**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# Islamic ethics, identity processes, and project-based learning method for madrasah teachers: A phenomenological approach

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**Abstract:** The development of project-based learning (PjBL) in the field of *akidah akhlak* (moral theology) is very urgent and for that process an Islamic ethics and identity process is needed. This study uses a phenomenological approach to explore the involvement of Islamic ethics and the identity of *Madrasah Aliyah* teachers in developing PjBL method. Involving twenty teachers of moral theology, and conducting in-depth interviews to reveal the narrative of teachers' practice in application of personal competence. Thematic analysis of two-group interviews with 20 teachers showed that teachers' personal beliefs provided a religiously motivated narrative framework that facilitated the interpretation of one's experiences. The involvement of Islamic ethics and identity processes when teaching, plays a role in the development of PjBL methods on moral theology. The application of Islamic ethics is the main bond in the development of PjBL methods, in addition to attribution of identity from God-given personality to PjBL method in moral theology. Identity process and Islamic ethics of madrasa teachers develop PjBL method when following the learning of moral theology. In conclusion, the results of this exploratory study show that Islamic ethics and identity processes of madrasah teacher can improve PjBL methods. 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 PjBL methods for teachers of moral theology.

**Keywords**: Islamic ethics, identity process, moral theology, PjBL method, madrasah teacher.

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## 1. Introduction

Islamic senior high school *(Madrasah Aliyah)* 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 (PjBL) methods 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; Lameras et al., 2021; Ro, 2020).

However, while the literature suggests that the unsuccessful use of PjBL methods 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 (Tambak et al., 2024; Simonton, Layne, & Irwin, 2021). 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 PjBL methods in madrasah learning (Lu et al., 2021; Yustina et al., 2020). Here, the PjBL methods of *Madrasah Aliyah* teachers may be a very important resource in addressing the quality of learning and mastery of students' moral theology *(akidah akhlak)* learning materials because research suggests PjBL 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 ethics of students (Ulya et al., 2020; Nuraini & Muliawan, 2020; Simonton et al., 2021; Tanak, 2020; Suhirman & Agus Muliadi, 2020). However, until now it is not clear how the use of the teacher's PjBL 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 ethics and piety.

Teaching with the use of quality PjBL methods 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). Because the learning material in this field (moral theology) is related to issues of Islamic ethics, morality and divinity which tend to be metaphysical, and 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 PjBL method used, the greater the risk of increasing scientific mindset, understanding of Islam and creed, students' morals and Islamic ethics 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 PjBL methods 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 PjBL methods is very important to maintain high-level scientific thinking skills, develop students' Islamic ethics 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).

The 'PjBL methods' for learning moral theology in *Madrasah Aliyah* was originally a concept that characterized an individual's creative capacity to teach science-based material (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 PjBL method is a complex dynamic relationship between scientific insights and mastery factors in method implementation (Farida et al., 2017; Moubarez, 2020; Eissa & Khalid, 2019). However, while scientific aptitude among children has been extensively investigated, limited empirical investigation has addressed PjBL methods. Evidence from studies that have examined *Madrasah Aliyah* teacher PjBL methods suggests that a variety of factors are involved in the development of teacher teaching methods. For example, studies that describe studies examining the relationship between teachers' personal knowledge, effectiveness and PjBL methods (Kurniawan et al., 2020; Faiz et al., 2020; McKay & Sappa, 2020; Mondro 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 PjBL methods (Kurniawan et al., 2020; Nuraini & Muliawan, 2020; Simonton et al., 2021). However, although religiosity is associated with PjBL methods in various contexts, namely (teaching competence, Parrado-Martínez & Sánchez-Andújar, 2020; Islamic ethics, emotional resilience, Ferreira et al., 2020; Islamic psychosocial studies), the role of a teacher's Islamic ethics in the development of PjBL methods 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 reason for the positive effect of the PjBL methods 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 creative experiences such as high-level skills can cause problems in establishing one's personal identity and thus pose a threat to teaching creativity. 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 PjBL methods (Tambak et al., 2024). Here, particularly the personal beliefs and PjBL methods 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 *Madrasah Aliyah* teachers.

This project addresses gaps in knowledge by taking an exploratory approach to understanding; how madrasa teachers' application of the principles and virtues of the Islamic ethics as the development of a PjBL methods; and how madrasa teacher attribution of identity from God-given personality as a PjBL method development strategy.

## 2. Literature review

Amril (2002) developed the Raghib al-Isfahani Moral theory dividing morals into two parts which he termed as potential moral and actual moral. Potential moral is in the form of *khuluq* (character) which is a form of *ghariziya* power which is bestowed by Allah SWT to humans to be immediately displayed in the form of real behavior through human efforts. Islamic ethics takes the form of behavior in a person after an ongoing effort to develop potential moral that Allah has bestowed upon him so that he is present in the form of real actions. To bringing up actual moral, humans must first purify the three faculties of the human soul, namely the power of *mufakkara*, the power of *syahwiya*, and the power of *hammiya*. The power of *hammiya* and *syahwiya* must be restrained because they do not have access to the divine and develop the power of *mufakkara*. Restraining from the power of *hammiya* and developing the power of *mufakkara* that can produce access to Allah SWT are the way to become a caliph. Cleansing the power of the soul is carried out by educating it through learning so that it can generate wisdom and knowledge while testing the power of the soul by restraining it so that it can give birth to *'iffa* and *jud*. While for the soul's power is performed by leading the power so that it is subject to reason. Only then it will give birth to *syaja'ah* and *hilm*. When all of these characters are gathered, the character of *'adalah* will be born.

The threat of identity processes, 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 ethics 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.

PjBL is a learning model that makes students the subject or center of learning, emphasizing the learning process which has an end result in the form of a product (Ozório et al., 2021). This means that students are given the freedom to determine their own learning activities, work on learning projects collaboratively until results are obtained in the form of a product. That is why the success of this learning is greatly influenced by the activeness of students. The PjBL method is a learning model in the form of real tasks such as project work, in groups, and in depth to gain a meaningful learning experience (Muhajir, Tambak, & Sukenti, 2024).

PjBL is a learning approach in which students engage in real projects that require the application of their knowledge, skills and understanding to solve a specific task or problem (Tambak et al., 2024; Simonton, Layne, & Irwin, 2021). PjBL combines aspects of theory and practice in a way that is meaningful for students, by providing real context and clear goals for learning. In PjBL, students typically work in groups to plan, design, implement, and evaluate their own projects (Parrado-Martínez, & Sánchez-Andújar, 2020; Faiz, Purwati, & Kurniawaty, 2020; Muhajir, Tambak, & Sukenti, 2024). They may be asked to create a physical product, presentation, artwork, technology solution, or written report as a result of their project. These projects can cover areas such as science, mathematics, languages, arts, technology, and social studies (Simonton, Layne, & Irwin, 2021; Tambak et al., 2024).

## 3. Method

Qualitative methodology with a phenomenological approach (Lundh, 2020) is used to examine whether and to what extent Islamic ethics and identity processes can construct PjBL methods for *Madrasah Aliyah* teachers of moral theology beliefs and thus contribute to the intellectual understanding of students' Islamic ethics 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 ethics 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 ethics in relation to the development of a PjBL method 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. 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 PjBL methods' and 'identity attribution of God-given personality as a strategy for developing PjBL methods' and defined.

## 4. Result

The analysis of the results showed that especially in the PjBL method, the Islamic ethics of teachers made it possible to develop them in students related to the identity and Islamic ethics. Here, personal beliefs are related to the development of PjBL methods 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 PjBL methods. On the other hand, the participants perceive their work as a calling and anticipate having a divinely created personality that protects them from over whelming identity stagnation behavior. This perception is the theme of 'God-given Attribution of Personality Identity as a Strategy for Developing PjBL methods. However, in both themes excerpt from interviews were found to respond to the six principles of identity processes construction. In this case, elements of belief and religion may have facilitated identity and Islamic ethics using methods and a positive view of one's work. While teaching creativity in using PjBL methods is considered a noble work, personal Islamic ethics and religiosity makes it possible to understand one's experience by incorporating Islamic ethics 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.

### 4.1. Application of the principles and virtues of the Islamic ethics as the development of a PjBL methods

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 PjBL methods in the field of moral theology. Teachers and students must work together in developing this method to develop higher order thinking as a way of increasing Islamic ethics. However, all madrasa teachers utilize Islamic ethics 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 ethics 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 ethics, 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 ethics 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 ethics 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 ethics materials to increase the Islamic ethics of students. So, I continue to teach together with the students to make a schedule. Although PjBL 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 PjBL methods-moral theology -by using the concepts of Islamic ethics in Islam. Here, teaching resonates with giving meaning, namely finding meaning and purpose in one's life. This makes it possible to develop PjBL methods 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 ethics is the main key for teachers to improve the PjBL methods–moral theology -to contribute to changing the quality of students' understanding of Islamic ethics and *aqidah* based on science. So, in developing a PjBL method 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 ethics is very involved in developing PjBL methods 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 PjBL method, 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."

### 4.2. Attribution of identity from God-given personality as a PjBL method development strategy

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 PjBL method 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 PjBL methods. Strategies for understanding oneself as equipped with special features that allow for developing PjBL 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' PjBL methods 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 ethics 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 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 ethicsful 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 PjBL 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 PjBL methods. 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 PjBL 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 PjBL methods (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 PjBL methods. 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.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this research indicate that Islamic ethics can contribute to the development of PjBL methods in the field of moral theology. By responding to the principles underlying the 'construction' of the identity process, madrasa teachers can also develop PjBL methods in learning. Thus, the results show that religion, Islamic coping strategies and narratives can develop quality PjBL methods, contributing to students' scientific understanding of *aqidah* and morals. Therefore, teachers apply the principles of their personal beliefs to develop PjBL methods and use a religious narrative framework that justifies their innate and unique suitability for their profession. Teaching to be like this is conceptualized as a challenge to grow in the virtues of Islam alongside the calling one is chosen, or born to do.

In line with previous research, analysis of narrative reports shows a variety of challenging situations faced by teachers that would require the development of PjBL methods to maintain personal well-being (Ozório et al., 2021; Shpeizer, 2019; Kang et al., 2020). However, while previous research has focused primarily on how foreign and intrinsic factors can contribute to the development of quality, scientifically PjBL methods 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 ethics and teaching identity.

In particular, the results show that personal beliefs and religiosity can respond to the underlying constituents of self-development for using PjBL methods. This is in line with an extensive series of studies on identity maintenance showing that the use of PjBL methods contributes to students' greater scientific thinking and Islamic ethics (Cronjé et al., 2017; Ndlovu, 2014; Burton & Nwosu, 2003; Zakariya, 2019; Al Arood et al., 2020; Azim et al., 2021; Illman & Smith, 2013). However, this study furthers this idea by showing that the application of individual beliefs in using PjBL methods contributes to personal development and growth in harmony with the principles of identity construction of self-esteem and self-efficacy (Simonton, Layne, & Irwin, 2021; Tambak et al., 2024). In this sense, narrative stories show that Islamic virtues are conceptualized as more understanding, reflective and more creatively developing for the quality of PjBL methods on moral theology (Parrado-Martínez, & Sánchez-Andújar, 2020; Faiz, Purwati, & Kurniawaty, 2020; Muhajir, Tambak, & Sukenti, 2024).

Therefore, controlling oneself, one's emotions and reactions in the PjBL method on moral theology with feelings of self-efficacy and morality (Tambak et al., 2023). In addition, personal interpretation of Islamic doctrines, combined with Islamic ethics in these doctrines, contributes to the activity of PjBL methods by stabilizing identity when motivation is low and expectations are high (Tambak & Siregar, 2023). 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. When using the PjBL methods 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 ethics. Here, a very important factor is to see oneself as a Divine choice to become a teacher (Tambak & Sukenti, 2020). 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).

Meanwhile, the theory used to examine Islamic ethics is Bertens' (2000) moral theory. He argued that morality is the values and norms that hold a handle on a person or group in regulating his behavior. Miskawaih (2011) in his moral theory also revealed that morality is a state of the soul that forces a person

to take spontaneous actions. In addition, Amin (1929) stated that the term moral is nothing but intended to refer to the will or desire in someone who has been accustomed so that it becomes spontaneous actions. Furthermore, Amril (2015) in his Islamic ethics theory argued that morality is a human effort to display good and virtuous behavior based on the abilities that have been granted in humans. Morals are the result of human effort to realize a potential mental state (*gharizi*) to appear in real behavior spontaneously. 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; Tambak et al., 2021), personal Islamic ethics and religiosity play a role in the development of the teacher's PjBL method on moral theology.

## 6. Conclusion

The involvement of personal Islamic ethics and identity processes when teaching, plays a role in the development of PjBL methods on moral theology. The application of Islamic principles and Islamic ethics is the main bond in the development of PjBL methods, in addition to attribution of identity from God-given personality to learning in moral theology. Identity, Islamic ethics, and scientific thinking of students develop when following the learning of moral theology. In conclusion, the results of this exploratory study show that Islamic ethics and personal identity of madrasah teacher can improve PjBL methods. 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 PjBL methods for teachers of moral theology. However, despite these limitations, this study offers a new perspective in researching PjBL methods for teachers of moral theology by linking personal Islamic ethics with the principles of identity construction. While it is not suggested that personal Islamic ethics can be an exclusive way to develop a teacher's PjBL methods 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, PjBL methods 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.

### Author Contribution Statement

Contributions of the authors in this article: Muhajir, contributed as concepts and drafters of the article; Abd Rahman bin Abd Ghani contributed as data analyzers and interpreters; Desi Sukenti as the drafter of the manuscript; Miftah Syarif and Widodo contributed in collecting data and critically revising the article. All authors agree to take responsibility for all aspects of this work.

### Disclosure of Interests

We have no conflict of interest to declare

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