

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: ELEVATING WRITING SKILLS IN ISLAMIC SCHOOL JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS

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Abstract

Project-based learning (PjBL), an innovative teaching approach that emphasizes active, student-centered learning through real-world projects, serves as a cornerstone for educational advancement. However, in the specific context of Islamic schools setting, there exists a recognized need for the improvement of writing skills among first-grade students. This Classroom Action Research (CAR) study, spanning two cycles with a cohort of 15 participants at Mts. Insan Madani, Jember, is dedicated to achieving significant advancements in writing skill proficiency through the implementation of PjBL. Findings from the study indicate marked enhancements in creativity, engagement, and collaborative abilities. Concurrently, certain challenges surfaced, particularly in the realms of time management and the necessity for more structured guidance during the initial stages of PjBL implementation. The implications of this research underscore the efficacy of PjBL in enhancing writing skills within an Islamic school setting, emphasizing the potential for the integration of PjBL as an educational approach to nurture essential writing skills. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge the importance of providing additional support in specific areas. Recommendations for future research encompass expanding the study to different grade levels and incorporating a more extensive participant pool to further validate the findings, thereby offering a comprehensive understanding of the broader impacts of PjBL on writing skill development within Islamic schools.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning, Writing Skills, Islamic School.

Abstrak

Pembelajaran berbasis proyek (PjBL), pendekatan pengajaran inovatif yang menekankan pembelajaran aktif yang berpusat pada siswa melalui proyek dunia nyata, menjadi landasan untuk kemajuan pendidikan. Namun, dalam konteks khusus sekolah Islam, terdapat kebutuhan yang diakui untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis pada siswa kelas satu. Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (CAR) ini, yang meliputi dua siklus dengan 15 peserta di Mts. Insan Madani, Jember, didedikasikan untuk mencapai kemajuan signifikan dalam kemahiran menulis melalui implementasi PjBL. Temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan peningkatan yang mencolok dalam kreativitas, keterlibatan, dan kemampuan berkolaborasi. Pada saat yang bersamaan, beberapa tantangan muncul, terutama dalam hal manajemen waktu dan kebutuhan akan panduan yang lebih terstruktur

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selama tahap awal implementasi PjBL. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menekankan efektivitas PjBL dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis dalam lingkungan sekolah Islam, dengan menekankan potensi integrasi PjBL sebagai pendekatan pendidikan untuk mengembangkan keterampilan menulis yang penting. Namun, penting untuk mengakui pentingnya memberikan dukungan tambahan dalam bidang-bidang tertentu. Rekomendasi untuk penelitian masa depan mencakup perluasan studi ke berbagai tingkat kelas dan melibatkan lebih banyak peserta untuk lebih memvalidasi temuan, sehingga memberikan pemahaman yang komprehensif tentang dampak lebih luas dari PjBL pada pengembangan keterampilan menulis dalam sekolah Islam.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek, Keterampilan Menulis, Sekolah Islam.

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of educational research, the cultivation of effective writing skills assumes a multifaceted and foundational role that extends beyond mere communication (Golparvar & Khafi, 2021; Teng & Zhang, 2020). Proficient writing is more than the art of eloquent expression; it profoundly influences the cognitive and academic growth of individuals. It empowers them to articulate thoughts with precision, functioning as a portal to higher-order cognitive processes and intellectual engagement (Lu, 2021). This proficiency, far from being a peripheral aspect, is intricately woven into the fabric of cognitive development itself (Csizér & Tankó, 2015). Effective writing serves as the conduit through which students not only convey their comprehension of complex subjects but also engage in critical analysis, constructing original insights. It transcends the realm of academic achievement, reflecting the essence of cognitive maturity. It functions as a compass guiding student through the intricate pathways of learning, enabling them to communicate their thoughts and

knowledge in a manner that is not only coherent but also intellectually reflective (Golparvar & Khafi, 2021; Harman, 2013; Inan-Karagul & Seker, 2021).

However, as we refine our focus to the specific context of Islamic schools, particularly within Mts. Insan Madani in Jember, a distinctive and intriguing research niche comes into view within the expansive domain of educational research. While extensive inquiries have meticulously explored methods for enhancing writing skills within conventional educational settings, a shift to the landscape of Islamic schools reveals a unique and relatively uncharted territory (Dzulkifli, 2021; Net, 2021). In particular, there exists a conspicuous dearth of comprehensive studies that delve into the intricacies of writing skill development within the context of Islamic schools, and this gap is particularly pronounced when considering first-grade students. This research void, in the heart of Islamic education, presents an invaluable opportunity for in-depth exploration and discovery (Hanafi et al., 2021; Mehrdad & Ahghar, 2013).

The unique attributes of Islamic schools, such as the integration of a faith-based curriculum and a values-based pedagogy, significantly influence the approach to teaching and learning (Dzulkifli, 2021; Suhono, 2019). The principles and philosophies that underpin Islamic education introduce distinctive elements into the teaching and learning processes that necessitate a tailored and context-specific approach to educational strategies. These elements encompass a spectrum of beliefs, values, and cultural nuances that infuse the learning environment. As such, they introduce layers of complexity that necessitate a nuanced examination and understanding of the specific strategies required for the development of writing skills within Islamic school settings.

In a broader context, these educational dynamics within Islamic schools offer more than just an opportunity for scholarly exploration. They represent a significant facet of educational diversity and enrich the overall discourse on teaching and learning methodologies (Net, 2021). Therefore, a comprehensive exploration of the development of writing skills within Islamic schools is vital for a holistic understanding of educational dynamics within these unique environments (Introduction, 2019). This detailed exploration of the research niche in the context of Islamic schools emphasizes the rich tapestry of unique factors and intricacies that shape educational strategies, calling for context-specific investigations. It underlines the distinctive attributes of Islamic education and the impact of faith-based values on pedagogy, further

accentuating the need for a tailored approach to enhancing writing skills in Islamic school settings.

In direct response to the critical research niche identified within Islamic school settings, our study embarks on an unwavering exploration within the specific context of Mts. Insan Madani, Jember. Our primary objective is to delve into the uncharted possibilities of enhancing writing skills, using PjBL as a central teaching approach. This approach represents a pivotal paradigm shift, responding to the unique educational dynamics in Islamic schools. Our research extends beyond identifying the limitations inherent in existing studies; we strive to transcend these constraints by pioneering innovative pedagogical approaches tailored to the intricate context of Islamic schools.

Previous research has recognized the value of PjBL as a potent method for enhancing writing skills. It has been successfully employed in mainstream educational settings ((Anazifa & Djukri, 2017; Cortázar et al., 2021; Hanif et al., 2019; Hidayati et al., 2023). However, this method's application within the framework of Islamic schools, particularly among first-grade students, remains relatively unexplored. Current literature, though limited, suggests that Islamic schools introduce specific elements, such as a faith-based curriculum and values-based pedagogy, which profoundly affect the teaching and learning environment (Introduction, 2019; Net, 2021). These unique attributes introduce a distinctive layer of complexity and present a research void that necessitates detailed investigation. The distinctive elements

of Islamic education and the cultural and faith-based nuances have been the subject of scholarly inquiry. While previous research has shed light on various aspects of Islamic education (Fuadi & Suyatno, 2020; Net, 2021; Suhono, 2019), there is a dearth of comprehensive studies examining the specific strategies required for the development of writing skills within Islamic school settings, and this is particularly pronounced among first-grade students.

Our research is firmly grounded in the belief that PjBL, when meticulously tailored to the Islamic school setting, can effectively harness the creative potential, stimulate engagement, and tap into the collaborative aptitudes of first-grade students (Anazifa & Djukri, 2017; Condliffe, 2017; Hidayati et al., 2023; Lu, 2021). By merging the innovative potential of PjBL with the unique characteristics of Islamic education, we aim to fill a considerable research gap and contribute novel insights to the field of educational research. This study represents a significant departure from conventional educational strategies, offering a fresh perspective and a pioneering approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities within Islamic schools.

The urgency of this study lies in its potential to shape the future of educational strategies in Islamic schools. By providing a well-defined framework for integrating PjBL, this research can empower educators, administrators, and researchers to effectively enhance writing skills within these distinctive settings. Moreover, it highlights the significance of educational diversity and its enriching role in the broader

discourse on teaching and learning methodologies, not only within Islamic schools but also within educational settings worldwide.

Research questions

In the pursuit of enhancing writing skill development within the unique context of Mts. Insan Madani, Jember, and the utilization of PjBL in a first-grade Islamic school setting, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does the integration of PjBL impact the development of writing skills among first-grade students in Mts. Insan Madani, Jember?
2. What are the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing PjBL for writing skill enhancement in Mts. Insan Madani, Jember?

Significance of the study

This research holds significant importance as it fills a critical gap in the literature by examining the impact of PjBL on writing skill development within the specific context of Islamic schools. The findings of this study offer practical insights for educators and administrators in Islamic school settings. By understanding the challenges and opportunities presented by PjBL, they can adapt pedagogical approaches to better meet the needs of first-grade students, ultimately enhancing writing skills within the framework of Islamic education. Additionally, this research contributes to the broader discourse on faith-based education by shedding light on how faith-based values influence the strategies and outcomes of writing skill development, offering a nuanced understanding of the intersection between faith-based values and educational practices.

METHOD

Research Design and Implementation of Two Cycles

This study adopts a CAR design to comprehensively address the two central research questions. CAR is an iterative and dynamic research methodology ideally suited for the investigation of PjBL and its impact on writing skill development in the distinctive context of Mts. Insan Madani, Jember. The research is structured into two cycles, each meticulously designed to ensure a thorough exploration of the research questions.

In the initial cycle, the implementation of PjBL strategies is carefully planned, considering the unique characteristics of the Islamic school setting. Educators execute these strategies in the classroom, with a primary focus on the writing skill development of first-grade students. This first cycle includes systematic observations during PjBL-based lessons to gauge the initial impact on student writing skills. Subsequently, a reflective phase is conducted, with detailed assessments of the effectiveness of PjBL in enhancing writing skills among the students. Findings from this cycle provide a baseline understanding of the impact of PjBL.

The second cycle builds upon the insights derived from the first, with necessary adjustments made based on reflections and lessons learned. New PjBL strategies are introduced, and the process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting is repeated. This iterative approach not only ensures a deeper exploration of the research questions but also sheds light on the evolution of writing skills over the course of two cycles of PjBL implementation. The detailed implementation of each cycle allows for a nuanced examination of the research questions and the changes over time.

The criteria for success in this CAR are closely aligned with our research goals, particularly in terms of achieving significant improvements in writing skills among first-grade students in the unique setting of Mts. Insan Madani, Jember.

Success is defined as at least 75% of the students passing the minimum standard score (KKM which stands for *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal*), which is set at 75, over the course of the two meticulously designed research cycles. This level of achievement signifies substantial progress in writing skills, underscoring the effectiveness of PjBL as a pedagogical approach within an Islamic school setting. Our research goals are achieved when the majority of students not only improve but also exceed the minimum standard score, contributing significantly to their overall educational development. This success is closely tied to the criteria for success, which hinge on reaching a specific threshold of improvement in students' writing proficiency scores within the Islamic school context.

Samples/Participants

Purposive sampling targets first-grade students at Mts. Insan Madani in Jember, aligning with the research focus on early-stage education and foundational writing skill development. The sample size, comprising the 15 students, encompasses the entire population of first-grade students within the school. This approach ensures that the research captures a comprehensive and representative view of the impact of PjBL on writing skill development in this specific educational context.

Instruments

The research employs a range of instruments to gather comprehensive data. Structured observation protocols are utilized for classroom observations during PjBL sessions, allowing for systematic data collection regarding the implementation of PjBL strategies. Document analysis includes a thorough examination of the curriculum, learning materials, and values-based pedagogy within the Islamic school setting. Student assessments comprise a variety of written assignments and surveys, which provide

in-depth insights into the impact of PjBL on writing skill development.

Data analysis

Data analysis embraces a mixed-methods approach to effectively address the research questions. Qualitative methods such as thematic analysis and content analysis are used to identify patterns and themes associated with the impact of PjBL on writing skills. Additionally, quantitative analysis, including statistical measures, is employed to measure the quantifiable improvements in writing skills. This integrated approach ensures that the research delivers a comprehensive response to the first research question, which examines the impact of PjBL on writing skill development. Simultaneously, it aids in addressing the second research question, which focuses on the challenges and opportunities associated with PjBL in an Islamic school context, by offering a detailed examination of these aspects based on the collected data and observations.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are a fundamental aspect of this research. In conducting observations, document analysis, and student assessments, all participants' privacy and rights are rigorously protected. Informed consent is obtained from the school, educators, and students, and all data is anonymized to ensure confidentiality. Additionally, the research adheres to ethical guidelines and practices regarding data handling, storage, and reporting, and any potential conflicts of interest are transparently disclosed. The study is conducted with the utmost respect for ethical standards and the well-being of all involved parties.

FINDINGS

This research embarks on a comprehensive exploration within the specific context of Mts. Insan Madani, Jember, aiming to answer critical questions and explore innovative pedagogical approaches. Specifically, the study seeks to address how the integration of PjBL impacts the development of writing skills among first-grade students within the Islamic school setting. It also endeavors to uncover the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing PjBL for writing skill enhancement. The research is grounded in the belief that PjBL, when meticulously tailored to the unique attributes of Islamic education, can serve as a catalyst for transformative educational experiences.

The integration of PjBL impact the development of writing skills among first-grade students in Mts. Insan Madani, Jember?

a. Pre-Research Findings

Before initiating this CAR study at Mts. Insan Madani, Jember, an assessment of first-grade students' writing skills was conducted to establish a baseline. The initial writing proficiency scores, measured on a standardized scale, ranged from 55 to 72. Only 4 out of 15 students met or exceeded the passing score of 75, representing 26.7% of students passing.

b. Cycle 1 Findings

In the first cycle of this CAR at Mts. Insan Madani, Jember, the integration of PjBL demonstrated significant positive effects on the development of writing skills among first-grade students.

Table 1. Writing Proficiency Scores Comparison - Cycle 1 vs. Pre-Research

Student ID	Pre-Research Score	Cycle 1 Score	Improvement
Student 1	65	78	+13
Student 2	58	75	+17
Student 3	62	80	+18
Student 4	70	82	+12
Student 5	55	70	+15
Student 6	68	76	+8
Student 7	72	85	+13
Student 8	61	74	+13
Student 9	67	81	+14
Student 10	63	79	+16
Student 11	59	73	+14
Student 12	64	77	+13
Student 13	69	84	+15
Student 14	66	80	+14
Student 15	71	86	+15

The provided table presents a detailed comparison of the writing proficiency scores for each student across three key stages: the Pre-Research assessment, Cycle 1, and the observed Improvement in writing skills. The Pre-Research assessment established the baseline writing proficiency of these first-grade students at Mts. Insan Madani, Jember. Notably, students started with varying levels of proficiency. For instance, Student 3 had a Pre-Research score of 62, while Student 2 had a lower score of 58. As we transition to Cycle 1, we witness a significant improvement in the writing skills of these students. Notably, Student 3 exhibited remarkable progress, with a notable improvement of +18 points, achieving a Cycle 1 score of 80. This pattern of improvement is consistent across most students, with varying degrees of progress. For example, Student 5, who began with a Pre-Research score of 55, demonstrated substantial growth, achieving a Cycle 1 score of 70, resulting in a +15 point improvement. The improvement observed in Cycle 1

signifies the positive impact of Project-based Learning (PjBL) on enhancing writing skills within this unique educational context. It highlights the potential for growth and development in writing proficiency among first-grade students through tailored pedagogical approaches. Overall, the table illustrates how these students, each starting with distinct baseline scores, made significant strides in their writing skills during Cycle 1. This sets a promising foundation for the subsequent research cycles, indicating the potential for further enhancements in writing proficiency as the research progresses.

c. Cycle 2 Findings

In the first cycle of this CAR at Mts. Insan Madani, Jember, the integration of PjBL demonstrated significant positive effects on the development of writing skills among first-grade students. The inclusion of a second cycle in this research is valuable for assessing the sustainability and potential for further improvement in writing skills.

Table 2. Writing Proficiency Scores Comparison - Cycle 2 vs. Cycle 1

Student ID	Cycle 1 Score	Cycle 2 Score	Improvement (Cycle 2)
Student 1	78	88	+10
Student 2	75	89	+14
Student 3	80	92	+12
Student 4	82	91	+9
Student 5	70	84	+14
Student 6	76	87	+11
Student 7	85	92	+7
Student 8	74	86	+12
Student 9	81	90	+9
Student 10	79	89	+10
Student 11	73	85	+12
Student 12	77	88	+11
Student 13	84	92	+8
Student 14	80	90	+10
Student 15	86	94	+8

The presented table provides a comprehensive overview of the writing proficiency scores for each student across two key research cycles: Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, with a specific focus on the Improvement observed in Cycle 2. In Cycle 1, students initially exhibited varying levels of writing proficiency, as reflected in their Cycle 1 scores. For instance, Student 4 achieved a Cycle 1 score of 82, signifying a relatively high level of proficiency, while Student 5 attained a lower score of 70. As we transition to Cycle 2, it is evident that these first-grade students at Mts. Insan Madani, Jember, continued to make notable progress in their writing skills. The Improvement (Cycle 2) column indicates the positive changes in their scores between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. Remarkably, Student 2 displayed significant growth, with an impressive +14 point Improvement, raising their Cycle 2 score to 89. This pattern of improvement is consistent across most students, underscoring the effectiveness of PjBL in further enhancing writing proficiency. For example, Student 5, who

started with a Cycle 1 score of 70, exhibited substantial growth with a +14 point Improvement, achieving a Cycle 2 score of 84. Similarly, Student 15, who initially had a Cycle 1 score of 86, demonstrated further improvement with an +8 point Improvement in Cycle 2, resulting in a score of 94. Overall, the table illustrates the continuous positive trajectory of writing skill development among these first-grade students, highlighting the sustainability and further enhancement of their writing proficiency as they progress from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 in this research.

The challenges and opportunities associated with implementing PjBL for writing skill enhancement in Mts. Insan Madani, Jember?

To gain valuable insights into the dynamics of implementing PjBL for writing skill enhancement in the unique context of Mts. Insan Madani, Jember, a structured questionnaire was administered to 15 respondents. Before delving into the questionnaire results, it is important to note that the questionnaire used in this study demonstrated high reliability, with a

Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87. This reliability ensures that the questionnaire consistently measured the constructs under investigation.

Table 3. Questionnaire Results on PjBL Implementation

No	Questionnaire Item	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
1	I believe PjBL improved my writing skills.	2 (13.33%)	3 (20.00%)	6 (40.00%)	4 (26.67%)
2	I felt that PjBL increased my engagement in learning.	1 (6.67%)	2 (13.33%)	7 (46.67%)	5 (33.33%)
3	I found implementing PjBL to be challenging.	4 (26.67%)	3 (20.00%)	4 (26.67%)	4 (26.67%)
4	PjBL positively impacted our teamwork.	1 (6.67%)	2 (13.33%)	7 (46.67%)	5 (33.33%)
5	I believe PjBL was well-aligned with our school's values.	2 (13.33%)	3 (20.00%)	6 (40.00%)	4 (26.67%)
6	I thought PjBL required additional time beyond our regular curriculum.	4 (26.67%)	4 (26.67%)	4 (26.67%)	3 (20.00%)
7	I experienced increased creativity due to PjBL.	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	7 (46.67%)	6 (40.00%)
8	PjBL significantly supported my language proficiency improvement.	2 (13.33%)	3 (20.00%)	5 (33.33%)	5 (33.33%)
9	PjBL had a positive impact on my overall writing skills.	2 (13.33%)	3 (20.00%)	6 (40.00%)	4 (26.67%)
10	PjBL enhanced my critical thinking skills.	1 (6.67%)	2 (13.33%)	6 (40.00%)	6 (40.00%)
11	Implementing PjBL required additional teacher training.	3 (20.00%)	4 (26.67%)	3 (20.00%)	5 (33.33%)
12	I believe PjBL was inclusive and benefited all students.	2 (13.33%)	3 (20.00%)	6 (40.00%)	4 (26.67%)
13	PjBL had a positive impact on my language proficiency.	2 (13.33%)	3 (20.00%)	4 (26.67%)	4 (26.67%)
14	I thought PjBL was well-integrated into our school's curriculum.	2 (13.33%)	3 (20.00%)	6 (40.00%)	4 (26.67%)
15	I found PjBL enjoyable.	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	6 (40.00%)	7 (46.67%)

Based on the above table 2, the questionnaire results offer a nuanced perspective on how students perceive the implementation of PjBL for enhancing writing skills at Mts. Insan Madani, Jember. These findings reflect a diverse

range of viewpoints, encompassing positive experiences, as well as challenges encountered within this innovative pedagogical approach, particularly within the unique context of an Islamic school setting. Positively, a substantial number of students (66.67%) expressed their belief

that PjBL had a beneficial impact on their writing skills. This indicates that a significant portion of the student body found PjBL to be an effective method for improving their writing abilities. This outcome underscores the potential of PjBL to serve as a catalyst for enhancing fundamental academic skills, which is a crucial aspect of any educational institution. Furthermore, the survey results emphasize that PjBL has a noteworthy influence on student engagement in learning. An impressive 80% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that PjBL increased their level of engagement in the learning process. This finding holds great significance, as engaged learners are more likely to be motivated and responsive to new concepts, fostering more effective learning outcomes.

The survey also highlights the positive impact of PjBL on teamwork skills, with a substantial majority (80%) of students agreeing that PjBL contributed to improved teamwork. This underscores the collaborative nature of PjBL, where students work collectively, exchange ideas, and collaborate on projects. Such skills extend beyond academics and are invaluable for future professional and personal growth. Additionally, a considerable number of students (66.67%) believed that PjBL was well-aligned with the values upheld by their school. This result suggests that PjBL can successfully integrate with the school's value-based pedagogy, potentially enriching the learning experience by incorporating ethical and moral principles. This alignment can contribute to a holistic education that goes beyond academics.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the challenges brought to light by the survey. A notable portion of students (53.34%) found the implementation of PjBL to be challenging. This finding underscores the need for additional support and resources to facilitate a smooth transition to this

innovative pedagogical approach. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensuring that all students can benefit from PjBL effectively. Furthermore, a significant number of students (53.34%) believed that PjBL demanded additional time beyond the regular curriculum. This observation suggests that PjBL may require more instructional time, potentially impacting the coverage of the standard curriculum. This challenge highlights the importance of careful planning and integration of PjBL into the broader educational framework, ensuring a balanced and effective learning experience.

In a nutshell, the questionnaire results offer a multifaceted perspective on PjBL implementation at Mts. Insan Madani, Jember. While there are clear benefits, such as improved writing skills, increased engagement, and enhanced teamwork, there are also associated challenges related to perceived complexity and time requirements. These findings provide valuable insights for educators and administrators, guiding them in their efforts to optimize PjBL within the unique context of an Islamic school setting, ultimately fostering a well-rounded educational experience for students.

DISCUSSION

This research embarked on a journey to unravel the impact of PjBL on the development of writing skills among first-grade students within the distinctive context of Mts. Insan Madani, Jember. Through two cycles of CAR and a comprehensive student survey, this study aimed to offer a nuanced understanding of PjBL's effectiveness and the complexities surrounding its implementation.

The CAR cycles yielded compelling evidence of the transformative potential of PjBL on students' writing skills. During the initial cycle, students exhibited notable improvements in their writing abilities, a trend that continued

and intensified in the second cycle. These findings resonate with established research in the field. For instance, (Lu, 2021) have emphasized the capacity of PjBL to significantly enhance writing skills. Their work aligns with our study, as we observed PjBL not only improving writing proficiency but also fostering critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills (Cortázar et al., 2021; Hidayati et al., 2023).

Moreover, it is essential to underscore that PjBL's influence extends far beyond the realm of writing skills alone. As shown in our study, PjBL serves as a comprehensive pedagogical approach that nurtures a spectrum of higher-order cognitive skills. This includes the cultivation of critical thinking abilities, stimulating creativity, and encouraging students to engage actively in collaborative efforts. These facets contribute substantially to the creation of a positive and intellectually stimulating learning environment, consistent with the work of Hugerat (2016), Sasson et al. (2018) and Stefanou et al. (2013).

Student engagement emerged as a pivotal aspect of PjBL's impact in our research. Notably, the increase in student engagement aligns with previous studies highlighting PjBL's potential to create more interactive and participatory learning environments (Sasson et al. (2018)). Engaged students tend to be more motivated and self-directed in their learning, factors that are conducive to the development of improved writing skills (Lu, 2021), as observed in our study.

While the research sheds light on the promising aspects of PjBL, it also uncovers challenges inherent in its implementation. The language barrier emerged as a significant hurdle for some students, necessitating additional support and accommodations. This finding echoes the broader discourse on the critical role of language proficiency in effective learning (Hanif et al., 2019). Additionally, the integration of PjBL presented time

constraints that could potentially impact the coverage of the standard curriculum, a challenge also noted in previous research on PjBL (Condliffe, 2017; Cortázar et al., 2021). Lastly, educators' need for adequate training and support resonates with previous studies emphasizing the importance of ongoing professional development (Lu, 2021; Wahbeh et al., 2021).

Overall, this research contributes valuable insights into the impact of PjBL on writing skills and student engagement within the specific context of Mts. Insan Madani, Jember. By drawing on the support of previous studies, our findings affirm PjBL's potential to enhance writing skills and foster engagement while nurturing critical thinking and creativity. However, we must remain attuned to the challenges, including language barriers, time constraints, and educator preparedness. This study underscores the significance of tailored strategies and comprehensive support for both students and educators when implementing PjBL in Islamic school settings. As we delve deeper into the intricacies of PjBL's impact, we contribute to a broader discourse on effective pedagogical approaches and their potential to shape the future of education in diverse settings.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This research explored the impact of PjBL on first-grade students' writing skills at Mts. Insan Madani, Jember, through two CAR cycles and a comprehensive student survey. The study highlighted the transformative potential of PjBL, leading to significant improvements in writing proficiency, enhanced critical thinking, stimulated creativity, and promoted collaboration. These findings align with prior research, emphasizing PjBL's broader benefits for cognitive development and active student engagement. Moreover, the study demonstrated that PjBL fosters dynamic

and interactive learning environments, where students actively participate in their educational journey, transcending the traditional role of passive knowledge recipients. Nonetheless, it also revealed challenges, including language barriers, time constraints, and the need for teacher training, stressing the importance of tailored language support, strategic planning, and comprehensive educator support within the PjBL framework. The implications of this research extend globally, emphasizing the potential of innovative pedagogical approaches to reshape educational practices. PjBL not only enhances writing skills but also cultivates critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration, inspiring educational institutions worldwide to reconsider teaching methods and prioritize holistic student development.

Suggestions

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, we must acknowledge its limitations. The relatively small sample size and the specific context of Mts. Insan Madani, Jember, may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the research duration was relatively short, and the long-term effects of PjBL remain an area for future exploration. To address these limitations, future research could involve larger and more diverse samples, encompassing a broader spectrum of educational institutions. Longitudinal studies could provide a deeper understanding of the sustained impact of PjBL on students' writing skills and overall development. Furthermore, investigating strategies to mitigate language barriers and enhance teacher preparedness in PjBL implementation could yield practical solutions for educators.

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