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CONTEXTUAL FIQH LEARNING THROUGH SOCIAL PROBLEMS: DEVELOPING ETHICAL AWARENESS AMONG MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the transformation of fiqh learning at MI Al Hasanah through a case-based approach and its impact on students' ethical awareness. Despite growing interest in contextual Islamic pedagogy, limited studies have examined the use of students' real social problems as the foundation of fiqh learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level. This study employed a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal a shift from textbook-centered instruction to contextual and dialogic learning based on everyday cases. This approach enhances student participation and promotes ethical reasoning beyond halal-haram categories by considering social consequences. It also contributes to a more value-oriented learning climate, although it requires stronger teacher competence in facilitating reflective discussion.

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INTRODUCTION

Fiqh instruction in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah plays a fundamental role in establishing students' religious foundations from an early age (Hanapi & Barni, 2024; Hasanah, 2021). At this stage, learners begin to understand rules of worship and patterns of social relations from an Islamic perspective. Fiqh does not merely present legal rulings; it also carries values that guide human conduct toward public good and well-being (Ahyani, 2025; Norman & Ruhullah, 2024). However, classroom practice often emphasizes procedural mastery and memorization (Sato & McDonough, 2019; Terry, 2017; Ullman & Lovelett, 2018), which means the ethical dimension that constitutes the spirit of fiqh is not always explored in sufficient depth.

Rapid social and technological developments have introduced new challenges for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students. Primary school children are increasingly exposed to bullying, misuse of digital media, low academic honesty, and more complex peer relationships (Ging & O'Higgins Norman, 2016; Healy, 2021). These conditions require stronger ethical awareness that can guide students to make responsible decisions. When fiqh learning is not connected to such realities, legal content may be perceived as detached rules rather than guidance for everyday life.

The central problem lies in the gap between the fiqh material taught in class and the social problems students face in their daily lives. Previous studies have identified that fiqh instruction at the primary level is still dominated by procedural and memorization-oriented approaches, which limit students' opportunities to engage in deeper ethical reasoning (Sato & McDonough, 2019; Ullman & Lovelett, 2018).

In contrast, other studies emphasize the importance of contextual and inquiry-based learning to support meaningful understanding, yet these approaches are rarely integrated specifically into fiqh instruction at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level (Katan & Baarts, 2023; Mahara, 2025). This indicates a conceptual and practical inconsistency between the intended ethical orientation of fiqh and its classroom implementation. As a result, students may recognize categories such as halal and haram, yet not necessarily grasp the moral reasoning underlying particular rulings. This situation highlights the need to

transform the orientation of instruction so that fiqh becomes a source of ethical reflection that is relevant to students' concrete experiences.

Conceptually, fiqh is oriented toward the objectives of Islamic law, which emphasize the protection of essential human values (Dalimunthe & Riza, 2025; Norman & Ruhullah, 2024). This perspective supports the view that each ruling has an ethical dimension that can be explained to learners in ways that align with their developmental stage. At the same time, social constructivism argues that knowledge is constructed through interaction with the environment (Barak, 2017; Saleem et al., 2021). Integrating these two frameworks enables fiqh learning to be developed through analysis of real-life situations that are close to students' lived experiences.

Based on this rationale, a social-problem-based approach is considered relevant for transforming fiqh learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Teachers introduce age-appropriate, authentic cases and guide students to examine them through fiqh principles. This process encourages learners to identify values, consider consequences, and formulate attitudes grounded in Islamic teachings (Qadri et al., 2024). In this way, rulings are not treated as rigid doctrine but as rational and applicable guidance (Levin, 2018).

This study focuses on how a social-problem-based transformation of fiqh learning is designed and implemented in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. It also examines changes in students' perspectives when interpreting social issues after participating in such learning. The analysis is directed toward capturing classroom interaction dynamics, teacher strategies, and students' responses to the instructional model.

The novelty of this research lies in a systematic effort to integrate contemporary social issues experienced by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah children with the substance of fiqh as a means of developing ethical awareness. This approach not only offers an instructional strategy but also reorients the goals of fiqh learning from mere mastery of legal rules to understanding the values that underpin them. Accordingly, the study contributes a fresh perspective to curriculum development and classroom practice in primary-level Islamic Religious Education.

Based on the background and identified research gap, this study is guided by the following research questions:(1) How is social-problem-based fiqh learning designed and implemented in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah? (2) How does this learning approach influence students' ethical awareness in interpreting social issues? (3) What pedagogical and conceptual implications emerge from the implementation of this approach?

The study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution by enriching contextual models of fiqh learning and a practical contribution by supporting teachers in designing instruction that is responsive to students' social realities. The transformation examined in this research is anticipated to strengthen students' ethical foundations so that they not only know religious rules, but are also able to internalize them in everyday conduct. However, these studies tend to focus more on instructional strategies and media innovation, rather than positioning students' real social problems as the primary entry point for developing ethical reasoning in fiqh learning.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the transformation of social-problem-based fiqh learning and its impact on students' ethical awareness within a natural school setting (Abdurrohman Akbar, 2024; Cresswell, 2014; Sumilih et al., 2025). The research site was MI Al Hasanah, selected purposively because fiqh instruction there explicitly connects learning content to social problems that are close to students' everyday experiences. The researcher served as the primary instrument, directly involved in data collection and interpretation in order to capture the learning dynamics comprehensively.

Participants included one fiqh teacher, one school principal, and 10 sixth-grade students (aged approximately 11–12 years) who were directly involved in social-problem-based fiqh learning. The participants were selected purposively based on their active engagement in the planning and implementation of the learning process, as well as their direct experience in classroom activities. This selection ensured that the data obtained were relevant to the focus of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Fajri, 2023; Karya et al., 2024). Research ethics were maintained by anonymizing participants' identities, obtaining permission from the school prior to data collection, and ensuring that all reported findings did not expose individual participants.

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation (Fitrah, 2018; Karatsareas, 2022; Mamik, 2015). Observations were conducted to record

the stages of instruction, the use of social problems as learning triggers, teacher–student interaction patterns, and students' responses during discussions. Interviews were conducted after observations so that questions could be grounded in events that actually occurred in the classroom, covering teachers' instructional considerations, students' learning experiences in interpreting social problems, and the principal's perspectives on the learning climate. Documentation was used to strengthen the evidence base, including lesson plans and teaching materials, as well as learning artifacts such as students' written reflections when available.

Data analysis followed an interactive and cyclical process involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Creswell, 2013; Manzilati, 2017; Sari et al., 2025). Data from interviews, observations, and documentation were coded to identify major themes consistent with the research focus, namely the transformation of instructional planning and implementation (Gelmez-Burakgazi, 2020), changes in students' ethical awareness, and pedagogical as well as conceptual implications. Trustworthiness was enhanced through triangulation of sources and methods by comparing findings across informants and aligning them with observational and documentary evidence, complemented by limited member checking to ensure that the researcher's interpretations remained faithful to the field reality.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Transformation of Planning and Implementation in Social-Problem-Based Fiqh Learning

This section addresses the first research question concerning how social-problem-based fiqh learning is designed and implemented in Madrasah IbtidaiyahThe transformation in the planning and implementation of fiqh learning is evident in the way teachers redefine the starting point of instruction. Learning no longer begins with a text-centered explanation of content, but instead starts from situations that are familiar to students' school experiences. This shift positions fiqh as guidance with purpose and rationale rather than as a set of rules to be memorized.

This direction is reflected in the fiqh teacher's emphasis on grounding instruction in students' lived realities so they can grasp the meaning behind legal provisions. "I no longer begin by explaining the material directly from the textbook. Instead, I start with cases that they often experience at school, so they understand why the ruling exists and how to apply it." (Teacher interview). This statement indicates that instructional planning is oriented toward building a more functional and applicable understanding of fiqh.

From a planning perspective, a case-based approach requires teachers to design a learning sequence that enables students to connect everyday events with relevant fiqh principles. Teachers must select realistic cases, prepare guiding questions, and structure discussion stages that move students from describing a problem to reasoning about the ethical rationale and practical application of rulings. In this way, planning goes beyond organizing content; it also scaffolds students' thinking processes.

At the implementation stage, the shift becomes visible in more dialogic and participatory classroom dynamics. Students are no longer positioned primarily as passive listeners, but are encouraged to express viewpoints, respond to peers, and construct reasons for their judgments. This indicates that instruction is moving toward learning practices that foster engagement and confidence to speak.

Students' experiences further strengthen the picture that case-based learning has an immediate impact on classroom participation. "When we learn through stories about incidents at school, I feel more confident to speak up, and the discussion feels more engaging than just listening to an explanation." (Student interview). This response suggests that familiar contexts help students feel safer and more prepared to contribute ideas.

The observed impact also implies that the approach changes not only the topic or examples used, but the overall learning atmosphere, making it more active and interactive. When students perceive the topic as close to their experiences, learning becomes a space for meaning-making rather than mere reception of information. This condition reinforces the teacher's role as a facilitator who guides discussion so that it remains connected to fiqh principles and instructional goals.

Overall, the transformation of planning and implementation in this case can be understood as a shift toward more contextual and dialogic fiqh learning. Interview data reveal two mutually reinforcing dimensions: changes in teachers' strategies that begin with authentic cases and changes in students' responses as they participate more actively in discussion. Consequently, learning becomes more relevant to school life and creates opportunities for deeper understanding that can be more readily applied in everyday behavior.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that emphasize the importance of contextual and student-centered learning in enhancing engagement (Katan & Baarts, 2023; Saleem et al., 2021). However, this study extends prior research by specifically positioning students' real social problems as the primary entry point in fiqh learning, rather than merely as supporting examples.

B. Changes in Students' Ethical Awareness During the Learning Process

This section answers the second research question by examining how the learning approach influences students' ethical awareness in interpreting social issues.Changes in students' ethical awareness can be seen in how they evaluate actions that previously tended to stop at the labels halal or haram. Within a case-based learning process, students begin to move from brief normative judgments toward more reflective evaluations by considering the effects of an action on others and the surrounding social context.

This shift is apparent when students do not merely state a legal status, but also connect it to moral consequences such as causing harm, creating loss, or producing injustice. "Now I do not only say that something is halal or haram, but I also think about whether the action could hurt a friend or harm others." (Student interview). This statement indicates the emergence of broader ethical reasoning, as students begin to incorporate relational considerations and social consequences into how they understand fiqh.

This change can also be understood as the development of students' ability to recognize moral problems more holistically. Students start to realize that an action is not considered wrong only because it is prohibited, but because it may undermine dignity, hurt feelings, or disrupt social harmony. In this way, fiqh is understood as guidance for safeguarding the common good rather than merely as a set of individual behavioral limits.

Beyond reasoning, changes in ethical awareness are also visible in the affective domain and in everyday behavioral habits. Students not only understand the lesson content but also begin to show greater caution in their daily conduct. This can be observed in their tendency to relate situations they encounter to issues discussed in class, so that learning extends beyond the classroom into practical considerations in their social lives.

This strengthening is reinforced by the fiqh teacher's observations of changes in students' behavior and the way they reflect on their actions. "I have noticed that students are becoming more careful in their behavior and often connect what they do with the fiqh lessons we have discussed in class." (Teacher interview). This account suggests that learning does not only change students' responses during discussions, but also influences how they evaluate and regulate their actions in everyday life.

The changes in ethical awareness identified here do not imply that students immediately become morally ideal. Rather, they indicate an emerging internalization process. Students begin to formulate reasons, weigh consequences, and link the values learned to concrete experiences. This process is important because it positions fiqh not merely as knowledge, but as an ethical framework that guides decision-making.

Overall, the interview findings indicate that case-based learning supports the development of students' ethical awareness in two complementary directions. First, ethical reasoning expands beyond halal and haram categories toward consideration of social impact. Second, students demonstrate greater caution and a growing habit of relating everyday actions to fiqh-based values. Together, these directions reflect a deeper change because they involve both patterns of thinking and patterns of acting.

This finding supports earlier research highlighting the role of Islamic education in character development (Sholikah et al., 2025). Nevertheless, unlike prior studies that focus on habituation and moral reinforcement, this study demonstrates that ethical awareness can also be developed through reflective reasoning based on real-life cases.

C. Pedagogical and Conceptual Implications for the Development of Fiqh Learning

This section responds to the third research question by outlining the pedagogical and conceptual implications of the approach.The pedagogical and conceptual implications of case-based fiqh learning can be observed at two interconnected levels, namely changes in the school learning climate and increased demands on teachers' instructional competence. At the school level, this approach does not remain merely a classroom strategy, but has the potential to shape how students communicate, evaluate behavior, and carry moral values into broader social spaces.

From an institutional perspective, one of the most visible changes is the increased salience of values in students' everyday interactions. The school principal noted that this approach encourages a

more active learning atmosphere and allows values to emerge more naturally in students' conversations. "This approach makes the learning atmosphere more active, and values such as honesty and care appear more frequently in students' conversations at school." (Principal interview). This account suggests that the impact of learning extends beyond content understanding into communication culture and students' social habits.

Pedagogically, a key implication is the strengthening of dialogic learning, which requires strong facilitation skills. When instruction begins with cases, classroom discussion becomes the primary space for constructing understanding. This means teachers need to manage interaction, maintain discussion focus, and ensure that students' talk moves from lived experiences toward reasoning about values and relevant fiqh principles.

This consequence is reflected in the fiqh teacher's experience of increased demands to be more creative in formulating questions and guiding discussion. "This model requires me to be more creative in developing questions and facilitating discussion so that students truly understand the meaning behind the rulings." (Teacher interview). The statement underscores that a shift in approach also transforms the teacher's role from a transmitter of content into a designer of learning experiences and a guide for students' thinking processes.

Another implication concerns the need to balance openness in discussion with conceptual accuracy. Case-based discussions allow diverse student perspectives, yet teachers must ensure that the conversation does not drift, does not become mere opinion debate, and ultimately leads to a defensible understanding of key principles. In this context, skills in questioning, synthesizing, and providing feedback become crucial determinants of learning quality.

At the conceptual level, these findings support the view that fiqh can be positioned as a framework for developing social ethics rather than solely as a legal-formal system. When students are guided to consider the impact of actions on others and the values attached to particular behaviors, fiqh learning moves closer to the aims of character formation and social responsibility. This broadens the meaning of fiqh instruction and makes it more relevant to behavioral challenges and social relationships in the school environment.

Accordingly, the pedagogical and conceptual implications can be summarized in two points. First, a case-based approach has the potential to strengthen a more active, value-oriented school climate, as reflected in the principal's observations. Second, the approach requires stronger teacher competencies in designing questions, facilitating discussion, and directing students toward understanding the meaning behind rulings. Together, these implications indicate that changes in fiqh learning involve not only methodological adjustment, but also a reorientation of educational goals toward more reflective learning with broader cultural impact in the school setting.

These results align with previous studies emphasizing the need for teacher competence in facilitating active learning environments (Mahara, 2025). However, this study highlights a more specific demand for teachers' skills in guiding ethical reasoning through structured discussion, which has received limited attention in earlier research.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that the expectations and direction presented in the Introduction are ultimately reflected in the Results and Discussion. Fiqh learning that initially tended to be normative can be reoriented toward more contextual and dialogic instruction through the use of cases closely connected to students' lived experiences. This shift is evident in instructional planning and classroom implementation that are grounded in real-life problems, alongside strengthened student ethical awareness that moves beyond halal and haram labeling toward consideration of moral and social consequences. In this way, the study demonstrates compatibility between the original research aims, the theoretical framing, and the empirical evidence identified in the field.

These findings also open pathways for further research development and wider application. Future studies can examine the approach in different school settings, compare outcomes across grade levels, and refine indicators of ethical awareness so they can be captured more systematically through qualitative or mixed-method designs. In practical terms, the results can support the development of case-based fiqh teaching guidelines, strengthen teacher training in discussion facilitation and reflective questioning, and inform assessment tools that evaluate students' ethical reasoning and their ability to apply fiqh principles in authentic situations. Further inquiry may also explore longer-term effects on school culture and

students' social habits so that the contribution extends beyond classroom practice to the strengthening of value education within the madrasah environment.

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