Integrating Ki Hajar Dewantara's Philosophy with a Project-Based Learning Approach in Indonesian Language Education

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore the potential integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy with the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach in Indonesian language education at the primary and secondary education levels. Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy, which emphasizes education rooted in local wisdom values, freedom, and character development, is highly relevant to the principles embedded in PjBL, which prioritizes active, collaborative, and contextual learning. Through a literature review approach, this article examines various sources discussing the implementation of Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy in education as well as the application of PjBL in the context of Indonesian language learning. The study results indicate that integrating these two approaches can create a more dynamic learning environment, motivate students to think critically, and enhance their communication skills and understanding of the language. Moreover, this approach can also foster character development and student independence, aligning with Ki Hajar Dewantara's vision of building holistic and character-based education. The implications of this integration can enrich the quality of Indonesian language education, not only in cognitive aspects but also in character building, social skills, and students' preparedness to face global challenges.

Keywords: Ki Hajar Dewantara's Philosophy; Project-Based Learning (PjBL); Indonesian Language

INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia requires a renewal of its approach to create a generation that is not only intelligent but also morally upright and capable of addressing global challenges. Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy, as a cornerstone of national education, provides guidance for Indonesia's educational goals: to develop

individuals holistically—intellectually, emotionally, and socially. The principle *"Ing ngarso sung tulodo, ing madyo mangun karso, tut wuri handayani"* emphasizes the educator's role in providing examples, motivation, and support for students. This philosophy reflects an understanding that education should center on learners, prioritizing character development and personal growth to prepare them as independent and responsible individuals (Mulyasa, 2013).

On the other hand, the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach has been recognized as an effective method to enhance 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. PjBL engages students in active learning through real-world experiences involving problem-solving and product creation. Research shows that PjBL can boost student motivation and prepare them for real-life challenges (Bell, 2010; Thomas, 2000). By employing this approach, students can connect knowledge with practical applications, which is highly relevant to the demands of the future workforce.

In the context of Indonesian language learning, integrating Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy with PjBL can create more contextual and meaningful learning experiences. Indonesian language learning would not only focus on theoretical and structural aspects of the language but also on students' ability to communicate ideas and think critically through projects relevant to daily life. For instance, projects such as creating written works or organizing language-based events can train students to work in teams, address communication challenges, and produce outputs that benefit society (Anderson, 2004). This approach allows students to develop more practical language skills while internalizing social and cultural values inherent in their lives.

This study aims to explore the potential integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy with PjBL in Indonesian language education at the primary and secondary levels. It will examine how these two approaches can complement each other in creating a more holistic learning experience, focusing on students' character development, social skills, and meaningful, relevant learning experiences. This integration is expected to contribute to a more dynamic and humanistic education system.

Research on Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy highlights the principle *"Ing ngarso sung tulodo, ing madya mangun karso, tut wuri handayani"* as a foundation for character-based and independent student development. Studies suggest that this philosophy can be applied across various teaching methods, including PjBL, to enhance student engagement and experiential learning. PjBL has proven effective in fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration (Bell, 2010; Thomas, 2000). In the context of Indonesian language education, PjBL facilitates student interaction with texts, conducting research, and producing creative projects relevant to their lives, thereby enhancing their language skills holistically.

Integrating Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy with PjBL in Indonesian language education can create a more meaningful, relevant, and student-centered learning experience while supporting character building and 21st-century skills development. A study published in the *Journal of Education and Practice* by Abdulrahman & Manal (2015) examined the implementation of PjBL in enhancing student engagement and 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. This study found that PjBL supports the development of practical and theoretical skills in language education, aligning closely with Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy, which emphasizes active, collaborative, and experience-based teaching.

Additionally, research by Yavuz (2017) in the *International Journal of Instruction* discussed the application of constructivist principles in PjBL to deepen students' understanding across disciplines, including Indonesian language education. This study suggested that PjBL provides students with opportunities to develop their understanding independently, consistent with Ki Hajar Dewantara's emphasis on education that shapes character and independence. Integrating Dewantara's philosophy with PjBL can foster a more dynamic, solution-oriented learning environment that is relevant to real-life contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ki Hajar Dewantara's Educational Philosophy

Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy is deeply rooted in the principles of local wisdom, holistic development, and character education. His famous motto, *"Ing ngarso sung tulodo, ing madyo mangun karso, tut wuri handayani"* (in front, set an example; in the middle, build motivation; behind, provide support), underscores the role of educators in shaping students' character and independence. Dewantara emphasized that education should be student-centered and designed to nurture learners' intellectual, emotional, and social capacities (Mulyasa, 2013). Research highlights the applicability of Dewantara's principles in contemporary education, particularly in fostering character development and integrating local cultural values into the curriculum. For example, Sukarno (2012) found that incorporating Dewantara's principles in classroom practices enhanced students' moral reasoning and self-reliance, contributing to their holistic growth.

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as a Modern Educational Approach

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is a student-centered instructional method that emphasizes active learning through real-world projects. Bell (2010) highlights that PjBL is effective in cultivating 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. PjBL enables students to engage in meaningful problem-solving activities and create tangible outputs, enhancing their understanding and motivation. Research supports the effectiveness of PjBL in language education. For instance, Thomas (2000) demonstrated that PjBL fosters

deeper comprehension and application of language skills by involving students in practical tasks, such as writing reports, conducting interviews, or organizing events. Similarly, a study by Larmer et al. (2015) emphasizes that PjBL enhances student engagement and prepares learners for real-world challenges by bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application.

The Intersection of Dewantara's Philosophy and PjBL

The integration of Dewantara's philosophy and PjBL is a promising educational strategy. Both approaches prioritize student-centered learning and the holistic development of learners. Dewantara's focus on character building complements PjBL's emphasis on collaboration, critical thinking, and contextual learning. According to Yavuz (2017), PjBL aligns with constructivist principles that resonate with Dewantara's educational vision, allowing students to construct knowledge through active engagement and reflective practices. Empirical studies support this integration in the Indonesian context. For instance, Anderson (2004) highlighted the potential of PjBL to enhance Indonesian language skills through collaborative projects that incorporate cultural and social elements. Abdulrahman and Manal (2015) found that PjBL encourages student autonomy and creativity, aligning with Dewantara's vision of fostering independent learners. Furthermore, the integration of cultural themes into PjBL projects has been shown to enhance students' appreciation of local values while improving their language proficiency (Sudirman, 2018).

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study utilizes a literature review method to explore and analyze various relevant sources on Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy, the project-based learning (PjBL) approach, and their application in the context of Indonesian language education. The literature review allows for an in-depth examination of existing studies, theories, and concepts to understand how Dewantara's philosophy and PjBL can complement and enrich Indonesian language learning. The sources reviewed include books and journal articles that discuss Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy, particularly principles such as *ing ngarso sung tulodo, ing madya mangun karsa,* and *tut wuri handayani* in educational contexts. Additionally, previous studies on the implementation of PjBL in language education and its impact on critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills are analyzed. The review also incorporates theoretical studies on the fundamental principles of PjBL and their relevance to Indonesian language education, as well as reports and documentation on the practical application of PjBL in teaching Indonesian.

Instrument and Procedure

The data collection procedure involves several steps. First, relevant sources are identified using academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ERIC, among others, which provide insights into the integration of Dewantara's philosophy and PjBL. Next, literature is selected based on quality and relevance, adhering to criteria such as recency, significance, and contribution to the research topic. Finally, the selected sources are organized into categories, including educational philosophy, the application of PjBL in Indonesian language education, and relevant educational theories.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected literature follows three main techniques. Thematic synthesis is employed to identify key themes related to Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy and PjBL, such as how Dewantara's emphasis on character education can be applied in collaborative project-based learning within Indonesian language education. Comparative analysis is then used to evaluate findings from various studies on PjBL across different disciplines to determine how this approach can be adapted to the context of Indonesian language education while considering Dewantara's principles. Lastly, the discussion connects Dewantara's educational philosophy with the practices and principles of PjBL found in the literature, exploring the potential integration of these two approaches to enhance the teaching of Indonesian language.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy emphasizes education that focuses on character development rather than mere academic achievement. Education, according to Dewantara, should produce individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also socially and emotionally wise.

The Principle of "Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha" in Project-Based Learning for Indonesian Language Education

The principle *"Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha,"* articulated by Ki Hajar Dewantara, translates to "setting an example in the front." It highlights that educators must serve as role models for their students in attitude, behavior, and the learning process itself. By being exemplary, teachers can inspire and guide students by demonstrating behaviors worth emulating. In Indonesian language learning, this principle can be implemented through activities that involve not just theoretical instruction but also direct teacher engagement in the learning process. Language is not only a tool for communication but also a reflection of character and culture. Mastery of language reflects positive attitudes and character. Teachers play a critical role in modeling proper language usage, comprehension, and critical thinking in analyzing literature or social phenomena. Examples of implementation include:

1. Being a Model for Proper Language Use
    Teachers consistently use appropriate and standard Indonesian in the classroom. For instance, when teaching descriptive writing, the teacher provides a live demonstration on the board, showing how to create effective and engaging sentences while explaining the use of proper grammar and punctuation.
2. Active and Innovative Teaching Methods
    Teachers demonstrate creativity by employing innovative teaching methods, such as project-based learning (PjBL). For example, during a short story writing project, the teacher might guide students through brainstorming, creating characters, and structuring a clear storyline while providing real-time editing feedback.
3. Modeling Ethical and Respectful Language Practices
    In discussions or speaking activities, the teacher exemplifies how to listen attentively, give others a chance to speak, and provide constructive feedback, fostering a respectful communication environment.
4. Encouraging Active Participation
    Teachers actively involve students in group activities, such as creating a presentation or drama, and demonstrate how to plan projects, assign tasks, and collaborate effectively.

The Principle of "Ing Madya Mangun Karsa" in Project-Based Learning

The principle *"Ing Madya Mangun Karsa"* translates to "in the middle building motivation." It underscores the educator's role in inspiring and supporting students during the learning process. Beyond imparting knowledge, teachers must cultivate students' enthusiasm and willingness to learn and grow. In the context of Indonesian language education, this principle fosters active student participation and curiosity. Teachers must motivate students to explore language, literature, and culture through project-based approaches, helping them remain confident, focused, and engaged in completing tasks. Examples of implementation include:

1. Building Student Motivation Through Collaborative Projects
    Teachers facilitate group work, such as collaborative short story writing, where students take on specific roles (e.g., developing the plot, editing, or character creation) and encourage teamwork.
2. Providing Constructive Feedback
    For instance, after a presentation on a literary work, teachers offer feedback on clarity, language use, and idea development while appreciating effort and suggesting improvements.
3. Encouraging Responsibility
    Teachers give students ownership of their projects, such as creating educational posters or videos on Indonesian grammar, helping them to manage tasks step by step while fostering independence and accountability.
4. Enhancing Relevance in Learning

Teachers guide students to engage with meaningful, real-world topics, such as writing articles on social issues, ensuring the learning experience resonates with students' lives.

The Principle of "Tut Wuri Handayani" in Project-Based Learning

The principle *"Tut Wuri Handayani"* translates to "providing support from behind." It signifies the educator's role in motivating and supporting students while allowing them the freedom to explore and develop independently. In project-based learning, students work on meaningful projects, with teachers facilitating and supporting them as needed. Teachers ensure students stay motivated and on track, offering guidance without taking over their learning journey. Examples of implementation include:

1. Allowing Freedom in Choosing Project Topics
   Teachers give students the flexibility to select themes, such as writing short stories or creating campaigns promoting proper Indonesian language usage, while providing general guidelines.
2. Providing Motivational Feedback
   Teachers give positive and constructive feedback to enhance students' confidence and perseverance.
3. Guiding Project Stages
   During a video creation project on grammar, teachers provide technical advice and outline clear steps, encouraging creativity and problem-solving.
4. Fostering Collaboration
   Teachers guide group dynamics in collaborative tasks, ensuring all members contribute and learn the importance of teamwork.

Integration with Research and Practical Outcomes

Studies have shown that project-based learning enhances both academic and non-academic skills. For instance, Bell (2010) highlights that PjBL fosters 21st-century skills, such as collaboration, communication, and creativity, aligning with Dewantara's holistic educational philosophy. Research by Dewi (2019) demonstrates that PjBL improves Indonesian language skills in writing and speaking, reinforcing the effectiveness of combining Dewantara's principles with modern pedagogical approaches. By applying Dewantara's philosophy to project-based learning, educators not only cultivate linguistic competence but also nurture students' character and life skills, creating a comprehensive and meaningful educational experience.

CONCLUSION

The philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara, which emphasizes the principles of *"Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha"* (setting an example in the front), *"Ing Madya Mangun Karsa"* (building spirit and motivation in the middle), and *"Tut Wuri Handayani"* (providing support from behind), holds significant relevance in Project-Based

Learning (PjBL) for Bahasa Indonesia. These three principles serve as a critical foundation for fostering more active, participatory, and holistic learning. By integrating Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy with the PjBL approach, the learning environment not only focuses on mastery of the subject matter but also on shaping students' character as individuals who think critically, creatively, and responsibly.

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