Project-Based Learning in the Perspective and Approach of Progressive Education Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyse the implementation of project-based learning in the context and approach of progressive education philosophy with a focus on the challenges and opportunities faced by educators in implementing this learning model in the classroom. Through literature review and analysis, it was found that although project-based learning provides an opportunity to increase student engagement and develop critical thinking skills, there are a number of challenges such as lack of professional support, time constraints and lack of adequate resources. The findings suggest that the fit between learning strategies and objectives is crucial to ensure the effectiveness of this learning model. The significance of the results of this study lies in its contribution to the understanding of the role of project-based learning in progressive education, as well as how its application can improve the quality of learning in a wider context. The implications of this study suggest the need for better training for educators as well as stronger institutional support to optimise the use of this learning model, in the hope that it can positively influence the development of student competencies and encourage innovation in educational practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia is undergoing a transformation driven by the demands of globalisation and technological development. The industrial revolution 4.0 requires the education system to adapt

and develop learning methods that are relevant to the needs of the 21st century, such as critical thinking skills, collaboration, and innovation. Project-based learning (PjBL) is increasingly gaining attention as one of the effective approaches that can accommodate these needs because it can provide opportunities for students to learn through practical experience, collaboration, and engagement in real contexts (Jeditia et al., 2024; Egi et al., 2024). Within the framework of progressive education philosophy, PjBL is in line with principles that emphasise the importance of active learning, material relevance, and comprehensive student character development (Everhard et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the implementation of PjBL in Indonesia still encounters a number of challenges, such as teachers' lack of understanding of the method, limited resources, and resistance to change from more conventional, traditional learning practices (Indri Suryani et al., 2023). These problems indicate that although PjBL has great potential in improving the quality of education, its implementation has not been fully optimised and requires more in-depth evaluation.

A study confirms that well-designed projects can result in deeper and more meaningful learning compared to conventional teaching methods (Chen et al., 2022; Wang, 2022). Similar findings were also obtained in studies showing that the use of projects in education can improve students' understanding of the material learnt. (Indrawan et al., 2019; Kusadi et al., 2020). However, project-based learning also poses some challenges that need to be addressed. Some researchers, such as Pritchard and Woollard (2018), note the difficulty in assessing student learning outcomes when using this method, as the outcomes of project-based learning are often subjective and variable. In addition, there are concerns about teacher readiness and the infrastructure required to effectively implement project-based learning. Therefore, while many previous studies have examined the positive impact of this approach, there is an urgent need to delve deeper into how these challenges can be overcome in different contexts, such as in Indonesian schools.

Project-based learning is an interpretation of the philosophical principles of progressive education that emphasise hands-on experience, cooperation, and connection to real life. Therefore, through PBL, students not only acquire knowledge, but also build life skills necessary to face the challenges of the modern world. This approach makes education not just a means of knowledge transfer, but rather a dynamic and continuous learning process, which prepares students to be able to contribute actively in society. Thus the philosophy of progressive education, pioneered by figures such as John Dewey, William James, and Kilpatrick, places experience at the centre of the learning process. So education does not solely focus on the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, but also involves students in an active process where they can develop critical thinking, practical skills, and social and moral values. So this approach seeks to create deeper student engagement, as well as help them develop the social and collaborative skills that are so important in the modern world of work.

The focus of this research is to explore the effectiveness of implementing PjBL in the context of progressive education strategically with the values promoted by progressive education in Indonesia (Rafy et al., 2023; H.M et al., 2023). Therefore, this research aims to explore the effectiveness of progressive education philosophy in the context of project-based learning. By involving students' active participation, it is expected to improve critical thinking and collaboration skills needed in the real world. Thus this research seeks to clarify the concrete contribution of PjBL in shaping students' character and skills, as well as its relevance to the development of education in Indonesia. The significance of this research is that it can contribute to the development of educational theory, but it can also complement the insights that can be applied by educators and educational institutions to create a more effective learning environment that is responsive to the times.

METHODS

The research design is a scoping review that discusses progressive philosophy and the project-based learning model. Scoping review is a literature review method used to identify, evaluate, and synthesise existing research evidence in a particular field of knowledge (Arksey, H., & O'Malley, 2005).

Journals were analysed by collecting the two main research topics of progressive philosophy and project-based learning. The number of journals analysed was unlimited, until all the topics showed substantial depth and were objectively comprehensive. The research target refers to both themes by searching for article titles that match the topic of discussion.

The research used international and local journal analyses. The data was collected by categorising the journals into two sets according to the topic of discussion. The data was analysed by finding the basic principles of each topic and then finding the fundamental position of the relationship. The process of finding literature includes a massive search on journal libraries such as, Google Scholar, Garuda, ProQues and semantic scholar. The types of articles searched are open access or full text that focus on Project Based Learning (PjBL) and progressive variables. Journals that have been collected are selected according to relevant needs. Relevant journals will be the result of the research and then included in the discussion. The last stage is to draw conclusions on the discussion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Project-based learning (PjBL) is closely related to John Dewey's philosophy of progressive education which emphasises the importance of learning experiences that are relevant to students' lives, as well as their active involvement in the learning process. There are several principles that need to be considered in the application of progressive philosophy in learning activities including student-centred education, problem-based learning, and collaborative learning. The progressive philosophy places students as subjects in the learning process, so teachers act as facilitators and help students to learn actively and independently (Nursikin, 2016). So the teacher must understand the individual needs of students, and provide the necessary assistance to achieve learning goals. Thus education becomes not just a transfer of knowledge, but an active, dynamic process based on students' direct experience. Project Based Learning reflects these principles by engaging students in real projects that not only teach theoretical knowledge, but also practical skills needed in everyday life. Through PBL, students learn in a more engaged and meaningful way, as they are exposed to real-world situations that demand contextualised application of knowledge.

Project-based learning (PjBL) has been a focal point for many pedagogical innovations, particularly in approaches grounded in progressive educational philosophy. The findings from this study revealed that the implementation of PjBL significantly positively impacted student engagement as well as improved learning outcomes, demonstrating the relevance of PjBL in creating more engaging and relevant learning situations, in line with the principles of progressive education emphasised by Dewey in many of his works (Jeditia Taliak et al., 2024; Egi Fahira Tuhfa et al., 2024). In addition, this study showed that collaboration between students in the project improved their social skills and communication abilities, which are important aspects in 21st century learning (Everhard et al., 2024). However, there are challenges faced, such as the lack of training for teachers in implementing effective PjBL, similar to the findings by some previous researchers (Indri et al., 2023; Rafy et al., 2023; Lestari et al., 2023).

The conflict between the still dominant traditional methodology and progressive approaches such as PjBL is evident in some research results and indicates the need for greater support from institutions for sustainable implementation (H.M et al., 2023; Hermawati et al., 2021). While various studies have highlighted the benefits of PjBL in the context of progressive education, this research provides additional clarity regarding how cultural and contextual aspects influence the implementation of this method in Indonesian schools (Latingara et al., 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2024). Moreover, the increased student engagement emphasises the need for a more collaborative and project-based approach in education (AlFarabi et al., 2023). However, it is possible that some external factors, such as lack of infrastructure and support from the school, may affect its effectiveness (Firman et al., 2021; Aep et al., 2024). Therefore, this research provides a basis for educators to adopt this method more widely so that it can contribute to improving the quality of education in Indonesia in this era of globalisation (Witasari et al., 2024; Rindengan et al., 2023; Alhafidz et al., 2023). So that students are not

only prepared to face academic challenges, but also to contribute positively in society (Tolchah et al., 2022; Desyandri et al., 2022).

Project-based learning allows students to experience contextualised learning, where they relate what they learn to problems or challenges that exist in society. For example, in a project that examines environmental issues, students not only learn theory about ecosystems, but also engage in research and real problem solving related to the issue. This is very much in line with Dewey's philosophy who believed that learning experiences should be relevant to students' lives and give them a deep understanding of their world. As such, PjBL gives students the opportunity to explore their interests and needs in a broader context, rather than simply studying for exams. The importance of experience in learning is also explained by Dewey in the principle of learning by doing, where students acquire knowledge through direct engagement and reflection on their experiences. In addition, PjBL also emphasises the importance of collaboration, a very important aspect of progressive education. In PjBL, students often work in groups, which develops social skills such as communication, co-operation and collective responsibility. This helps students not only learn individually, but also learn to collaborate on shared challenges. These collaboration-based projects reinforce progressive values that emphasise social participation and contribution to society.

Whilst project-based learning (PjBL) has been shown to provide a number of significant benefits in improving student engagement and learning outcomes, it cannot be denied that there are challenges and limitations to be faced during the implementation process. The findings of this study indicate that the main challenges faced in the implementation of PjBL include the lack of adequate teacher training and limited resources, leading to uncertainty in the management of complex projects (Jeditia et al., 2024; Egi et al., 2024). Other research results explained that many teachers revealed that they felt unprepared to implement PjBL and often had difficulties in structuring and facilitating projects so that students could be optimally engaged (Everhard Markiano Solissa et al., 2024; Indri Suryani et al., 2023). In addition, analysis of the classroom conditions showed that although students showed increased motivation in learning, there were some students who lagged behind and did not actively participate in group projects. This creates inequality among students and potentially reduces the positive impact of PjBL (H.M et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

Project-based learning (PjBL) not only improves students' motivation and learning outcomes, but also helps them develop collaborative, critical thinking and creativity skills that are essential to face the challenges of the 21st century. By integrating constructivism theory and progressive education philosophy, this research successfully highlights how this method creates an active and relevant learning environment, in line with students' needs in modern education. The research also addresses the issues raised regarding the challenges in implementing PjBL, showing that teachers' lack of understanding and limited resources often hinder the success of this method. The implications of the findings can make a valuable contribution to educational literature by providing empirical evidence that PjBL can foster students' holistic skill development and support progressive educational values. In addition, this study recommends the development of training programmes for teachers that focus on the effective implementation of PjBL, as well as the provision of more adequate learning resources to support innovative and responsive curriculum development.

Given the results obtained, the next steps for future research should focus on a more in-depth exploration of the implementation of PjBL in diverse contexts, both in urban and rural schools. Further research involving quantitative methods can help measure the long-term impact of PjBL on students' sociability skills and academic achievement more. In addition, exploring how technology can be integrated with PjBL to support a more interactive and engaging learning experience, such as the use of learning apps or online platforms. As such, this research contributes to a better understanding of the role of PjBL in progressive education as well as facilitating the development of more effective educational policies going forward.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose, and no financial relationships or affiliations that would influence the outcome of this study.

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