



Integration of the Values of Independence and Creativity through Practical Learning in Islamic Junior High Schools

Yayuk Sukrasingsih¹, Siti Mudlikah²

^{1,2} MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan

¹yayukskr@gmail.com, ²lika12@gmail.com

Abstract

The implementation of independence and creativity values at MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan has not been optimally realized through classroom theory alone, so structured practical activities are needed to strengthen students' character in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. This study aims to analyze the integration of the values of independence and creativity independence and creativity values through the practice of making clothing fragrances at MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan using a Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach. This research is a field case study with data collection techniques through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that project activities are able to increase students' active involvement, build responsibility, and foster creativity in designing products and packaging. Students not only understand the production process technically, but also learn to make decisions and work together in groups. In addition, this project provides contextual experiences that are relevant to real life and nurtures awareness of the economic value of products. These findings affirm that project-based learning is effective in developing independent and creative character in junior high school students.

Keywords

Project-Based Learning, independence, creativity, clothing fragrance

INTRODUCTION

Education at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level is not only oriented towards achieving academic competence, but also towards shaping students' character to be independent, creative, and adaptive to the developments of the times (Rosyadi et al., 2023; Sholeh, 2025; Zuhri et al., 2026). In the Merdeka Curriculum, learning is directed so that students have meaningful learning experiences through project-based activities that are contextual and applicable (Hikmayana, 2025; Istighosah, 2025; Omelianenko & Artyukhova, 2024). Independence becomes one of the important characters that need to be instilled early on so that students are able to make decisions, solve problems, and take responsibility for their learning process. On the other hand, creativity also becomes an essential 21st-century competency that encourages students to think innovatively and productively (Dilekçi & Karatay, 2023; Tohani & Aulia, 2022). The integration between the values of independence and creativity can be realized through practical activities that



are relevant to daily life. One form of its implementation is through the practice of making simple products that have utility and economic value, such as clothing fragrances. This activity not only brings students closer to contextual learning but also opens up entrepreneurial insight from an early age.

Islamic junior high schools as education institutions based on Islam have the responsibility to integrate character values into every learning process. At MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan, character strengthening becomes one of the priorities in supporting the institution's vision to produce a generation that is moral, skilled, and independent. However, the implementation of independence and creativity values is not sufficient through theoretical approaches alone; it needs to be realized in the form of structured and directed practical activities (Illeris, 2018; Kinsella, 2018). The practice of making clothing fragrances can serve as an integrative means between science learning, entrepreneurship, and character education. Through this activity, students are trained to understand the basic concepts of mixing materials, managing the production process, and designing product packaging creatively. In addition, the activity can foster self-confidence and responsibility for the outcomes of both group and individual work. Thus, learning is not only cognitive but also touches affective and psychomotor aspects in a balanced way.

Although character strengthening has become a concern, learning practices at MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan still tend to focus on conventional material delivery and are oriented solely towards completing the curriculum. Project-based learning activities that can foster students' independence and creativity have not been implemented optimally and continuously. Some students still show a high dependence on teachers in completing assignments and are less willing to express innovative ideas or suggestions. In addition, entrepreneurship learning at the MTs level is often still theoretical without being followed by practical applications. This condition affects the underdevelopment of life skills, which should be an important provision for students. In the midst of the demands of the modern era that emphasize problem-solving and innovation abilities, limited



practical experience becomes a particular challenge. Therefore, a learning model that can address these needs concretely and contextually is required.

Research conducted by Achmad Fauzi and his team shows that the implementation of Project-Based Learning in Islamic education effectively enhances students' independent character and critical thinking skills through active involvement in completing learning projects (Fauzi et al., 2025). Research conducted by Ahmad Aly Syukron Aziz Al Mubarak and Ahmad Wisnu Saputra shows that the Project Based Learning model in Islamic education is effective in increasing students' creativity while also strengthening religious values through active and meaningful project-based learning activities (Al Mubarak & Saputra, 2025). Research conducted by Yesi Purwaningatmaja and her team shows that the integration of Islamic values in science learning at madrasahs can enhance students' conceptual understanding while also shaping religious character through linking science material with Islamic values in the learning process (Purwaningatmaja & others, 2023).

Various previous studies have extensively discussed the strengthening of independence and creativity character through project-based learning, but most have been conducted at the high school level or general schools. Research that specifically examines the integration of values of independence and creativity through the practice of making simple products in the environment of madrasah tsanawiyah is still relatively limited. In addition, studies linking the practice of making clothes fragrance with the strengthening of character values and students' entrepreneurial potential have not been explored in depth. Some research focuses more on the aspects of product results or the quality of experiments, without comprehensively examining their impact on the formation of students' character. This condition indicates a research gap that needs to be filled, particularly in the context of religious-based educational institutions such as MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan. Therefore, research is needed that not only assesses the technical aspects of product creation, but also analyzes the process of internalizing the values of independence and creativity in these activities. This research is expected to be



able to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of character-based learning models in madrasahs.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the integration of the values of independence and creativity through the practice of making clothing fragrances at MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan. Specifically, this study aims to describe the process of implementing practical activities as part of project-based learning. In addition, this study also aims to identify the forms of independent and creative behavior that emerge during the activities. This study is expected to evaluate the extent to which the practice is able to enhance students' life skills and entrepreneurial spirit. Another goal is to formulate recommendations for an effective learning model in integrating character education with productive practice activities. With the achievement of this goal, this research is expected to serve as a reference for the development of learning innovations in Islamic junior high schools.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research type with a case study approach, as it focuses on an in-depth examination of the integration of independence and creativity values through the practice of making clothing fragrances at MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan. This research falls into the category of field research conducted directly at the research site to obtain contextual and authentic data. The research design is arranged descriptively-analytically, emphasizing the process, meaning, and dynamics of the practice activities as part of project-based learning (Qomar, 2022). The research subjects include the head of the madrasah, the responsible teachers, and students involved in the practice activities. The focus of the study is directed at the process of internalizing the values of independence and creativity during the planning, implementation, and evaluation of clothing fragrance-making activities.

The data collection technique was carried out directly in the field by following the entire sequence of clothing fragrance making practices with students at MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan. The researcher was present in the classroom and practice room to observe how students divided tasks, mixed ingredients, handled mistakes, and creatively designed product packaging. During the activities, the researcher noted behaviors that



demonstrated independence, such as taking the initiative to work without waiting for instructions, as well as creativity in choosing scents and label designs. Interviews were conducted casually after the practice activities were completed, both with the teacher and several student representatives, with simple questions about their experiences, difficulties faced, and benefits felt (Gunawan, 2023; John Joi Ilhaluw, Sugiarto, 2023). Documentation was collected in the form of photos of the activity process, finished products, and students' notes or worksheets used during the practice. The collected data is then read, sorted, and grouped based on themes such as independence, creativity, cooperation, and responsibility. The results of this grouping are then summarized to find patterns and conclusions, and then compared between the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure that the data obtained truly reflects the real conditions in the field (Pinton Setya Mustafa, 2020; Purwanto, 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Implementation of Clothing Fragrance Making Practice as Project-Based Learning

The implementation of the clothing fragrance-making practice at MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan is carried out through the stages of planning, implementation, and simple evaluation. The teacher first explains the purpose of the activity, introduces the materials and tools used, and divides the students into several small groups. Each group is given the responsibility to design the scent composition, determine the product name, and create the packaging label design. During the process, students are actively seen discussing and trying several mixture variations to achieve the desired fragrance. This activity not only involves cognitive aspects but also motor skills and teamwork. The learning process is more dynamic compared to conventional classroom learning. The teacher acts as a facilitator who guides without overly dominating the process. Based on the interview results, the teacher conveyed:

"This activity makes students more active and not just listen to explanations. They learn directly from the process, even daring to try different aroma mixtures without being afraid of making mistakes."

One of the students also expressed:



"Usually we only study theory, but this time we made our own product. It feels more exciting and challenging because we really have to try."

In the implementation of the practice, there was an increase in student participation, who previously tended to be passive in class. Some students who usually rarely ask questions actually appeared more active when in practice groups. This situation shows that a project-based approach can change the classroom dynamics to be more collaborative and communicative. The practice activities also create a fun learning atmosphere so that students do not feel burdened by the learning material. Interaction among students occurs naturally because they have a shared goal to produce the best product. This reinforces that hands-on learning experiences are more effective in increasing student engagement.



Figure 1 practice of making clothing fragrance

2. Integration of the Value of Independence in the Practice Process

The value of independence can be seen from how students manage group tasks and complete production stages without relying entirely on the teacher. Some students spontaneously take on roles as recorders of material composition, solution mixers, or label designers. When there is a measurement error or the fragrance is not appropriate, students try to correct it independently before asking the teacher. This indicates a learning process through direct experience. In addition, students are also responsible for the cleanliness of tools and the workspace after the activity is completed. These behaviors reflect the growth of responsibility and discipline. The independence that emerges is not only in technical aspects but also in decision-making. The teacher in the interview stated:



"I see students starting to be brave in making their own decisions. They don't keep asking questions continuously, but try to find solutions first"

A student also said:

"We have to divide the tasks ourselves and finish the work completely. If we are not united and independent, our product will not be completed"

Students demonstrate the ability to manage time independently so that the production process is completed according to the schedule that has been set. They discuss to determine work steps in order to avoid material wastage. In some groups, students even make small notes about measurements that succeeded and those that were less successful as evaluation material. This reflective attitude shows that independence develops through the experience of trying and correcting mistakes. The teacher only gives general guidance without excessive intervention, so students are accustomed to thinking and acting independently.

3. Development of Creativity through Product Innovation

Student creativity is evident in the variety of scents produced as well as the design of the product packaging. Each group tries to create its own distinctive characteristics, whether through combinations of floral, fruity, or mixed fragrances. Some students even give the product names with unique and attention-grabbing terms. During the packaging stage, students use colored label paper and add simple logos drawn by hand. This creativity emerges because students are given the freedom to create without overly rigid limitations. The teacher only provides general guidance regarding safety and product functionality. It is this freedom that encourages students to be more confident in expressing their ideas. In an interview, one student stated:

" We want our product to be different from other groups, so we try to mix floral and citrus scents to make it fresher"

The teacher also conveyed:

" I do not limit their ideas, as long as they are safe and align with the learning objectives. It turns out the results are quite creative and beyond expectations"

Besides the aspects of aroma and packaging, creativity is also seen in the simple promotional strategies devised by the students. Some groups tried presenting their products in a style similar to offering goods in a store. They explained the advantages of



the aroma and the benefits of their products in front of their classmates. This activity trains students' courage, communication, and imagination skills. The creativity that emerges is not only in the physical product but also in the way the product is presented and marketed. This shows that practice-based learning can develop creativity comprehensively.



Figure 2 product and creativity results

4. The Impact of Practice on Life Skills and Entrepreneurial Spirit

This activity not only impacts aspects of independence and creativity, but also opens students' insights into simple business opportunities. Students begin to understand that the products they make have utility value and economic potential if further developed. Some groups even calculate estimated production costs and simple selling prices based on teacher guidance. Discussions about marketing and packaging make students think about strategies to attract consumer interest. This experience provides an initial overview of the process from production to distribution of goods. Thus, practical activities contribute to strengthening life skills. Learning becomes more contextual and relevant to everyday life. In an interview, a student stated:

When we calculated it, it turned out that the capital wasn't very large. We realized that this could be sold.

The teacher also conveyed:

I hope this activity can serve as an initial provision for students to be courageous in entrepreneurship in the future.

Students show enthusiasm for developing products on a larger scale if they receive support from the school. Some students express ideas to sell products at school bazaars or specific events. This indicates the emergence of entrepreneurial thinking from



an early age. Hands-on experience in producing goods makes students understand that the business process requires cooperation, accuracy, and responsibility. The life skills developed through this practice have the potential to become a long-term asset for students.

Discussion

The research results on the practice of making fabric softeners at MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan are very relevant to be analyzed using Project-Based Learning (PjBL) theory, which is rooted in John Dewey's thinking and enriched through the Project Method by William Heard Kilpatrick. Dewey emphasized that education must be based on real experiences (learning by doing), where students gain understanding through direct involvement in meaningful activities. The research findings indicate that students are more active, engaged, and show high enthusiasm when learning is conducted through the practice of producing fabric softeners. The process of planning, implementing, and evaluating products reflects the main principle of PjBL, which is student-centered learning oriented toward the completion of real projects. These activities not only produce physical products but also provide deep and reflective learning experiences. Thus, this practice is a concrete implementation of Dewey's ideas on progressive education.

According to Kilpatrick, projects in learning must have clear objectives, be relevant to students' lives, and be carried out voluntarily with full involvement. In this study, students were given the responsibility to determine the composition of scents, packaging design, and product presentation strategies. This freedom to choose and design reflects the principle of purposeful activity as stated by Kilpatrick. Students do not merely follow instructions, but understand the purpose of the activity and feel ownership of the project. The interview results showing that students feel "more exciting and challenging" indicate the presence of emotional involvement in the learning process. This involvement becomes a key to the success of PjBL because the project is not seen as an ordinary task, but as a meaningful experience. Thus, the implementation of practice in the madrasa is in line with the methodological structure of the Project Method.



The integration of the value of independence in practice can also be explained through the PjBL framework. Dewey believes that learning experiences should develop the capacity to think and act independently when facing real problems. When students try to correct mixed aroma mistakes or manage the division of tasks without fully depending on the teacher, this demonstrates the growth of individual and collective responsibility. In PjBL, the teacher functions as a facilitator who provides a learning environment, rather than as a center of information. The finding that teachers do not directly help when mistakes occur indicates the consistent application of this principle. Students' independence develops because they are given space to experience, experiment, and reflect on the process themselves.

The aspect of creativity that emerges in variations of scents, packaging designs, and promotional strategies is also a logical consequence of the implementation of PjBL. Kilpatrick emphasizes that a good project provides wide opportunities for students to express their ideas and imagination. The freedom to be creative in determining the product's identity shows that students are not confined to uniform patterns. In this context, creativity develops because the project demands original solutions to the problems faced, such as how to produce a unique fragrance or attractive packaging. The results of teacher interviews stating that they do not limit students' ideas further confirm the alignment of the practice with PjBL principles. The creativity that emerges is not the result of direct instruction, but the result of independent exploration in the project execution process.

The impact on life skills and entrepreneurial spirit can also be understood within the framework of Dewey and Kilpatrick's theories. Dewey stated that schools should be a miniature of social life, where students learn to face real situations that are relevant to society. The clothing fragrance-making project provides experiences in production, cost calculation, and even simple marketing simulations. These activities reflect the integration between school and the socio-economic reality outside the classroom. Kilpatrick added that authentic projects will prepare students for real life through direct



experience. When students begin calculating capital and considering selling prices, they are learning about economic responsibility and productive work.

Research findings at MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan are consistent with the basic principles of Project-Based Learning developed by Dewey and enriched by Kilpatrick. The practice of making clothing fragrances meets the elements of real experience, clear objectives, active student involvement, collaboration, reflection, as well as authentic products as the final outcome. This study does not require the addition of new theories, but reinforces the relevance of PjBL in the context of madrasah education. In fact, these results show that the classic theory of progressive education remains contextual and applicable in current learning. Thus, this practice can be positioned as a model for effective PjBL implementation in integrating student independence and creativity through productive projects.

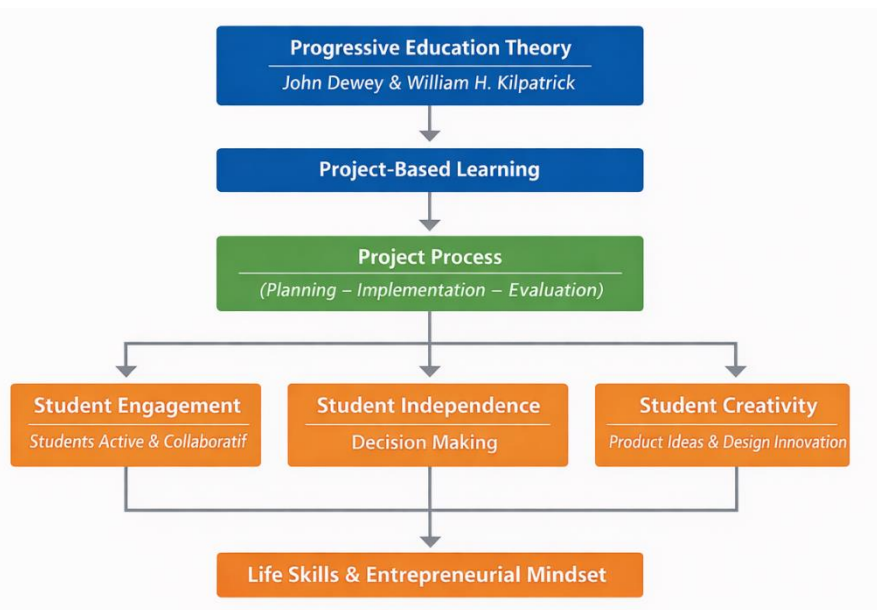


Figure 3. Learning Model integrating independence and creativity

CONCLUSION

The practice of making clothing fragrances at MTs Al Yakin Pungpungan is effective in integrating students' independence and creativity through a Project-Based Learning approach rooted in John Dewey's thought and enriched by William Heard Kilpatrick. The project activities encourage students to be actively involved from the planning stage, production process, to product evaluation, making learning more



contextual and meaningful. The research results show an increase in responsibility, the ability to cooperate, courage in decision-making, as well as the emergence of creative ideas in developing scents and product packaging. In addition, students also begin to understand the economic value of the products produced, which contributes to the formation of life skills and entrepreneurial spirit. Thus, project-based learning has proven capable of transforming learning patterns to be more participatory and productive in the madrasah environment.

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