resilience to construct great learning techniques, they are a member of an outside group that God did not choose to instruct. Consequently, the claim that only a specific population segment is developed or generated to prepare makes it possible to comprehend the differences in goals and professional development.

Discussion

The study's findings suggest that religion and Islamic coping techniques can help establish project-based learning methods in moral theology by reacting to the ideas underpinning identity formation. These findings demonstrate that religion, Islamic coping techniques, and narratives may help to produce high-quality project-based learning methods, contribute to identity maintenance, and improve students' scientific knowledge of Aqidah and morality. As a result, teachers employ personal beliefs to construct project-based learning methods and religious narrative frameworks to defend their natural and distinct appropriateness for their vocation. Teaching to be in this manner is conceived of as a challenge to grow in Islamic qualities in addition to the vocation one is selected or born to accomplish.

Prior research showed that an examination of narrative reports reveals a range of complex conditions that teachers experience, necessitating the development of project-based learning methods to sustain personal well-being (Ozório et al., 2021; Shpeizer, 2019; Kang et al., 2020). While previous research has primarily focused on how foreign and intrinsic factors can contribute to the development of high-quality, scientifically project-based learning methods in the Islamic field (Amri et al., 2019; Chua & Islam, 2020; Farida et al., 2017; Shpeizer, 2019), this study expands on previous knowledge by investigating the possible relationship between personal Islamic behavior and teaching identity.

Moreover, the findings suggest that employing project-based learning methods, personal views, and religiosity may respond to the underlying aspects of identity-building and self-development. This is consistent with a large body of research on identity maintenance, which shows that using project-based learning methods leads to more significant scientific thinking and Islamic behavior in students (Zakariya, 2019; Al Arood et al., 2020; Azim et al., 2021). However, this study extends this theory by demonstrating that using individual beliefs in project-based learning methods helps personal development and progress through the identity-building principles of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Narrative stories demonstrate that Islamic virtues are regarded as more comprehending, contemplative, and creatively growing for the quality of project-based learning methods in moral theology.

Thus, self-efficacy and morality are emphasized in the scientific learning approach to moral theology, along with self-management of oneself, emotions, and reactions. Furthermore, when motivation is low, and expectations are high, the combination of an individual's interpretation of Islamic ideas and the Islamic conduct they represent stabilizes identity and enhances project-based learning methods. Fundamentally, Islamic theology allows for the formation of narrative arcs that encourage reflection on student behavior and contribute to assessing the significance of a teacher's activity. Individual interpretations of Islamic religious texts are used to grasp the teachings scientifically and, as a result, to promote Islamic conduct when employing project-based learning methods in the field of morality. An important component here is to perceive oneself as making a divine decision to become a teacher. Teachers further identify themselves by their work. Instead of viewing teaching as a contractually necessary professional identity, it is stated as being inextricably linked to one's identity, comparable to gender identity (Eissa & Khalid, 2019; Farida et al., 2017; Hamzah et al., 2022).

Therefore, being a teacher becomes a thorough image of a person's intrinsic nature and Allah SWT's creation. This concept is crucial for retaining a positive sense of one's identity, even in difficult circumstances, and reacting to the underlying identity maintenance process. In

conclusion, personal Islamic behavior and religiosity play a role in the development of the teacher's project-based learning methods on moral theology, in addition to the development of identity creativity during teaching and high emotionality (Tambak & Sukenti, 2020; Pessotti et al., 2018; Sukenti & Tambak, 2023).

The involvement of identity processes during teaching, emotional solidity, personal Islamic conduct, and religiosity aided in creating the madrasah aliyah teachers' project-based learning methods on moral theology. In addition to attributing identity from a God-given personality to learning in moral theology, the primary bond in establishing project-based learning methods is the application of Islamic principles and Islamic conduct. Students' creativity, Islamic conduct, and scientific thinking grow as they master moral theology. However, while these findings show the association between Islamic practice and creativity in teacher identity, numerous cautions must be noted when adopting project-based learning methods in moral theology. This study's generalizability is restricted as a qualitative study with a tiny sample size of twenty teachers with strong convictions. This caution is crucial in the context of the recruited population since all moral theology teachers who consider themselves to be believers are inextricably linked to Islam. Similar reports might still be acquired from firmly attached members of other Islamic groups or persons with distinct, strong views. Similarly, it is questionable whether other self-identified and highly associated moral theology teachers would agree with the comments of the interviewed persons.

Despite these limitations, this study provides a unique viewpoint for exploring project-based learning methods for moral theology teachers by integrating personal Islamic conduct with identity formation ideas. On the other hand, individual Islamic conduct is not considered the sole option to enhance a teacher's project-based learning methods; it is a helpful addition that may contribute to using a teacher's creative approach and would deserve additional investigation. Therefore, future studies may conduct large-scale studies to investigate the probable link between the process of religiosity, project-based learning methods, and identity and explore the potential advantages of adopting moral theology in teacher training courses. This will allow for a more generalizable conclusion by outlining the possible consequences using a quantifiable and representative sample.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings suggest that the principles and virtues of Islamic morals contained in Islamic behavior are a development of project-based learning methods for madrasah teachers' teaching. Likewise, the attribution of identity to a God-given personality is included in the identity process as the main glue in developing project-based learning methods for madrasah teachers in teaching to develop their profession. Thus, the findings demonstrate that religion, Islamic coping techniques, and narratives may help to produce high-quality project-based learning methods, contribute to identity maintenance, and improve students' scientific knowledge of *Aqidah* and morality. As a result, teachers employ personal beliefs to construct project-based learning methodologies and religious narrative frameworks to defend their natural and distinct appropriateness for their vocation. Teaching to be in this manner is conceived of as a challenge to grow in Islamic qualities in addition to the vocation one is selected or born to accomplish. The involvement of identity creativity during teaching, as well as emotional solidity, personal Islamic conduct, and religiosity, aided in creating the madrasah aliyah teachers' project-based learning methods on moral theology. In addition to attributing creativity from a God-given personality to learning in moral theology, the primary bond in establishing project-based learning methods is the application of Islamic principles and Islamic conduct. Students' creativity, Islamic conduct, and scientific thinking grow as they master moral theology. Thus, this research concludes that Islamic identity and behavior are essential in developing project-based learning methods in madrasah teachers for their future professions. However, while these findings show the association between Islamic practice and creativity in teacher identity, numerous cautions must be noted when adopting project-based learning methods in moral theology. This research is limited to state Madrasah Aliyah teachers in Riau Province, so future research is needed to

examine project-based learning methods for all Madrasah Aliyah teachers, both public and private, throughout the Republic of Indonesia.

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