



Managing Problem-Based Learning to Strengthen Students' Understanding of Rukhsah in Islamic Religious Education: A Comparative Multiple-Case Study

Ade Supriatna^{1a*}, Wiwik Dyah Aryani^{2b}

^{1,2} Universitas Islam Nusantara, Bandung, Indonesia

^aadesupriatna43@gmail.com, ^bwiwikaryani10@gmail.com

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*Correspondence Address:

adesupriatna43@gmail.com

Abstract:

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is widely recognized as a contextual approach in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), yet limited research has examined how its implementation is managed systematically across different school contexts, particularly in teaching *rukhsah*. This study compared the management of PBL-based *rukhsah* instruction at two public junior high schools in Karawang Regency, Indonesia. Using a qualitative multiple-case design, data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis and examined through within-case and cross-case analysis. The findings show that effective implementation depended on the integration of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling functions with contextual problem design, heterogeneous group organization, teacher scaffolding, authentic assessment, remedial support, and academic supervision. The two schools adapted PBL differently according to their environments: the industrial context of SMP Negeri 2 Klari encouraged worker-related cases and wider use of digital references, whereas the agrarian context of SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel emphasized local experiences and community resources. Across both sites, students showed stronger applied understanding through their ability to classify cases, apply religious principles, compare alternatives, and justify solutions. The study's main contribution is an integrated **POAC-PBL framework** showing that managerial coherence, contextual adaptation, teacher scaffolding, and continuous evaluation jointly support the application of Islamic jurisprudential knowledge.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Education is expected to develop students' intellectual capacities while shaping religious commitment, moral character, and social responsibility. In Indonesia, this mandate is established in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which positions faith, devotion to God, noble character, knowledge, competence, and responsible citizenship as central

educational outcomes. Islamic Religious Education consequently occupies a strategic position because it connects religious knowledge with students' attitudes and everyday conduct. The management of religious education in schools is further regulated by Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation Number 16 of 2010, while the current national curriculum requires learning to be meaningful, contextual, and responsive to students' developmental needs (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of the Republic of Indonesia, 2025; Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2010; Republic of Indonesia, 2003).

Despite this strategic position, Islamic Religious Education is frequently delivered through teacher-centered explanations and memorization of normative content. Such instruction may enable students to reproduce definitions or legal provisions but does not necessarily develop their ability to interpret religious principles, evaluate circumstances, and apply Islamic teachings to real situations. This problem is particularly relevant at the junior high school level, where students begin to encounter increasingly complex religious and social questions. Islamic Religious Education therefore requires pedagogy that connects textual knowledge, critical reflection, and applicable understanding rather than treating students as passive recipients of predetermined answers (Parhan et al., 2024; Sholeh et al., 2024; Ulfat, 2020).

Problem-Based Learning offers a relevant response because it places a meaningful and often ill-structured problem at the beginning of the learning process. Students work collaboratively to identify what they already know, determine what they need to investigate, locate relevant information, formulate explanations, and evaluate possible solutions. The teacher functions as a facilitator who provides scaffolding and conceptual clarification rather than serving as the sole source of information. Through this process, PBL supports the activation of prior knowledge, self-directed inquiry, collaborative learning, reflective thinking, and the application of knowledge to authentic situations (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery, 2006; Yew & Goh, 2016).

The educational value of PBL is supported by a substantial body of research. Meta-analytic evidence indicates that PBL can produce stronger skills and knowledge application, although its effects on factual knowledge may vary according to the assessment method and the quality of implementation. PBL has also been found to be particularly beneficial for long-term retention, skill development, and learner satisfaction compared with conventional instruction. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of PBL should not be judged solely through short-term test performance; it should also be examined through students' capacity to explain, apply, compare, and justify what they have learned (Dochy et al., 2003; Gijbels et al., 2005; Strobel & van Barneveld, 2009).

Within Islamic Religious Education, PBL is especially relevant to the teaching of *fiqh*, which requires students to connect normative sources with the circumstances in which Islamic legal provisions are applied. Studies in Islamic educational settings have shown that PBL can encourage active participation, collaborative inquiry, contextual comprehension, and character development. Contextual approaches to *fiqh* have similarly been found to help learners connect religious concepts with everyday practices. These characteristics make PBL appropriate for teaching *rukhsah*, or religious concessions, because students must understand not only the forms of legal concession but also the conditions, reasons, and practical consequences underlying their application (Khalil & Arifin, 2024; Mardhiah et al., 2024; Rohman, 2022).

The preliminary study at Klari 2 Public Junior High School and Ciampel 2 Public Junior High School in Karawang Regency indicated that students' understanding of *rukhsah* had not developed optimally. Instruction remained substantially dependent on teacher explanation, while students tended to receive and memorize information rather than examine cases involving illness, travel, limited access to water, fasting exemptions, or other legally relevant circumstances. Students experienced difficulty explaining why a particular concession could be applied and

connecting the applicable rule with the conditions of a specific case. This situation indicated a gap between knowing the formal provisions of *rukhsah* and using those provisions to make reasoned religious judgments.

The two schools also represented different instructional contexts. Klari 2 Public Junior High School was located near an industrial area and had broader access to learning facilities and information sources. In contrast, Ciampel 2 Public Junior High School was situated in a more agrarian environment, where teachers relied more extensively on students' social experiences, the surrounding community, and local religious figures as contextual learning resources. These differences made it necessary to examine not only whether PBL was implemented but also how teachers adapted problems, learning resources, group activities, and assessment procedures to their respective school environments.

Successful PBL requires more than following a sequence of classroom activities. The quality of the problem, group composition, learning resources, teacher facilitation, time allocation, assessment, and institutional support can influence how students participate and what they ultimately learn. From a management perspective, these elements can be examined through planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. The POAC framework makes it possible to investigate how teachers design contextual problems, organize students and resources, facilitate inquiry and discussion, and monitor conceptual understanding. Research also indicates that all PBL phases contribute to learning and that contextual arrangements influence collaboration and positive interdependence among group members (Schmidt et al., 2011; Shimizu et al., 2021; Terry, 1977).

Previous studies of PBL in Islamic Religious Education have predominantly examined learning outcomes, classroom participation, critical thinking, character development, or the integration of PBL with another instructional model. These studies provide important evidence of PBL's pedagogical potential but give less attention to its implementation as a complete learning-management process. Research has also commonly been conducted within a single institution or at elementary, pesantren, and higher-education levels. Limited evidence explains how PBL is planned, organized, enacted, and controlled in teaching *rukhsah* at the junior high school level or how its implementation differs across schools with contrasting sociocultural and resource conditions (Irnawati et al., 2021; Nugraha et al., 2024; Rohman, 2022).

The novelty of this study lies in three interrelated dimensions. First, it integrates the POAC management functions with the pedagogical stages of PBL, thereby examining implementation as a systematic process rather than only as a classroom technique. Second, it focuses specifically on *rukhsah*, a context-sensitive topic that requires students to connect Islamic legal provisions with real-life conditions. Third, it adopts a comparative multiple-case perspective by examining two public junior high schools located in industrial-fringe and agrarian environments. This design enables the study to identify common implementation patterns while explaining how social context, learning resources, and institutional support shape teachers' adaptations of PBL.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze how Problem-Based Learning is planned, organized, implemented, and controlled to strengthen students' understanding of Islamic Religious Education, particularly the topic of *rukhsah*, at Klari 2 Public Junior High School and Ciampel 2 Public Junior High School. It also seeks to compare how the two schools adapt contextual problems, learning resources, collaborative activities, facilitation, and assessment to their respective environments. The study is theoretically important because it connects PBL scholarship with learning-management analysis in Islamic Religious Education. Practically, its findings are expected to guide teachers and school leaders in developing contextual, manageable, and sustainable PBL practices that strengthen conceptual understanding, critical reasoning, collaboration, and the responsible application of religious knowledge.

Research Design



Method (منهج)

This study employed a qualitative multiple-case study design to investigate the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). A qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to understand teachers' and school leaders' experiences, practices, and interpretations within their natural educational settings (Adrias & Ruswandi, 2025; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The case study design was appropriate for examining a contemporary educational practice whose implementation was closely connected to school context (Khan, 2022; Yin, 2017). The two schools were treated as separate bounded cases and subsequently compared to identify similarities and contextual variations in PBL implementation. Although mixed-methods literature informed the initial consideration of research designs, the study did not include a quantitative strand or integrate qualitative and quantitative datasets; it was therefore classified as a qualitative study rather than a mixed-methods study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted over approximately three months in 2026 at SMP Negeri 2 Klari and SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel, two public junior high schools in Karawang Regency, Indonesia. The schools were selected because they represented different social and educational contexts. SMP Negeri 2 Klari is located near an industrial area and serves 826 students in 22 classes, supported by three IRE teachers. In contrast, SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel is situated in a predominantly agrarian area and serves 447 students in 12 classes, supported by two IRE teachers. These institutional characteristics were used to describe the research contexts and did not represent the number of research participants.

Participants comprised school principals, IRE teachers, and students who were directly involved in PBL-based instruction. They were selected purposively based on their teaching experience, involvement in lesson planning and implementation, knowledge of school policies concerning innovative learning, and participation in the observed lessons. Purposive selection enabled the researchers to obtain information-rich accounts from participants with direct knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2015). Students were included to provide supporting perspectives on classroom participation, group inquiry, problem-solving activities, and their understanding of the concept of *rukhsah*.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct classroom observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school principals and IRE teachers to explore the planning, organization, implementation, supervision, and evaluation of PBL. The interviews also examined supporting factors, implementation challenges, student responses, and differences between the two school contexts. The flexible interview format allowed the researchers to pursue relevant issues that emerged during the conversations while maintaining consistency across participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Direct observations were conducted during IRE lessons addressing *rukhsah*. The observations focused on the stages of PBL, including problem orientation, student-group organization, collaborative investigation, presentation of findings, and evaluation or reflection. Attention was also given to teacher facilitation, student participation, group interaction, the use of learning resources, time allocation, and classroom conditions. Document analysis covered teaching modules or lesson plans, student assignments and learning outcomes, assessment records, and lesson documentation. The use of multiple data sources enabled the researchers to

compare reported practices with observed classroom activities and documentary evidence, thereby producing a comprehensive understanding of each case (Khan, 2022; Yin, 2017).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection using the interactive qualitative analysis model comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2014). Interview data were transcribed and organized together with observation records and relevant documents. The researchers repeatedly reviewed the data, assigned initial codes, grouped related codes into categories, and developed themes that represented the implementation of PBL in each school.

The analysis was conducted in two stages. First, within-case analysis was used to understand PBL implementation at each school independently. Second, cross-case analysis was undertaken to identify similarities, differences, and context-dependent patterns between SMP Negeri 2 Klari and SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel (Yin, 2017). The planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling functions were employed as deductive analytical categories based on Terry's (1977) management framework. Inductive coding was also applied to capture emerging themes, including differences in learning resources, student participation, school support, and implementation constraints. A thematic matrix was subsequently developed to connect categories, evidence, and interpretations across the two cases (Miles et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017).

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the findings was established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Alexander, 2019; Shenton, 2004). Credibility was strengthened through approximately three months of engagement in the research settings, source triangulation involving principals, teachers, and students, and methodological triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents. Member checking was conducted by confirming key findings and interpretations with relevant informants. Peer debriefing with colleagues and the research supervisor was also undertaken to examine the coherence between the data, analytical categories, and conclusions.

Transferability was supported by providing contextual descriptions of the schools, student populations, learning environments, and surrounding social conditions. Dependability and confirmability were maintained through systematic documentation of interview transcripts, observation notes, documentary evidence, coding decisions, and cross-case analytical processes. These procedures provided a transparent chain of evidence and reduced the possibility that the findings reflected only the researchers' personal assumptions (Nowell et al., 2017; Shenton, 2004).

Result (نتائج)

Cross-Case Context of PBL Implementation

The findings revealed that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) was implemented in two schools with different social and educational environments. SMP Negeri 2 Klari served 826 students in 22 classes and employed three Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers. Its proximity to an industrial area shaped students' familiarity with factory work, shift schedules, labour mobility, and the religious practices of industrial workers. Meanwhile, SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel served 447 students in 12 classes and employed two IRE teachers. Its location near agricultural land and rural settlements made farming activities, local religious traditions, and community relationships more prominent in students' daily experiences.

Despite these contextual differences, both schools used everyday problems to help students understand *rukhsah*, or religious concessions. At SMP Negeri 2 Klari, teachers commonly connected the topic with workers travelling outside the region, working irregular shifts, or experiencing difficulties performing religious obligations at regular times. At SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel, teachers related *rukhsah* to farmers working in fields from early morning, residents travelling long distances, and community members facing limited access to water during certain conditions. These examples enabled students to connect Islamic jurisprudential concepts with situations they could recognise.

The implementation of PBL in both schools followed four interconnected management functions: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. Planning involved developing teaching modules, selecting contextual problems, determining learning objectives, and preparing assessments. Organizing covered group formation, task distribution, learning-resource allocation, and institutional coordination. Actuating involved classroom inquiry, discussion, presentation, and reflection, while controlling consisted of monitoring, assessment, feedback, remedial instruction, and academic supervision.

The evidence collected from classroom observations, interviews, and learning documents indicated that students became more involved when *rukhsah* was presented through real-life problems. Students did not merely restate definitions but began to identify relevant conditions, distinguish among forms of religious concession, select supporting religious principles, and explain their decisions. The most visible indications of strengthened understanding appeared during group discussions and presentations, when students had to justify whether a particular case qualified for *rukhsah*.

Nevertheless, the implementation pattern was not identical across the two schools. SMP Negeri 2 Klari made greater use of printed references and digital resources, whereas SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel relied more extensively on students' experiences, the surrounding community, and local religious figures. These differences did not alter the principal stages of PBL but influenced the sources of information, forms of argument, and examples generated by students. Thus, school context functioned as an important condition shaping how PBL was operationalised.

Table 1. Cross-Case Context of PBL Implementation

Aspect	SMP Negeri 2 Klari	SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel
School population	826 students, 22 classes	447 students, 12 classes
IRE teachers	Three teachers	Two teachers
Social environment	Industrial and worker-oriented	Agrarian and rural-religious
Dominant problem context	Shift work, labour mobility, and industrial life	Farming activities, rural travel, and local religious practices
Main learning resources	Books, library materials, digital sources, and students' experiences	Textbooks, local environment, community experience, and religious figures
Common outcome pattern	More varied references and arguments	Stronger use of experiential and local examples

Planning PBL-Based IRE Learning

The planning stage began with the development of teaching modules aligned with the learning outcomes of the curriculum. The modules specified learning objectives, problem scenarios, PBL stages, learning resources, media, time allocation, and assessment procedures. Teachers selected *rukhsah* because it allowed students to analyse religious provisions through concrete situations, including prayer for sick people, *tayammum* when water was unavailable, combined and shortened prayers for travellers, and exemptions from fasting under legally recognised conditions.

Teachers formulated learning objectives that extended beyond recalling definitions and

religious rulings. Students were expected to explain the meaning of *rukhsah*, distinguish among its different forms, identify the conditions governing its application, and determine appropriate solutions to particular cases. The planning documents also incorporated collaborative and attitudinal objectives, including responsibility, willingness to listen to different interpretations, confidence in presenting arguments, and respect for religious evidence.

The two schools differed in the way problem scenarios were designed. Teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Klari tended to develop cases related to workers, business travel, factory shifts, and changing work schedules. Teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel more frequently used problems concerning agricultural labour, travel between rural areas, adverse weather conditions, and community religious practices. The problems were therefore designed around the same conceptual content but contextualised according to the social environment of each school.

Time allocation was a major consideration because PBL required several interconnected activities. Teachers divided the learning process into stages covering problem orientation, group formation, investigation, discussion, presentation, clarification, and evaluation. In several lessons, these activities were distributed across more than one meeting so students had adequate opportunities to obtain information and prepare their arguments. Teachers also anticipated that some groups would require additional assistance in identifying credible references or understanding the problem.

Planning was found to determine the coherence of subsequent implementation. Lessons with clear problem scenarios, task instructions, and assessment criteria proceeded more systematically than lessons in which students required repeated clarification. The findings also indicated that contextual relevance alone was insufficient; scenarios needed to be conceptually accurate, appropriate to students' abilities, and sufficiently open to encourage investigation. Effective planning therefore involved balancing curriculum requirements, the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, student readiness, and available instructional time.

Table 2. Planning of PBL-Based IRE Learning

Planning component	Common practice in both schools	Contextual variation
Learning objectives	Understanding and applying the concept of <i>rukhsah</i>	Examples adjusted to students' social environment
Learning materials	Prayer, fasting, travel, illness, and <i>tayammum</i>	Industrial-worker cases in Klari and agrarian cases in Ciampel
Problem design	Authentic cases requiring explanation and justification	Different occupational and community settings
Learning process	Orientation, investigation, discussion, presentation, and evaluation	Adjusted to class readiness and available resources
Assessment plan	Observation, group work, individual tasks, and evaluation	Additional remedial support based on student needs
Main planning challenge	Limited instructional time	Different levels of student literacy and access to learning resources

Organizing Students and Learning Resources

The organizing stage was primarily reflected in the formation of heterogeneous learning groups. Teachers considered students' academic abilities, participation levels, communication skills, and classroom relationships when establishing the groups. This arrangement was intended to prevent active or high-achieving students from being concentrated in one group. Each group was expected to include students who could initiate discussion, locate information, record conclusions, and communicate findings.

Within the groups, students were assigned responsibilities such as discussion leader, recorder, reference seeker, presenter, and responder. The division of responsibilities helped make participation more evenly distributed, although teachers still needed to intervene when certain students dominated the discussion or remained passive. Clear instructions and role distribution were particularly important for students who were not yet accustomed to independent inquiry or collaborative decision-making.

SMP Negeri 2 Klari organised learning resources by combining textbooks, jurisprudential references, library materials, and relevant online sources. The availability of computers and wider access to information enabled groups to compare multiple explanations. Some groups divided their inquiries according to the Qur'anic basis, relevant hadith, and jurisprudential interpretation of a particular form of *rukhsah*. This arrangement generated diverse arguments, although students required guidance to distinguish authoritative information from general online content.

At SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel, limited technological access encouraged teachers to organise learning around textbooks, classroom materials, students' experiences, and the surrounding community. Local religious figures and community practices were occasionally used as supplementary sources for understanding how *rukhsah* was applied. Teachers subsequently clarified the information obtained to ensure consistency with the learning objectives and accepted religious principles. The local environment thus became an instructional resource rather than merely a setting for learning.

Institutional coordination supported the organization of learning in both schools. IRE teachers communicated with homeroom teachers and school management when PBL activities required additional time, classroom arrangements, or follow-up outside regular lessons. This coordination helped maintain continuity between meetings and allowed teachers to monitor unfinished group assignments. However, the effectiveness of group organization remained dependent on clear role allocation, teacher facilitation, access to credible references, and the active participation of each student.

Table 3. Organization of PBL-Based IRE Learning

Organizing aspect	SMP Negeri 2 Klari	SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel
Group composition	Heterogeneous groups based on ability and participation	Heterogeneous groups adapted to classroom dynamics
Student roles	Leader, recorder, information seeker, presenter, and responder	Similar roles with more intensive teacher guidance
Principal resources	Library, computers, books, and online sources	Textbooks, local environment, lived experience, and religious figures
Teacher role	Facilitator and verifier of multiple references	Facilitator, contextual guide, and verifier of local information
Institutional support	Schedule adjustment and access to school facilities	Schedule coordination and use of community resources
Main organizational issue	Evaluating the credibility of varied information	Limited technological access and uneven independent-learning readiness

Actuating the PBL Process

The implementation stage began when teachers introduced a problem related to *rukhsah* without immediately providing its solution. Problems included determining the appropriate form of prayer for a traveller, deciding whether an ill person could perform *tayammum*, or evaluating whether a person's circumstances justified postponing fasting. Students were asked to identify the facts of the case, determine what information they needed, and formulate questions that would guide their investigation.

During group investigation, students examined learning materials, discussed relevant religious provisions, and proposed solutions. Teachers circulated among the groups, asked probing questions, and provided scaffolding when students encountered conceptual difficulties. Instead of directly confirming every answer, teachers encouraged students to reconsider the conditions underlying a religious concession and to connect their conclusions with relevant evidence. This process gradually shifted classroom interaction from teacher explanation to student inquiry.

Classroom observations showed increased student participation compared with the interaction pattern commonly associated with teacher-centred instruction. Students asked more questions, exchanged interpretations, and expressed disagreement regarding whether a particular situation met the requirements for *rukhsah*. Students who initially relied on memorised definitions began to use situational details when explaining their answers. However, participation remained uneven in some groups, especially when students lacked confidence or had difficulty reading religious references independently.

The presentation stage provided the clearest evidence of students' developing understanding. Each group presented its interpretation, explained the supporting basis, and responded to questions from other groups. Teachers then clarified misconceptions, differentiated similar concepts, and strengthened conclusions using appropriate jurisprudential references. Students demonstrated understanding when they could explain why a concession applied, compare alternative cases, and revise their initial answers after receiving additional information.

Variations were also found between the schools. Students at SMP Negeri 2 Klari tended to cite a wider range of printed and digital references, resulting in more varied arguments. Students at SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel relied more strongly on direct experience and local religious practices, producing explanations grounded in familiar community situations. Both patterns supported engagement and contextual understanding, although each required teacher mediation to ensure that students' conclusions remained conceptually and religiously accurate.

Table 4. Implementation of the PBL Process

PBL stage	Observed learning activity	Indication of student understanding
Problem orientation	Students examined an authentic case of <i>rukhsah</i>	Identified relevant facts and religious issues
Learning organization	Students determined roles and investigation needs	Formulated questions and information requirements
Group investigation	Students searched for evidence and discussed alternatives	Connected religious principles with situational conditions
Presentation	Groups explained and defended their solutions	Justified answers and responded to alternative interpretations
Evaluation and reflection	Teachers clarified concepts and students revised conclusions	Corrected misconceptions and reformulated explanations
Contextual variation	Klari used more diverse references; Ciampel used more local experience	Different evidence pathways led to contextual understanding

Controlling and Evaluating Learning

The controlling stage was conducted throughout the learning process rather than only at the end of the lesson. Teachers monitored student participation, group interaction, use of learning resources, and progress in solving the assigned problems. Observation sheets were used to record student engagement, cooperation, responsibility, and ability to communicate religious reasoning. This monitoring enabled teachers to identify groups requiring further guidance before they presented their conclusions.

Student understanding was evaluated using several forms of evidence, including group discussions, presentations, individual assignments, written evaluations, and classroom reflection. Teachers examined whether students could interpret the meaning of *rukhsah*, provide examples, classify cases, compare different conditions, draw conclusions, and explain the reasons supporting their decisions. Consequently, evaluation was directed towards both conceptual understanding and the application of knowledge to unfamiliar situations.

At SMP Negeri 2 Klari, controlling activities placed greater emphasis on periodic evaluation and additional academic assistance. Students who had not demonstrated adequate understanding received clarification or short remedial activities outside the main lesson. Teachers also reviewed the sources used by students to prevent inaccurate conclusions based on unreliable online information. This pattern reflected the school's broader access to information and the corresponding need to evaluate its quality.

At SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel, teachers used a more personal approach and paid greater attention to the internalisation of religious values. In addition to examining the accuracy of students' answers, teachers observed whether students understood the purpose of religious concessions and avoided interpreting them simply as opportunities to reduce religious obligations. Feedback emphasised that *rukhsah* represented religious ease under particular conditions while remaining governed by specific principles and responsibilities.

Academic supervision by school principals provided an additional layer of control in both schools. Principals conducted classroom visits, reviewed instructional implementation, and provided feedback to IRE teachers. Reflection following the lessons helped teachers identify problems related to time management, unequal group participation, student literacy, and the suitability of problem scenarios. Controlling therefore functioned not only as student assessment but also as a mechanism for improving subsequent PBL planning and implementation.

Table 5. Control and Evaluation of PBL Implementation

Control component	Implementation	Function
Process monitoring	Observation of participation, collaboration, and inquiry	Identified students and groups requiring assistance
Authentic assessment	Group work, presentations, individual tasks, and reflection	Assessed application and explanation of concepts
Conceptual evaluation	Interpretation, classification, comparison, and justification	Examined depth of understanding
Follow-up at Klari	Periodic evaluation, source verification, and remedial assistance	Addressed learning difficulties and information accuracy
Follow-up at Ciampel	Personal guidance and reinforcement of religious values	Connected conceptual understanding with religious responsibility
Academic supervision	Classroom visits and feedback from school principals	Improved the quality and continuity of PBL implementation



Discussion (مناقشة)

The findings demonstrate that strengthened understanding of *rukhsah* emerged from the interaction between authentic problems, collaborative inquiry, prior knowledge, and teacher facilitation. Students' understanding was indicated by their ability to classify cases, compare conditions, provide religious reasoning, and revise conclusions rather than merely reproduce definitions. This pattern supports the constructivist foundation of PBL, in which knowledge is developed through facilitated problem-solving and reflection. It also corresponds with evidence that PBL is particularly valuable for knowledge application and the development of problem-

solving skills, although its effect may differ according to the type of learning outcome assessed (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Strobel & van Barneveld, 2009; Yew & Goh, 2016).

The four POAC functions explain why the classroom model produced these learning processes. Planning established the alignment among the problem, learning objectives, resources, and assessment; organizing provided group structures and access to information; actuating transformed the plan into inquiry and dialogue; and controlling connected assessment with instructional improvement. Thus, PBL did not operate as an isolated sequence of classroom activities but as a managed learning system. This finding extends Terry's (1977) management functions into the micro-level management of instruction and supports the argument that successful PBL requires structured facilitation rather than minimally guided student activity (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Schmidt et al., 2011).

The cross-case comparison shows that contextualisation did not require identical resources or problem scenarios. The industrial environment of SMP Negeri 2 Klari supported cases involving employment mobility and irregular working hours, while the agrarian context of SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel supported cases involving farming, distance, weather, and rural religious practices. In both cases, familiar situations activated prior knowledge and stimulated situational interest. This finding is consistent with the view that effective PBL problems should be authentic, relevant, and sufficiently complex to promote inquiry while remaining accessible to learners (Savery, 2006; Schmidt et al., 2011). Contextual adaptation should therefore be regarded as a core design requirement rather than an optional addition.

Student collaboration contributed to the development of understanding but did not occur automatically. Heterogeneous grouping and task distribution encouraged participation, yet differences in confidence, literacy, and access to information still affected students' contributions. Teacher questioning and clarification were essential for preventing dominant students from controlling discussions and for ensuring that experiential or digital information was interpreted accurately. These findings are particularly important in IRE because students must not only propose practical solutions but also evaluate them against recognised religious principles. They correspond with research on PBL in Indonesian Islamic education showing that authentic problems and guided group inquiry can connect religious knowledge with contextual reasoning (Rohman, 2022; Yew & Goh, 2016).

The findings also qualify the claim that PBL "improved" student understanding. Because this study employed a qualitative multiple-case design without pre-test and post-test measurements or a comparison group, it does not establish a statistical causal effect. Instead, it provides process-based evidence of strengthened understanding through changes observed in students' participation, explanations, comparisons, applications, and justification of answers. This interpretation is compatible with research showing that PBL tends to demonstrate stronger benefits in knowledge application, long-term retention, and skill development than in immediate factual recall (Gijbels et al., 2005; Strobel & van Barneveld, 2009). Future quantitative or mixed-methods research is needed to estimate the magnitude of the learning improvement.

Academically, this study contributes a context-sensitive management framework for explaining PBL implementation in IRE. Previous PBL scholarship has predominantly examined instructional stages or learning outcomes, whereas the present findings show that those outcomes are mediated by the interdependence of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. The comparison further demonstrates that resource differences do not necessarily prevent meaningful PBL implementation when teachers redesign problems and learning resources around the local environment. The study therefore contributes an integrated **POAC-PBL framework** in which managerial coherence, contextual problem design, teacher scaffolding, and continuous evaluation jointly explain how students develop applied understanding of Islamic

jurisprudential concepts.



Conclusion (خاتمة)

This study concludes that the implementation of Problem-Based Learning in Islamic Religious Education supported students' understanding of *rukhsah* at SMP Negeri 2 Klari and SMP Negeri 2 Ciampel. This strengthened understanding was reflected in students' ability to identify relevant facts, distinguish forms of religious concession, apply Islamic principles to contextual cases, and justify their conclusions. Effective implementation depended on the integration of four management functions: systematic and context-sensitive planning, appropriate organization of groups and learning resources, inquiry-oriented classroom implementation, and continuous control through authentic assessment, feedback, remedial instruction, and academic supervision. Although the two schools had different social settings and resource availability, both successfully adapted PBL to their local contexts. The study therefore demonstrates that PBL in IRE is not merely a sequence of instructional activities but a contextual learning system whose effectiveness depends on coherent management, teacher scaffolding, and institutional support.

This study was limited to two public junior high schools, one IRE topic, and qualitative evidence collected within a relatively short period. Its findings consequently cannot be statistically generalised or interpreted as proof of a causal effect on student achievement. Future research should involve schools with more diverse characteristics, examine other IRE topics, and employ longitudinal or mixed-methods designs incorporating pre-tests, post-tests, and comparison groups. IRE teachers are encouraged to develop authentic problems based on students' social environments, establish clear roles within heterogeneous groups, verify the credibility of religious references, and use assessment to measure both conceptual understanding and its application. School principals should support PBL through academic supervision, professional development, flexible scheduling, and equitable access to learning resources.

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