

Learning Transformation: The Influence of Project-Based Learning on Students' Interest and Achievement in Indonesian Language

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method on students' interest and learning outcomes in Indonesian language education at the Faculty of Economics, Universitas Patempo. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method with a triangulation approach, encompassing source, method, and theory triangulation. The sample includes 60 management students from the 2023 cohort, selected using Cochran's formula for a limited population with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Data were collected through questionnaires completed by students after implementing the PjBL method and analyzed descriptively. The results show that the application of PjBL significantly enhances students' learning interest, with 52.6% strongly agreeing and 42.1% agreeing that they were more engaged in learning Indonesian through PjBL. Additionally, 63.2% agreed and 36.8% strongly agreed that their understanding of Indonesian language materials improved after PjBL implementation. Factors such as interactivity, the relevance of projects to real life, and collaboration among students contributed to increased interest and learning outcomes. This research contributes to curriculum development in higher education, particularly in Indonesian language learning, and offers practical insights for lecturers in designing more effective teaching strategies. Future studies are recommended to broaden the scope of subjects and populations studied and to investigate the long-term impact of PjBL on students' academic and professional outcomes.

Keywords: *Project-Based Learning, Learning Interest, Learning Outcomes, Indonesian Language, Higher Education.*

Introduction

Student interest and learning outcomes are two crucial factors that significantly influence the quality of education, particularly in the context of Indonesian language learning in higher education. In many higher education institutions, including the Faculty of Economics at Universitas Patempo, Indonesian language education is often perceived as less relevant to disciplines that are more technical and practical, such as economics. This has led to a low level of interest in Indonesian language courses among students, which in turn affects their engagement in the learning process and results in unsatisfactory academic outcomes. For instance, many students feel that Indonesian language courses are not directly related to their future jobs or careers, leading to a lack of motivation to learn (Hanafi & Rohaemi, 2024).

To address this challenge, a more engaging and relevant learning approach is needed to help students see the direct connection between the material they are studying and their professional lives. One learning method that can increase student interest and involvement is Project-Based Learning (PjBL). PjBL requires students to engage in real-world projects that are relevant to their professional world, giving them the opportunity to apply knowledge in more practical and applicable contexts. Through this approach, students are not only passive recipients of information but also actively involved in planning and completing projects that address real-world problems (Anderson & Slotkin, 1975).

Research by Sudibjo et al., (2020) shows that PjBL can enhance creativity and cooperation among students and plays a role in increasing motivation. Additionally Hidayat, (2022) found that using PjBL based on creative media, such as scrapbooks, can significantly improve learning outcomes. In the context of Indonesian language learning, Anggaira, (2022) showed that student interest plays an important role in the effectiveness of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, where interactive methods like PjBL proved to be more effective than traditional learning methods (Malyuga & Petrosyan, 2022).

However, the application of PjBL in Indonesian language learning at the higher education level is still relatively underexplored. Most research on PjBL has focused on primary and secondary education. Studies on the application of PjBL in higher education, particularly in non-language faculties such as the Faculty of Economics, are still limited. Malyuga & Petrosyan, 2022) Argue that although PjBL has been effectively applied in science and technology education, its application in humanities courses, such as Indonesian language, has not been widely researched. This highlights a gap in the existing literature, particularly in exploring the factors that influence the effectiveness of PjBL in the context of higher education.

This research aims to examine the impact of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method on student interest and learning outcomes in Indonesian language courses at the Faculty of Economics, Universitas Patempo. Given the importance of Indonesian language education as a tool for communication and professional skill development, increasing student interest and learning outcomes in this course is essential. Therefore, the application of a more interactive and contextual PjBL method is considered a potential solution to enhance student engagement in Indonesian language learning (Hanafi & Rohaemi, 2024).

PjBL allows students to engage in projects that are relevant to their professional lives, making the material they study more meaningful and applicable. This approach can increase student interest by connecting the theory they learn with real-world practice. Previous research has shown that PjBL has a positive impact on interest and learning outcomes; however, most of this research has been conducted at the primary and secondary education levels (Hidayat, 2022).

This study fills this gap by focusing on the application of PjBL in Indonesian language learning at the higher education level, specifically in the Faculty of Economics. The study also aims to explore the factors that make PjBL effective in increasing student interest, such as the relevance of the material to the professional world, interactivity, and collaboration in projects. Thus, this research not only contributes to the literature on PjBL but also provides practical solutions for improving the quality of Indonesian language education in non-language faculties.

This study addresses three main questions: (1) how does the application of PjBL affect student interest in Indonesian language learning at the Faculty of Economics, Universitas

Patompo? (2) how does student interest affect their learning outcomes? and (3) what factors support the success of PjBL in increasing student interest? It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute positively to the development of more effective and relevant learning methods for students in non-language faculties and enhance their understanding of the importance of the Indonesian language in their professional lives.

Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method to deeply understand the influence of implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on students' motivation and learning outcomes at the Faculty of Economics, Universitas Patompo. This method was chosen as it allows a comprehensive exploration of phenomena, focusing on the collection and analysis of qualitative data to describe real conditions. The approach utilizes subjective interpretations of students' experiences and perceptions regarding the application of PjBL (Lestari & Apoko, 2022).

The population in this study consists of 72 students from the 2023 Management Study Program at the Faculty of Economics, Universitas Patompo. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for a finite population, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. Establishing a representative sample size ensures good external validity for the study (Viñuela & De Caso Fuertes, 2023). Sample Size Calculation Using Cochran's Formula:

I. Initial Sample Size (n_0):

With:

1) = 1.96 (95% confidence level)

2) = 0.5 (maximum proportion)

3) = 0.05 (margin of error)

2. Adjusted for Finite Population (n):

Based on the calculation, the required sample size is 60 students

Data were collected using the following methods by distributing questionnaires and conducting In-depth Interview and observation. Observation was focused on students' engagement patterns, collaboration, and challenges during PjBL implementation (Viñuela & De Caso Fuertes, 2023). The study was conducted over one academic semester, following these steps:

1. Preparation:

1) Introducing PjBL to students through training modules.

2) Designing projects aligned with relevant courses.

2. Implementation:

1) Group projects were carried out over several sessions, reflecting the principles of PjBL.

3. Data Collection:

1) Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations at various stages of implementation.

4. Analysis and Reporting:

Data were analyzed, and the research findings were reported in a scientific format, including key findings and practical recommendations.

Results and Discussion

1. The Effect of PjBL Implementation on Interest in Learning Indonesian

Data Presentation:

The questionnaire results indicate that the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) significantly enhances students' interest in learning Indonesian. A total of 52.6% of students strongly agreed, and 42.1% agreed that they became more interested in Indonesian language lessons through PjBL. These findings highlight the effectiveness of PjBL in capturing students' attention, driven by factors such as interactivity, material relevance, and active participation in the learning process. Supporting Data Visualization:

Figure 1: Students' responses on increased interest in learning Indonesian through PjBL.

Response Level	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	52.6
Agree	42.1
Neutral	5.3

Analysis:

PjBL fosters active engagement, collaboration, and real-world application of knowledge, aligning with constructivist theory, which asserts that contextual and meaningful learning enhances engagement and interest (Hidayat, 2022). Unlike traditional passive teaching methods, PjBL empowers students to actively and independently participate, significantly boosting enthusiasm for Indonesian language lessons. Research by Lestari & Apoko, (2022) corroborates these findings, emphasizing that creative and interactive learning media within the PjBL framework contribute to heightened interest.

2. The Influence of Learning Interest on Academic Achievement

Data Presentation:

Findings reveal that increased interest in learning positively impacts students' academic performance. A total of 63.2% of students agreed, and 36.8% strongly agreed, that their understanding of Indonesian language materials improved after experiencing PjBL.

Figure 2: Student responses on the effect of PjBL on understanding Indonesian language materials.

Response Level	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	36.8
Agree	63.2

Analysis:

Learning interest serves as an intrinsic motivator, encouraging students to focus and exert greater effort in mastering content. This aligns with Hanafi (2024), who highlights interest as a critical determinant of academic achievement (Hanafi & Rohaemi, 2024). PjBL requires students to complete projects independently, enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. This finding resonates with active learning theories, which emphasize the importance of direct engagement in improving understanding and knowledge retention (Hidayat, 2022).

3. Factors Enhancing Learning Interest Through PjBL

Several key factors were identified as contributing to the increased interest in learning Indonesian through PjBL:

a. Interactivity and Active Engagement:

Students actively engage in collaborative activities, interacting with peers and lecturers, creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment. Interactive learning motivates students to participate more actively (Hidayat, 2022).

b. Real-World Project Relevance:

Projects were designed to be relevant to real-world contexts and daily life situations, enhancing the relevance and meaning of the materials studied. Applying learned concepts in real-world scenarios provides students with concrete experiences, increasing their interest in learning.

c. Collaboration and Teamwork:

PjBL emphasizes teamwork, fostering collaboration and opportunities to share ideas and learn from peers. Students feel more involved due to their roles and responsibilities in completing the projects.

Analysis:

The combination of these factors creates a more engaging and effective learning environment, allowing students to gain deeper material understanding while feeling more motivated to learn. These findings are consistent with Hidayat, (2022) who reported that PjBL paired with creative media significantly boosts motivation and academic outcomes.

4. Research Contributions and Novelty

Although PjBL has been widely studied in elementary and secondary education contexts, this research offers novelty by exploring its influence on Indonesian language learning at the higher education level, specifically within the Faculty of Economics. Most prior studies have focused on PjBL's application in primary and secondary schools, while research on university students remains limited. This study addresses this gap by highlighting the effectiveness of PjBL in the context of university-level language education.

a. Implications of Research

The study emphasizes the importance of adopting active learning models like PjBL to enhance student engagement and academic performance in language education. It provides valuable insights for educators aiming to integrate innovative teaching methods into university curricula.

b. Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to a single faculty, reducing the generalizability of findings.
2. Longitudinal studies were not conducted, limiting insights into long-term impacts of PjBL on learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The implementation of PjBL significantly enhances students' interest and achievement in Indonesian language learning. By fostering active engagement, real-world relevance, and collaboration, PjBL proves to be an effective educational approach in higher education contexts. Future research could expand on these findings by exploring PjBL's long-term impacts and its application across various academic disciplines.

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