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Reimagining Madrassa Education: Integrating Constructivist and Islamic Philosophies with Project-Based Learning

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ABSTRACT
In Pakistan, madrassa education is mainly based on rote memorisation and doesn't focus much on reflective, student-centered learning. Many discussions about reform have focused on changing the curriculum or politics within schools, but very few have looked into the teaching methods used in madrassas. This article fills that gap by looking at how Islamic educational philosophy and constructivist learning theories can work together to create a framework for project-based learning (PBL) in madrassas. A conceptual review of both traditions shows that there are significant similarities. For example, inquiry-based learning is similar to Qur'ānic calls for tadabbur (reflection), deep understanding is identical to tafaqquh, and problem-solving is similar to ijtihād. The paper presents a theoretical model of "Constructivist PBL within Islamic Epistemology," emphasising experiential projects that integrate contemporary skills with Islamic values. This method goes against the idea that rote memorisation is the best way to learn and shows how madrassas can turn out graduates who can think critically, find jobs, and gain spiritual insight. The article ends with a suggestion to try out some changes in a few madrassas as a first step towards reform. This article is part of a larger doctoral research project at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC-IIUM). It looks into constructivist ways to mix modern and traditional education in Pakistani madrassas.

Keywords: *Madrassa Education, Project-Based Learning (PBL), Constructivist Learning, Islamic Epistemology, Educational Reform, Inquiry-Based Learning*

1. INTRODUCTION

Calls to "bring up to date" South Asian madrassas frequently emphasise curriculum policies, geopolitics, or security issues. But the pedagogy, or how teachers, texts, and students actually

interact, is still not well understood.[1] This article addresses that deficiency by introducing a theory of project-based learning (PBL) grounded in constructivist educational principles and Islamic educational objectives. I propose that PBL ought not to be perceived as an external imposition but rather as a deliberate enhancement of Islamic traditions about knowledge, character, and community, provided it is ethically founded and thoughtfully endorsed.[2] PBL organises learning around complex, real-world tasks that require research, design, and the production of public outputs over a long period of time.[3] Based on constructivist ideas, PBL stresses that students make sense of things by being actively involved and thinking about them. Dewey's central idea was that experience is the most essential part of education, but not all experiences are equally valuable. They need to be carefully chosen and arranged to help people grow and stay the same.[4] In practice, this means that teachers make sure that students' questions are aimed at understanding the subject matter, rather than just letting them happen.[5] Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development underscores that timely guidance and collaboration enable learners to transcend their autonomous abilities, establishing the foundation for "guided inquiry" methodologies in PBL.[6]

Islamic educational philosophy presents a congruent objective. Halstead says that the Arabic words that are often translated as "education"—taʿlīm (knowledge transfer), tarbiyah (growth nurturing), and taʾdīb (virtue formation)—are all about helping people become responsible Muslims who know, become, and act as such.[7] This trio fits well with PBL's focus on combining knowledge, skills, and attitudes when dealing with issues that are morally important. Classical Islamic texts also connect learning to habitual behaviour. Ibn Khaldūn says that qualities are not gained just by knowing things, but by doing them over and over again until they become second nature.[8] Learning by doing, which is a key part of PBL, is in line with Islamic teaching methods.

At the same time, "discovery learning" in general doesn't work. Scaffolding, which includes structures, prompts, and coaching, is essential for effective PBL because it helps students focus on important ideas and lowers their cognitive load.[9] This is especially important in madrassas, where critics often say that any activity led by students shows a lack of rigour. Dewey himself warned that experience without careful planning can be harmful to learning, causing people to

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[1] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Religious Education and the Rhetoric of Reform: The Madrassa in British India and Pakistan," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 2 (1999): 294–296. Cambridge University Press & AssessmentAcademia

[2] John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 30–31, 76–79. Internet Archive

[3] John W. Thomas, *A Review of Research on Project-Based Learning* (San Rafael, CA: Autodesk Foundation, 2000), 1–2. TECFA

[4] Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 30–31. Internet Archive

[5] Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 76–79. Internet Archive

[6] Lev S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 86–87. Florida Atlantic University

[7] J. Mark Halstead, "An Islamic Concept of Education," *Comparative Education* 40, no. 4 (2004): 521–523, 527. ibnughony.files.wordpress.com

[8] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967; abridged ed. 2005), 518–520. ia903106.us.archive.org

[9] Cindy E. Hmelo-Silver, Ravit Golan Duncan, and Clark A. Chinn, "Scaffolding and Achievement in Problem-Based and Inquiry Learning," *Educational Psychologist* 42, no. 2 (2007): 99–101. Andy Matuschak

become disconnected and shallow instead of growing in a meaningful way.[10] Consequently, a constructivist-Islamic Project-Based Learning (PBL) must incorporate principled constraints and teacher facilitation that are congruent with textual reasoning and the ethical objectives of the tradition.

This article presents a three-step framework. First, it shows a constructivist learning model—experience, guidance, collaboration—translated into Islamic educational terms: taʿlīm, tarbiyah, and taʾdīb. Second, it sets design rules for PBL in religious studies, such as using real, morally charged questions, having conversations about scripture and commentary, doing things over and over again to encourage inquiry and adab, and showing what you've learnt in public to help the community. Third, it compares this approach to the usual rhetoric of reform, which has often been more about controlling institutions or political goals than about what happens in the classroom.[11] The article emphasises pedagogy, offering a pragmatic approach for madrassa educators to amalgamate established educational objectives with contemporary learning science while maintaining their normative principles.[12]

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

2.1. Islamic Educational Objectives (taʿlīm – tarbīyah – taʾdīb) and Their Relationship with Guided Inquiry

Islamic pedagogical discourse frequently revolves around three interrelated Arabic concepts: taʿlīm (knowledge transfer), tarbīyah (holistic character development), and taʾdīb (refinement of manners or adab). These concepts are crucial for comprehending education within the Islamic tradition. J. Mark Halstead illustrated that Islamic education traditionally seeks not only intellectual advancement but also moral and spiritual transformation, associating the attainment of knowledge with personal development and social responsibility.[13] This tripartite framework corresponds with contemporary perspectives on holistic education; however, its association with constructivist pedagogies—predominantly guided inquiry methodologies such as project-based learning—remains insufficiently explored.

Taʿlīm is frequently regarded as the transactional dimension of education—transmitting sacred texts, legal decrees, and conventional disciplines. However, classical texts do not regard taʿlīm solely as rote memorisation. For instance, al-Ghazālī, in Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn, stresses that students must interact with the material, understand its meanings, and think about how it applies to their lives.[14] This viewpoint corresponds with constructivist theories that assert learning entails the creation of meaning rather than the passive reception of information. When students study Qur'ānic verses or legal principles, they don't just memorise them; they also understand them by actively engaging with them, interpreting them, and applying them.

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[10] Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 30–35, 76–79. Internet Archive

[11] Zaman, "Religious Education and the Rhetoric of Reform," 294–300. Cambridge University Press & Assessment

[12] Halstead, "An Islamic Concept of Education," 523–527; Hmelo-Silver et al., "Scaffolding and Achievement," 100–101. ibnughony.files.wordpress.comAndy Matuschak

[13] J. Mark Halstead, "An Islamic Concept of Education," *Comparative Education* 40, no. 4 (2004): 521–523.

[14] Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1999), 3:67–69.

Tarbīyah, conversely, prioritises individual growth by cultivating the soul's moral consciousness and reconciling the disparity between external knowledge and internal virtue. Al-Ghazālī often criticises scholars who know a lot but don't have good morals, pointing out that real Islamic education involves developing both inner qualities and outward behaviour. Consequently, tarbīyah corresponds with constructivist principles that learning alters attitudes—molding thoughts, emotions, and behaviours.[15] Student-led initiatives that incorporate moral applications in real-world settings—such as coordinating community service or keeping reflective journals—exemplify the practice of tarbīyah through guided exploration.

Lastly, adab means having good manners, being polite, and being respectful when you talk to someone. In traditional schools, students were taught to be courteous to their teachers, classmates, and texts. They thought that adab was essential for understanding the subject itself.[16] Contemporary education frequently dissociates content from behaviour or context, whereas Islamic pedagogy perceives them as interrelated. Constructivist approaches also recognise that learning communities flourish through collaborative norms, respectful inquiry, and collective accountability. When teachers guide students in project-based learning, they model and coach behaviours that help students ask questions, like being humble when they make mistakes, being persistent when things are unclear, and being honest. This allows students to grow intellectually and morally.

Guided inquiry, especially in project-based learning, naturally includes three essential parts: scaffolding, real-world tasks, and social reflection. Scaffolding helps students who are having trouble with complex tasks. Ashman and Snow showed how well-structured scaffolding helps students learn new ways of thinking.[17] In Islamic education, scaffolding may encompass teacher-facilitated questioning (ḥadīth-style dialogues), structured textual commentary, or incremental tasks that evolve from rote memorisation to practical application. This method is similar to how teachers used to teach through mudārasa (shared study) and ḥadīth sharḥ (commentary), where they gradually gave students more responsibility.

Authentic tasks—projects grounded in real-world significance—correspond to the notion of mawāqif (situational acts within Islamic practice) that necessitate substantive action, whether in mosque service, zakāh planning, or communal reflection. When students engage in these tasks under supervision, they cultivate tarbīyah by promoting a sense of communal responsibility, empathy, and spiritual purpose while interacting with disciplinary material.

Reflective social discourse improves learning by encouraging conversation, criticism, and the creation of shared meaning. Islamic scholarship has historically prioritised nazar (contemplation) and muta'āshirah (interactive engagement) in educational contexts. Scholars asked questions that made people think, encouraged students to question each other, and showed that inquiry

[15] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, 1:45–48.

[16] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, 2:123–126.

[17] J. Ashman and E. Snow, *Instructional Psychology: An Introduction* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2008), 142–144.

can be a group activity.[18] This method is in line with modern dialogic pedagogy, which says that students should work together to understand things better through structured reflection and teamwork.

The Islamic triad of taʿlīm, tarbīyah, and taʾdīb provides a thorough theoretical framework for both guided inquiry and project-based learning. Each part is carefully designed to fit with constructivist ideas. Taʿlīm encourages the creation of knowledge through active participation; tarbīyah encourages moral behaviour through practice in context; and taʾdīb establishes behavioural and relational standards that are important for community learning. Guided inquiry combines structure with freedom, real-world context with scaffolded challenges, and individual thought with group discussion to bring all three parts together.

This convergence establishes the foundation for an Islamic-inspired Project-Based Learning (PBL) model that is not externally imposed but is grounded in the tradition's intrinsic goals and practices. In the following section, I will delineate particular design principles that emerge from this alignment and illustrate their application in rejuvenating pedagogical methods within madrassa environments.

2.2. Principles of Constructivist-Guided Inquiry and Framework

Guided inquiry has emerged as a fundamental pedagogical approach grounded in constructivist learning theory. Discovery learning focuses on open-ended exploration, while guided inquiry entails offering structured assistance that progressively transfers responsibility from the educator to the learner. Jerome Bruner, who came up with the idea of the "spiral curriculum," thought that students learn best when they go over the same ideas again and again, but with more difficulty and the proper support. So, inquiry is not entirely open-ended; it is meant to improve understanding, make connections, and encourage higher-order thinking.[19]

Wood, Bruner, and Ross first came up with the idea of scaffolding, which is a temporary structure made by teachers to help students finish tasks they can't do on their own.[20] These supports can include modelling, prompts, feedback, or breaking down complex problems into smaller, more manageable parts. As students become more skilled, the scaffold is slowly taken away, allowing them to work on their own. Lev Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) serves as the theoretical framework: significant learning transpires in the interval between learners' independent capabilities and their potential achievements with assistance.[21]

Studies on problem-based and inquiry learning demonstrate that scaffolding is essential for enhancing student achievement. Hmelo-Silver, Duncan, and Chinn point out that scaffolds can be conceptual, metacognitive, procedural, or strategic. Each type of scaffold helps to reduce

[18] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 112.

[19] Jerome S. Bruner, *The Process of Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 52–54.

[20] David Wood, Jerome S. Bruner, and Gail Ross, "The Role of Tutoring in Problem Solving," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 17, no. 2 (1976): 98–99.

[21] Lev S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 86–87.

cognitive load and keep learners focused on the most essential ideas.[22] A conceptual scaffold could be a guiding question that leads to more research, while a procedural scaffold could be a timeline that shows the steps of a project. Metacognitive scaffolds facilitate contemplation of the learning process, resonating with the Qurʾānic emphasis on self-reflection (ḥisāb al-nafs).[23]

In madrassa settings, where education has historically relied on teacher lectures and student memorisation, scaffolding can be exceptionally effective. Instead of throwing away tradition, guided inquiry can change the teacher's role to that of a facilitator, where they ask structured questions, give commentary, and slowly lead students to analyse texts on their own. This method is similar to the old practice of mudārasa (collaborative study), in which a shaykh would ask questions and point out commentaries to help students improve their ability to understand. Constructivist research endorses these strategies, illustrating that dialogue and well-timed enquiries are essential instruments for learners to gain and enhance knowledge.[24]

Making real tasks is another critical part of guided inquiry. Dewey stressed that learning should be based on real-life situations instead of drills that don't relate to real life.[25] In project-based learning, real-world problems are solved and knowledge is used in practical, meaningful ways. In madrassa education, this could involve projects where students analyse contemporary financial practices through fiqh principles, coordinate community initiatives centred on Islamic ethics, or create multimedia presentations on tafsīr topics. According to Islam, knowledge that isn't put into practice (ʿamal) is incomplete.[26] These activities connect what you know with what you do in real life.

It is also important to have reflective discourse. Mercer and Littleton show that exploratory talk, where students say, explain, and question ideas, helps them reason and learn together.[27] Reflection and dialogue have been essential components of Islamic pedagogy for an extended period. The Prophet ﷺ frequently posed enquiries to his companions, such as "Do you know who the bankrupt person is?"—a dialogical method that facilitated deeper comprehension among learners.[28] Guided inquiry exemplifies this dialogical ethos by promoting students' collaborative meaning-making while honouring the teacher's facilitative role.

Some people who don't like constructivist methods say that giving beginners too little help could be too much for them. Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark assert that unguided discovery may induce cognitive overload, leading to inadequate retention.[29] However, advocates of guided inquiry

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[22] Cindy E. Hmelo-Silver, Ravit Golan Duncan, and Clark A. Chinn, "Scaffolding and Achievement in Problem-Based and Inquiry Learning," *Educational Psychologist* 42, no. 2 (2007): 100–102.

[23] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 117–118.

[24] Neil Mercer and Karen Littleton, *Dialogue and the Development of Children's Thinking* (London: Routledge, 2007), 28–30.

[25] John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 30–32.

[26] Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999), 3:67–69.

[27] Mercer and Littleton, *Dialogue and the Development of Children's Thinking*, 45–48.

[28] Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-Birr, ḥadīth no. 2581.

[29] Paul A. Kirschner, John Sweller, and Richard E. Clark, "Why Minimal Guidance During Instruction Does Not Work," *Educational Psychologist* 41, no. 2 (2006): 78–79.

contend that scaffolding precisely tackles this concern by offering an equilibrium of direction and autonomy. When done right, guided inquiry uses the best parts of constructivism and adds load management ideas from cognitive science. In madrassa settings, where students frequently possess minimal experience in critical questioning, scaffolding facilitates a gradual development of inquiry, thereby mitigating confusion.

The combination of guided inquiry and scaffolding that fits with Islamic educational values is a good start for reform. Taʿlīm can be seen as a way to interact with texts in a structured way that focuses on making meaning through scaffolds. Tarbīyah manifests through genuine projects that cultivate responsibility, empathy, and ethical conduct. Taʾdīb is cultivated through the principles of respectful discourse, inquiry, and cooperative reasoning. So, guided inquiry based on constructivism not only helps students learn more, but it also helps them reach the spiritual and moral goals of madrassa education.

2.3. The alignment of Islamic educational objectives with constructivist-oriented inquiry

The previous discussions emphasise that the Islamic triad of taʿlīm, tarbīyah, and taʾdīb centres on the acquisition of knowledge, moral and spiritual growth, and the cultivation of refined conduct. At the same time, guided inquiry based on constructivism stresses scaffolding, real-world tasks, and discussions that make you think. Both methods are meant to help students learn more than just facts and figures; they want to help them learn in a way that changes them. These frameworks together point to a promising way to change how teachers teach in madrassas.

In Islamic education at the level of taʿlīm, the emphasis extends beyond mere transmission of texts to promoting the active internalisation of their meanings by learners. Al-Ghazālī's assertion that knowledge devoid of practice is rendered vacuous corresponds with constructivist perspectives, which contend that mere passive listening is inadequate for genuine comprehension.[30] When teachers use guided inquiry by asking good questions, helping students understand, and giving them more freedom over time, they encourage them to think about and understand the Qurʾānic ideas of reflection (tadabbur) and understanding (tafaqquh) instead of just reciting. This scaffolding process directly contributes to the attainment of the Islamic objective of profound knowledge.

Tarbīyah's goal is to help people develop their character and moral values, which naturally happens through project-based inquiry. Students need to use what they know in real-life situations for authentic PBL tasks. For example, they might have to come up with solutions, work with communities, or make things that meet real needs. These tasks are in line with Islamic educational principles that say that knowledge should lead to good actions (ʿamal ṣāliḥ). For example, a project that uses fiqh to look at financial practices not only teaches jurisprudence but also makes people more aware of fairness, justice, and responsibility. This shows Ibn Khaldūn's belief that character traits are shaped by repeated practice and habituation, not just by studying

[30] Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999), 1:45–48.

theory. Guided inquiry operationalises tarbīyah by amalgamating moral development with experiential learning opportunities.[31]

The principle of taʾdīb, which involves improving adab, is very similar to the way guided inquiry works, which is through collaboration and dialogue. Constructivist research underscores that knowledge is most effectively cultivated through social interaction, wherein learners collaboratively articulate, contest, and enhance ideas.[32] In the past, adab governed not only how students should treat their teachers and texts in madrassa settings, but also how they should debate scholarly issues (munāẓara). Guided inquiry brings back the Islamic idea of taʾdīb to the modern classroom by making inquiry projects focus on respectful dialogue, critical questioning, and shared responsibility. The teacher's job as a facilitator is similar to the shaykh's job of making sure that conversations are both intellectually challenging and morally sound.

This convergence extends beyond individual objectives to include foundational epistemologies. Constructivism asserts that learners acquire knowledge by connecting new information with existing understanding through experience and reflection.[33] Likewise, Islamic educational philosophy posits that knowledge is not simply static information but an integrated process encompassing ʿilm, ʿamal, and ḥāl (knowledge, action, and state). Syed Naquib al-Attas defines taʾdīb as the "inculcation of adab," which integrates intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions into a holistic educational framework.[34] As a result, both traditions see learning as a complete, growing process that is closely linked to its setting.

Combining these traditions gives us two essential ideas for reforming madrassas. First, it makes a conceptual link that shows how modern teaching methods enhance Islamic identity instead of threatening it. The Qurʾānic injunctions to observe, reflect, and deliberate (Q 3:191; Q 59:21) may be interpreted as promoting inquiry-based learning. Second, it gives applicable design rules: scaffolding as taʿlīm, real projects as tarbīyah, and dialogical norms as taʾdīb. This alignment demonstrates that guided inquiry and Islamic education are interconnected rather than distinct entities.

Importantly, this coming together also addresses the concerns raised by critics of changes to education. People often oppose modern methods in madrassas because they are worried about secularisation or the loss of traditional practices. However, by anchoring guided inquiry in the Islamic triad, reformers can illustrate conformity with the Prophetic teaching model, which employed questioning, experiential learning, and incremental scaffolding.[35] Constructivist inquiry does not erode tradition; instead, it revitalises its core principles.

This review establishes the conceptual foundations for the theoretical framework of the article. The alignment of taʿlīm–tarbīyah–taʾdīb with the principles of guided inquiry suggests that a hybrid model—constructivist problem-based learning within Islamic epistemology—is both theoretically coherent and pedagogically viable. Este modelo promete llevar la educación en las

[31] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 518–520.
[32] Neil Mercer and Karen Littleton, *Dialogue and the Development of Children's Thinking* (London: Routledge, 2007), 45–48.
[33] Jerome S. Bruner, *The Process of Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 52–54.
[34] Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1991), 2–3.
[35] Mark Halstead, "An Islamic Concept of Education," *Comparative Education* 40, no. 4 (2004): 523–525.

madrassas más allá de la memorización mecánica, dotando a los estudiantes de competencias reflexivas, éticas y prácticas, sin perder de vista los objetivos islámicos.

3. **DISCUSSION**:

3.1. Using the Framework in Madrassa Classrooms

The framework above shows that project-based learning (PBL) strategies that are in line with the Islamic goals of taʿlīm, tarbīyah, and taʾdīb can help bring madrassa teaching back to life. This part shows how this model can be used in three essential parts of madrassa curricula: fiqh, tafsīr, and sīrah. Each example illustrates the integration of constructivist principles, such as scaffolding, authentic tasks, and reflective dialogue, with Islamic educational objectives to promote enhanced comprehension and holistic development.

3.1.1. Fiqh: Islamic Finance and Contemporary Ethical Concerns

Students usually learn fiqh by reading classical texts and memorising the rules. Then, they apply the rules to made-up situations. This does help people learn about doctrine, but it doesn't always help them in real life. A PBL approach can fix this by putting fiqh in real-life social and economic situations. For example, Students look at how a local microfinance institution works to see if it follows Islamic law. With the teacher's help, they begin with classical rules about ribā, qarḍḥasan, and profit-sharing. g. The teacher helps students learn how to get principles from sources and then gives them parts to analyse on their own. Students talk to bank officials, collect documents, and write a report that compares the bank's practices to the fiqh ruling. This project includes taʿlīm by studying legal sources, tarbīyah by teaching people to be responsible for social justice in finance, and taʾdīb by teaching people to talk to professionals and peers in a respectful way. It also helps people learn how to think critically and solve problems in the real world. Similar initiatives in Islamic finance education indicate that practical projects enhance comprehension and dedication to ethical practices.[36]

3.1.2. Tafsīr: Qurʾānic Environmental Ethics

Tafsīr instruction frequently emphasises the analysis of linguistic characteristics, the debate of interpretations, and the memorisation of commentaries. y. This method can be helpful, but it can also separate scripture from moral issues that are happening right now. s. Project-based inquiry makes the Qurʾān more relevant by putting interpretations in the context of critical global issues. s. Example Project: Students examine the Qurʾānic notion of stewardship (khilāfah) in connection with environmental care. e. The teacher talks about important verses (Q 2:30; Q 6:165; Q 55:7–9) and classical commentaries. Using guided worksheets to show how to connect exegesis to thematic questions, students then come up with a "Green Madrassa Initiative" for the campus that puts Qurʾānic principles into action by cutting down on waste, planting trees, and raising awareness. In this context, taʿlīm entails rigorous examination of the Qurʾān and tafsīr; tarbīyah fosters ecological accountability as a spiritual endeavour; and taʾdīb is manifested through collaboration and ethical behaviour. The last community project is an example of Dewey's idea that education should come from doing things that are important to society.[37]

[36] M. Kabir Hassan and Mervyn K. Lewis, *Handbook of Islamic Banking* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2007), 385–388.
[37] John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 30–32.

These methods are in line with global trends that are integrating sustainability into religious education.[38]

3.1.3. Sīrah: Leadership and Conflict Resolution

Sīrah studies frequently narrate the life of the Prophet Muhammad, focusing on chronology and events. s. This method may not fully use sīrah's potential to teach modern leadership and ethics, even though it is inspiring. s. A PBL approach sees sīrah as a way to solve problems. g. Sample Project: Students analyse the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah as a case study in conflict resolution. The teacher gives students primary sources from Ibn Hishām and Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, as well as scholarly analysis. s. Students are put into groups to act out negotiations, with some being Muslim envoys, some being Quraysh representatives, and some being neutral observers. s. The teacher shows how to look at motives, concessions, and implications. s. Students then write a paper about what they learnt that can be used in current negotiations in Pakistan. n. This activity promotes taʿlīm through detailed textual work, tarbīyah by nurturing qualities like patience and strategic thought, and taʾdīb by encouraging respectful dialogue even when disagreeing. g. Reflection links the Prophet's example to contemporary governance, exemplifying the Qurʾān's characterisation of him as a "beautiful model" (Q 33:21). Studies indicate that role-playing enhances moral reasoning.[39]

3.2. Expected Benefit

Using constructivist PBL in these areas can lead to deeper learning than just memorising facts. It can help students focus on applying what they learn, putting things together, and thinking about what they've learnt. It makes students more interested because real projects are more interesting than abstract exercises. It also helps people learn skills that can be used in other areas, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, all based on Islamic identity. Additionally, public projects can help build community ties by showing how madrassas help with social welfare.

3.3. Possible Problems

Even with these benefits, there are still problems. Some traditional scholars might not want to do projects because they think they will make studying texts less rigorous. Teachers might not know how to lead and help with projects. Limited resources could make it hard to find real opportunities. Also, we need new ways to test that look at process and reflection, not just content mastery. To get past these, a phased approach is necessary. This means starting with small projects, training teachers, and making sure tests are culturally appropriate. l. Framing PBL as an extension of Islamic objectives, rather than a foreign methodology, can mitigate resistance.

3.4. Towards an Integrated Madrassa Pedagogy

The examples of fiqh, tafsīr, and sīrah demonstrate that constructivist PBL, grounded in Islamic epistemology, is practical. It provides a culturally pertinent approach to modernising madrassa education while honouring tradition. The framework connects research to scripture and

[38] Fazlun Khalid, "Islam and the Environment," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (London: Continuum, 2005), 867–872.

[39] Robert Jackson, *Religious Education: An Interpretive Approach* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1997), 115–117.

scholarly tradition, getting students ready to face modern problems. This synthesis offers a transformative Islamic and educational pedagogy.

4. CONCLUSION

This article stresses that for madrassa reform to work, both the curriculum and the way teachers teach need to be improved. Although extensive research has concentrated on contemporary topics or institutional politics, the fundamental processes of teaching and learning remain underexplored. This study seeks to bridge the gap by merging constructivist, project-based learning (PBL) with Islamic educational philosophy. The examination of Islamic educational objectives indicates that taʿlīm, tarbīyah, and taʾdīb emphasise more than mere memorisation; they encompass the acquisition of knowledge, the cultivation of moral character, and the enhancement of behaviour. Constructivist theory and guided inquiry advocate for scaffolding, authentic tasks, and reflective dialogue—principles that resonate with Islamic pedagogy. This indicates that these traditions are not antagonistic but rather mutually reinforcing. The framework of "Constructivist PBL within Islamic Epistemology" exemplifies this synergy. Scaffolding corresponds with taʿlīm, genuine projects with tarbīyah, and dialogic discourse with taʾdīb. When you look at PBL through this Islamic lens, you see reform as a way to bring back the Prophetic teaching model, which used questioning, hands-on learning, and guidance. This framework can be used for the main subjects taught in madrassas. In fiqh, students may examine contemporary financial matters through the lens of classical jurisprudence.[40] In tafsīr, projects can connect Qurʾānic ideas of stewardship to problems with the environment. In sīrah, role-playing the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah can help people learn how to lead and negotiate. These examples show how constructivist methods help people understand texts better and encourage them to think critically, be ethical, and get involved in their communities. The consequences are significant. First, this model lets madrassas teach modern skills while still keeping their Islamic identity. Second, it fits with national goals, like getting students ready for jobs in Islamic finance and leadership. Third, it adds to the global conversation about faith-based education by showing how religious knowledge can work with modern learning theories.

But there are problems. Resistance from traditional teachers, not enough training for facilitators, and not enough resources could make it hard to put this into action. These problems show how important pilot programs, teacher training, and evaluations that take culture into account are. Madrassas can test and improve this method by starting small, which strikes a balance between tradition and new ideas. In conclusion, combining constructivist PBL with Islamic epistemology is a promising way to rethink how madrassas teach. It confirms that the intellectual traditions of Islam possess the capacity for active, reflective, and comprehensive learning. We need to make a conscious effort to develop these traits along with new ideas about how to teach. This method connects the past and the present and gets Muslim scholars ready to lead with integrity, wisdom, and effectiveness.

[40] Mark Halstead, "An Islamic Concept of Education," *Comparative Education* 40, no. 4 (2004): 523–525.

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