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## Active and Creative Learning Models in Islamic Religious Education: An Analysis of PAKEM and PJBL

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze active and creative learning models in PAI, particularly through the PAKEM (Active, Creative, Effective, and Fun Learning) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approaches. Using a qualitative research method grounded in a literature review, data were obtained from scientific articles and other relevant studies that examined the implementation of the two models. The study's results indicate that active and creative learning models can increase students' motivation, engagement, and creativity in understanding Islamic values. Factors supporting implementation include teacher professionalism, availability of facilities, student motivation, and school support, whereas obstacles include limited time, limited facilities, and resistance to new methods. Overall, PAKEM and PjBL have demonstrated a positive impact on students' mastery of material, character development, and 21st-century skills. Therefore, the development of active and creative learning designs in PAI is essential to addressing educational needs in the digital era and independent curricula.

**Keywords:** Active Learning, Creative, Islamic Religious Education, PAKEM, Project-Based Learning

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### INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a vital role in shaping students' character, morals, and faith, and in providing a sound understanding of religion. But in reality, there is still PAI learning that tends to be passive, monotonous, and does not actively involve students. As a result, there is minimal motivation to learn, low student creativity, and limited understanding of religious materials. Engagement in more innovative and interactive learning models is needed to address these weaknesses.

An active and creative learning model provides an approach in which students are more deeply engaged, not only as recipients of information but also as inventors, participants, and collaborators in the educational process. Active learning, for example, motivates students to think critically, discuss, explore, and engage in relevant real-world activities. Creativity in learning

the Process provides students with the opportunity to convey ideas, develop solutions through new approaches, and connect religious materials to everyday situations.

Some recent studies have shown that models such as PAKEM (Active, Creative, Effective, and Fun Learning) have been used in PAI and have yielded positive results. For example, Fitriani, Ibrahim, Amin, and Djazilan (2023) report that PAKEM in elementary schools can be implemented effectively and improve students' achievement of learning completeness in PAI. Research by Triningsih, Purwanto, and Mulyono (2024) also shows that the implementation of PAKEM at SDN Siwungkuk 01 Brebes improves the quality of PAI learning. (Triningsih et al., 2024)

In addition, the latest study emphasizes the use of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Islamic Religious Education as an innovative model to enhance students' creativity and motivation. For example, Abidatul Chasanah, Laila Badriyah, and Eli Masnawati (2025) reported that the implementation of PjBL at SMAN 1 Waru, Sidoarjo, encourages student creativity in PAI subjects, supported by factors such as interactivity, student enthusiasm, teacher assistance, and the use of media and technology. (Chasanah et al., 2025)

In addition, Juherni & Khalipah's (2025) research at MI Mambaul Ulum Kaliacar shows that the application of PjBL to Al-Qur'an and Hadith lessons through the Student Worksheet (LKPD) significantly increases student creativity, from an initial average of 65% to 85% in the second cycle, as well as increasing student participation and learning satisfaction. (Juherni Juherni & Khalipah Khalipah, 2025) The studies show that project-based models not only enhance creativity but also make learning experiences more relevant, engaging, and rewarding for religious students.

Another important aspect is the development of students' analytical thinking skills through active learning methods. Nur Hidayati (2023), in the journal Afkarina, reported that the use of active methods in PAI learning significantly improves students' critical thinking skills. (Hidayati, 2024) This study is significant because critical thinking is one of the most necessary 21st-century skills, including a deeper understanding of religious values.

The Merdeka Curriculum offers ample opportunities to implement active and creative learning models in Islamic Religious Education. The application of the active learning model in PAI in the era of the Independent Curriculum indicates that students are more engaged and that PAI materials are more aligned with daily life. (Lutfhy Aria Yudiarta, 2025) However, challenges such as teacher readiness, learning facilities, and prevailing views on PAI remain obstacles that must be considered.

Based on the background outlined above, the problem formulation for this study is as follows. First, how an active and creative learning model can be

Designed to align with the goals of Islamic Religious Education in schools. Second, what factors support or hinder the implementation of active and creative learning models in learning practices? Third, how does the application of active and innovative learning models, such as PAKEM and Project-Based Learning (PjBL), affect students' motivation to learn?

In addition, technological advances and the digital age introduce new dimensions to PAI learning. Innovative and creative learning strategies in the digital era, such as the use of multimedia, online platforms, and interactive applications, are essential for fostering a contemporary learning environment. The study "Development of Innovative and Creative Learning Strategies for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the Digital Era" demonstrates that the use of technology in PAI instruction positively affects student participation. (Fathimah Raniyah et al., 2024)

Taking this background into account, this study aims to analyze active and creative learning models in Islamic Religious Education: how the models are designed, how they are implemented in the classroom, the factors that support or hinder them, and their effects on student motivation, creativity, and understanding. Thus, it is hoped that this research will make a meaningful contribution to educators and developers of the PAI curriculum, so that religious learning not only focuses on knowledge but also builds students' character, creativity, and critical thinking skills in addressing contemporary challenges.

Three essential aspects are interrelated in the learning process. These three aspects are the subject matter taught, the learning process, and the results of that process. The learning model also serves as a learning smoother, facilitating the flow of goal-oriented learning activities. Therefore, an effective learning model fosters learning activities. (Ariep Hidayat, Maemunah Sa'diyah, 2020) Many students still view studying as a challenging, boring, and monotonous activity, which makes it difficult for some to understand the material presented. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a learning model that fosters a more active learning environment. One approach is to create an active learning model. (Mulyono, 2024)

Based on the background outlined above, the problem formulation for this study is as follows: first, how can an active and creative learning model be designed to align with the goals of Islamic Religious Education in schools? Second, what factors support or hinder the implementation of active and creative learning models in learning practices? Third, how does the application of active and innovative learning models, such as PAKEM and Project-Based Learning (PjBL), affect students' motivation to learn?

In line with the formulation of the problem, this study aims to design an active and creative learning model that is in accordance with the goals of Islamic Religious Education in

Schools. In addition, this study aims to analyze the factors that support and hinder the implementation of active and creative learning models in the classroom. Furthermore, this study aims to determine the extent to which the application of active and innovative learning models, such as PAKEM and Project-Based Learning (PjBL), influences students' motivation to learn.

## **METHOD**

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a literature study. This study aims to analyze relevant literature on the application of active learning to improve students' understanding of Islamic values in schools. Data was collected through the study of books, scientific articles, journals, and other documents related to the research topic. This literature review approach allows researchers to explore various theories and concepts and synthesize existing ideas to gain a deeper understanding of how active learning models can be integrated into Islamic Religious Education. In the analysis, the researcher will use content analysis to examine information on the implementation of active learning in Islamic education and its impact on students' understanding and practice of Islamic values. (Nikita Ulia Rahardi1, Marhamah Putri, 2025).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Active and Creative Learning Model**

Active learning is a teaching and learning strategy in education that aims to improve educational quality and achieve effective and efficient student engagement. As Hisyam expressed, "an active learning strategy is a learning strategy that invites students to learn supportively, for example, from the perspective of students, teachers, learning situations, learning programs, and learning facilities. Active learning is a learning process in which students engage in more activities, through interactive engagement with the subject matter, thereby encouraging them to develop understanding rather than merely accepting lessons from a teacher or facilitator. (Scott, 2024)

Active learning has characteristics, including consistently trying, not wanting to be a spectator, using learning modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic), and attending to the learning process. Active learning is a learning that invites students to learn actively. When students learn actively, they take the lead in learning activities. They actively use their cognitive abilities to identify the main idea of the material, solve problems, or apply what they have just learned to real-life situations. Through active learning, students are invited to participate in all aspects of the learning process, both mentally and physically.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in schools aims to develop not only cognitive (religious knowledge) but also affective (character, morals, worship) and psychomotor (e.g., worship practices, Qur'an reading) aspects. Therefore, the active and creative learning model must include elements that support character development and the internalization of religious values, rather than merely delivering theoretical material.

One related study is "Islamic Religious Learning Model with Active Learning Method in Elementary Schools" by Sukron et al. (SDIT Al Hikmah, Depok). This research develops an active learning model specific to PAI at SDIT that accounts for initial conditions, PAI learning objectives, and student participation in the active learning process. (Scott, 2018) In this study, the model was developed through a Research and Development (R&D) approach, implementing the principles of Borg & Gall, and encompassed needs analysis, design, testing, and improvement. This suggests that the design process should be conducted systematically and iteratively, with joint validation by teachers and students.

The model's creative element is generally expressed through methods such as Fun Creative Learning (at SD Islam Phase B, Bogor), which emphasizes a fun learning environment, employs varied engaging activities, and attends to students' cognitive and psychological development. (Farhan et al., 2022a)

The model should also include creative and interactive learning media. For example, the study "Analysis of the Impact of Learning Media and Creative Thinking Skills on PAI Learning Outcomes at Al-Ashriyah Islamic Junior High School" found that the use of interactive media, combined with students' creative thinking skills, significantly supports PAI learning outcomes. (Zinnurain, 2022)

Another important aspect is the design of authentic assignments/assignments that allow students to apply religious values in real-life situations. The PjBL and PBL models are commonly referred to in the literature as methods that will enable students to create real products, projects, or activities that connect religious materials to daily life. Although not all PjBL studies focus on PAI, the same model emerged in the study "The Impact of the PjBL Model on PAI Learning Motivation" in West Karawang. (Annida Suaidah, 2023)

In addition to content and methods, the model should include a comprehensive rubric or assessment tool that encompasses not only written assessments but also observations of attitude, active engagement, project assignments, and student reflections. An effective PAI learning design model typically includes formative and authentic assessments to enable teachers to monitor students' spiritual, moral, and creative development. For example, in "Recognizing the Concept of Learning Design and Evaluation of Assessment in Islamic Religious Education" by Putri et al. (Tifani Asnita Putri et al., 2024)

The state of the school, socio-cultural context, and accessibility of facilities/infrastructure also need to be considered in the design of the model. The optimal model in one school may not be appropriate in another if the context differs. The research "Creative Model of Islamic Literacy Towards Excellent Schools at SMA Negeri 2 Karossa" indicates that factors such as resources, teacher professionalism, a supportive learning environment, and financial assistance significantly affect the implementation of the creative model.

Models must be adaptable to change, particularly in the digital and post-pandemic era. A study on the design of PAI online learning at MTs Nurul Wathan Banyuasin revealed that teachers need to develop a plan that can be implemented both in person and online, using technology to ensure that the educational process remains dynamic and creative even without physical meetings.

An active and creative teaching model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) should be designed to achieve PAI's primary goal: to cultivate students who are faithful, knowledgeable, and of good character. Therefore, learning strategies need not only to emphasize cognitive aspects but must also integrate affective and psychomotor dimensions through activities that involve students directly. Hidayat emphasized that active learning should provide opportunities for students to participate, discuss, and connect real experiences with Islamic values. In this way, the learning process becomes more meaningful rather than fixated on memorization. (Hidayati, 2024)

This model can be implemented using the PAKEM (Active, Creative, Effective, and Fun Learning) or Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach. Sukron researched to develop the PAI active learning model at SDIT Al Hikmah Depok, taking into account the school context, student needs, and curriculum objectives. The results prove that a systematic approach through needs analysis, design, testing, and improvement can produce an interactive and relevant PAI learning model.

In addition, the creative dimension of the learning process can be strengthened by applying the Fun Creative Learning method, which emphasizes a fun and interactive learning environment. Research by Rahmatullah (2021) shows that an innovative learning environment in PAI contributes to increased student engagement, curiosity, and critical thinking skills related to religious topics. Innovative learning tools, both digital and non-digital, have a crucial role in supporting active and creative design.

Creative Learning, creative means having the creativity or ability to create. The term "creative" denotes that learning is a process of developing students' creativity, because every individual has imagination and curiosity that never cease. Creativity in the psychology of thinking will emerge intrinsically when it is recognized that educational values must be organized to be consistent with the individual's freedom to act and to be responsible. According to WS. Winkel in Mardianto, in the taxonomy of learning, creativity is found in the

Psychomotor realm at the last level. Creativity, in this case, is expressed through generating new ideas, taking initiative, and using operational verbs such as design, arrange, create, combine, organize, and plan. Creativity is not only aimed at students; teachers and educators must also be creative, as teacher creativity is a key to learning success. Teachers are a significant factor that strongly influences, and even largely determines, students' learning outcomes. (Zulhamsyah, 2024)

### **Factors That Support And Hinder The Implementation Of Active And Creative Learning Models**

The implementation of active and creative learning models in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is influenced by several factors that can support or hinder their effectiveness. One of the main supporting factors is teachers' commitment and professionalism. Teachers who are highly dedicated and professionally competent will seek to improve the quality of learning through innovative methods. Teachers who understand the principles of active learning can design activities that engage students directly, thereby enabling optimal achievement of PAI learning objectives—whether cognitive, affective, or psychomotor.

The next factor is the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure. Comfortable classrooms, props, books, and digital media can support teachers in implementing various creative methods that involve students' active participation. Research shows that schools with well-equipped facilities can maximize students' interaction, collaboration, and creative activities in PAI learning. (Farhan et al., 2022b)

In addition, students' interest and motivation for learning are also essential factors. Highly motivated students tend to be more enthusiastic about active learning, more willing to discuss, think critically, and participate in creative projects or tasks. Good motivation increases student engagement, enabling active and innovative learning to proceed more effectively. (Rafikasari et al., 2021) School support also plays a significant role in successful implementation. Principals and administrative staff who implement supportive policies, such as adequate time allocation and teacher incentives, can create a climate conducive to learning innovation. A supportive school environment will facilitate teachers' consistent use of active and creative methods.

Teacher training and professional development are the following supporting factors. Teachers who regularly attend training or workshops on active-creative methods, PjBL, and PAKEM will be better able to design innovative learning experiences. Research shows that teachers who understand current methodologies and techniques can improve the quality of student interaction and engagement in PAI learning. (Rusdi, 2018, p. 50) The teacher factor is among the most frequently observed. Teachers must have a methodological understanding of active and creative learning, the ability to design innovative activities, and t h e readiness to utilize

Media/technology. Research on "Active Learning at the Elementary Level" conducted in Depok indicates that teachers require training and experience in planning and implementing new strategies. (Scott, 2018)

On the other hand, several factors hinder the implementation of this model. Limited learning time is the main obstacle, because active and creative learning takes longer to prepare and implement. Meanwhile, the busy schedule limits teachers' ability to implement this method optimally. Limited learning facilities and resources are also obstacles. Schools that lack media, books, or assistive technology reduce the effectiveness of active learning, as students cannot make optimal use of learning resources for creative tasks or projects. (Wahid et al., 2024)

In addition, resistance to changes in learning methods from some teachers is an inhibiting factor. Teachers who are comfortable with lecture-based or traditional methods tend to be reluctant to adopt new techniques that require creativity and active student participation, thereby hampering innovation in learning. Finally, the challenges of managing heterogeneous classrooms affect the implementation of active and creative learning models. Differences in students' abilities, backgrounds, and characteristics require a flexible and adaptive approach from teachers. Research shows that heterogeneous classrooms, without effective management strategies, often struggle to implement creative methods; therefore, careful planning and adapting processes to students' needs are essential. (Akhyar Alimiddin, 2024)

### **Application of Active and Creative Learning Approaches, Such as PAKEM and Project-Based Learning (Pjbl), to Students' Learning Motivation.**

The application of active and creative learning models, such as PAKEM (Active, Creative, Effective, and Fun Learning), positively influences students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The PAKEM model emphasizes active student involvement through a variety of methods, including discussions, question-and-answer sessions, educational games, and engaging learning media. This approach aims to foster a positive learning environment and encourage students to participate actively, thereby maximizing their understanding of PAI material. (Scott, 2018)

The implementation of PAKEM in PAI learning can be done by integrating religious values into every learning activity. For example, through group discussions on religious themes, the development of projects grounded in Islamic values, or the use of relevant learning media. This not only increases students' understanding of the material but also fosters a positive attitude towards religious learning. (Farhan et al., 2022a)

The application of the PAKEM model has been shown to increase students' motivation to learn. Students become more enthusiastic about participating in the learning process because

The methods used are more varied and fun. Active student participation in classroom activities can improve learning outcomes and foster a positive attitude toward PAI materials. (Rafikasari et al., 2021) Another advantage of implementing PAKEM is the creation of a conducive learning environment. Students feel more comfortable and less stressed, thereby understanding the material more easily. This approach also helps develop students' social and emotional skills through interaction with classmates, which is an essential aspect of Islamic-based character education.

Despite its many benefits, PAKEM implementation faces challenges, including time and resource constraints. Teachers need to plan each activity carefully so that learning goals are achieved. In addition, teacher training is necessary to ensure they understand and can apply the PAKEM model effectively. (Rusdi, 2018)

In addition to PAKEM, the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model positively influences students' motivation to learn. PjBL emphasizes project completion as a means of learning, which encourages students to think critically, creatively, and collaboratively. Through projects, students can apply the knowledge gained to real-world situations, making learning more meaningful. (Adnan, 2018)

In the context of PAI, PjBL can be applied through projects related to Islamic values, such as the creation of Islamic history papers, the preparation of da'wah videos, or religion-based social activities. This kind of project allows students not only to learn theory, but also to apply religious values in real life. The implementation of PjBL has been shown to increase students' learning motivation, as they feel more challenged and motivated by the tangible outcomes of their projects. Group work also enhances students' sense of responsibility and cooperation, thereby increasing overall learning motivation. (Scott, 2018)

The advantages of implementing PjBL in PAI also include improving 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Students can see the relevance of PAI material to everyday life, thereby increasing their short-term motivation and fostering long-term interest in learning. (Farhan et al., 2022a) Challenges in implementing PjBL include the requirement for additional time, limited facilities, and intensive teacher guidance. Therefore, careful planning and adequate support are essential to ensure that PjBL operates effectively and positively influences students' learning motivation.

## **CONCLUSION**

The application of active and creative learning models in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), through PAKEM and Project-Based Learning (PjBL), has been proven to increase students'

Motivation to learn. This model makes students more active, creative, and engaged in learning, while helping them understand religious values in their context. Supporting factors, such as teacher competence, adequate facilities, student motivation, and school support, influence the success of implementation. Limited time, facilities, teacher understanding, and resistance to new methods hamper it. With appropriate support, the implementation of PAKEM and PjBL can improve academic achievement, 21st-century skills, and students' positive attitudes toward PAI learning.

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