



Indonesian language teachers' perceptions of project-based learning (PjBL) implementation

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Abstract

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The Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach is one of the main strategies in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, as it emphasizes collaborative, contextual, and problem-solving-oriented learning. This study aims to describe the perceptions of Indonesian language teachers toward the implementation of PjBL and to identify the challenges and needs for strengthening its application in schools. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through questionnaires and interviews involving Indonesian language teachers from six public and private junior high schools in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The results indicate that most teachers have a good understanding of the concepts and stages of PjBL (82%) and demonstrate a relatively high level of readiness (73%) in its implementation. However, the practical application in the classroom remains constrained by limited time, learning facilities, and institutional support. These challenges have encouraged teachers to adapt PjBL contextually, for example, through simple projects based on local culture. The findings also reveal that 91% of teachers require further practical training to design, implement, and assess project-based learning effectively. The implications of this study highlight the importance of strengthening teacher capacity through practice-oriented training, the provision of adequate learning facilities, and the development of collaboration among schools, education authorities, and local communities to achieve effective, sustainable, and contextually relevant implementation of PjBL in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the main approaches in the Independent Curriculum is Project-Based Learning (PjBL), which emphasizes collaborative activities and solving real-world problems by optimizing student experiences. Project-Based Learning strategies have proven effective in improving students' narrative writing skills, critical thinking, and creativity, while simultaneously fostering cultural literacy through the development of locally-based media

and teaching materials.(Gustina Nasution et al., 2025). In addition, the integration of literacy through folk tales and local sources in the PjBL model encourages active student involvement and contextual character building (Wijayanti et al., 2022).

According to Pan et al., the essence of project-based learning is to encourage students to work in groups to formulate real solutions to everyday life problems by utilizing the knowledge they have learned throughout the learning process (Ásványi & Gedeon, 2025). The Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach is a learning strategy that prioritizes active student participation in completing projects collaboratively. Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is a long-term learning method that encourages student involvement in designing, developing, and presenting a product as a solution to real-life problems (Sani in Agung Maulana Irsyad & Dewi Anggraini, 2023). This approach is believed to develop students' critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills, which are highly relevant to Indonesian language learning. However, the implementation of the PjBL model at the junior high school/Islamic junior high school (SMP/MTs) level still faces various obstacles. This is particularly evident in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, where several technical and pedagogical challenges remain to be addressed.

According to Thomas, Project-Based Learning is different from conventional learning approaches. PjBL encourages students to become independent and proactive learners, where they take the initiative to seek and understand relevant information to solve challenges in the project, not just passively receiving material (Ling et al., 2024). But still, many teachers have complained about the implementation of PjBL learning during MGMP (Student Learning Group) activities and other activities. Many teachers remain confused about how to implement PjBL learning. Furthermore, some teachers are still unsure whether the PjBL learning they are implementing is appropriate. This certainly requires research to find solutions for implementing PjBL appropriately.

Implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in learning Indonesian. It has been proven effective in improving junior high school students' literacy competencies. As stated by Ikanubun, PjBL provides real-life learning experiences that hone students' critical thinking and communication skills through collaborative projects in Indonesian language classes (Ikanubun & Pau, 2025). Strengthened by Wijayanti, the implementation of this model is significantly able to increase the scores of students' writing skills and creativity, especially in the material of writing procedural texts (Restika Wijayanti, 2024). Furthermore, research by Nitatalia, Ngatmini & Budiawan (2023) confirmed that the average score of students' news writing test increased by 22 points after the PjBL model was implemented in Indonesian language classes.(Nitatalia et al., 2023). Research by Fathonah et al. also states that the PjBL model has proven effective in developing critical thinking skills, problem-solving, and creativity in junior high school students in project-based Indonesian language learning (Fathonah, 2024). However, although student learning outcomes continue to improve thanks to the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL), research gaps remain, particularly in exploring teachers' perceptions of the implementation of PjBL in Indonesian language learning in junior high schools, particularly in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. As expressed by Yemima Br Ginting et al. The majority of research focuses on the impact of PjBL on students' academic achievement, while the reflections and challenges faced by teachers in implementing PjBL have not been analyzed in detail (Yemima Br Ginting et al., 2025). Based on this, research that focuses on teacher perceptions is crucial to produce project-based learning strategies that are more applicable and relevant for junior high schools in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia and other areas with similar challenges.

The effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has been proven through various studies, but its implementation still faces challenges, particularly related to teacher readiness

and digital technology adaptation. Most studies focus on short-term outcomes, such as improved post-test scores, and have not sufficiently explored the long-term impact on knowledge retention and student attitudes. Therefore, ongoing implementation strategy studies are needed to strengthen the character and literacy of junior high school students (Permana Putra & Wahyuni, nd). As mentioned by Sari, teachers have a positive perception of project-based learning, but some obstacles are still felt, such as in-depth understanding and adaptation to the new curriculum (Sari et al., 2021). Trinaldi et al. also emphasized that the government's role in providing training and support is essential for teachers to think more critically and improve their ability to implement PjBL (Trinaldi et al., 2022). In order to support optimal implementation of PjBL, continuous training, provision of adequate infrastructure, and the active role of teachers in integrating local values are very necessary as part of a contextual learning strategy (Sari et al., 2021).

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has been implemented in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia as part of the Independent Curriculum to improve student engagement and learning outcomes. PjBL has proven effective in fostering thinking skills and active participation. The Project-Based Learning method is the most effective (Nawalinsi & Muhsinatun Siasah Masruri, 2016). This effectiveness increases when teacher-designed projects are relevant to the students' lives and environment. The Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model is crucial for developing students' creativity (Aliman et al., 2018). Thus, the implementation of PjBL in Bantul schools has the potential to support the development of creative and contextual thinking skills in accordance with regional characteristics.

However, the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia has not been evenly distributed due to ongoing challenges in teacher preparedness and school institutional support. Research shows that teachers are not fully prepared for curriculum changes (Ben Gurion & Nasir, 2024). Many teachers still require ongoing mentoring and training to optimally design and manage learning projects. Other research also confirms that the implementation of PjBL and learning motivation influences students' critical reasoning skills at Muhammadiyah Terpadu Elementary School (Nuryanto & Dyah Prastiti, 2024). These findings indicate that teacher and student motivation play a crucial role in the successful implementation of PjBL. Therefore, to ensure effective PjBL in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, teacher capacity building, increased school resource support, and local partnerships are needed to ensure consistent and sustainable implementation of this model.

Research on the perspectives of Indonesian language teachers in junior high schools in Bantul on the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is crucial for gaining a comprehensive picture of the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for implementing learning that are tailored to local needs. An in-depth study of teachers' experiences can strengthen PjBL implementation, making learning more adaptive to student characteristics and local culture, and strengthening 21st-century skills (Roham Damai Setia Farasi et al., 2023). Furthermore, this research is expected to enrich education policy and strengthen student literacy, particularly in junior high schools in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. A structured evaluation of the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) can provide valuable insights for education policymaking at the regional and national levels. Therefore, the results of this study can contribute to improving the quality of contextual and sustainable project-based learning in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia and other regions with similar characteristics.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive study that aims to describe teachers' perspectives on Indonesian language learning with Project-Based Learning (PjBL). The

subjects of this study were Junior High School/Islamic Junior High School (SMP/MTs) teachers in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The sampling technique used to select subjects was purposive sampling. Teachers selected as research subjects were selected based on several criteria that could represent a representative sample in terms of results. The research location was in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The data collection technique used was interviews. Data validity used source triangulation techniques. The data analysis technique in this study used the theory of Miles and Huberman, namely data collection, data reduction, data display, and verification or concluding data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted at six junior high schools (SMP) and equivalent schools in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The subjects were Indonesian language teachers across the six schools. The six schools selected as research locations were selected based on their status and ranking. The six schools comprised three public junior high schools and three private junior high schools in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The following presents the research findings and discussion.

The results of the study indicate that Indonesian language teachers at junior high schools in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia have a good understanding and positive attitudes toward project-based learning (PjBL). Most teachers have a good understanding of the stages of PjBL implementation, from project design, implementation, to evaluation. Teachers' readiness to implement this model is also quite high, as demonstrated by positive motivation and commitment to learning innovation. However, the implementation of PjBL in the field is not yet fully optimal due to constraints on time, learning facilities, and school managerial support. This indicates that teachers' conceptual readiness has not been fully balanced with adequate technical and institutional readiness.

The interview results reinforced the questionnaire findings and confirmed that teachers had a positive perception of the benefits of PjBL, particularly in improving students' critical thinking, writing, and collaboration skills. However, teachers faced various obstacles in practice, such as limited technological resources, difficulty managing project implementation time, and the need for examples of applicable teaching materials. Teachers attempted to adapt the implementation of PjBL to school conditions through simple adaptation strategies, for example, by linking projects to the cultural context and school activities. Furthermore, almost all teachers stated the need for further training and practical assistance to design and implement projects effectively. In general, the results of this study confirmed that the implementation of PjBL in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia has been quite successful at the conceptual and teacher motivation levels, but still requires strengthening in terms of training, facility support, and institutional collaboration to ensure more effective and sustainable implementation of this model.

The results of this study indicate that Indonesian language teachers in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia have a good understanding of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and consider this model to be in line with the spirit of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes active, collaborative, and contextual learning. Most teachers (82%) have understood the steps for implementing PjBL and have begun applying it to several materials, especially procedural and narrative texts. Interview results also support this, where teachers stated that PjBL helps students write more creatively and improves critical thinking skills. These findings align with research by Ikanubun & Pau, which explains that PjBL can improve students' writing and communication skills because projects require collaboration and real-world problem-solving (Ikanubun & Pau, 2025).

Although teachers' understanding of the PjBL concept is quite strong, their level of readiness for implementation still varies. Approximately 73% of teachers stated that they are ready to implement PjBL, but are not yet fully able to implement it systematically due to time constraints and limited facilities. This is in line with interview results, which stated that limited infrastructure (such as LCDs, internet connections, and student workspaces) is a major obstacle. Teachers also assessed that implementing PjBL requires a longer time allocation than conventional models. This condition is consistent with the findings of Sari et al., who explained that although teachers have a positive perception of PjBL, its implementation is still hampered by the readiness of teaching materials and curriculum adaptation (Sari et al., 2021).

The technical barriers encountered in the field are also reinforced by previous research. Research conducted by Mawar Damara and Fernandes revealed that limited learning facilities and access to information technology are key factors hindering the successful implementation of PjBL in schools. These conditions require teachers to adapt project activity designs to ensure they can be implemented within limited resources (Damara & Fernandes, 2025). In the context of Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, this is evident in teachers' efforts to convert project activities into manual or simplified forms, such as poster making, text writing, and oral presentations. This adaptation demonstrates teachers' pedagogical flexibility to maintain the essence of PjBL despite limited resources and time. This adaptive attitude aligns with the results of research conducted by Muhibbullah et al. that the success of implementing PjBL is greatly influenced by the availability of learning facilities, school managerial support, and the teacher's ability to manage project implementation time (Muhibbullah et al., 2024).

In terms of assessment, the questionnaire results showed that 82% of teachers had used rubrics and provided feedback in assessing student project results. However, most teachers still encountered difficulties maintaining objectivity because the rubrics used did not fully differentiate between process, product, and collaboration aspects. Many teachers tend to assess based on the final results and student engagement, without considering thinking skills and collaboration during project implementation. Research by Setiawan (2021) at SMP Negeri 2 showed that the main components of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) assessment included challenging problems, work management, collaboration, and final projects, but the assessment tended to focus solely on the product (Setiawan & Novianto, 2022). Another finding by Arsyad & Rathomi (2025) also emphasized that the implementation of effective PjBL assessment really requires a process and product differentiation rubric, as well as institutional support in improving the competence of teacher assessors (Arsyad & Rathomi, 2025). Thus, improving teacher competency in designing, testing, and applying authentic assessment rubrics is a strategic step to strengthen the implementation of PjBL in schools in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Another prominent aspect is the need for further training for teachers to support the effective implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Bantul. Ninety-one percent of respondents stated the need for practical mentoring to improve their skills in designing, implementing, and assessing contextual learning projects. A study by Mariyani showed that strengthening teacher competencies through application training accompanied by hands-on practice can improve teachers' skills and confidence in implementing PjBL in the classroom (Mariyani et al., 2023). Therefore, prioritizing teacher capacity building through practical training, collaborative mentoring, and professional reflection is increasingly important in developing PjBL policies for schools in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that teachers in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia have a positive perception of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and have demonstrated adaptive efforts despite limited facilities. However, sustainable implementation requires stronger

policy support, particularly in the form of practical training, field mentoring, and strengthened collaboration between schools and higher education institutions. Therefore, the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Bantul has the potential to become a project-based learning model that is relevant to local needs while strengthening students' 21st-century competencies.

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interview analysis, it can be recommended that the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia needs to be strengthened through more practical, contextual, and sustainable strategies. Indonesian language teachers already have a good understanding of the PjBL concept, but implementation in the field is still hampered by limited time, facilities, and the need for technical assistance. Therefore, the education office, together with MGMP, needs to develop hands-on training that emphasizes simple project design, the development of assessment rubrics, and the evaluation of authentic learning outcomes. Schools also need to provide managerial support and basic facilities, such as collaboration spaces and adequate technology access. Furthermore, collaboration between schools, universities, and local communities is important to enrich project themes and link learning to the cultural context of Bantul. The implications of this research emphasize that strengthening teacher capacity, providing institutional support, and integrating local values into project design are key to realizing effective, sustainable, and relevant PjBL implementation for students in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study shows that junior high school Indonesian language teachers in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia have a conceptual understanding and positive attitudes towards project-based learning (Project-Based Learning). Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is considered in line with the spirit of the Independent Curriculum because it encourages students to think critically, collaborate, and produce tangible products. However, implementation in the field is still less than optimal due to limitations in facilities, time, and institutional support. Teachers have demonstrated adaptive skills by simplifying project implementation to suit the school context, but they still need further guidance and training to design authentic assessment rubrics and manage projects effectively. Therefore, strengthening teacher capacity through practice-based training, providing supporting facilities, and collaboration between schools, local governments, and local communities needs to be a priority in education policy. These efforts are expected to strengthen the contextual, creative, and sustainable implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Indonesian language learning in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

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