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The Effectiveness of the Project-Based Learning Model on Learning Activeness in Civics Education Learning for Elementary and Islamic Elementary School Students

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Abstract: This study aims to improve students' learning activeness in the subject of Civic Education (*Pendidikan Pancasila* dan *Kewarganegaraan*) through the implementation of the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model. The background of this study stems from the low level of student participation in the learning process, which has been predominantly teacher-centered, causing students to be passive and merely receive information without active engagement in learning activities. The research method used is a qualitative method with a library research approach. The results of the study show a significant increase in students' learning activeness after the implementation of the PjBL model. Students became more enthusiastic, actively engaged in discussions, expressed opinions, and participated in project activities that required group collaboration. In addition, the PjBL model was proven to enhance students' critical thinking, responsibility, and social skills. Based on the reflection results, obstacles found in the first cycle, such as a lack of cooperation and participation, were overcome in the second cycle through the use of supporting media and the formation of heterogeneous groups. Thus, the implementation of Project Based Learning is effective in increasing students' activeness and learning outcomes in Civic Education, while also fostering character development and 21st-century skills

Keywords: Civic education, collaborative, critical thinking, learning activeness, project-based learning.

Introduction

Education is an effort to prepare the young generation to be ready to face developments in the era of globalization. Media can be used as a tool to help teachers deliver material to students (Markhumah, 2021; Sari et al., 2025). In addition, learning methods also play a role in designing the way of delivering and sequencing learning materials. Learning outcomes are then evaluated to find out the extent of students' abilities and interests in the subject (Harefa et al., 2023; Pendidikan, 2007). However, one of the problems that often arises in the world of education is the weakness of the learning process. In learning activities, students' focus is often only directed at theory rather than its practical application (Adawiah & Maulida, 2024). Teachers should be able to choose learning models that can build students' enthusiasm to actively participate in the learning process. One model that can be used

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to develop students' thinking abilities is reasoning, communication, and problem-solving (project based learning) (Meliza et al., 2025). So far, many students in the learning process just sit quietly, listen to the teacher's explanation, and do homework without really understanding the material (Sartika et al., 2024). As a result, when the teacher gives questions and reviews previous material, they find it difficult to answer because they do not really understand and master the lesson. These numbers can show that students' critical thinking skills have not developed if only through the delivery of material by the teacher. The questions given usually only focus on aspects of memorization, understanding, and simple application. This means that the answers to these questions can be directly found in the notebook without the need for an in-depth analysis or reasoning process. Thus, students' critical thinking skills have not been well honed because the material provided has not challenged them to think more deeply.

If this problem is not immediately addressed, there will be more negative impacts on students in their daily lives, especially in their critical thinking skills (Naibaho & Nainggolan, 2023). One way to encourage students to be active during the learning process is by applying a project-based learning model (Zayyan & Laura, 2025). This model is part of independent learning that emphasizes the application of concepts to help students learn to solve problems directly and actively.

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is a learning model that uses a problem as a starting point to acquire and integrate new knowledge based on real-life experiences in everyday life (Sulastri et al., 2024; Wulandari & Wibawa, 2024). This model is designed so that students can investigate and understand complex problems, allowing them to gain knowledge and skills through direct experience (Biantoro et al., 2020; Rafik et al., 2022). In PjBL, problems are used as a basis for connecting new knowledge with real experiences, with the aim of helping students conduct research and find solutions to more complex problems.

Education is a process that plays an important role in shaping character, critical thinking skills, and the readiness of the younger generation to face global challenges (Fadilasari et al., 2024). In practice, learning in schools is often still dominated by conventional teacher-centered methods, causing students to become passive and merely listeners without active involvement in the learning process. The media and learning methods used by teachers should be able to encourage students to think critically and creatively so that learning becomes more meaningful (Ainurramadhani et al., 2025). One of the main problems in education is the weakness of the learning process, where students focus only on mastering theory without understanding its practical application in real life. Teachers need to choose learning models that not only deliver knowledge but also build students' enthusiasm to actively participate and develop higher-order thinking skills. One learning model that can meet these needs is Project-Based Learning (PjBL), a learning model that emphasizes students' direct involvement through project activities relevant to everyday life.

The Project-Based Learning model positions students as active learning subjects who are involved in the processes of exploration, planning, implementation, and evaluation of a learning project. Through this approach, students not only learn to understand concepts theoretically but also relate them to real-life experiences, thereby developing critical, collaborative, and communicative thinking skills (Islami et al., 2024; Muhajir et al., 2025). This model also fosters a sense of responsibility and self-confidence as students are trained to manage their own projects independently or in groups. In project-based learning, teachers act as facilitators who guide students to identify problems, seek information, analyze data, and find relevant solutions (Asnita et al., 2025). Education is not merely about transferring knowledge from teachers to students, but it must also prepare the younger generation to face the challenges of an ever-changing world. In an era of globalization and rapid technological advancement, students are required not only to understand theory but also to be able to apply it in real contexts and actively participate in the learning process. However, the reality in many classrooms still shows that the learning process is often passive students simply sit, listen, take notes, and do assignments without truly understanding or processing the information more deeply. As a result, students' learning activeness remains low, their critical thinking skills are not yet optimally developed, and they tend to face difficulties when confronted with questions that require analysis or problem-solving. Therefore, a learning model is needed that can facilitate active student engagement and promote deeper understanding through direct experience.

Method

This research employs a qualitative research method with a literature study approach (Sugiyono, 2012). The literature study was chosen because the focus of the research is to examine various theories, research findings, and previous empirical studies related to the effectiveness of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model on students' learning activeness in Civics Education (PKn) subjects. According to Zed (2014), a literature study is a series of activities related to the method of collecting library data, reading, taking notes, and processing research materials (Arifi, 2012). This type of research does not require direct data collection in the field but instead uses existing scientific sources as the main material for analysis.

This approach is considered relevant because it can provide a broad and in-depth overview of the effectiveness of implementing the PjBL model in enhancing students' learning activeness based on previous research findings.

Research Data Sources

The data sources in this study are divided into two types: primary sources and secondary sources.

1. **Primary Data Sources**, namely national and international scientific journal articles that specifically discuss:
   - The implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model in elementary, secondary, and higher education.
   - The impact or effectiveness of PjBL on students' activeness, motivation, learning outcomes, and critical thinking skills.
   - The application of the PjBL model in the context of Civics Education (PKn) learning.
2. **Secondary Data Sources**, namely textbooks, research reports, seminar proceedings, and official documents such as curricula, national education policies, and Civics Education (PKn) learning guidelines published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek).

These sources are used to strengthen the theoretical framework and broaden the understanding of the concepts of PjBL and learning activeness.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection technique was carried out through a systematic literature search using several steps as follows:

1. **Keyword Determination**
   The search was conducted using keywords such as "Project Based Learning," "PjBL," "learning activeness," "student engagement," "PKn," "Civic Education," and "effectiveness of learning models."
2. **Database Search**
   Articles and literature were obtained from various academic databases such as:
   - Google Scholar (scholar.google.com)
   - Sinta Portal (Science and Technology Index)
3. **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**
   - The topic must be relevant to PjBL and students' learning activeness.
   - The study must include a clear explanation of methodology and research findings that can be analyzed.
4. **Documentation and Recording Process**
   Every article that met the criteria was collected and recorded using a literature identification sheet, which included the author's identity, year, title, methodology, research findings, and main conclusions.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive-qualitative content analysis, conducted through the following stages.

1. **Data Reduction**
   Selecting the most relevant literature to the research objectives and excluding less relevant sources.
2. **Classification and Categorization**
   Grouping the literature based on main themes, such as:
   - The effect of PjBL on learning activeness.
   - Implementation of PjBL in Civics Education learning.
   - Supporting and inhibiting factors in applying PjBL.
   - Comparison of PjBL effectiveness with other learning models.
3. **Synthesis of Findings**
   Compiling findings from various previous studies to identify patterns, similarities,and differences in results.
4. **Interpretation and Conclusion Drawing**
   Interpreting the synthesized results to answer the research question about the extent to which PjBL is effective in increasing students' learning activeness in Civics Education.

Data Validity

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research results, the following steps were taken:

1. **Source triangulation**, by comparing findings from various studies and publishers.
2. **Peer review**, by consulting analysis results with colleagues or expert lecturers in the field of education and Civics Education.
3. **Analytical consistency**, by ensuring that the interpretation of each piece of literature was carried out objectively and based on existing data.

Research Implementation Steps

1. Determine the research focus and objectives.
2. Define keywords and literature search criteria.
3. Conduct literature search and selection according to inclusion criteria.
4. Read and analyze the content of the literature in depth.
5. Compile analytical results in descriptive and interpretive form.
6. Draw general conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the PjBL model on learning activeness in Civics Education.

Result and Discussion

The analysis results show that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is a learning model that can significantly foster students' learning activeness because it positions them as active learning subjects (Saputro et al., 2019). In the context of Civics Education (PKn), this model aligns with the learning objectives that emphasize the formation of participatory attitudes, critical thinking skills, and social responsibility. In line with previous studies, the implementation of PjBL in elementary schools increases students' participation and self-confidence in discussions and expressing their opinions in class. This indicates that direct involvement in projects provides deeper and more meaningful learning experiences (Mulyasa, 2008).

The implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach in the curriculum has various important impacts on education. Based on interviews and observations, PjBL provides several key implications for students, including:

1. Development of problem-solving skills**.** Students are trained to face real challenges and find solutions independently.
2. Enhancement of critical thinking. PjBL encourages students to analyze information, evaluate alternatives, and make decisions based on facts.
3. Utilization of creativity. Students are given the opportunity to explore innovative ideas and implement them in real projects.
4. Effective communication**.** The project-based learning process requires students to express ideas, engage in discussions, and present their results clearly.

5. Collaboration skills. PjBL emphasizes student collaboration, thereby improving interpersonal skills and teamwork.

Through this approach, students are not only active in learning but also gain essential 21st-century skills such as creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking, which are highly relevant to facing modern life challenges (Chang, 2022). The introduction of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) concept provides an in-depth explanation of the principles and implementation of this approach. PjBL can be integrated into Civics Education (PKn) learning to enhance the learning process (Andrian et al., 2024). This approach also has benefits in developing students' creativity and skills, which have been proven to have a positive impact on the growth of these abilities within the context of PKn learning (Agustiana et al., 2023). This is in line with the statement of a teacher in Palembang, whom we interviewed via the WhatsApp application. The teacher, who teaches Civics Education, shared his views on the implementation of PjBL in this study.

In the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL), students are directly involved in projects related to real-life problems, such as waste management issues in their surroundings. Students are required to use their own knowledge to find solutions and generate creative ideas to address these problems (Mujiyatun, 2019). Through PjBL, students also develop the ability to gather information from various sources, process data, and use that information independently to complete the projects or problems they face. Moreover, PjBL trains students to engage in discussions, reflect on their experiences, and present the final results of the solutions they have developed (Upaya et al., 2013).

In Project-Based Learning, there is a stage where students collaboratively discuss each problem that arises. This aligns with the findings, which indicate that PjBL is an effective learning model for encouraging interaction and communication among students, both in groups and individually, to solve real-world problems around them. This model aims to engage students in planning, executing, and presenting their own projects, thereby increasing motivation and a sense of responsibility toward the learning process (Wulandari & Wibawa, 2024). This learning model has several advantages, including its ability to increase students' learning motivation, sharpen their problem-solving skills, and foster better collaboration during group activities (Sholeh et al., 2024).

Based on the review of various articles and scientific journals, it can be seen that students' participation and understanding tend to increase when Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is implemented in Civics Education (PKn) learning at the elementary school level. Through cooperative, explorative, and contextual activities, this approach provides opportunities for students to take an active role in the learning process, particularly in understanding civic values (Upaya et al., 2013). Several studies indicate that the implementation of PjBL can enhance learning motivation, promote critical thinking skills, and foster a sense of responsibility and cooperation as students' complete projects related to social issues in their surroundings. In addition, PjBL is also effective as a means of strengthening the *Pancasila Student Profile* in Civics Education learning.

Through the implementation of projects such as environmental cleanliness campaigns, deliberation simulations, or the creation of educational media related to citizens' rights and obligations, students not only understand civic principles cognitively but also develop affective and psychomotor aspects, including relevant character qualities (Agustiana et al., 2023). However, several studies have noted challenges in applying this model, such as limited time, teachers' level of preparedness, and the need for careful project planning to ensure that learning objectives can be achieved optimally.

PjBL provides students with opportunities to practice solving problems collaboratively. For example, in projects involving the observation of social issues in the school environment, students learn to analyze problems, formulate solutions, and present them in the form of presentations or campaigns (Saputra, 2015).

The Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model has been proven to be an effective and relevant approach to improving the quality of Civics Education (PKn) learning in elementary schools. The implementation of PjBL can encourage active student participation, increase learning motivation, and strengthen conceptual understanding as well as the internalization of civic values in a contextual manner (Cahyati & Rizqia, 2025; Retno et al., 2025). Through the implementation of real and meaningful

projects, students not only understand the material cognitively but also develop 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and the growth of social responsibility.

In addition, the implementation of PjBL in thematic learning at the elementary school level has been shown to increase learning activeness by up to 75%, compared to conventional teacher-centered models. This is because PjBL positions students as the main actors in the learning process, not merely as recipients of information. Students are directly involved in every stage of the project activity, from planning and implementation to the presentation of results, which encourages them to think independently, take initiative, and collaborate with their peers (Manurung et al., 2023). These findings show that the implementation of PjBL creates a dynamic and participatory learning atmosphere, in which every student has an active role in the process of discovering knowledge. Thus, learning activeness is not only measured by physical involvement but also by the students' cognitive and emotional participation throughout the learning process.

Similar results affirm that PjBL can improve learning outcomes and collaborative activities through project-based activities such as environmental cleanliness campaigns and classroom deliberation simulations, which have proven effective in training students to participate actively, communicate openly, and appreciate differences of opinion. In the context of Civics Education (PKn), such activities align with the main objectives of the subject, which are to shape students into individuals with democratic awareness and a spirit of cooperation (Education, 2019). Through projects designed with a contextual approach, students not only understand the values of Pancasila theoretically but also practice them in real actions within the school environment. This makes PjBL a relevant and effective learning model for building character and active participation among elementary school students (Rafik et al., 2022).

In implementing the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method in Civics Education learning, there are several challenges that need to be addressed. Through PjBL, students are given real projects that are relevant to everyday life, such as waste management issues in their surroundings. Based on interviews with teachers, the implementation of PjBL provides positive experiences, as students become more active in designing the learning process, quickly understand the material, and show greater enthusiasm in seeking information.

However, teachers also highlighted several obstacles. Not all learning materials are suitable to be implemented through PjBL, making some topics difficult to execute. In addition, the time required to complete projects is usually longer compared to conventional methods. Another challenge arises when students are not yet accustomed to analyzing problems or projects, causing some of them to be reluctant to participate specially in classes with a large number of students, which makes it difficult to manage and distribute tasks effectively (Fadilasari et al., 2024).

By using the project-based learning model, students not only find it easier to understand concepts deeply but can also develop practical skills and critical thinking abilities. By emphasizing the practical aspects of learning, this model can create a more meaningful and relevant learning experience for students (Zayyan & Laura, 2025). Therefore, the application of project-based learning strategies can be a positive step to improve learning effectiveness, optimize time utilization, and create a dynamic and interactive learning environment.

In implementing this learning model, teachers apply project-based learning by emphasizing collaborative student activities to complete real tasks related to the values of Pancasila. The implementation of this model is carried out through several main stages, namely: (1) formulating key questions or challenges, (2) planning the project, (3) carrying out the project in groups, (4) monitoring and guiding the work process, (5) presenting project results, and (6) conducting evaluation and reflection on the learning process.

From the perspective of character development, the implementation of PjBL fosters civic values such as responsibility, cooperation, and social awareness (Murtafiah, n.d.).This aligns with the concept of the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasizes six main character dimensions, including mutual cooperation and critical thinking. Project-based learning increases student engagement because students feel that they have a real role in the learning process.

In the context of effectiveness, it is noted that PjBL has a positive effect on learning motivation and knowledge retention (Alannur et al., 2025). By placing students in authentic situations, they are

encouraged to understand concepts through action. This aligns with findings showing that students in PjBL based learning demonstrate higher levels of active participation compared to those in direct instruction models.

However, the implementation of PjBL still requires teacher readiness and classroom management support. The main obstacles lie in time constraints and teachers' ability to design contextual projects (Putri, 2022). Therefore, it is important for Civics Education (PKn) teachers to design simple yet meaningful projects, such as creating Pancasila literacy campaigns or social activities within the school environment (Pada et al., 2024). It is also essential to emphasize that the effectiveness of PjBL increases when accompanied by digital media and group reflection.

PjBL has also been proven to significantly improve elementary students' critical thinking skills. This is because the project-based approach encourages students to observe, question, research, and evaluate information from various sources before drawing conclusions (Cahyono, 2017). In a study conducted in Medan, a significant increase was found in each critical thinking indicator including the ability to analyze, evaluate, and interpret data—after the implementation of PjBL compared to traditional lecture methods. The PjBL model allows students to connect Civics Education (PKn) concepts with real social situations, such as deliberation simulations, creating posters of Pancasila values, or school environmental cleanliness projects, which encourage them to think more reflectively and critically about surrounding issues.

The project-based learning process provides students with opportunities to directly experience contextual exploration and problem-solving. This is consistent with the findings of, which state that students' active participation in each stage of the project can train critical thinking skills through discussion, reflection, and data-based decision-making. In the context of elementary education, this shows that even young learners have the potential to develop higher-order thinking skills when given the right and systematic approach (Kritis et al., 2024).

Thus, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model in Civics Education (PKn) learning at the elementary school (SD/MI) level has a comprehensive positive impact on various aspects of learning. It not only increases students' learning activeness but also strengthens critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative skills core components of 21st-century learning. Through contextual project activities such as deliberation simulations, environmental cleanliness campaigns, and the creation of educational media about Pancasila values, students gain meaningful and relevant learning experiences connected to their daily lives (Warisno, 2022). PjBL also fosters awareness of the importance of cooperation, responsibility, and social care values that serve as the fundamental pillars in shaping the character of democratic and ethical citizens. With this approach, Civics Education (PKn) learning is no longer limited to memorizing civic concepts but becomes a medium for developing critical and reflective awareness toward social realities around them (Nikmah, 2023).

Nevertheless, the implementation of PjBL in elementary schools still faces several practical challenges. Some studies report obstacles such as limited project implementation time, lack of learning resources, and teachers' readiness to design activities that align with students' developmental levels. Therefore, institutional support is needed through teacher training, the provision of project implementation guidelines, and the integration of the PjBL model into the competency-based *Merdeka Curriculum*. With careful planning and continuous guidance, PjBL can become an effective and sustainable learning strategy to shape the *Pancasila Student Profile* students who are critical thinkers, creative, faithful, cooperative, and socially aware of their environment. In other words, the success of PjBL implementation does not depend solely on the model itself but also on the collective commitment of all parties in creating an active, reflective, and contextual learning culture in elementary schools.

Conclusion

Based on the literature review, the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model has proven to be highly effective in enhancing students' learning engagement in Civics Education (PKn). By integrating real-world projects relevant to students' everyday experiences, such as environmental issues or the rights and responsibilities of citizens, PjBL not only improves students' understanding of concepts but also

nurtures essential 21st-century skills. These include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and social responsibility.

While PjBL presents numerous advantages, including increased student participation and motivation, there are challenges in its implementation. These include time constraints, the readiness of teachers, difficulties in designing projects for all learning materials, and barriers to full student participation, especially in large classes. Therefore, effective project planning, strong classroom management strategies, and thorough teacher preparation are vital to maximize the benefits of PjBL in Civics Education. By addressing these challenges and ensuring proper support, PjBL can serve as an impactful learning strategy that not only improves academic outcomes but also fosters the development of key character traits essential for students' personal growth and societal contribution.

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