

IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING IN INCREASING COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT AND SELF-REGULATED LEARNING IN FIQH LEARNING IN MADRASAH TSANAWIYAH

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Abstract: The transformation of 21st-century education demands learning that fosters cognitive engagement and independent learning in students. However, fiqh learning in Islamic junior high schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) is still dominated by a teacher-centered approach, resulting in suboptimal student participation and self-regulated learning. This study aims to analyze the implementation of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) in enhancing cognitive engagement and self-regulated learning in fiqh learning in Islamic junior high schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah). The study employed a qualitative approach with field research. Informants included the madrasah principal, fiqh teachers, and students selected purposively. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña models. Data validity was tested through source triangulation, technical triangulation, and member checking. The results indicate that the implementation of Student-Centered Learning through group discussions, problem-based learning, collaborative learning, and inquiry learning can improve students' thinking skills, analytical skills, problem-solving skills, and reflection. This approach also develops self-regulated learning through the ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate learning and strengthen intrinsic motivation. Successful implementation is supported by teacher competence, school culture, learning facilities, and the leadership of the madrasah principal. Thus, Student-Centered Learning is an effective approach to improving the quality of fiqh learning, making it more active, reflective, and student-centered.

Keywords: Student-Centered Learning; cognitive engagement; self-regulated learning; fiqh learning; Madrasah Tsanawiyah.

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INTRODUCTION

The transformation of 21st-century education demands a shift in the learning paradigm from merely transferring knowledge to developing students' holistic competencies. The development of digital technology, globalization, and the complexity of life's challenges require students to have critical, creative, communicative, and collaborative thinking skills, as well as the ability to engage in lifelong learning. Therefore, education is no longer solely oriented toward mastering material, but also toward developing 21st-century competencies so that students can adapt to rapid change (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2023).

This shift positions teachers as facilitators who create active, reflective, and collaborative learning experiences. The OECD (2023) emphasizes that quality learning must enhance cognitive engagement, namely students' intellectual involvement in understanding concepts, solving problems, and reflecting on their learning process. Cognitive engagement is a crucial indicator because it is closely related to motivation, academic achievement, and higher-order thinking skills (OECD, 2023).

One approach that aligns with these demands is Student-Centered Learning (SCL). This approach places students at the center of learning through exploration, discussion, problem-solving, and reflection, while the teacher acts as a facilitator guiding the learning process. Through this approach, students are expected to develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and independent learning skills on an ongoing basis (OECD, 2023).

The implementation of Student-Centered Learning also aligns with the policy direction of the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka), which encourages the use of various learning strategies, such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, discovery learning, inquiry learning, and collaborative learning. This approach provides a more meaningful learning experience, enabling students not only to master knowledge but also to develop higher-order thinking skills and take responsibility for their own learning process (UNESCO, 2023; OECD, 2023).

In the context of Islamic education, particularly in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) learning in Madrasah Tsanawiyah (Islamic junior high schools), the implementation of Student-Centered Learning is becoming increasingly important. Fiqh learning not only aims to understand Islamic law but also trains students to analyze Islamic evidence, solve life's problems based on Islamic principles, and develop religious character. Therefore, fiqh learning requires strategies that encourage discussion, case analysis, argumentation, and decision-making based on valid evidence.

However, fiqh learning practices in various Islamic schools (madrasas) are still dominated by a teacher-centered learning approach. Learning predominantly utilizes lectures and memorization methods, thus limiting students' opportunities for critical thinking, discussion, and problem-solving. As a result, students tend to be passive recipients of information and lack the learning experiences that foster higher-order thinking skills and independent learning. Various studies also indicate that Islamic Religious Education learning still faces challenges in increasing students' active participation and intellectual engagement.

One indicator of the success of Student-Centered Learning is increased cognitive engagement. Cognitive engagement reflects students' ability to use deep thinking strategies, connect new knowledge with prior experiences, apply metacognitive strategies, and maintain attention when completing complex learning tasks. Students with high cognitive engagement not only seek correct answers but also understand the reasoning behind a concept, evaluate arguments, and reflect on their thinking processes. The OECD (2023) emphasizes that cognitive engagement is the foundation of meaningful learning because it encourages students to develop higher-order thinking skills.

Beyond cognitive engagement, successful 21st-century learning is also determined by Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) skills. Zimmerman explains that self-regulated learning is a student's ability to set learning goals, choose appropriate strategies, monitor learning progress, evaluate outcomes, and reflect to improve the quality of learning in the next stage. Thus, students play an active role in managing their own learning process, rather than simply receiving information from teachers (Faza & Lestari, 2025; Halder Adhya & Panda, 2026).

In Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) learning, self-regulated learning plays a crucial role because the material requires not only mastery of normative concepts but also the ability to analyze evidence, connect theory to real-life issues, and make decisions based on sharia principles. Students with good self-regulation tend to be more independent in seeking references, discussing topics, evaluating their understanding, and refining learning strategies. Conversely, low self-regulation leads to students being more dependent on teachers, thus hindering the development of critical thinking skills in the learning process.

The relationship between student-centered learning, cognitive engagement, and self-regulated learning has been increasingly studied in educational research. Li and Lajoie (2022) demonstrated that cognitive

engagement and self-regulated learning are interconnected through the use of metacognitive strategies, monitoring understanding, and reflecting on learning. Other research also indicates that student-centered learning contributes to increased motivation, learning independence, and academic achievement. However, most research has been conducted on general subjects, digital learning, or higher education, so its implementation in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) learning in Islamic junior high schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) remains scarce.

Previous studies also show that research on cognitive engagement has been predominantly conducted in technology-based learning and higher education, while research on self-regulated learning has been dominated by digital learning contexts. Furthermore, research integrating student-centered learning, cognitive engagement, and self-regulated learning into Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) instruction at Islamic junior high schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) is still very limited.

Based on this review, three research gaps remain. First, qualitative research exploring the implementation of student-centered learning in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) instruction in Islamic junior high schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) is still limited. Second, the relationship between student-centered learning, cognitive engagement, and self-regulated learning has been studied primarily quantitatively, thus failing to explain the implementation process in the classroom. Third, there is still little research exploring teacher strategies for fostering cognitive engagement and developing student self-regulation in fiqh instruction.

Based on these gaps, this study offers a novel approach in the form of an in-depth analysis of the implementation of student-centered learning in fiqh instruction, positioning cognitive engagement and self-regulated learning as key indicators of learning success. This research not only describes the learning strategies implemented by teachers but also explains how these strategies shape students' thinking activities, develop self-regulation, and create meaningful learning experiences within the context of Islamic education. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of Student-Centered Learning in fiqh learning in Madrasah Tsanawiyah, describe the form of cognitive involvement of students, identify the development of self-regulated learning, and explain the relationship between the three aspects in realizing fiqh learning that is active, reflective, and oriented towards the development of 21st century competencies.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with field research to examine the implementation of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) in enhancing cognitive engagement and self-regulated learning in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) instruction at a junior high school (Madrasah Tsanawiyah). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand learning phenomena naturally through the experiences, interactions, and practices of teachers and students (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles et al., 2020).

The study was conducted at MTs Negeri 2 Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, which was purposively selected because it implemented the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) with a Student-Centered Learning approach in the Fiqh subject. The research focused on the implementation of Student-Centered Learning, student cognitive engagement, and self-regulated learning during the learning process.

The research informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, consisting of the madrasah principal, the deputy head of curriculum, the Fiqh teacher, and students. Informants were recruited until data saturation was reached, ensuring that the information obtained was representative of the phenomenon under study.

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted through passive participatory methods to observe teacher activities, student engagement, learning strategies, classroom interactions, and the use of instructional media. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, the Islamic jurisprudence teacher, and students, while documentation included teaching modules, learning materials, assessments, student work, activity photos, and other relevant documents.

Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, technical triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from the principal, teachers, and students, while technical triangulation was conducted by matching the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. Furthermore, interview results were reconfirmed with informants through member checking to ensure the researcher's interpretations were consistent.

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2020). The data obtained was condensed through a process of selection, coding, and grouping based on research themes. Then, it was presented in narrative form and interview

excerpts to facilitate interpretation before drawing conclusions.

The research was conducted in accordance with ethical research principles. All informants provided voluntary consent prior to data collection, and their identities were disguised using codes such as GF-01 (Fiqh Teacher), KS-01 (School Principal), and PD-01 (Student) to maintain confidentiality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Student-Centered Learning in Islamic Jurisprudence Learning

The research results show that the implementation of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) learning at MTs Negeri 2 Palangka Raya has become one of the strategies employed by teachers to create more active, participatory, and meaningful learning. Based on observations, teachers no longer dominate the entire learning process through lectures, but rather act more as facilitators, providing opportunities for students to explore knowledge, discuss, express opinions, solve problems, and reflect on the Islamic jurisprudence material being studied. This approach provides space for students to construct their own understanding through authentic learning experiences, making the learning process more student-centered than teacher-centered (UNESCO, 2023; OECD, 2023).

Based on interviews, the Islamic jurisprudence teacher explained that the implementation of Student-Centered Learning involves shifting the learning pattern from a one-way delivery of material to one that involves students in every stage of the learning process. Teachers design learning through contextual problem-solving, group discussions, presentations of discussion results, reflection, and feedback, allowing students the opportunity to actively construct their knowledge.

One of the jurisprudence teachers said:

“Now, I no longer explain the material for an entire hour. I simply provide an introduction, then ask my students to discuss arguments, complete case studies, and then present their findings. I find they’re much more engaged than when they were just listening to a lecture..” (GF-01)

This statement was reinforced by the head of the madrasah who explained that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum encourages teachers to develop student-centered learning.

“We encourage all teachers to ensure that learning is not solely teacher-focused. Teachers should be facilitators who provide opportunities for students to think, ask questions, and present their arguments..” (KS-01)

Observations show that teachers use a variety of learning strategies that provide opportunities for active student interaction, including group discussions, presentations, problem-based learning, question-and-answer sessions, learning reflection, and collaborative assignments. These strategies engage students more effectively in the learning process than those using lecture-only teaching methods. This finding aligns with the view that student-centered learning can enhance student participation, critical thinking skills, and engagement through learning activities centered on student learning experiences (OECD, 2023).

The implementation of Student-Centered Learning is also reflected in increased student activity during the learning process. Observations show that students are more frequently asking questions, responding to peers' opinions, presenting arguments based on Islamic jurisprudence, and reflecting on the material being studied. These activities demonstrate a shift from passive learning to more active learning.

One student stated:

"When I study in a group discussion, I feel more confident asking questions and expressing my opinions. We can also help each other understand material we don't yet understand." (PD-01)

Another student explained:

"When the teacher gave us a case study about an everyday fiqh problem, we were asked to find the answer in books and other sources. Learning became more interesting because we were involved in finding the solution." (PD-05)

Observational data shows that most students exhibit greater enthusiasm when given the opportunity to discuss than when learning is limited to teacher explanations. This demonstrates that student-centered learning can enhance social interaction, the courage to express opinions, and responsibility for the learning process..

Students' Cognitive Involvement in Jurisprudence Learning

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of Student-Centered Learning has a positive contribution to increasing students' cognitive engagement in Islamic jurisprudence learning at MTs Negeri 2 Palangka Raya. Based on observations, students no longer merely receive information from the teacher passively, but are actively involved in various thinking activities such as identifying problems, analyzing evidence, connecting Islamic jurisprudence concepts to everyday life, constructing arguments, and evaluating answers obtained through group discussions.

These activities indicate that learning has shifted from a process of knowledge transfer to a process of active knowledge construction by students. This condition is in line with the view that cognitive engagement is a form of mental investment by students in understanding material in depth through the use of higher-order thinking strategies (OECD, 2023).

a. Student Thinking Activities

Observations show that students demonstrate more intensive thinking during the learning process compared to conventional learning. Teachers provide opportunities for students to identify fiqh issues related to everyday life, then seek legal basis for these issues through the Quran, hadith, and the opinions of scholars. Students then discuss their findings before presenting their arguments to the class.

The fiqh teacher explains:

"I don't give students answers right away. I direct them to find evidence first, then discuss it in groups before discussing it together. This way, they do more thinking than just listening to the teacher's explanation.." (GF-01)

This statement is supported by the results of interviews with students..

" We were asked to find the answers ourselves from books and the internet, as directed by the teacher. Afterward, we discussed and explained the answers to each other.." (PD-02)

Observations also showed that students were more likely to ask questions, rebut other groups' opinions, and connect Islamic jurisprudence material to their daily experiences. These activities reflect increased cognitive engagement, as students actively use their thinking skills during the learning process. This finding aligns with an OECD report stating that student-centered learning can increase cognitive engagement through ongoing exploration, argumentation, and reflection (OECD, 2023).

b. Analytical Skills

The research results show that the implementation of Student-Centered Learning also improves students' analytical skills in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). Teachers not only ask students to memorize Islamic jurisprudence laws but also to analyze the reasoning behind a legal provision based on the evidence used. In discussions, students are asked to compare several Islamic scholars' opinions on a given issue and then present arguments based on the sources they have found.

The fiqh teacher explains:

“What we assess is not only whether the answer is right or wrong, but how students are able to explain the reasons and legal basis for the opinions they express..” (GF-02)

The head of the madrasah also said that fiqh learning is directed at building analytical thinking skills..

“Today’s learning is no longer solely oriented toward memorization. Teachers are encouraged to help students understand the rationale behind a law, enabling them to develop deeper thinking skills..” (KS-01)

Observations show that students are able to connect Islamic jurisprudence concepts to various contemporary issues, such as digital transactions, social media use, and daily religious practices. This ability demonstrates improved analytical skills, which are an indicator of cognitive engagement in meaningful learning..

c. Problem Solving Skills

Research findings show that problem-based learning provides students with opportunities to develop problem-solving skills. Teachers present various case studies related to current fiqh issues, then ask students to identify the problem, seek relevant information, discuss alternative solutions, and draw conclusions based on sharia evidence.

One student explained:

“When given a case study, we have to discuss the evidence and then come up with a solution together. Learning like this helps us understand the material better because it directly relates to our daily lives..” (PD-04)

The fiqh teacher added:

“When students are able to explain the solution to a case with the right legal basis, I see that they really understand the material, not just memorizing it..” (GF-03)

Based on observations, most students were able to systematically develop problem-solving steps through problem identification, reference search, argument analysis, and conclusion drawing. These activities demonstrate the development of higher-order thinking skills, which are the primary goal of student-centered learning.

D. Students’ Self-Regulated Learning in Jurisprudence Learning

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) not only increases students’ cognitive engagement but also contributes to the development of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) in

fiqh learning. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, students began to demonstrate the ability to manage their learning process independently through learning planning activities, monitoring learning progress, evaluating learning outcomes, and building intrinsic motivation to understand fiqh material. These findings indicate that student-centered learning provides space for students to become more independent, responsible individuals, and able to control their own learning process. This condition is in line with Zimmerman's theory, which explains that self-regulated learning is an active process when students consciously regulate their thoughts, motivation, and behavior to achieve predetermined learning goals (Zimmerman, 2002).

a. Forethought Phase

Based on the research results, the learning planning stage was evident in student activities before the learning process began. Teachers provided the learning module, learning objectives, and issues to be discussed several days before the meeting so students had the opportunity to prepare by reading the material, seeking additional references, and formulating questions to be discussed in class.

The fiqh teacher explains:

"Before the lesson begins, I send out the main material through the class group. I ask students to read it first so that during the discussion, they already have a basic understanding of the material to be covered.." (GF-01)

This was reinforced by one of the students who stated:

"If the material has been distributed beforehand, I usually read it first at home so that I won't be confused during the discussion and can participate in answering questions.." (PD-03)

Observations show that most students come to class with small notes containing important points and questions they want to discuss. This habit demonstrates the ability to plan the learning process before the lesson begins. According to Zimmerman (2002), the ability to set goals, choose strategies, and prepare learning resources are key characteristics of the forethought phase, the initial stage in the self-regulated learning process. Thus, the implementation of Student-Centered Learning has encouraged students to plan their learning more systematically.

b. Performance Phase

Throughout the learning process, students demonstrate their ability to monitor their learning progress through group discussions, presentations,

and reflection on their understanding. The teacher does not immediately provide answers to every question, but rather provides opportunities for students to reassess their understanding through interactions with peers.

The fiqh teacher explains:

"I often ask students back questions rather than giving them direct answers. This way, they can determine whether their understanding is correct or whether it needs further improvement.." (GF-02)

Students also expressed:

"When discussing, I can know whether my answer is appropriate or not because my friends also give their opinions.." (PD-05)

Observations showed that students actively matched discussion results with the references used, noted parts they didn't understand, and asked questions when they encountered differences of opinion. These activities indicate the existence of a self-monitoring process, namely the students' ability to monitor their learning progress and control the strategies used during the learning process. This finding supports Zimmerman's (2002) theory, which states that the performance phase is characterized by an individual's ability to control attention, use learning strategies consciously, and monitor their own progress during learning..

c. Self-Reflection Phase

The learning evaluation stage occurs after the learning activity is completed. The teacher provides students with the opportunity to reflect on the material they have learned through class discussions and simple reflective journal entries. These activities help students evaluate their learning success and identify areas of the material that still require further study.

The fiqh teacher explains:

"At the end of the lesson, I always ask students to share what they have understood, what is still difficult, and how they will improve it in the next meeting.." (GF-01)

A student conveys:

"When we finished studying, we were asked to write down our conclusions and any parts we didn't understand. From there, I knew which material I needed to study again at home.." (PD-07)

Based on observations, the reflection activity enabled students to better identify their strengths and weaknesses in understanding the fiqh material. Students also showed a tendency to improve their learning strategies in subsequent meetings based on the results of the previous evaluation. This

condition aligns with the self-reflection phase in Zimmerman's (2002) theory, namely the ability to evaluate learning outcomes and use these experiences as a basis for improving the quality of learning in the future.

The implementation of Student-Centered Learning is able to develop students' Self-Regulated Learning through four main indicators: the ability to plan learning, monitor the learning process, evaluate learning outcomes, and build intrinsic motivation. These four indicators strongly align with Zimmerman's Self-Regulated Learning cycle model, which consists of three main phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection (Zimmerman, 2002).

These results also support various recent studies that suggest that learning that provides autonomy to students can improve self-regulation skills, the use of metacognitive strategies, and learning independence (Panadero, 2017; Li & Lajoie, 2022). However, this study makes a distinct contribution because it demonstrates that Zimmerman's theory is not only relevant to general or technology-based learning but can also be effectively implemented in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) learning in Madrasah Tsanawiyah (Islamic junior high schools). These findings show that the integration of Student-Centered Learning with fiqh learning is able to form students who not only understand Islamic legal concepts, but also have the ability to manage their learning process independently, reflectively, and sustainably.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Student-Centered Learning in Islamic Jurisprudence Learning

Supporting Factors for the Implementation of Student-Centered Learning

The research results show that the successful implementation of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) learning at MTs Negeri 2 Palangka Raya is influenced by several interrelated supporting factors, namely teacher competence, school culture, the availability of learning facilities, and the support of the madrasah principal. These four factors form a conducive learning ecosystem that enables students to be actively involved in the learning process.

1) Teacher Competence

Based on observations and interviews, teacher pedagogical competence is a key factor in the successful implementation of Student-Centered Learning. Teachers not only master the Islamic jurisprudence material but are also able to design lessons that encourage students' thinking through

discussions, problem-based learning, collaboration, and inquiry learning. Teachers also demonstrate the ability to facilitate learning interactions, provide stimulating questions, and guide students in discovering concepts independently.

A Islamic jurisprudence teacher explained:

“The teacher’s role now is no longer as a center of information, but as a facilitator. I must be able to design activities that encourage students to actively think and find their own answers to each problem presented.” (GF-01)

Observations show that teachers consistently provide opportunities for students to ask questions, discuss, and present their work. Teachers also use various forms of formative assessment to track the development of student understanding throughout the learning process.

This finding is in line with research stating that teacher pedagogical competence is a determining factor in the successful implementation of student-centered learning because teachers act as facilitators who are able to create active and meaningful learning experiences (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; OECD, 2023).

2) School Culture

A school culture that supports learning innovation is also a crucial factor in the implementation of Student-Centered Learning. According to interviews, the madrasah provides teachers with the freedom to develop creative learning strategies and encourages collaboration between teachers through lesson study activities, Subject Teacher Conferences (MGMP), and internal academic discussions.

The madrasah principal stated:

“We provide teachers with space to innovate. Each teacher is encouraged to try various learning models that can increase student engagement according to the characteristics of the subject.” (KS-01)

A school culture that is open to change makes teachers more confident in implementing innovative learning approaches. Furthermore, good communication between the madrasah principal, teachers, and students creates a more democratic learning environment, allowing students to feel comfortable expressing their opinions during the learning process.

3) Learning Facilities

The availability of learning facilities also supports the implementation of Student-Centered Learning. Observations indicate that classrooms are

equipped with LCD projectors, internet access, libraries, and various digital learning resources that can be utilized by teachers and students. Furthermore, most students have access to digital devices, making it easier for them to find additional references during learning activities.

A fiqh teacher explained:

“We often use learning videos, e-books, and digital articles as discussion materials. With these facilities, students can more easily find references when completing case studies.” (GF-02)

The use of learning technology provides opportunities for students to obtain information from various sources, making the learning process more contextual and centered on student learning activities.

4) Support from the Principal of Madrasah

The support of the madrasah principal is a strategic factor in the successful implementation of Student-Centered Learning. Interviews revealed that the madrasah principal actively motivates teachers to participate in training, workshops, and ongoing professional development activities. Furthermore, the madrasah provides support by providing learning resources and academic supervision aimed at improving the quality of learning.

The madrasah principal stated:

“We strive to provide mentoring to teachers through academic supervision and training so that they are better prepared to implement student-centered learning.” (KS-01)

These findings indicate that the madrasah principal’s instructional leadership plays a crucial role in building a culture of innovation and improving the quality of learning implementation in the madrasah (Hallinger, 2020).

Factors Inhibiting the Implementation of Student-Centered Learning

Although the implementation of Student-Centered Learning shows positive results, this study also found several obstacles that teachers still face in its implementation, namely limited learning time, diverse student characteristics, teacher readiness, and limited learning media.

1) Time Limitation

Time constraints were the most frequently cited obstacle by teachers. Discussion-based learning, problem-solving, and presentations require more time than lectures, so not all material can be covered in depth in a single meeting.

A fiqh teacher explained:

“Group discussions do make students more active, but often there isn’t enough time, so presentations have to be continued at the next meeting.” (GF-03)

Observations also showed that some groups did not have the opportunity to optimally present their discussion results due to limited class time.

2) Student Characteristics

This study found that students’ academic abilities, courage to express their opinions, and motivation to learn varied widely. Some students were able to participate actively, while others tended to be passive and awaited teacher direction.

A fiqh teacher explained:

“Not all students have the same courage. Some are very active in discussions, but others are still shy about expressing their opinions, so they need to be provided with gradual guidance.” (GF-02)

These differences in characteristics require teachers to use more flexible learning strategies so that all students can be optimally involved in the learning process.

3) Teacher Readiness

Although teachers have made efforts to implement Student-Centered Learning, research results indicate that not all teachers have the same level of readiness to design student-centered learning. Some teachers still require training on authentic assessment, developing collaborative activities, and effective classroom management.

The principal stated:

“There are still some teachers who need guidance, especially in designing learning activities that are truly student-centered.” (KS-01)

These findings indicate that ongoing teacher professional development is necessary for the optimal implementation of Student-Centered Learning.

4) Learning Media

Another obstacle identified was the limited availability of learning media appropriate to the characteristics of the fiqh material. Although school facilities were adequate, not all materials were supported by interactive media capable of facilitating exploration-based learning and problem-solving.

A fiqh teacher explained:

“We still need to develop more engaging digital learning media so that students can actively explore fiqh material.” (GF-01)

Based on documentation, the use of learning media is still dominated by presentations and textbooks, making the development of interactive digital media a necessity to improve the quality of Student-Centered Learning implementation.

Research findings indicate that the successful implementation of Student-Centered Learning is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. Teacher competence, a school culture that supports innovation, the availability of facilities, and the leadership of the madrasah principal are factors that strengthen learning effectiveness. Conversely, time constraints, diverse student characteristics, teacher preparedness, and learning media remain challenges that need to be addressed through teacher professional development, the provision of more innovative learning resources, and strengthening school policies.

The results of this study align with the findings of the OECD (2023), which emphasized that the success of student-centered learning is strongly influenced by teacher capacity, school leadership, a collaborative culture, and a supportive learning environment. Furthermore, Hallinger (2020) explained that the principal’s instructional leadership contributes to improving the quality of learning through teacher empowerment and the creation of an innovative academic culture. Therefore, the implementation of student-centered learning in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) learning depends not only on the learning strategies used by teachers but also requires strong institutional support to sustainably enhance students’ cognitive engagement and self-regulated learning.

Discussion

Research results show that the implementation of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) learning can increase student engagement in the learning process. The shift in the teacher’s role from information center to facilitator encourages students to construct knowledge through discussion, problem-solving, collaborative learning, and inquiry learning. This finding aligns with constructivist theory, which states that knowledge is built through the interaction between learning experiences, the environment, and reflection, while the teacher acts as a scaffolder, helping students achieve higher levels of understanding (Vygotsky, 1978).

The implementation of Student-Centered Learning also increases students' courage to ask questions, express opinions, and develop arguments based on the Quran, Hadith, and the opinions of scholars. This demonstrates that the learning process incorporates active learning, not simply the transfer of information. Weimer (2013) emphasized that Student-Centered Learning places responsibility for learning on students, enabling them to develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving. Thus, Islamic jurisprudence learning is not only oriented toward mastery of material but also toward the development of higher-order thinking skills.

These findings align with those of the OECD (2023) and UNESCO (2023), which state that student-centered learning improves participation, motivation, and learning outcomes. Research by Putri Dwi Erwanti and Suratno (2025) also shows that student-centered learning encourages student agency, learning motivation, and self-regulated learning. Meanwhile, Li and Lajoie (2022) explain that opportunities to explore knowledge independently increase cognitive engagement and the use of metacognitive strategies. This demonstrates that the implementation of student-centered learning in fiqh learning aligns with the 21st-century educational paradigm that places students at the center of learning.

This study also found increased cognitive engagement among students. They were able to analyze fiqh issues, connect concepts to everyday life, construct arguments based on evidence, and evaluate various alternative problem-solving strategies. These activities reflect cognitive engagement, namely mental engagement through the use of deep thinking strategies, monitoring understanding, and reflecting on learning (Fredricks et al., 2004).

According to the OECD (2023), cognitive engagement is related to the ability to use deep learning strategies, enabling students to better analyze, evaluate, and solve problems. This is evident when students connect fiqh material to contemporary issues, such as digital transactions, social media ethics, and daily religious practices. Thus, fiqh learning is no longer understood as memorization, but as a critical thinking process aimed at understanding Islamic law contextually.

This finding supports research by Shi et al. (2026), which states that discussion, collaboration, and problem-based learning enhance cognitive engagement. Li and Lajoie (2022) also emphasized that cognitive engagement develops through the use of metacognitive strategies to monitor thought processes. In this study, increased cognitive engagement was influenced by the use of real-life cases that encouraged students to connect fiqh concepts to the realities of life.

Furthermore, this study demonstrated the development of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL). Students were able to plan learning activities, monitor understanding during discussions, evaluate learning outcomes, and demonstrate intrinsic motivation to deepen their understanding of fiqh material. These findings indicate that Student-Centered Learning not only increases learning engagement but also fosters student independence.

These results align with Zimmerman's (2002) theory, which explains that Self-Regulated Learning occurs through three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection. These three phases are evident when students set learning goals, monitor the learning process, and reflect on the results. Thus, Islamic jurisprudence learning facilitates the gradual development of self-regulation.

These findings also align with Panadero (2017), who stated that self-regulation develops through learning that grants students autonomy. Li and Lajoie (2022) added that self-regulated learning has a reciprocal relationship with cognitive engagement. The better a student's ability to manage their learning process, the higher their cognitive engagement. This is evident in students' habits of seeking additional references, evaluating understanding through discussion, and refining learning strategies based on the results Reflection.

The successful implementation of Student-Centered Learning is also supported by teacher competence, an innovative school culture, the availability of learning facilities, and the leadership of the principal. Teachers are able to design activities that encourage critical and collaborative thinking, while the school culture provides space for learning innovation. The principal's support through academic supervision and teacher professional development also strengthens the implementation of learning.

These findings align with Hallinger (2020), who stated that instructional leadership influences learning quality improvement through teacher empowerment and a collaborative learning culture. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) also emphasized that learning quality is influenced by teacher competence in designing meaningful learning experiences. Therefore, the success of Student-Centered Learning is determined not only by learning strategies but also by school organizational support.

On the other hand, this study identified several obstacles, including time constraints, diverse student characteristics, teacher preparedness, and limited learning media. These obstacles indicate that the implementation of Student-Centered Learning requires sound planning, effective classroom management, and continuous teacher competency development. However,

these obstacles do not diminish the effectiveness of this approach, but rather demonstrate the importance of systemic support from all stakeholders in the madrasah.

Overall, the implementation of Student-Centered Learning in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) learning has successfully created more active, reflective, and collaborative learning. This approach increases cognitive engagement and self-regulated learning, while simultaneously developing critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, key competencies for 21st-century education. Therefore, Student-Centered Learning is worthy of implementation as a strategic approach in Islamic Religious Education (IS), particularly in fiqh, in Madrasah Tsanawiyah (tsanawiyah).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of student-centered learning in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) instruction at Islamic junior high schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) can improve students' cognitive engagement and self-regulated learning. The application of strategies such as group discussions, problem-based learning, collaborative learning, and inquiry learning transforms instruction from teacher-centered to student-centered. Through this approach, students become more active thinkers, analyze Islamic jurisprudence issues, solve problems based on evidence, and reflect on their learning process. Furthermore, self-regulated learning develops through improved ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate learning and foster intrinsic motivation for independent learning.

This study provides an empirical contribution to the development of Islamic Religious Education (ISE) instruction by demonstrating that student-centered learning not only increases student participation but also strengthens cognitive engagement and self-regulation in learning. Unlike previous research that focused primarily on learning outcomes or general subjects, this study integrates student-centered learning, cognitive engagement, and self-regulated learning in ISE instruction, enriching the study of Islamic Religious Education (ISE) instruction at Islamic junior high schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah).

Practically, the results of this study indicate that teachers need to optimize student-centered learning through contextual, collaborative, and problem-solving strategies. Madrasahs also need to support this implementation by improving teacher competency, providing adequate facilities, developing learning media, and strengthening instructional leadership to ensure sustainable learning quality.

This study was limited to one madrasah and used a qualitative approach, so the results cannot be generalized. Therefore, further research is recommended involving more madrasahs using mixed methods or quantitative approaches to examine the relationship between student-centered learning, cognitive engagement, self-regulated learning, and learning outcomes. Future research could also explore the integration of digital technology, artificial intelligence, and learning analytics to strengthen the implementation of student-centered learning in Islamic Religious Education (ISE).

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