

# The Impact of Implementing the Independent Curriculum Based on Project-Based Learning on Arabic Reading Skills (*Maharoh Qirāah*) at State Islamic Junior High School

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the impact of implementing the Independent Curriculum based on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on Arabic reading skills (*Maharoh Qirāah*) in learning at *Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Bandung*. This study employs a qualitative approach, collecting data through observations, interviews with Arabic language teachers, student questionnaires, and documentation of learning activities. The results indicate that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on PjBL has a positive impact on *Maharoh Qirāah* learning. The project-based approach has been proven to enhance students' interest and motivation, placing them in the "very good" category. Additionally, the quality of the learning process has significantly improved, accompanied by an increase in students' learning outcomes and competencies, both of which are rated as "very good". These findings were obtained through an analysis of observation data, interviews, and questionnaire results. The interview data with Arabic language teachers was reinforced by questionnaire responses containing 15 statements covering three main components. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum has also facilitated teachers in designing more engaging and interactive learning materials. Ultimately, this study confirms that the integration of Project-Based Learning within the Independent Curriculum framework is not merely a pedagogical alternative but a strategic approach that substantially strengthens the effectiveness of Arabic reading instruction. By simultaneously enhancing student motivation, learning quality, and academic achievement, this model contributes meaningfully to the development of more adaptive, student-centered, and outcome-oriented Arabic language education. These findings therefore offer both theoretical enrichment and practical direction for educators and curriculum developers seeking to elevate the standard of *Maharoh Qirāah* learning in Islamic secondary education.

**Keywords:** Independent Curriculum, Project-Based Learning, *Maharoh Qirāah*

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## INTRODUCTION

*Maharoh Qirāah* is crucial for passive communication in Arabic. The cognitive process of reading in Arabic involves connecting written symbols with their corresponding sounds and meanings (Sessas et al. 2023; Ritonga et al. 2020). This skill is essential for understanding and interpreting texts, making it a fundamental aspect of learning Arabic (Supriyani 2024; Sitorus and Ahkas 2023; Sholehuddin and Wijaya 2019; Syahputra 2020; Laili and Ainin 2022).

*Maharoh Qirāah* is one of the essential language skills in language learning, particularly in the context of learning Arabic. Regarding the urgency and importance of comprehensive language skills, *Maharoh Qirāah* is one of the four fundamental language skills, alongside listening (*Maharah Istimā'*), speaking (*Maharah Kalām*), and writing (*Maharah Kitābah*) (Sessas et al. 2023; Omar and Dahan 2011; Ritonga et al. 2020). These skills collectively contribute to

overall language proficiency, which is crucial for effective communication and comprehension (Musthofa et al. 2024; Nafsah and Musthofa 2023; Farhan et al. 2024; Latifah, et al. 2023; Nahdla, et al. 2023). Mastery of reading skills in Arabic is culturally and academically relevant, as it opens doors to a wealth of literature, historical texts, and academic resources, enriching students' cultural knowledge and understanding (Gutas 2025; Syafei 2023; Syafei, Suleman, and Rohanda 2024; Carioti et al. 2024).

In school education, guidelines are needed for educators or teachers. With the curriculum, educators can evaluate students' development in absorbing the knowledge and experiences they gain. The Independent Curriculum is a strategic initiative aimed at improving educational outcomes by providing schools with the flexibility to implement a curriculum that meets the needs of students (Bancong 2024; Hima et al. 2025; Anggraena et al. 2021; Febrianto et al. 2025). The Independent Curriculum offers students a holistic education that prepares them to face real-world challenges (Yafie et al. 2024; Rahmah et al. 2024; Hima et al. 2025; Apoko et al. 2022). It also aims to create a dynamic and engaging educational environment through innovative approaches, such as Project-Based Learning (Günzel and Brehm 2024; J. Zhang et al. 2023). The curriculum focuses not only on academic achievement but also on developing essential life skills, preparing students to thrive in a rapidly changing world (Hvalby, Guldbrandsen, and Fandrem 2024; Hafina et al. 2024; Arunkumar 2023; Handayani, et al. 2023).

The Independent Curriculum impacts various components of the learning process, including Arabic language education (Rahmah et al. 2024; Raswan et al. 2025; Almelhes 2025; Laili, et al. 2022; Fitriyah and Wardani 2022). The curriculum is a crucial component that interacts with the teaching model to enhance learning outcomes. It is designed to support the development of specific language skills, such as reading (*Maharoh Qirāah*), which is a key aspect of learning Arabic (McCluskey et al. 2021; Alhawary 2023; Bin Sawad et al. 2022; Ali, et al. 2020). It involves not only reading aloud or silently but also understanding the meaning and context of the text. Implementing an effective curriculum for teaching Arabic as a foreign language can be challenging due to the complexity of the language and the limited exposure students may have outside the classroom (Esmaili and Rakati 2022; Jamil et al. 2024; Al-Assaf 2021; Alhamami 2025). This highlights the importance of a well-structured curriculum that addresses these challenges (Sanjaya and Muqoddam 2024; As'ari 2010).

The curriculum plays a vital role in developing *Maharoh Qirāah*, which refers to reading comprehension skills in Arabic (El-Khatib 2025; Alkasasbeh et al. 2025; Bin Sawad et al. 2022; Gu, Siraj, and Ismail 2025). One of the key ways the curriculum influences *Maharoh Qirāah* is through the incorporation of pedagogical strategies such as Project-Based Learning (PjBL) (Al-Kamzari and Alias 2025; Issa and Khataibeh 2021; Easley, Fitzgerald, and Palincsar 2018). This approach involves students working in groups to explore and analyze Arabic texts, helping to develop their reading and comprehension skills (Phan 2018; Qpilat and Salam 2023; Morgan 2023). As students are tasked with researching a theme and presenting their findings creatively, they are encouraged to engage more deeply with the text (Rahman et al. 2023; Alfalah et al. 2023).

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in *Maharoh Qirāah* instruction at the *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (Junior High School) level offers innovative opportunities, as well as its own challenges (To and Truong 2025; Febrianto et al. 2025; Saavedra and Rapaport 2024). One of the main issues that has yet to be addressed is the effectiveness of PjBL in specifically improving *Qirāah* skills, given the limited research on this topic. In short, *Maharoh Qirāah* is crucial, as it is an integral part of religious, cultural, and educational structures (Rahayu et al. 2025; Sari et al. 2025; Agustira et al. 2025; Green and du Plessis 2023). Therefore, this research is essential to examine the development of *Maharoh Qirāah*, as its absence could have a significant impact on the aforementioned aspects (Darwati, et al. 2023; Abidah and Ulum 2024; Sa`adiyah 2023).

The novelty lies in the form of an innovative and adaptive learning model that is relevant to the needs of today's students, particularly in *Maharoh Qirāah*, enabling a deeper understanding of Arabic texts. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of implementing the Independent Curriculum based on PjBL on the improvement of *Maharoh Qirāah*?

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study was conducted over a period of one and a half months, from September to October 2024. The study adopts a qualitative approach as it applies a naturalistic method to examine issues related to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, Project-Based Learning, *Maharoh Qirāah*, individual students, and documents (Crowell. 2019). The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on students' reading skills (*Maharoh Qirāah*) at *Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Bandung City* (Junior High School 1 Bandung City). The focus of this qualitative study is on students' reading skills in Project-Based Learning and its effect on *Maharoh Qirāah*.

### **Research Data**

The research data includes the results of interviews, observations, and questionnaires, as well as documentary analysis covering teaching modules, syllabi, and other teaching materials. The participants in this study are as follows: Arabic language teachers who implement the Independent Curriculum in the teaching process, and students from class 7H in the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, totaling 29 students, consisting of 15 males and 14 females. The seventh-grade class was selected because other grade levels have not yet implemented the Independent Curriculum at *Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Bandung City*. They were chosen based on specific criteria, including ensuring they could provide in-depth insights into the research topic. The selection criteria included 10 years of teaching experience, holding both bachelor's and master's degrees in education, and their willingness to participate in interviews. These criteria ensured that the participants had expertise and substantial experience in their field, enhancing the reliability and depth of the qualitative data. Therefore, they participated in the interviews as they met the selection criteria to provide their perspectives on the research topic.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection in this study uses semi-structured interview techniques, observation, and document analysis (Crabbe 1961). The interviews were conducted with Arabic language teachers. The interview process followed an interview guideline, considering the data needs of the research. This ensured that the interview questions were relevant, focused, and capable of eliciting in-depth information in line with the research objectives. The first step was to understand the purpose and goals of the interview, specifically identifying the information that needed to be gathered. Based on these objectives, the researcher developed key topics or themes that would be the focus of the interview. Next, key questions were formulated to help gather information from the respondents in a deep and structured manner. The questions were designed to be clear, unambiguous, and open-ended, allowing the respondents to feel free to share their views or experiences. Before being used, the interview guidelines were validated by an expert validator. To maximize the interview results, an emotional approach was used by asking the informants to share interesting experiences they had encountered while teaching, in order to build an emotional bond with the researcher (Braun and Clarke 2006). Observation is an advanced data collection technique carried out by observing the learning process in class 7H, as it is considered to represent the entire population. A questionnaire was distributed to gain an understanding of the impact of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on PjBL on students' *Maharoh Qirāah*. The questionnaire contained statements covering students' interest and motivation to learn, the quality of the learning process, learning outcomes, and improvements in competencies, developed into 15 items based on a Likert scale. Documentation analysis was conducted by analyzing various teaching materials used by teachers in the classroom, which would later be used to validate and provide additional information related to the impact of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on PjBL on students' *Maharoh Qirāah*.

### Data Analysis Procedure

The qualitative data analysis procedure involves several key steps. First, the researcher collects data through interviews, observations, questionnaires, or document analysis (Creswell and Clark 2017). The process of analyzing the questionnaire results begins with collecting data from respondents who have completed the questionnaire manually. Once collected, the data is examined to ensure the completeness and validity of the answers. Incomplete or irrelevant questionnaires may be eliminated or re-examined to maintain data quality. Next, the data is coded; answers on a scale (such as the Likert scale) are assigned numbers, while open-ended responses are categorized based on specific themes or patterns. After coding, using a simple quantitative method, the data is entered into Microsoft Excel software for easier further analysis

This process involves triangulation, which means comparing data from various sources to enhance the accuracy of the findings. With these steps, the researcher can gain a deeper insight into the phenomenon being studied (Crabbe 1961; Paul Marc Camic et al. 2003).

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of data collection and analysis, it was found that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on PjBL had an impact on *Maharoh Qirāah*, which includes the improvement of students' interest and motivation to learn, the increase in the effectiveness and quality of the learning conducted, as well as the improvement in learning outcomes and students' competencies, as the researcher found:

#### Interest and Motivation to Learn

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on PjBL has been able to increase students' interest and motivation to learn in *Maharoh Qirāah* lessons. This is shown by the interview results with the informants, who stated: *"The increase in students' learning interest is evident from the improvement in attendance and active participation in every lesson. Students show greater interest in the material presented by engaging in class discussions, asking questions, and providing responses"* (Arabic teacher). The increase in students' learning motivation who implement PjBL-based learning is in line with the research findings conducted by Guo et al. (2020), Asyari et al. (2024), Thi Van Pham and Huu Tran (2021), and Zhang, Shi, and Zhang (2023). This shows that students feel more motivated when they are involved in projects that allow them to apply knowledge in real-world contexts. PjBL encourages students to collaborate, actively participate in learning activities, and create tangible products, all of which contribute to the increase in their learning interest.

#### Learning Process

In the aspect of learning implementation, it is known that there is an increase in effectiveness, where the learning material becomes easier to master in *Maharoh Qirāah* through the new approach applied in the Independent Curriculum. This is in line with the results of interviews with informants, who stated: *"The improvement in the learning process is evident from the increased interaction between teachers and students during learning activities. Teachers are now more actively using a variety of methods, such as group discussions, simulations, and project-based learning, where students are directly involved in the learning process"* (Arabic teacher). The increase in learning effectiveness due to the implementation of the PjBL learning model is in line with the research findings conducted by Alemneh and Gebrie (2024), Rehman, Huang, and Mahmood (2025), Hidayat et al. (2024), Hasibuan, Sunarno, and Susanti (2025), and Asnur, Weriza, and Putri (2025), found that the more structured stages of learning in PjBL-based instruction enable the learning process to run more systematically and effectively. A similar statement was also conveyed by Al-Kamzari and Alias (2025), Yusri, Yusof, and Sharina (2024), Yamada (2021), and Pagola et al. (2025), who stated that the fundamental principles of PjBL-based learning can help teachers improve the quality and effectiveness of the learning process they implement

**Table 1. Project-Based Learning (PjBL) Syntax in *Maharoh Qirāah* (Blumenfeld et al. 1991).**

PjBL Stages	Learning Activities
Start with a Driving Question	-The teacher starts the lesson with a triggering question: "How can we effectively understand Arabic texts?" or

	<p>"Why is understanding Arabic texts important?"          -Students are given the opportunity to explore the benefits of reading skills in daily life.</p>
Design a Project Plan	<p>-The teacher and students collaboratively decide on the project to be carried out: creating a summary of the reading text, a vocabulary booklet, and a presentation about the content of the text.          -Determine the project objectives, the format of the final product, and the success criteria for the project.</p>
Create a Schedule	<p>-The teacher guides students in creating a project timeline, including the text analysis stage from the 7th-grade Arabic textbook on the topic of school equipment, summarizing the text, and presenting the results.          -Division of tasks in groups or individually.</p>
Monitor the Students and the Progress of the Project	<p>-Students begin working by reading the given Arabic text or selecting one independently.          -The teacher provides guidance in understanding the text, finding the meaning of difficult vocabulary, and identifying the main ideas and key information in the text.          -Students develop products (vocabulary booklet and presentation of results).</p>
Assess the Outcome	<p>-Students present their project results in front of the class.          -The teacher and other students provide feedback on the accuracy of text comprehension, creativity in presentation, and readability of the project results.</p>
Evaluate and Reflect on the Experience	<p>-The teacher and students reflect on the learning process, discuss the challenges faced, and evaluate the achievement of reading competencies in the project.          -Students write reflections on their learning experiences and the benefits of the project in improving their understanding of Arabic reading.</p>
	<p>Implementation          Project: Creating a text summary and compiling difficult vocabulary into a mini dictionary.          Reading Source: Text from the 7th-grade Arabic textbook.          Final Result: Mini dictionary and a digital presentation visualizing students' understanding of the text they read.</p>





Figure 1. Documentation of activities: Presentation of product results by students in Arabic reading (*Qirāah*) learning based on Project-Based Learning.

### Learning Outcomes and Student Competencies

The statement conveyed by the informant is: "The improvement in students' learning outcomes and competencies is evident from the achievement of better academic scores in each evaluation, including daily tests, assignments, and projects. Students show improvement in understanding concepts, as well as in their ability to read, summarize words, translate, identify the theme of Arabic texts, and so on. Additionally, students' competencies in specific skills, such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, have also developed significantly, among others" (Arabic teacher). The researcher's observations support the above findings, where students have demonstrated the ability to ask questions independently, analyze phenomena, engage in group discussions effectively, and develop products or projects such as simple dictionaries. Additionally, there has been a significant improvement in students' competencies (PL).

The improvement in learning outcomes and student competencies, particularly those who implemented Project-Based Learning (PjBL), is consistent with the findings of research conducted by Hidayat et al. (2024), Yoon et al. (2023), Susiyanti and Juandi (2022), and Hasibuan et al. (2025), which shows a significant improvement in learning outcomes and student competencies after engaging in learning with the PjBL model. This is because PjBL-based learning requires students to actively participate in planning, organizing, and developing products (Guo et al. 2020; Asnur et al. 2025; Zhang and Hwang 2023).

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and supported by questionnaires distributed to students, it was found that the skills in *Maharoh Qiro'ah* showed improvement in terms of motivation, learning processes, and students' learning outcomes and competencies.

Based on the results of the questionnaire, which focused on the impact of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on *Maharoh Qirāah*, the data was collected through three main components: 1) Students' Interest and Motivation, 2) Learning Process, and 3) Improvement in Students' Learning Outcomes and Competencies. The responses were measured using a Likert scale with four levels, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). This numerical scale was used to facilitate data analysis and presentation. The results were then displayed numerically, where a score of 4 represented total agreement, and a score of 1 represented total disagreement. This approach allowed for a clear assessment of the impact of PjBL on the different aspects of *Maharoh Qirāah*, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of the curriculum in enhancing students' skills and motivation.

**Table 2. Interest and Motivation in Learning.**

Indicators of Interest and Motivation in Learning	Value*
Students are interested in attending <i>Maharoh Qirāah</i> lessons after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.	3,20

The <i>Maharoh Qirāah</i> learning is now more varied and interesting compared to before.	3,41
Students feel more motivated to learn Arabic independently.	3,17
Students often use additional learning resources (books, videos, apps) outside of class in <i>Maharoh Qirāah</i> learning.	2,86

\*Max Value 4

As shown in Table 2, after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, students' interest in participating in *Maharoh Qirāah* lessons showed an increase, with an average score of (3.20), indicating a fairly high level of student interest. *Maharoh Qirāah* learning is now considered more varied and engaging compared to before, with a score of (3.41), showing that the applied teaching methods successfully captured students' attention. Additionally, students feel more motivated to study Arabic independently, reflected in the independent motivation score of (3.17). However, the use of additional learning resources such as books, videos, or apps outside the classroom remains relatively low, with a score of (2.86), indicating that there is still room to enhance the utilization of independent learning resources outside the classroom.

**Table 3. Learning Process**

Indicators of the Quality of the Learning Process	Value*
The teacher's role in guiding and motivating students is crucial during the <i>Maharoh Qirāah</i> learning process in the Independent Curriculum.	3,55
The material used in <i>Maharoh Qirāah</i> learning is more relevant to daily life after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.	3,13
Students feel it is easier to master the <i>Maharoh Qirāah</i> material with the new approach applied in the Independent Curriculum.	3,03
The variation of teaching methods (discussion, presentation, and collaboration) helps students improve their ability to read Arabic texts.	3,48

\*Max Value 4

In Table 3, the role of the teacher in guiding and motivating students is highly significant in the learning process of *Maharoh Qirāah*, with an average score of (3.55), indicating that the teacher's contribution is considered very important by students. The *Maharoh Qirāah* learning material is now perceived as more relevant to daily life after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, with a score of (3.13), showing an increase in the relevance of the content being taught. The new approach in the curriculum also makes students feel it is easier to master the material, although the ease of mastering the material is at a score of (3.03), indicating that there are still challenges in understanding the lesson. Furthermore, the variety of teaching methods, such as discussions, presentations, and collaboration, is considered helpful in improving students' ability to read Arabic texts, with a score of (3.48), showing that these variations successfully support a more effective learning process.

**Table 4. Learning Outcomes and Competency Improvement**

Indicators of Learning Outcomes and Competency Improvement	Value*
Students can read Arabic words, phrases, and sentences with correct intonation and articulation ( <i>makhrāj</i> ) after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum	3,10
Students can translate Arabic sentences in a text after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.	3,20
Students are able to use vocabulary in the context of Arabic sentences after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.	3,10
Students can identify the theme of an Arabic text after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.	3,13
Students can retell the content of an Arabic text after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.	3,10
Students are able to work collaboratively in groups to understand the text and produce projects related to reading skills ( <i>Maharoh Qirāah</i> ).	3,20
Students are able to create a group project on reading and understanding a	3,06

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text and produce a joint presentation report about the content of the text related to reading skills (*Maharoh Qirāah*).

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\*Max Value 4

Based on Table 4, after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, students' ability to read Arabic words, phrases, and sentences with correct intonation and articulation (*makhraj*) has an average score of (3.10), indicating a fairly good level of mastery. Students' ability to translate Arabic sentences in a text has also improved, reflected in a score of (3.20), which indicates a sufficient understanding of the content of the text. The use of vocabulary in the context of Arabic sentences has a score of (3.10), showing that students are becoming accustomed to the contextual application of vocabulary.

In addition, students can identify the theme of an Arabic text with a score of (3.13) and retell the content of the text with a score of (3.10), indicating a fairly good understanding in recognizing and recalling the text's content. In terms of group work, students' ability to collaborate in understanding the text and produce projects related to *Maharoh Qirāah* received a score of (3.20), signifying effective cooperation among students. Students' ability to create group projects, understand texts, and prepare joint presentation reports has a score of (3.06), indicating that they are starting to become skilled in organizing their understanding into a group project, though there is still room for further development.

**Table 5. The average percentage for each of the three main components:**

Components	Frequency	Percentage
Interest and Motivation	79	79%
Learning Process	82,94	83%
Learning Outcomes and Student Competencies	78,68	79%

As observed in Table 5, the data analysis results show a positive impact from the implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in *Maharoh Qirāah* learning across three main components: Student Interest and Motivation, Learning Process, and Learning Outcomes and Student Competencies. The component of Student Interest and Motivation shows a mean score frequency of 79, with a percentage of 79%, indicating that the implementation of this curriculum successfully enhanced students' interest and motivation in learning *Maharoh Qirāah*. This percentage reflects students' engagement with a more varied and interactive learning method.

The Learning Process component has the highest percentage, 83%, with an average frequency of 82.94, indicating the effectiveness of the teaching methods in the Independent Curriculum. Varied methods, such as discussions, collaboration, and active teacher involvement, help students better understand the material. This shows that the quality of the learning process has a strong influence on the success of *Maharoh Qirāah* learning.

Meanwhile, the Learning Outcomes and Student Competencies component has an average frequency of 78.68 and a percentage of 79%. Although slightly below the percentage for the learning process, this result still indicates a good improvement in students' ability to read, translate, and understand Arabic texts. Overall, the Learning Process is the component with the most significant impact, followed by improvements in Student Interest and Motivation, and Learning Outcomes and Student Competencies. This shows that effective learning is the key factor in enhancing both student motivation and competencies in *Maharoh Qirāah*.

From the results of the student questionnaire data, the impact of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on PjBL on *Maharoh Qirāah* can be seen in the overall survey assessment diagram as follows:

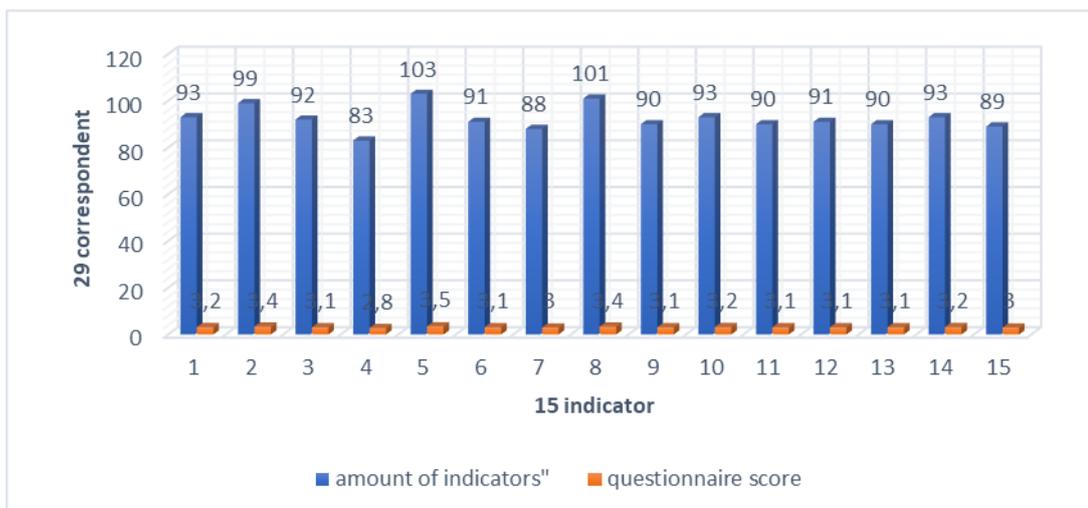


Figure 2. Student Questionnaire Assessment Diagram

The results depicted in the graph 2 indicate a consistently positive response from the 29 participants across all 15 evaluation indicators. The high values of the indicator fulfillment, ranging from 83 to 103, demonstrate that the learning implementation was perceived as effective and well-structured. Notably, Indicators 5 and 8 achieved the highest scores, suggesting that these aspects represent the strongest components of the instructional design.

Meanwhile, the questionnaire scores exhibit limited variation, remaining within a narrow range. This homogeneity of responses suggests a high degree of agreement among respondents, indicating that the measured aspects were clearly understood and consistently experienced during the learning process. Such stability strengthens the reliability of the instrument and supports the validity of the collected data.

These findings imply that the implemented learning model successfully addressed the targeted instructional objectives. The convergence between high indicator fulfillment and stable questionnaire responses reflects strong alignment between instructional design, learning activities, and student perceptions. Consequently, this reinforces the conclusion that the applied pedagogical approach effectively facilitates meaningful learning outcomes.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) significantly improves students' interest, motivation, learning processes, and learning outcomes in *Maharoh Qirāah*. These results are consistent with previous studies on instructional models that emphasize student engagement and experiential learning. When compared with studies on the VAK (Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic) learning model, similar patterns emerge. Research by Aboudonya, Ibrahim, and Osman (2025), Istiqomah and Suryadarma (2023), Stein, Stanford, and Rowland (2014), Sepriyanti et al. (2019), Herliana et al. (2025), and Kadam, Gaikwad, and Bhamre (2021), demonstrated that learning models incorporating multiple sensory channels lead to higher motivation, deeper comprehension, and stronger retention. Although this study employed PjBL rather than VAK explicitly, the learning activities observed such as collaborative discussion, text visualization through presentations, and kinesthetic engagement in project production implicitly activated visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities. This convergence helps explain the substantial gains in motivation and reading competence observed in the present research.

Furthermore, these results align with multisensory and motor learning theories. Bruner's constructivist theory emphasizes that learners construct knowledge most effectively through active discovery and problem-solving (Sanli 2024; Pang, Zhu, and Sultan 2020; Chaudhary and Pillai 2019). In this study, students constructed meaning by analyzing Arabic texts, organizing vocabulary, and producing tangible learning products, which reflects Bruner's enactive-iconic-symbolic learning progression (Leong, Toh, and Cheng 2025; (Makouar 2018; Al-Homoud 2024).

Similarly, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences supports the idea that linguistic intelligence develops more optimally when integrated with interpersonal, spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic engagement elements clearly embedded within PjBL activities. From a kinesthetic learning perspective, the act of creating projects, presenting outcomes, and collaborating physically and cognitively reinforces reading comprehension and language internalization (Al-Homoud 2024; Imbaquingo and Cárdenas 2023; Deng and Said 2025).

In addition, the findings corroborate recent intervention-based research. Tseng (2021), Green and du Plessis (2023), Kunicina et al. (2024), Rennoll et al. (2022), Yang et al. (2021), Borroni et al. (2021), Luk et al. (2024), and Thi Van Pham and Huu Tran (2021) reported that PjBL significantly enhances students' academic performance and transferable competencies such as collaboration and problem-solving. The improvements in reading accuracy, vocabulary application, thematic identification, and collaborative performance in this study strongly support those conclusions, demonstrating that PjBL is not only pedagogically effective but also linguistically transformative in Arabic reading instruction.

These findings offer important pedagogical implications. First, the study demonstrates that PjBL is highly compatible with the goals of the Independent Curriculum, particularly in promoting student autonomy, engagement, and competency development in foreign language learning (Green and du Plessis 2023; Zhong, Ismail, and Lin 2025; Febrianto et al. 2025; Yafie et al. 2024; Mutanga 2024). Second, integrating project-based activities into *Maharoh Qirāah* instruction can significantly strengthen both linguistic skills and essential 21st-century competencies, such as teamwork, communication, and critical thinking. Therefore, Arabic language teachers are encouraged to redesign reading instruction by embedding structured project cycles, reflective activities, and collaborative learning environments (Stoller and Myers 2019; Grant 2017; Slater and Beckett 2019; (Yekimov et al. 2021; Naseer et al. 2025; Megayanti, Busono, and Maknun 2020).

Despite these promising results, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study involved a relatively small sample size (29 students), which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the research relied heavily on self-reported questionnaire data and teacher interviews, which may introduce subjective bias. The absence of a control group also restricts the ability to attribute improvements solely to PjBL without considering other possible influencing variables.

Future studies should expand the sample size and include experimental or quasi-experimental designs with control groups to strengthen causal inference. Further research is also needed to examine the long-term impact of PjBL on Arabic reading proficiency and to explore how different learner profiles respond to project-based instruction. Moreover, comparative studies between PjBL, VAK, and other multisensory instructional models would provide deeper insight into the most effective pedagogical strategies for developing *Maharoh Qirāah* competencies.

## CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the impact of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on students' reading skills (*Maharoh Qirāah*) at *Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Kota Bandung* (State Junior High School 1 of Bandung City). The results of the study indicate that the application of PjBL successfully increased students' interest and motivation to learn, as seen in the improvement of attendance and active participation in learning, as well as their involvement in class discussions. Students showed a greater interest in the material being taught, which aligns with previous findings that involvement in real projects can enhance learning motivation. In addition, there was a significant improvement in students' learning outcomes and competencies after applying the PjBL model, with percentages showing that Interest and Motivation was 79%, Learning Process was 83%, and Learning Outcomes and Student Competencies were 79%. Students experienced a positive impact on their reading skills (*Maharoh Qirāah*). However, this study also identified challenges faced by both teachers and students in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, including the need for adjustments in teaching methods to suit students' needs. Therefore, it is important for educators

to continuously develop innovative and adaptive teaching strategies to support the achievement of the expected basic competencies and learning indicators. Overall, this study affirms that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum based on PjBL has a positive influence on students' interest, motivation, learning process, and learning outcomes in reading skills (*Maharoh Qirāah*), as well as promoting broader competency development in the context of Arabic language learning.

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