

The Effect of Project Based Learning on Students' Motivation in Learning English at MTs As-Syafi'iyah Kalongan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) learning model on students' English learning motivation at MTs As-Syafi'iyah Kalongan. The background of this study is based on the low motivation of students to learn in English subjects, which is largely due to the learning methods that are still teacher-centered and have minimal active student involvement. This research used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design. The research subjects consisted of two classes, namely the experimental class that used the PjBL model and the control class that used conventional methods. The data collection technique was carried out through a learning motivation questionnaire given at the time of the pre-survey and post-survey. The data obtained were analyzed using a normality test, homogeneity, independent t-test, and N-Gain calculation. The results showed that there was a higher increase in learning motivation in the experimental group compared to the control group. The N-Gain score in the experimental class was 0.3544 (medium category), while the control class was only 0.1587 (low category). The t-test results showed a significant difference between the two groups. Thus, it can be concluded that the PjBL model has a significant effect on increasing students' English learning motivation.

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INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that plays a crucial role in the world of education. In today's era of globalization, mastering English has become one of the fundamental skills that students must possess in order to compete globally (Saputri et al., 2023). The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has designated English as an important subject taught from elementary to secondary education levels (Hidayah et al., 2022). A good command of English enables students to access knowledge from various sources, communicate across cultures and open broader future opportunities (Agung et al., 2022). Therefore, English teaching is not only aimed at developing linguistic competence, but also at shaping students into confident, active individuals who are adaptable to the challenges of the modern world.

However, field findings reveal that students' motivation to learn English at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level remains relatively low. Observations at MTs As-Syafi'iyah Kalongan show that many students exhibit passive attitudes during English lessons. They tend to lack enthusiasm, rarely ask questions, and participate minimally in the learning process. Some students even perceive English as a difficult, uninteresting, and confusing subject. This lack of motivation leads to lower classroom participation and declining academic performance. Poor learning motivation not only affects material comprehension but also hinders the development of students' communication skills in using English actively.

Preliminary research results show that more than 60% of students stated they lacked interest in learning English. Most of them found it difficult to understand the material delivered by the teacher, felt afraid to speak in English, and lacked self-confidence. Additionally, many students reported that the teaching methods used so far were boring. In follow-up interviews, some students admitted that they were reluctant to participate actively in class due to fear of making mistakes and not having opportunities to express themselves freely. These findings reinforce the assumption that students' motivation in learning English needs to be improved through more innovative, contextual, and participatory approaches.

One of the main factors contributing to low motivation in learning English is the teacher-centered learning approach. In this model, students act merely as passive recipients of information, while the teacher becomes the sole source of knowledge in the classroom. Limited interaction and lack of collaborative activities lead students to feel unchallenged and emotionally or intellectually disengaged in the learning process. Students are not given enough opportunities to explore English in real-life contexts or to develop creative projects relevant to their lives. This disconnect makes learning feel distant from their everyday experiences and ultimately decreases student engagement.

In response to this issue, the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model is offered as an alternative solution to address low learning motivation. PjBL is a learning approach that encourages students to actively engage in solving relevant, meaningful projects connected to real-life situations (Karim & Na, 2024; Lu, 2021). Through PjBL, students do not merely aim to understand the material, but also develop collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity skills (Tarigan & Nadhira, 2023). In the context of English learning, PjBL provides space for students to use the language contextually through activities such as creating conversation videos, designing travel brochures in English, or preparing presentations on specific topics (Agintayani, 2022). These activities foster enjoyable,

challenging, and meaningful learning experiences, which in turn can significantly enhance students' motivation to learn.

The implementation of PjBL also aligns with the characteristics of 21st-century learners who demand active, problem-solving-based instruction. PjBL positions students as the central subjects of the learning process, rather than passive objects who merely receive content (Meirawati & Kresnawati, 2022). Students become more responsible for their own learning process and learn to work collaboratively in teams to complete tasks (Widowati & Dewanto, 2025). This indirectly encourages them to become more motivated, engaged, and willing to try new things in English learning. Thus, PjBL is not only an engaging method but also holds significant potential in sustainably improving students' learning motivation.

Numerous studies have explored the effectiveness of PjBL. For example, research by Halimah & Winarni (2021) showed that the PjBL model had a positive effect on student motivation in science subjects. Similarly, Fadiyah Andirasdini & Fuadiyah (2024) found that PjBL positively influenced students' motivation in biology learning. However, most previous studies have mainly focused on improving cognitive outcomes, particularly in exact sciences such as science or biology. In contrast, research specifically addressing the influence of PjBL on English learning motivation within Islamic schools remains limited. This highlights a significant research gap that needs to be addressed. Furthermore, the madrasah learning environment has unique characteristics in terms of pedagogy, religious values, and student profiles. Therefore, this study is both relevant and necessary to determine the extent to which PjBL can enhance students' English learning motivation in the madrasah context.

This study not only contributes theoretically by enriching the literature on the application of PjBL in English education but also offers practical implications for teachers, schools, and educational stakeholders in designing more effective, student-centered teaching strategies. It is hoped that teachers at MTs As-Syafi'iyah Kalongan and other madrasahs will begin adopting project-based learning as a fun and productive alternative for teaching English. Moreover, the findings from this study can serve as a reference for education policymakers in developing teacher training programs or curriculum frameworks that encourage the use of active and innovative teaching methods in schools.

Based on the aforementioned background, regarding the importance of English, low student motivation, preliminary research findings, and the potential of the PjBL model, the researcher is interested in conducting a study titled *"The Influence of Project Based Learning on Students' Motivation Learning English in MTs As-Syafi'iyah Kalongan."* This research is expected to provide real contributions to efforts in improving students' learning motivation and to serve as a reference for teachers and educational institutions in developing innovative, enjoyable, and relevant instructional strategies that meet the needs of today's learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Project Based Learning (PjBL)

Project Based Learning (PjBL) is a student-centered learning model, where they learn knowledge and skills by working on complex and authentic projects within a certain period of time. According to Kumar (2021) PjBL involves meaningful, problem-based tasks, and demands collaboration, planning and completion by students themselves. This model is

designed to increase student understanding through in-depth exploration and active investigation of a topic or problem. PjBL is considered effective in fostering students' emotional and cognitive engagement because it gives students greater autonomy in the learning process (Arief et al., 2024). That way, students not only learn to know, but also to do and create, including in the context of foreign language learning.

Concept of Learning Motivation

Learning motivation is an internal or external drive that encourages a person to engage in learning activities to achieve certain goals. Janah & Cahyono (2022) states that learning motivation can function as a driver of effort, determinant of the direction of learning activities, and reinforcer of student success. In the context of English language learning, motivation is a crucial factor that influences students' engagement in various language activities such as speaking, listening, writing and reading .

Teng (2025) distinguishes two types of motivation in language learning: integrative motivation, which is the desire to interact and integrate with the target language user community; and instrumental motivation, which is motivation due to specific goals such as passing exams or getting a job.

Relationship between PjBL and Learning Motivation

A number of studies have shown that the implementation of PjBL has a significant effect on increasing students' learning motivation. When students are given the freedom to choose topics, set goals, and work in groups to complete a project, they tend to be more excited and actively involved in the learning process (Nurhidayati et al., 2024; Pardede, 2024). In PjBL, motivation increases due to the elements of novelty, challenge, and collaboration that make the learning process more enjoyable and meaningful.

According to Halimah & Winarni (2021) a person's intrinsic motivation grows when three basic psychological needs are met: autonomy, competence, and relationships. These three needs are facilitated very well in project-based learning, as students are given responsibility and trust to complete the project independently or in groups.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study is a quantitative research employing a quasi-experimental approach. The research design used is the pre-survey and post-survey control group design, which involves two groups: an experimental group that received instruction using the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model, and a control group that continued with conventional instruction. Both groups were administered a pre-survey and a post-survey to measure changes in students' motivation to learn English before and after the treatment.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all eighth-grade students at MTs As-Syafi'iyah Kalongan during the 2024/2025 academic year. The total number of eighth-grade students was 70, divided into two classes. The sampling technique employed was total sampling, in which the entire population was used as the sample due to its relatively small size, making

it feasible for comprehensive study. One of the two classes was assigned as the experimental group, and the other as the control group.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The study employed a survey to collect data by administering a learning motivation questionnaire to students before and after the treatment. The questionnaire was constructed based on indicators of learning motivation, including aspects such as interest, attention, enthusiasm, independence, and active engagement in the learning process. A Likert scale with four response options (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree) was utilized to systematically measure students' level of motivation toward English learning. In addition to the questionnaire, the researcher also conducted classroom observations of student learning activities during the instructional process to serve as complementary data.

Table 1. Questionnaire Instrument for Motivation to Learn English

Indicators	No	Statement
Perseverance in Learning	1	I keep learning English even though the material is difficult.
	2	I try to understand English lessons even though it takes a long time.
	3	I keep doing English assignments even though I am not in the mood.
Resilience in the face of difficulties	4	I do not give up easily when experiencing difficulties in understanding English materials.
	5	When I get a low grade in English, I try to improve it.
	6	I look for ways to overcome difficulties in learning English.
Interest and Attention to the Lesson	7	I always pay attention to the teacher's explanation during English lessons.
	8	I feel happy when learning English lessons.
	9	I am interested in knowing more about English.
Tendency to Choose Challenging Tasks	10	I am happy if I am given a challenging English project assignment.
	11	I would like to try to do English problems that are more difficult than usual.
	12	I feel challenged if I am asked to make a presentation in English.
Desire and Hope to Succeed	13	I want to be an outstanding student in English lessons.
	14	I aim for high grades in English lessons.
	15	I aspire to be able to master English well.
Appreciation of Learning Effort	16	I believe that my efforts in learning English will pay off.
	17	I appreciate the process of learning English even though the results are not yet optimal.
	18	I feel proud when I have tried hard in learning English.
Happy and Satisfied with Learning Outcomes	19	I feel happy if I get good grades in English lessons.
	20	I feel satisfied when I complete my English assignments well.
	21	I am proud of my progress in learning English.

The research instrument was the learning motivation questionnaire, which had undergone content validation by subject matter experts and English teachers. Validity and reliability tests were conducted on a class outside the research sample. The results of the validity test indicated that most of the questionnaire items were valid (*r-calculated* > *r-table*), while the reliability coefficient, as measured using Cronbach's Alpha, exceeded 0.7, indicating that the instrument was reliable and appropriate for data collection. The following is a questionnaire instrument for motivation to learn English.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures in this study were carried out systematically to obtain valid and accurate data regarding the effect of Project Based Learning (PjBL) implementation on students' English learning motivation at MTs As-Syafi'iyah Kalong. This study used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design involving two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. Both groups were given a questionnaire to measure the level of motivation to learn English before (pre-survey) and after (post-survey) the treatment was carried out.

The first stage is the preparation of data collection instruments, namely in the form of a learning motivation questionnaire which is prepared based on the theory of learning motivation proposed by several experts. One of them is Teng (2025) who states that learning motivation can be measured through several indicators, including:

1. Perseverance in learning, namely the extent to which students show effort and enthusiasm to continue learning despite facing difficulties.
2. Endurance in facing difficulties, namely the ability of students not to give up easily when experiencing obstacles in learning.
3. Interest and attention to lessons, namely the extent to which students feel interested and focused on the subject.
4. The tendency to choose challenging tasks, namely students' courage and interest in facing difficult learning tasks.
5. Desire and hope to succeed, including students' aspirations to achieve learning achievements.
6. Appreciation of learning efforts, namely the extent to which students appreciate the importance of the learning process.
7. A sense of pleasure and satisfaction with learning results, namely students' positive feelings when achieving good results in learning.

The questionnaire instrument was prepared using a four-point Likert scale, namely: 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Agree), and 4 (Strongly Agree). Each statement item in the questionnaire is adjusted to the indicators above, to capture the dimensions of learning motivation as a whole. Before being distributed, the validity and reliability of the instrument were tested on a number of respondents outside the research sample who had similar characteristics. Validity was tested using item-total correlation technique, and reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha formula. Instruments that meet valid and reliable criteria are then used to quantitatively measure student learning motivation.

Furthermore, the pre-survey questionnaire was distributed to both groups (experimental and control) to determine the initial motivation level of students before being given treatment. The distribution was carried out directly in the classroom in a conducive atmosphere, with the supervision of researchers and subject teachers to ensure that students filled out the questionnaire honestly and independently.

After the pre-survey, the experimental group was given treatment in the form of learning using the Project Based Learning model for several meetings. Students were invited to design and complete English learning projects in groups. Meanwhile, the control group followed conventional learning methods such as lectures, practice questions, and questions and answers. The researcher also observed the learning process, especially in the experimental group, to record students' participation, involvement, and response in the project activities.

After the entire learning process was completed, the post-survey questionnaire was distributed to both groups. This questionnaire is the same as the pre-survey questionnaire, so that it is possible to compare the results to determine the increase in learning motivation after PjBL treatment. The distribution of the post-survey was carried out with the same procedure as the pre-survey so that the measurement conditions remained objective and equal.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis methods used in this study included gain score analysis to assess the improvement in learning motivation before and after the treatment, as well as an independent samples t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. Statistical analysis was conducted with the assistance of Microsoft Excel. The *t-test* was carried out at a 5% significance level, assuming that the data were normally distributed and homogeneous. The results of the data analysis were then used as the basis for drawing conclusions regarding the effect of the implementation of Project-Based Learning on students' motivation to learn English at MTs As-Syafi'iyah Kalongan.

FINDINGS

This study aims to determine the effect of PjBL learning model on students' English learning motivation. Data analysis was conducted to compare the increase in learning motivation between the experimental group that used the PjBL model and the control group that received conventional learning. The data testing was done through several stages: normality test, homogeneity test, t-test for pre-survey and post-survey, and N-Gain calculation.

Normality Test Results

Table 2. Normality Test Results

Class	Test Type	KS Count	KS table
Experiment	Pre-survey	0,1176	0,224
	Post-survey	0,2198	0,224
Control	Pre-survey	0,1299	0,224
	Post-survey	0,0812	0,224

Based on the results of the analysis using the Kolmogorov Smirnov test, the significance values are obtained as follows: experimental group pre-survey of 0.1176, experimental post-survey 0.2198, control pre-survey 0.1299, and control post-survey 0.0812. All of these significance values are smaller than the KS table, which is 0.224, indicating that the data is normally distributed. The results of this normality test indicate that the data in each group meet the requirements of normal distribution. Thus, the use of parametric tests such as the *independent sample t-test* to analyze differences between two groups can be done legitimately.

Homogeneity Test Results

Table 3. Homogeneity Test Results

Test Type	F Count	F table
Pre-survey	1,094	1,772
Post-survey	0,548	0,564

The test results show the pre-survey F value of 1.094 and post-survey of 0.548. Each of these values is smaller than the F table value. Thus, it can be concluded that the data has a homogeneous variance. This result indicates that the difference in variability between the experimental and control groups is not significant, so the assumption of equality of variance is met.

Independent Sample t-Test Results

To test the hypothesis regarding the difference in learning motivation between the experimental and control groups, a t-test was conducted on the pre-survey and post-survey scores.

Table 4. Results of t-test

Test Type	T count	T table
Pre-survey	0,021	1,995
Post- survey	9,163	1,995

The pre-survey t-test results show the t value of 0.021. This value is smaller than the t table value of 1.995, which means that there is no significant difference between the two groups before the treatment is given. This is important as a basis that the initial conditions of the two groups are equal. Meanwhile, the results of the post-survey t-test showed a calculated t value of 9.163, which is much greater than 1.995. This means that there is a very significant difference between the learning motivation of experimental and control group students after treatment.

This result provides strong evidence that the application of PjBL has a significant effect on increasing students' English learning motivation. Initially, both groups had equal levels of motivation. However, after the implementation of PjBL in the experimental class, there was a greater increase than the control group. This shows that the project-based learning approach has an effect on a more active, contextual, and interesting learning environment for students.

N-Gain Calculation Results

To determine the increase in learning motivation quantitatively, the N-Gain calculation was carried out from the pre-survey and post-survey results. The following are the results of the N Gain test calculation.

Table 5. N Gain Test Results

Class	N Gain Score
Experiment	0, 3544
Control	0, 1587

The calculation results show that the experimental group has an N-Gain score of 0.3544, while the control group only obtained an N-Gain of 0.1587. Based on Hake's (1999) classification, the N-Gain score of 0.3-0.7 is classified as moderate, while the score below 0.3 is classified as low. Thus, the increase in learning motivation in the experimental group was classified as moderate, while the control group only experienced a low increase.

These N-Gain results strengthen the previous t-test results. The increase in student learning motivation in the experimental group which reached the moderate category showed that the use of PjBL not only made a significant difference, but also had a considerable impact on the development of students' affective aspects. Meanwhile, the low increase in the control group indicates that conventional learning methods are less able to foster students' enthusiasm and learning engagement optimally.

DISCUSSION

This study aims to determine the effect of PjBL learning model on students' English learning motivation at MTs As-Syafi'iyah Kalongan. Based on the results of data analysis, it was found that the average increase in learning motivation in the experimental group was higher than the control group. The N-Gain score in the experimental group was 0.3544, while in the control group it was only 0.1587. In addition, the results of the *independent sample t-test* showed a statistically significant difference between the post-survey scores of the experimental group and the control group. This means that there is a real effect of using the PjBL model on increasing student learning motivation.

The increase in student learning motivation in the experimental class can be understood as a consequence of the application of student-centered learning strategies where students are not only recipients of material, but also as active subjects in the learning process. The PjBL model directs students to learn through the completion of specific projects that demand collaboration, creativity, initiative, and responsibility. In the context of this research, the projects include making a video conversation in English. The activity was designed in such a way as to encourage students to apply their language skills in a meaningful context.

During the implementation of PjBL, it was seen that students in the experimental group showed high enthusiasm. They seemed to be more active in group discussions, helped each other in preparing presentation materials, and tried to present the project results optimally. Some students who were previously passive in class even began to dare to appear in front of the class when presenting their projects. The teacher also noted an increase in attendance and involvement during the learning process. This contrasted with the

atmosphere in the control group which still showed conventional learning patterns. Most students in the control class seemed less enthusiastic and passive.

In PjBL, students are given the freedom to choose the form of the project, the way of working, and the method of presentation, so that the need for autonomy is fulfilled. They are also given the opportunity to display their work openly, get feedback from teachers and peers, which makes them feel competent (Karim & Na, 2024). In addition, group work in completing the project makes students interact with each other, support each other, and form positive social connections. These three aspects make learning motivation in PjBL naturally increase and last longer.

This result is in line with Darmayanti (2022) view that learning motivation increases when students are involved in meaningful, contextual, and fun activities. Learning is no longer perceived as a burden, but rather as a relevant and interesting activity. With the project, students feel they have a real purpose in learning, not just getting grades or doing questions. This also makes them more active and motivated to use English, even though it is still limited to simple vocabulary.

Other support for the results of this study comes from various previous studies. Research conducted by Arief et al., (2024) showed that *Project Based Learning* was able to significantly increase students' motivation and engagement because this model provides space for exploration and creativity. Similarly, the results of research by Nurhayati (2019) concluded that students feel more happy and active when learning with a project approach because they feel an important part of the learning process.

The successful implementation of PjBL depends on several supporting factors, including: careful project planning, good time management, availability of learning media, and teacher skills in facilitating learning. In this study, the English teacher played an important role as a facilitator who not only gave instructions, but also guided, directed and motivated students during the project work. When students experienced difficulties, the teacher was present to provide encouragement, not just to assess the final results. Thus, the teacher-student relationship becomes more dialogic and humanizes the learning process.

This finding has important implications for the development of learning strategies in madrasah, especially in English language learning. The PjBL model can be an applicable and effective alternative solution to increase learning motivation, while developing 21st century skills such as cooperation, communication, creativity, and problem solving. Therefore, it is recommended that madrasahs provide training and assistance for teachers to master and apply the PjBL model optimally in the learning process.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the application of the PjBL learning model has a significant effect on students' English learning motivation at MTs As-Syafi'iyah Kalongan. This is evidenced by the results of data analysis which shows an increase in learning motivation scores higher in the experimental group than the control group. The experimental group obtained an N-Gain score of 0.3544 which is included in the medium category, while the control group only obtained 0.1587 which is

classified as low. The t-test results also showed a significant difference between the two groups indicating that the PjBL model had an effect in increasing student motivation.

The increase in motivation occurred because the PjBL model allows students to be actively involved in learning, working in teams, completing real projects, and displaying their learning outcomes in the form of presentations or creative products. This active involvement fosters self-confidence, a sense of ownership of the learning process, and encourages students to use English more meaningfully. During the observation process, students in the experimental class seemed more enthusiastic, communicative, and showed increased participation compared to the control class which still used conventional learning methods. Therefore, the PjBL model can be used as an alternative learning strategy that is effective in increasing motivation to learn English in a madrasah environment.

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