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MADRASA TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE IN APPLYING THE PROJECT-BASED LEARNING MODEL IN AQIDAH AKHLAK LEARNING: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

The development of scientific thinking of students in the field of *Aqidah Akhlak* (moral theology) is very urgent and for that process a project-based learning models is needed. This study uses a phenomenological approach to explore the madrasa teacher's experience in applying the project-based learning model in *Aqidah Akhlak* learning. Involving twenty teachers of moral theology, and conducting in-depth interviews to reveal the narrative of teachers' practice in using project-based learning models. Thematic analysis of two-group interviews with 20 madrasah teachers showed that teachers' personal beliefs provided a religiously motivated narrative framework that facilitated the interpretation of one's experiences. The involvement of personal Islamic behavior and religiosity, identity creativity when teaching, plays a role in the development of project-based learning models on moral theology. The application of Islamic principles and Islamic behavior is the main bond in the development of project-based learning models, in addition to attribution of identity from God-given personality to learning in moral theology. Identity, Islamic behavior, and scientific thinking of students develop when following the learning of moral theology. In conclusion, the results of this exploratory study show that Islamic behavior and personal identity of madrasah teacher can improve project-based learning models. In the future, large-scale research could provide further evidence to reconsider the role of religious education in teacher training as an important factor in the development of project-based learning models for teachers of moral theology.

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INTRODUCTION

Madrasah aliyah (senior high school) education seeks to help students develop the skills, knowledge and values needed for science-based higher-order thinking (Retnawati et al., 2018; Susilowati & Suyatno, 2021). While forging skills that enable students in madrasahs to think science-based higher order with project-based learning models is one of the neglected areas in *madrasah aliyah*, the development of these abilities also burdens teachers and is found to be an important factor in increasing teaching professionalism (Lu et al., 2021; García-Carmona, 2020; Stewart, 2021; Lamerás et al., 2021; Ro, 2020; Karolina, et al., 2022; Tambak et al., 2022).

However, while the literature suggests that the unsuccessful use of project-based learning models in madrasahs may have an adverse effect on teacher quality, it is not clear which strategies teachers can employ to develop quality learning in the classroom. Instead, to date research has focused primarily on program evaluation aimed at improving students' quality learning strategies and has paid little attention to teachers' ds project-based learning models in madrasah learning (Lu et al., 2021; Yustina et al., 2020). Here, the project-based learning models of *madrasah aliyah* teachers may be a very important resource in addressing the quality of learning and mastery of students' *Akidah Akhlak* (moral theology) learning materials because research suggests project-based learning methods emphasizing creative and higher-order thinking have a positive effect on the development of learning quality and the success of understanding the material and increasing the Islamic behavior of students (Ulya et al., 2020; Nuraini & Muliawan, 2020; Simonton et al., 2021; Tanak, 2020; Suhirman & Agus Muliadi, 2020; Ro, 2020; Karolina, et al., 2022). However, until now it is not clear how the use of the teacher's project-based learning method can contribute to improving the quality of learning, the quality of student learning, and the improvement of students' scientific mindsets that contribute to the improvement of Islamic behavior and piety.

This project addresses this gap in knowledge by conducting a qualitative exploration of the narrative accounts of teachers of moral theology of *madrasah aliyah* to investigate their individual experiences with project-based learning models and their relationship to Islamic behavior and identity processes in the realm of professionalism. In doing so, this project provides a comprehensive analysis from an individual's perspective of project-based learning models in learning moral theology in madrasahs utilizing their Islamic behavior and creativity in their identity in learning of *Akidah Akhlak* of *madrasah aliyah* teacher professional setting.

Teaching with the use of quality project-based learning models in moral theology learning has been identified as a very challenging job (Al Arood et al., 2020; Ulya et al., 2020; Dehraj & Mahersar, 2018; Ritonga et al., 2019; Karolina, et al., 2022). Because the learning material in this field (moral theology) is related

to issues of Islamic behavior, morality and divinity which tend to be metaphysical, and madrasa teachers tend to be careful in their teaching-related to the divine word; if it is wrong to teach it will give birth to a deviant creed (Al Arood et al., 2020; Mansir & Purnomo, 2020; Amri et al., 2019; Zakariya, 2019). Factors that contribute to the quality of learners that are detrimental to teachers are the number and severity of student-teacher confrontations (Aji Sofanudin et al., 2016; García-Carmona, 2020). Here, the research shows that the worse the project-based learning models used, the greater the risk of increasing scientific mindset, understanding of Islam and creed, students' morals and Islamic behavior and the quality of learning (Ritonga et al., 2019; Al Arood et al., 2020; Farida et al., 2017). For example, teachers who did not develop project-based learning models were found to have greater knowledge stagnation for teaching failure and poor professionalism even when compared to other groups of teachers who failed to teach (Susilowati & Suyatno, 2021; García-Carmona, 2020). Therefore, the development of project-based learning models is very important to maintain high-level scientific thinking skills, develop students' Islamic behavior and the quality of learning in the classroom environment. This is very closely related to the creativity that is imprinted in the teacher (Simonton et al., 2021; Farida et al., 2017; Yustina et al., 2020). This study discusses how *madrasah aliyah* teachers can applying a project-based learning models in the field of study of moral theology and the extent to which personal identity and Islamic behavior may be involved in this process. In doing so, this project will add to previous knowledge by understanding how and to what extent the process of using a project-based learning model in the field of moral theology studies has an impact on the development of the quality of learning, the success of students' higher order thinking, Islamic behavior and religious practice of students.

The 'project-based learning models' for learning moral theology in *madrasah aliyah* was originally a concept that characterized an individual's creative capacity to teach science-based material (Karolina, et al., 2022; Al Arood et al., 2020; Chua & Islam, 2020; Doğan & Karabulut, 2019). Recent research has shown that instead of being an attribute of personal creativity, the project-based learning model is a complex dynamic relationship between scientific insights and mastery factors in method implementation (Farida et al., 2017; Moubarez, 2020; Eissa & Khalid, 2019; Taliak, 2021). However, while scientific aptitude among children has been extensively investigated, limited empirical investigation has addressed project-based learning models. Evidence from studies that have examined *madrasah aliyah* teacher project-based learning models suggests that a variety of factors are involved in the development of madrasa teacher teaching methods. For example, studies that describe studies examining the relationship between teachers' personal knowledge, effectiveness and project-based learning models (Kurniawan et al., 2020; Faiz et al., 2020; McKay & Sappa, 2020; Mondro et al., 2020; Hamzah et al., 2020) ignore relevant extrinsic factors. In contrast, extrinsic and intrinsic factors such as administrative support, individual values, leadership style, social support and significant

relationships were found to be important in the development of teacher project-based learning models (Kurniawan et al., 2020; Nuraini & Muliawan, 2020; Simonton et al., 2021). However, although religiosity is associated with project-based learning models in various contexts, namely (teaching competence, Parrado-Martínez & Sánchez-Andújar, 2020; Islamic behavior, Tambak & Sukenti, 2020; emotional resilience, Ferreira et al., 2020; Islamic psychosocial studies, Tambak et al., 2018), the role of a teacher's Islamic behavior in the development of project-based learning models in the learning of moral theology has not been studied so far. This is problematic because personal beliefs and religiosity may be a time and cost effective way to develop the quality of learning, students' scientific thinking, students' higher order thinking, students' understanding of divinity and the quality of learning in the area of *aqidah* and morality.

The importances of research is to the eksplere the experinces of madrasa teachers to explain the project-based learning models on the quality of learning may be related to the identity processes of *madrasah aliyah* teachers in *Akidah Akhlak* learning. In particular, (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2012; Breakwell, 2015) suggests that creative experiences such as high-level skills can cause problems in establishing one's personal identity and thus pose a threat to teaching creativity. The threat of identity processess, responding to the notion of a structural model of creativity, occurs when the principles of creativity in teacher identity are undermined (Breakwell, 2015; Jaspal & Breakwell, 2012). The principles that underlie the construction of identity that are found and defined empirically are (1) identity continuity (continuity between past and present self-concepts; i.e. understanding oneself as God's creation), (2) personal uniqueness (specificity; i.e. intentionally created. specifically), (3) self-confidence and control over one's life (self-efficacy; i.e. being able to change events through prayer), (4) personal values (self-worth; i.e. being loved by and justified through God), (5) feelings of closeness and acceptance by others (belonging to; i.e. belonging to the church) and (6) finding meaning and purpose in one's life (meaning; i.e. having a God-given purpose in one's life (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996; Jaspal & Breakwell, 2012). The six basic principles that underlie the construction of this identity, according to Jaspal & Breakwell (2012), make it possible to maintain a positive understanding of oneself. In essence, recent research has shown that personal Islamic behavior and religiosity can contribute to the process of maintaining identity by responding to these six basic principles of identity construction in an irreversible way, providing a positive view of oneself even in times of distress and trouble. However, while it is known that religiosity, and 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 maintaining identity in relation to *madrasah* teacher project-based learning modelss. Here, particularly the personal beliefs and project-based learning models of madrasah teachers in relation to the development of learning quality and student success are examined as important triggers of

underdevelopment, which contribute to lower quality and lower creativity in *Aqidah Akhlak* learning in *madrasah aliyah* teachers.

This project addresses gaps in knowledge by taking an exploratory approach to understanding how madrasa teachers' personal beliefs can applying the project-based learning models in relation to the principles underlying the construction of identity processes. While a focus on the individual experiences of madrasa teachers will therefore not provide generalizable conclusions that would allow to determine the extent to which teachers' Islamic behavior can applying project-based learning models, this study will provide an exploration how madrasa teacher's experience their Islamic behavior and identity processes in applying the project-based learning model in *Aqidah Akhlak* learning in aliyah madrasa.

METHODS

Qualitative methodology with a phenomenological approach (Lundh, 2020) is used to examine whether and to what extent Islamic behavior and identity process can applying project-based learning models for *madrasah aliyah* teachers of moral theology beliefs and thus contribute to the intellectual understanding of students' Islamic behavior and learning quality. Two group discussions with twenty active *madrasah aliyah* teachers were held in Pekanbaru, Indonesia. This sample size is generally considered an appropriate sample size to allow an in-depth examination of patterns and understanding of psychological thinking (Patton, 2002; Groenewald, 2018) by thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Although there are no strict rules, qualitative research analyzed by thematic analysis generally considers twelve to twenty-five participants an effective sample size for testing subjective experience (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

After receiving ethical approval from the University, purposive and modified snowball sampling was used to recruit research informants. Initially, twelve *madrasah aliyah* teachers of moral theology in Pekanbaru, Indonesia, were willing to participate in the research. With the aim of recruiting a diverse sample (eg differences in culture, denomination, age, length of teaching, and gender), a modified snowball strategy was used. Therefore, the sample was expanded by asking participants to invite others to conduct the study (Lundh, 2020). In this way, eight additional participants were recruited. Twenty informants are aged between 29–58 years old and identify themselves as Muslims with deep Islamic behavior and have been certified professional teachers.

To collect descriptions of the informants' first-hand experiences and their reactions to those experiences, a semi-structured interview schedule was used. The two-group discussion with ten informants lasted 100 and 170 minutes, respectively. The interview schedule was organized into two sub-sessions. In the first stage, participants were asked to speak freely about their beliefs in relation to their coping strategies. The initial question tries to open a dialogue by inviting the informants to freely talk about their experiences with Islamic behavior in relation to the development of a project-based learning model for learning moral

theology. Therefore, this opening question is framed directly to stimulate critical discourse that involves a large number of groups. During the initial question, follow-up questions that guide the discussion are asked. These follow-up questions are structured around the participants' direct answers. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and translated from Indonesian to English. The transcribed interviews were sent to participants for review. After the participant made some minor changes and sent back the corrected version. All names (moral theology) were anonymized and each transcript was analyzed individually by 'thematic analysis' (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Thematic analysis was found to be the most suitable method because it examines the holistic meaning of phenomena through the description of subjective perceptions (Aşdelen Teker & Güler, 2019). After transcription of the qualitative data, the transcripts were read over and over again to be as close to the account as possible. Initial ideas on main topics and potential themes were recorded, using NVivo 13, a qualitative data analysis software. The data is then reread and reviewed to identify potential key ideas that come up again and again. Several mind maps were created to fully understand the interaction of nodes and their contextual relationships. In the next step, the nodes are combined into the initial code. By considering the node's contextual information, the resulting code is intended to identify the meaning that lies beneath the semantic surface of the data. At this stage the data is coded by categorizing the interview extracts, identifying possible relationships with the identity creativity process (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Selvi, 2007). Initial themes are identified and defined. However, since one of the criticisms of the thematic analysis was that only the identified themes were sought by the researcher, the initial coding and definition of themes was also carried out by undergraduate students of Islamic religious education independently of the researcher. Concordance and difference in coding are contrasted. Comparison between the categorization of the interview extracts of researchers and graduates of Islamic religious education and the definition of themes shows high inter-rater reliability. The principal investigator and undergraduate students of Islamic religious education coded a total of 76% of the interview extracts either exactly (both raters categorize the text as exact), or, equal (both raters categorize the text including the exact same text) to the same two emerging themes. Two themes identified by researchers and undergraduate students of Islamic religious education were named 'application of Islamic principles and virtue as a strategy for developing a project-based learning models' and 'creativity attribution of god-given personality as a strategy for developing project-based learning models' and defined. Neither researchers nor students of Islamic religious education identified any other themes during the data analysis process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the results showed that especially in the project-based learning models, the Islamic behavior and religiosity of teachers made it possible to develop them in students related to the creative mindset of science and Islamic behavior. Here,

personal beliefs are related to the development of project-based learning models in two ways. On the one hand, the informants applied the principles of their personal beliefs, which was the theme 'Application of Islamic Principles and Virtue as a Strategy for Developing project-based learning models'. On the other hand, the participants perceive their work as a calling and anticipate having a divinely created personality that protects them from overwhelming creativity stagnation behavior. This perception is the theme of 'God-given Attribution of Personality Creativity as a Strategy for Developing project-based learning models'. However, in both themes excerpts from interviews were found to respond to the six principles of identity creativity construction. In this case, elements of belief and religion may have facilitated creative behavior using methods and a positive view of one's work. While teaching creativity in using project-based learning models is considered a noble work, personal Islamic behavior and religiosity makes it possible to understand one's experience by incorporating Islamic behavior into a narrative framework. This framework provides meaning by making it possible to categorize experiences as part of a larger Divine plan for one's life and extended environment.

Application of the principles and virtues of the Islamic Islamic behavior as the development of a project-based learning models

Basically, the results show that all (20 teachers of moral theology) in *madrasah aliyah* report that student-teacher creativity is the main basis in teaching and learning and often this is very difficult to implement, including using project-based learning models in the field of moral theologys. Teachers and students must work together in developing this method to develop higher order thinking as a way of increasing Islamic behavior. However, all madrasa teachers utilize Islamic behavior and religious values to develop creative learning methods at high escalation levels. T1 explains:

I say that learning to develop the determination of basic or essential questions must be done, but Salsa is less able to do so. He finds it difficult where to begin to formulate essential questions on the material of *aqidah*. I asked him to look for things that were problematic in the material being studied. But he said that he did not have the skills to do it and asked me to give an example from the material studied. When I tried to explain and tried to take his hand, he gave a poor response, found it difficult to do so, and grumbled at the ignorance. I tried to understand it and explain it nicely and calmly like the example of the Prophet Muhammad. After some time, Salsa calmed down and slowly performed.

This quote exemplifies the inability of students to formulate basic or essential questions in learning morals with the science-based project method. While trying to calm the student down, the teacher received an unfavorable response that was thrown at him by relying on his belief. In essence, harnessing the values of Islamic behavior allows him to act with patience and accept the situation as it is. In this sense, teachers feel that they will act according to God's will by enduring conflict and acting in the situation they are in at the moment. Assuming that teaching is worship that is beneficial in the afterlife. T14 and T16 explains:

And then there was one student who didn't listen. I asked him to design a project plan based on the material he was studying and he said: 'I find it difficult, please help me to be able to follow this lesson!' I was very surprised and felt that there were many students who had not been able to implement this learning method. I feel that teaching with the new method is difficult and difficult to apply to students, especially in matters of moral theology. But I'm working on my emotions. A few days ago, I held a recitation with the *majlis ta'lim* participants which we routinely do every week at the mosque with the Ustadz. I'm really trying really hard to be a better person, a person who doesn't get angry easily. I directed him and the other students to work in groups to make a plan for how their project would be carried out. And that's what I mean when I say that the strong Islamic behavior, I have makes me a better teacher.

This excerpt explains how the application of personal beliefs in designing project plans on the moral theology material being studied can increase the stability of self-esteem of identity by utilizing self-efficacy (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2012; Fielding & Hornsey, 2016). Basically, challenging situations are seen as opportunities to grow in the virtues of Islam. In this sense, success is defined by controlling one's emotions. Situations in reflective thinking and the application of personal Islamic behavior principles overriding hasty and emotional responses are characterized as personal accomplishments. It contributes not only to self-efficacy, as a feeling of being in control of one's life and situation, but also to self-esteem, conceptualizing personal growth according to the principles of Islamic behavior in Islam as personal success. In this sense, difficult situations can persist, even if there is no immediate satisfaction, as suggested by T4:

Ahmad called me "please help Sir!". Of course, I serve with patience and warmth! I create dialogue. Being a teacher is my calling--this is what I have to do. It's not always easy to deal with students, but when I come home and make time for prayer and prayer, I know that it's my calling--because I can change lives. For better. And it helped me to persevere, teaching science-based Islamic behavior materials to increase the Islamic behavior of students. So, I continue to teach together with the students to make a schedule. Although project-based learning gives students the freedom to be creative in determining how their projects are created and implemented, they still have to create a schedule that keeps the project completed properly using time effectively. This is where I train students' thinking skills to be critical and good at estimating what things they need to do for preparation, manufacture, until their projects can be completed without having to be delayed from the deadline set by the teacher.

This quote exemplifies how to monitor project progress, test learning processes and outcomes, evaluate project-making experiences or carry out projects in project-based learning modelss-moral theology -by using the concepts of Islamic behavior in Islam. Here, teaching resonates with giving meaning, namely finding meaning and

purpose in one's life. This makes it possible to develop project-based learning models by understanding them from a superordinate third-level perspective. Teaching becomes more than just a job, it turns into a calling and, in doing so, responds to meaning as the underlying principle of identity construction (Sternisko et al., 2020; Jaspal & Breakwell, 2012).

Strong Islamic behavior is the main key for teachers to improve the project-based learning models—moral theology—to contribute to changing the quality of students' understanding of Islamic behavior and *aqidah* based on science. So, in developing a project-based learning models to improve students' higher-order thinking, T20, revealed:

My students and I (student groups) have to monitor the progress of the projects they are making. Has it gone according to their plan or not? What obstacles were encountered? So what can be done to overcome it? I need to continue to monitor the progress of the project to provide additional assistance if needed. I don't think about being tired and wasting time, for me it's part of the *infaq* of time and thoughts that can be charity.

This quote confirms that teacher Islamic behavior is very involved in developing project-based learning models in learning by monitoring project progress in learning. In addition, the teacher also considers the purpose of teaching as a charity and is done sincerely, applied in activities to increase students' scientific thinking, T19 & 18 revealed:

I, in implementing the project-based learning models, test (evaluate) the learning process and outcomes during the student's implementation of the project and at the end of the project. Both are very important, so that later I can provide feedback, reinforcement, assistance, facilitation, and the like. Then I also still have to evaluate how the acquisition of student learning outcomes, both in terms of attitudes, skills, and knowledge. I also help students to do self-reflection in order to get students in the habit of constantly evaluating their project learning. At the end of the lesson, apart from me doing an assessment (testing the process and learning outcomes) both in terms of attitudes, skills and knowledge, the teacher also facilitates students to think and remember what things they have been able to do while working on a project, then what things still need to be improved, so that future projects that will be implemented by them will run more smoothly and successfully. I do this work sincerely as taught in Islam.

Attribution of identity from God-given personality as a project-based learning models

Understanding oneself as 'chosen to teach' (T8) makes it possible to see oneself as having a purpose in one's struggles. In this case, using the creativity of one's religious

identity contributes to maintaining a positive view of oneself and one's work. T7, for example:

Solving problems in a project-based learning models with students takes a lot of time and energy, sometimes very difficult. Need some special people to get along with children. It really gets you sometime. But that's also what I like about him: It's a God-given personality that allows us to teach high-level, scientifically based methods in the classroom, especially moral theology.

This quote shows how understanding oneself as different from others with inherently different created traits acts as a resource for developing project-based learning models. Strategies for understanding oneself as equipped with special features that allow for developing project-based learning methods in the classroom may therefore have responded to the peculiarities of the underlying identity principle (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2012). This is also seen in the T13 account:

Once there was a big argument that only I could handle. It happened on a Monday morning where two students started arguing in class. Other students tried to mediate so that the debate between the two would not heat up, but they began to argue. I prayed to God that they would hear me, and then I reconciled. They heard me and there was a moment, it was very special. I look them in the eye and they look into mine, and they stop arguing and then we can discuss the matter. It was very difficult—to sit down and talk to them, a long discussion. I direct their dialogue—I'm a very patient person so it's very useful! After that day, I felt really good about myself—and my skills.

This quote exemplifies how perception makes a unique and positive contribution to the development of students' project-based learning models and contributes to positive self-perception. In this sense, scientific thinking in the material of moral theology contributes positively to students' scientific thinking. On the other hand, contribution to scientific Islamic behavior development is considered personal success and is related to one's unique personality. Interestingly, the conceptualization of personality in this context is related to the understanding of identity as a divine prenatal gift. As the following quote will show, this conceptualization of personality can also contribute to identity continuity (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2012). T11 revealed:

I remember when I started teaching, I always developed scientific scientific thinking in learning morals. I want this material to be taught not only orthodox, but also to develop it with scientific thinking. I always invite my teacher colleagues for this, so that students will be more Islamic behaviorful and scientific. Colleagues teachers are very happy to discuss with me, and we do this continuously. Yes, I guess I've always been like that—always had the ability to develop scientific-creative methods. And obviously I developed this skill further, but it's always been there to some extent. It's just a part of me, a part of who I am, always. Yes. It makes me happy

because I can create a more positive atmosphere, and, on the one hand, it makes me feel special.

This quote exemplifies how being a teacher turns into an expression of individual personality rather than seeing the individual as a teacher. This makes it possible to allocate strategies for developing superior project-based learning methods that are specific to the nature of the teacher, and, in doing so, can increase self-esteem and self-efficacy. Hence, the anticipation of specific inherent traits as conditions for a career can resonate with continuity of principle identity, and, in doing so, provide self-esteem-enhancing rationality (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2012). By separating inherently different 'types' of people and associating themselves with these categories, individuals can build a sense of belonging. This makes group membership an inherited right that forms group cohesion, even in developing creativity using project-based learning models. T15 explained:

We teachers get along pretty well because we think the same way. And that's important—to get along well, to be part of our team, our gang of teachers, if you want to call it that. Especially in terms of being a developer and creator of quality project-based learning methods, we pay attention to each other. Like when a student finds it difficult to follow the lesson! We are in the teacher's room together in dialogue to provide solutions. This is just to give an example of how important it is to be part of a team.

This quote is in line with previous literature suggesting social support to be an important factor in the development of a teacher's project-based learning models (Ozório et al., 2021). In particular, this quote shows that having, as the underlying principle of identity construction (Shpeizer, 2019; Rapoport & Yemini, 2020), becomes very important for developing project-based learning models. While the anticipation of similarity in thought patterns and personality facilitates the attribution of group cohesion through similarity, membership in a group provides a sense of security. It is also possible to make a stark separation from former teachers who followed other career aspirations and left school. T16 explains:

But then we also have teachers like Yahya. Yahya is just not a teacher's material. Handsome man, good Islam, but not teacher material. He was just overwhelmed with his class, overwhelmed with the less creative students, with the daily complaints. He just didn't have the personality to do it—he did the training but couldn't do it in the real world. He's been off for a very long time—tired or so, no school, the right place for him, he's now some kind of manager somewhere.

As this quote exemplifies, the anticipated absence of a given teacher personality inherently justifies a misfit for this role. In this sense, the role of teacher training in relevant skills can be reduced. On the other hand, if a teacher does not develop sufficient resilience to develop quality learning methods, then this teacher is associated as part of an outside group, which was not chosen by God to teach. Therefore, the

rationale that only a certain part of the population is created, or created, to teach makes it possible to understand the differences in aspirations and career development.

The findings of this study indicate that religion, Islamic coping strategies can contribute to the development of project-based learning models in the field of moral theology by responding to the principles underlying the 'construction' of identity. Thus, the results show that religion, Islamic coping strategies and narratives can develop quality project-based learning models, contribute to identity maintenance and increase students' scientific understanding of *aqidah* and morality. Therefore, teachers apply the principles of their personal beliefs to develop project-based learning models and use religious narrative frameworks that justify their innate and distinctive suitability for their profession. Teaching to be in this way is conceptualized as a challenge to grow in the virtues of Islam in addition to the vocation one is chosen, or born to do.

The reason for the positive effect of the project-based learning models on the quality of learning may be related to the process of identity of *madrasah aliyah* teachers. In particular, Jaspal & Breakwell (2012) and Breakwell (2015) suggests that identity process experiences such as high-level skills can cause problems in establishing one's personal identity and thus pose a threat to teaching creativity. The threat of identity process, responding to the notion of a structural model of identity, occurs when the principles of creativity in teacher identity are undermined (Breakwell, 2015; Jaspal & Breakwell, 2012). The principles that underlie the construction of identity that are found and defined empirically are (1) identity continuity (continuity between past and present self-concepts; i.e. understanding oneself as God's creation), (2) personal uniqueness (specificity; i.e. intentionally created), specifically, (3) self-confidence and control over one's life (self-efficacy; i.e. being able to change events through prayer), (4) personal values (self-worth; i.e. being loved by and justified through God), (5) feelings of closeness and acceptance by others (belonging to; i.e. belonging to the church) and (6) finding meaning and purpose in one's life (meaning; i.e. having a God-given purpose in one's life (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996; Jaspal & Breakwell, 2012). The six basic principles that underlie the construction of this identity, according to Jaspal & Breakwell (2012), make it possible to maintain a positive understanding of oneself.

In line with previous research, analysis of narrative reports shows a variety of challenging situations faced by teachers that would require the development of project-based learning models to maintain personal well-being (Ozório et al., 2021; Shpeizer, 2019; Kang et al., 2020; Taliak, 2021; Stewart, 2021). However, while previous research has focused primarily on how foreign and intrinsic factors can contribute to the development of quality, scientifically project-based learning models in the Islamic field (Amri et al., 2019; Chua & Islam, 2020; Farida et al., 2017; Shpeizer, 2019), this study extends previous knowledge by examines the possible relationship between personal Islamic behavior and teaching identity.

In particular, the results show that personal beliefs and religiosity can respond to the underlying constituents of identity construction and self-development for using project-based learning models. This is in line with an extensive series of studies on identity maintenance showing that the use of project-based learning models contributes to students' greater scientific thinking and Islamic behavior (Cronjé et al., 2017; Ndlovu, 2014; Burton & Nwosu, 2003; Zakariya, 2019; Al Arood et al., 2020; Azim

et al., 2021; Illman & Smith, 2013; Ahyar et al., 2021; Tambak et al., 2022). However, this study furthers this idea by showing that the application of individual beliefs in using project-based learning models contributes to personal development and growth in harmony with the principles of identity construction of self-esteem and self-efficacy. In this sense, narrative stories show that Islamic virtues are conceptualized as more understanding, reflective and more creatively developing for the quality of project-based learning models on moral theology.

Therefore, controlling oneself, one's emotions and reactions in the scientific learning method on moral theology with feelings of self-efficacy and morality. In addition, personal interpretation of Islamic doctrines, combined with Islamic behavior in these doctrines, contributes to the activity of project-based learning models by stabilizing identity when motivation is low and expectations are high. Fundamentally, Islamic doctrine makes it possible to form narrative arcs that facilitate reflection on student behavior and contribute to the evaluation of the meaningfulness of a teacher's work (Karolina, et al., 2022; Tambak et al., 2022; Ahyar et al., 2021; Tambak et al., 2022). When using the project-based learning models in the field of morals, individual interpretations of Islamic religious texts are therefore used to understand the teachings scientifically and, as a consequence, to increase Islamic behavior. Here, a very important factor is to see oneself as a Divine choice to become a teacher. Therefore, teachers define themselves through their work: Instead of understanding teaching from the perspective of a contractually required job identity, being a teacher is described as being imperatively tied to one's identity, similar to gender identity (Eissa & Khalid, 2019; Farida et al., 2017; Howarth, 2016; Karolina, et al., 2022; Stewart, 2021).

Thus, being a teacher becomes a comprehensive picture of the personality inherent in a person and the creation of Allah SWT. This notion is critical to maintaining a positive view of one's identity, even in times of struggle, and thus responding to the underlying identity maintenance process. In conclusion, in addition to the development of identity creativity at the time of teaching, and high emotionality (Mosqueiro et al., 2015; Annalakshmi & Abeer, 2011; Pessotti et al., 2018), personal Islamic behavior and religiosity play a role in the development of the teacher's project-based learning method on moral theology.

CONCLUSIONS

Involvement of identity processes at the time of teaching, and high emotional, personal Islamic behavior and religiosity played a role in the development of the *madrasah aliyah* teacher's project-based learning models on moral theology. The application of Islamic principles and Islamic behavior is the main bond in the development of project-based learning models, in addition to the attribution of creativity from God-given personality to learning in the moral theology. Identity, Islamic behavior, and scientific thinking of students develop when following the learning of moral theology. However, although these findings have outlined the relationship between Islamic behavior and creativity in teacher identity, in the use of project-based learning models in the area of moral theology, a number of caveats need to be considered. As a qualitative research with a relatively small sample size of 20 teachers with strong

beliefs, this research is limited in its ability to generalize. This warning is especially important in the context of the recruited population, because all teachers of moral theology who declare themselves to be believers are deeply affiliated with Islam. It is still possible that similar accounts could be obtained from highly affiliated individuals of other Islamic denominations or individuals with different strong beliefs. Similarly, it may be questioned whether other self-identified and highly affiliated moral theology teachers would agree with the statements of the interviewed individuals. However, despite these limitations, this study offers a new perspective in researching project-based learning models for teachers of moral theology by linking personal Islamic behavior with the principles of identity construction. While it is not suggested that personal Islamic behavior can be an exclusive way to develop a teacher's project-based learning models it was found to be a useful addition that could contribute to the use of a teacher's creative method and would merit further examination. Therefore, future research may wish to carry out large-scale studies investigating the possible relationship between the process of religiosity, project-based learning models and identity, and, to examine the possible benefits of implementing moral theology in teacher training courses. This will make it possible to outline the possible effects with a quantitative and representative sample so as to provide more generalizable conclusions..

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