



Analysis of Effectiveness Project Based Learning (PjBL) toward Cross Culture Understanding (CCU) Course on Students' Character Building

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Abstract. Project Based Learning (PjBL) model can be implemented to Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course. Through this, the research study will be able to explore the effectiveness of PjBL applied in learning not only in transferring knowledge but also transferring values/character. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of implementing the PjBL in the Cross Cultural Understanding course in order to support the formation of student character. This study uses a qualitative method with a literature review approach. Data were collected through a review of scientific journals, books, and research reports relevant to the topics of PjBL, character education, and CCU learning. The analysis was carried out using thematic synthesis techniques to identify patterns, effectiveness, and implications of PjBL implementation in the context of CCU learning. Studies have shown that the application of PjBL in CCU learning can increase student engagement, critical thinking skills, and cultural awareness and transformation in attitudes to be more open and tolerant, and show improvements in social responsibility and empathy. PjBL not only enriches theoretical understanding of culture, but also strengthens character values needed in a multicultural society. Thus, the integration of PjBL in cross-cultural learning is worthy of being developed more widely in higher education.

Keywords: Project Based Learning, Cross Cultural Understanding, students' Character

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has had a significant impact on various dimensions of life, including the education sector. The rapid flow of information, increasing mobility between countries, and the intensity of intercultural interactions require the younger generation to have a comprehensive cross-cultural understanding. In this context, universities are no longer sufficient to only act as transmitters of theoretical knowledge, but also have a strategic responsibility in instilling character values in students. These values are an important foundation for creating a harmonious life in an increasingly plural and multicultural society [1].

The Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course is an academic endeavor designed as a response to the importance of strengthening cross-cultural understanding in a global context. This course does not merely present theories about cultural differences, but also focuses on developing a deeper understanding of the values upheld by various cultural groups. The main goal of this learning is to foster an attitude of mutual respect, tolerance, and openness, so that students are able to establish effective interactions and uphold ethics in the life of a diverse global society [2]. Traditional learning approaches that rely on lecture and memorization methods have proven to be less effective in instilling cross-cultural values in depth. In practice, students tend to only gain understanding at the cognitive level, without going through an internalization process that can form appropriate attitudes and behaviors. This causes a gap between the theoretical knowledge they have and the real ability of students to implement the values of cultural diversity in everyday life [3]-[5].

To address the limitations of conventional approaches, a contextual, interactive learning model is needed that focuses on direct experience. One approach that has received a lot of attention in educational studies and is starting to be implemented is Project-Based Learning (PjBL). Through PjBL, students are no longer positioned as passive recipients of information, but rather as active subjects involved in designing, implementing, and reflecting on projects that are relevant to the learning topic, including projects that raise issues related to intercultural interaction [6]-[8].

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is a learning approach that places students as the main subjects in the learning process through involvement in authentic projects that are challenging and encourage in-depth exploration. This method is believed to be able to increase students' active participation in learning, while developing creativity, critical thinking skills, and fostering positive characters such as the ability to work together, a sense of responsibility, and empathy. Projects that focus on cross-cultural issues, for example, provide opportunities for students to gain direct learning experiences through interactions with various cultural groups [9], [10].

The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course has the potential to be an effective means of building understanding and positive attitudes towards cultural diversity. In this process, students are encouraged to design projects that require direct involvement with other cultures, either through case studies, field observations, or simulations of intercultural interactions [11]-[13]. Through this kind of involvement, students not only learn theories about culture, but also gain direct experience that allows them to feel the challenges and appreciate the beauty of diversity [14]. This is in line with the goals of national education which emphasize the development of students' character in a comprehensive and holistic manner [15].

Although it offers great potential, the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the context of the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course presents various challenges, including limited resources, readiness of teaching staff, and complexity in the process of assessing aspects of student character. Therefore, a comprehensive literature review is needed to evaluate the extent to which PjBL is effective in shaping student character through CCU learning. This study is very important as a basis for developing a more adaptive and meaningful curriculum and learning strategy [16].

In an effort to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding, this study adopted a qualitative approach using the literature review method. This method allows researchers to collect, analyze, and synthesize various previous research findings that focus on the topics of Project-Based Learning (PjBL), character education, and cross-cultural learning. This approach is considered appropriate because it is able to provide a comprehensive picture of best practices, various challenges faced, and opportunities for developing effective learning models [17], [18]. Through this research model, the research literature review will be able to explore another side of the effectiveness of project-based learning implemented in learning, namely that each educator not only transfers knowledge but also transfers values/characters in each learning session.

This study focuses on exploring the effectiveness of implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course as a means of character building for students. The findings of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of holistic and transformative learning strategies in higher education environments. Thus, students are not only equipped with academic intelligence, but are also developed as individuals with strong characters who are able to act as agents of peace and harmony in global cultural diversity [19].

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is a learning approach that emphasizes the active involvement of students in carrying out real projects that are relevant to the learning material. This approach encourages students to integrate various competencies, such as critical thinking skills, creativity, and teamwork, while providing opportunities for students to apply knowledge practically. Various studies in the literature show that PjBL can increase students' learning motivation and social skills, aspects that are very important in the context of cross-cultural learning [20].

In the realm of character education, Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is considered an effective method because the collaboration and reflection processes that take place during the implementation of the project can foster positive character values. Through this approach, students learn to develop a sense of responsibility, respect differences of opinion, and build empathy through collaboration with group members from diverse backgrounds. PjBL invites students to directly experience the dynamics of teamwork that requires effective communication skills, the ability to compromise, and conflict resolution. This experience plays a significant role in the formation of strong character, especially in the socio-emotional aspect. Various literature studies show that the character developed through PjBL not only includes the cognitive domain, but also includes the affective and psychomotor domains, thus providing a holistic impact on student development [21]-[23].

The Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course plays an important role in higher education as a means to equip students with cross-cultural knowledge and skills. CCU not only focuses on teaching theories about cultural differences, but also aims to instill an attitude of tolerance, appreciation for diversity, and the ability to adapt in a complex global context. In the current era of globalization, the existence of CCU is very crucial because students must be prepared to face multi-dimensional and multi-cultural social interactions. Various

literatures highlight the importance of CCU as an effort to reduce stereotypes, prejudices, and cultural conflicts through in-depth understanding and direct experience experienced by students [24].

Conventional learning approaches in Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) courses, which tend to focus on lectures and theoretical aspects, are often ineffective in creating deep internalization of cross-cultural values. Students usually only understand concepts cognitively without being accompanied by significant changes in attitudes and behavior. This condition creates a gap between the knowledge gained and real practice, where students, although they understand the concept of diversity, have not been able to apply it effectively in social interactions. Previous studies have shown that traditional learning methods are less able to stimulate the emergence of empathy and critical awareness that are essential for dealing with cultural differences constructively and positively [25].

Several studies have shown that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) can be an effective alternative to overcome the limitations of conventional learning methods in Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) courses. Through active involvement in projects related to cross-cultural issues, students gain a more meaningful and in-depth learning experience. These experiences not only strengthen students' conceptual understanding, but also increase their social awareness and empathy for cultural diversity [26].

The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course has significant potential in shaping students' characters to be adaptive, tolerant, and socially responsible. The collaborative and reflective processes that take place during the project implementation provide important contributions to character development that is in accordance with the demands of a multicultural society. Through cross-cultural interactions in the context of the project, students have the opportunity to appreciate differences and hone their ability to resolve conflicts constructively. Various studies have shown that characters formed through this method tend to be more solid and provide a sustainable positive impact on students' social lives after completing their studies [27].

Despite its high effectiveness, the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course still faces a number of obstacles, including limited time, resources, readiness of teaching staff, and complexity in evaluating aspects of character that tend to be subjective. These various challenges often become inhibiting factors in the implementation of PjBL optimally. For example, lecturers are required to have special expertise in designing learning projects, facilitating dynamic learning processes, and assessing learning outcomes that include cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. Based on the literature review, it is recommended that there be ongoing training and adequate institutional support to overcome these obstacles and increase the effectiveness of PjBL implementation in the context of cross-cultural learning [28].

Literature review plays a crucial role in designing responsive, adaptive, and effective learning models. Through a review of various previous studies, researchers can identify various leading practices, relevant teaching approaches, and appropriate evaluation methods for the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) courses. This literature analysis also provides insight into the implementation of PjBL in the context of cross-cultural learning in various educational institutions, including the challenges that may be faced in its implementation. These findings serve as an important foundation in compiling curricula and formulating educational policies that are more adaptive to current socio-cultural dynamics and global needs [29].

The findings of this literature review are expected to provide theoretical contributions through a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between learning approaches and character formation in a cross-cultural context. From a practical perspective, the results of this study can be used as a reference in designing more relevant and effective teaching strategies. Practical implications include designing a curriculum that systematically integrates the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach in the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course, organizing training for lecturers, and developing character evaluation instruments that meet validity and reliability criteria. With these steps, it is hoped that universities will be able to be more optimal in forming students with strong characters and who are ready to face the dynamics of a multicultural global world [30]. In addition, exploration of the development of learning technology that supports the implementation of PjBL in a cross-cultural context is also an important agenda, so that learning in higher education is increasingly adaptive and of high quality amidst the ever-growing digital transformation [31]. So the literature review in this research focuses on analyzing the effectiveness of the PjBL model in CCU learning in building student character.

2. METHOD

This study applies a qualitative approach because it aims to explore in depth the contribution of project-based learning (PjBL) in the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course to the formation of student character. This approach was chosen because of its ability to reveal meanings, values, and subjective experiences that cannot be measured quantitatively. Through a qualitative approach, researchers can comprehensively understand the context of implementation, the dynamics of the learning process, and various factors that influence the effectiveness of PjBL implementation in a cross-cultural educational environment [32].

The main method used in this study is literature review, which is a systematic review process of various scientific references that are closely related to the focus of the research. Literature review is seen as the right approach to review various findings from previous research, theoretical foundations that have been used, and the implementation of relevant educational practices. Through this method, researchers can integrate various available knowledge, and conduct critical analysis of the extent to which the effectiveness of the implementation of PjBL in the context of the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course and the formation of student character [33].

The data in this study were obtained from various credible scientific sources, such as nationally and internationally indexed journal articles, dissertations, theses, academic conference proceedings, and reference books that discuss themes related to Project-Based Learning (PjBL), character education, and Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU). In this study, there are 7 research results as source materials. In the researcher sorting from several studies that were previously found, of course with various considerations and reasons. Some of them are similarities in research variables such as cultural studies, project-based learning models, implementation in the world of education and the most important thing is that several articles provide a character approach or build non-academic aspects of students. The inclusion criteria used in the literature search process include publications published in the period 2013 to 2025, available in both Indonesian and English, and explicitly review the application of the PjBL method in higher education related to character building and cross-cultural learning. These criteria are set to ensure that the literature reviewed is up-to-date, relevant, and contextual to the research needs [34].

Table 1. List of Research for Literature Review

TITLE	YEAR	VARIABLES/ ASPECTS
Developing Cross-Cultural Understanding (CCU) Materials In Tourism Guiding For Vocational Students	2023	CCU, Higher Students
Pengembangan Buku Ajar Mata Kuliah Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) Berbasis Media Sosial di Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Blitar	2018	CCU, English Education, higher education
The Effect of Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) Subject Toward The Studentsâ€™ Mindset (A Study on the Sixth Semester Students of English Study Program of FKIP UNTAN Pontianak in Academic Year 2008/2009)	2015	CCU, English Education, higher education
Overview of Student Understanding in Research Statistics Lectures Using the PJBL Method	2024	CCU, Students, higher education, Empathy(character)
Needs Analysis of Cross Cultural Understanding-Based English Materials for Senior High School Students: Teachers' Perception,	2024	Analysis, CCU, Higher Students
Developing the Cross-Cultural Understanding Course Materials for the English Major Students	2024	CCU, English Major/Students
The Use Of Project-Based Learning In Teaching CCU (Cross Cultural Understanding) At The Sixth Semester Students Of English Education Department Of Purworejo Muhammadiyah University: A Classroom Observation	2019	CCU, PjBL, higher education, attitude (character)

Efektivitas Model PjBL terhadap Keterampilan Kolaborasi Mahasiswa pada Perkuliahan Statistik Penelitian	2024	Effectiveness, PjBL
Literatur Review: Implementasi PjBL terhadap Kreativitas dan Berpikir Tingkat Tinggi Siswa	2024	PjBL, Critical Thinking (Character)
Fostering students' mathematical critical thinking skills on number patterns through digital book STEM PjBL	2023	PjBL, Critical Thinking (Character)
Implementation of Ethnoscience-Based PjBL on Science Literacy Learning Outcomes		PjBL, Simpathy (Character)
STEM-PjBL Learning: The Impacts on Students' Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Communication, and Collaboration Skills	2023	PjBL, Critical Thinking (Character)
The Effectiveness of the Project Based Learning (PjBL) Model on the Creative Thinking Skill of Students in the Human Respiration System	2024	Efectiveness, PjBL, Critical Thinking (Character)

The process of collecting secondary data in this study was carried out by searching various leading scientific databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, SpringerLink, ERIC, and ScienceDirect. Researchers used a number of keywords such as "Project-Based Learning", "Cross Cultural Understanding", "Character Education", "Higher Education", and "Character Education" to obtain relevant literature. The search results were then carefully selected based on the level of relevance to the topic, year of publication, and academic quality of the publication. This step aims to collect a corpus of literature which is the main foundation in implementing thematic analysis which will be carried out in the next stage [35].

After the relevant literature has been collected, the next stage is to analyze the data using the thematic synthesis method. This technique includes the process of identifying, classifying, and organizing central themes that emerge from each of the literature sources reviewed. The themes raised include, among others, the effectiveness of the implementation of PjBL, its contribution to character formation, the dynamics of the cross-cultural learning process, the role of teaching staff in the implementation of PjBL, and various obstacles faced in its implementation. Through this approach, researchers can reveal general patterns, variations in approaches, and innovative opportunities in the context of project-based learning in higher education environments [36].

In order to ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, the researcher applied the source triangulation technique and conducted a critical review of each literature used. Each publication was reviewed in depth based on methodological aspects, the context of the research implementation, and its contribution to the development of educational theory and practice. In addition, the researcher also made a comparison between the findings from various sources to identify consistency and variation in the existing data. This approach aims to ensure that the conclusions drawn are objective, unbiased, and scientifically accountable [37].

The literature review in this study was carried out through a series of structured and systematic stages. The initial stage begins with formulating the research problem and determining the objectives to be achieved. Next, a literature search is carried out using relevant keywords. After that, the literature is selected based on the predetermined inclusion criteria to ensure the suitability and quality of the sources. Each literature that passes the selection is then critically reviewed to assess its scientific contribution. Important information from the reviewed literature is systematically extracted, then arranged in the form of a thematic synthesis to answer the focus and research questions. This process is carried out to maintain the consistency of the argument and produce a structured and in-depth scientific narrative [38].

In the analysis stage, the main attention is directed at the character formation aspect reflected in the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course. The focus of the analysis is focused on character indicators such as tolerance, empathy, sense of responsibility, ability to work together, and an appreciative attitude towards diversity. The researcher evaluates the extent to which these values are manifested in the learning process, the dynamics of interaction between students, and the final learning outcomes as reflected in the findings of various literature studies. This approach allows the identification of the real contribution of PjBL to character formation in the context of cross-cultural education [39].

The analysis in this study also takes into account the variations in cultural and institutional contexts of each study reviewed. The researcher understands that the effectiveness of the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in shaping student character is greatly influenced by the background of local cultural values, the teaching style used by lecturers, and the assessment system implemented in each university. Therefore, each source of literature is analyzed by considering its original context first, before being synthesized into a more comprehensive and applicable framework of understanding across educational settings [40].

The main objective of implementing this literature review method is to formulate an understanding both theoretically and practically that can be used as a basis for developing a more effective Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) learning strategy with a Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach. In terms of methodology, this study also illustrates how a qualitative approach through a literature review is able to provide comprehensive answers to various contemporary education issues in depth. The findings are expected to contribute to the formulation of educational policies, curriculum development, and improving lecturer competence in designing cross-cultural learning processes that are able to shape students' characters as a whole [41].

3. FINDINGS

Relationship, Influence and Effectiveness among CCU course, PjBL and Student Character

Literature review indicates that Project Based Learning (PjBL) has a significant role in the formation of student character, especially in the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course. This approach does not only focus on mastering academic content, but also encourages active student involvement in a collaborative and reflective learning process. Specially designed projects integrate cultural and social values that encourage students to develop attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility. Therefore, PjBL functions as an effective means of developing characters that are adaptive to cultural diversity and dynamic in cross-cultural social interactions. In this case, PjBL is not just a mechanism for transferring knowledge, but rather a process of transforming attitudes and behaviors. Project-based learning requires students to participate emotionally and socially in diverse group interactions, so that they can directly experience and understand the reality of existing diversity. This process allows for a deeper and more sustainable internalization of character values compared to conventional learning methods.

Collaboration between students from diverse cultural backgrounds during project implementation has been shown to be an important factor in the formation of social-emotional character. Based on the literature review, teamwork in project-based learning (PjBL) facilitates the development of effective communication skills, tolerance, and the ability to resolve conflicts constructively. Students are encouraged to appreciate differences of opinion and foster mutual respect, which are fundamental aspects of cross-cultural education. This collaborative dynamic shows that the learning process does not only occur in the academic realm, but also involves emotional and social aspects. Conflicts that arise in project groups are used as opportunities for students to learn to manage differences wisely and strengthen empathy for others. In addition, the joint reflection process at the end of the project implementation further deepens character awareness and strengthens positive attitudes towards cultural diversity.

The results of the literature review confirm that project-based learning (PjBL) is effective in integrating cognitive and affective dimensions in Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) learning. Through the implementation of real projects such as cultural case studies, simulations, or fieldwork activities, students not only master cross-cultural theories conceptually, but are also able to apply them in complex and contextual situations. This approach increases students' critical awareness and adaptability in dealing with cultural differences. By applying theory in direct practice, students can relate academic knowledge to everyday experiences more meaningfully. Therefore, understanding cultural diversity is not only a conceptual memorization, but develops into a mindset and attitude that is reflected in social interactions. This strengthens the character of students who not only have intellectual understanding, but are also responsive and able to appreciate differences in a real and applicable way.

Literature review indicates that empathy is one of the most significant aspects of character developed through project-based learning (PjBL). Through direct involvement with cross-cultural issues and experiences in a series of projects, students are encouraged to put themselves in the shoes of others, understand different perspectives, and feel the consequences of those differences. This empathy is a crucial foundation in the formation of attitudes of tolerance and inclusivity. In addition to being the main goal of character education, empathy also plays a vital role as social capital for the creation of a harmonious

community life. In the era of globalization and cultural diversity, empathy developed through PjBL facilitates students in facing the dynamics of social interaction with an open and respectful attitude. Furthermore, this empathy also supports the formation of an inclusive self-identity that is oriented towards human values.

Although project-based learning (PjBL) has shown effectiveness, the literature review also identified a number of challenges in its implementation in Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) courses. Several studies highlighted the limited lecture time, lecturer readiness, and lack of supporting resources as the main obstacles that hinder the optimization of PjBL. In addition, subjective character evaluation is a significant obstacle in conducting a comprehensive assessment of learning outcomes. These problems indicate the need for adequate institutional support and intensive training for lecturers so that they can design and manage projects effectively. The development of a holistic, valid, and reliable assessment system is essential to ensure that the character aspects developed through PjBL can be measured objectively and accounted for academically.

The literature review highlights the crucial role of lecturers as facilitators who guide students throughout the implementation of learning projects. Lecturers have the responsibility to design projects that are relevant to the context, manage group dynamics effectively, and provide constructive feedback. The success of PjBL implementation is largely determined by the competence of lecturers in managing this complex and multidimensional learning process. The role of lecturers goes beyond simply delivering material; they also function as social mediators and mentors in the process of developing students' character. Therefore, lecturers' interpersonal and pedagogical skills are determining factors in creating a learning atmosphere that supports cross-cultural collaboration and encourages deep self-reflection.

Literature shows that project-based learning (PjBL) is effective in increasing students' social awareness regarding issues of diversity and social justice. Projects that raise cross-cultural themes encourage critical discussions and in-depth reflections on stereotypes, prejudices, and cultural conflicts that exist in society. Thus, PjBL plays a role in developing students' critical attitudes and problem-solving abilities regarding socio-cultural issues. Social awareness formed through PjBL allows students to become more sensitive to injustice and differences in the social context. Students not only act as recipients of information, but also as active agents of change in creating an inclusive and harmonious social environment.

In the thematic synthesis process, patterns of PjBL success in character building of students in the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course were found, including increasing empathy, tolerance, and intercultural communication skills. Although there are variations in cultural and institutional contexts, the similarity of these findings indicates that PjBL has a high level of flexibility and adaptability to be applied in various educational environments. The generalization of these findings provides a strong foundation in the development of project-based learning models that can be widely implemented in various higher education institutions. However, it is important to continue to consider local adjustments so that the learning program remains relevant and effective according to the needs and cultural characteristics of each institution.

The findings of this study provide crucial recommendations for the development of a Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) curriculum that integrates the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method in a structured and systematic manner. In addition, educational policies need to prioritize support in the form of lecturer training and the provision of adequate resources to ensure that the implementation of PjBL can be carried out optimally. The development of valid and reliable character assessment instruments is also essential to measure learning outcomes comprehensively. The implications of these findings emphasize the importance of harmonization between theoretical and practical aspects in designing a curriculum that is adaptive to the dynamics of needs both at the global and local levels. Progressive educational policies will provide space for pedagogical innovation and improving the quality of cross-cultural learning which ultimately contributes significantly to the formation of students' character as a whole.

This literature review confirms the need for further empirical research that tests the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) quantitatively and qualitatively in the context of Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU). Future research is suggested to use a mixed methods approach to obtain more comprehensive data regarding the impact of PjBL on student character formation. In addition, the development of learning technology that supports cross-cultural interaction is also an important aspect that needs to be explored to improve the quality of the learning process. This follow-up study has a strategic role in filling the gap in valid empirical data while providing strong evidence for the sustainability and development of PjBL in cross-cultural education. The integration of digital technology into the learning process has the potential to open up opportunities for more interactive and inclusive methodological innovations, in accordance with the needs of the modern era.

4. DISCUSSION

Project Based Learning (PjBL) in the context of Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) requires students to not only learn individually, but also collaboratively in groups consisting of members with diverse cultural backgrounds. The projects developed are adapted to real problems faced by multicultural societies, such as cultural conflicts, stereotypes, and discrimination. Through this approach, students get the opportunity to apply cross-cultural concepts into concrete practices, so that character values can be internalized through direct experience.

In addition, this learning process encourages critical reflection and open dialogue among group members, which in turn strengthens students' social and tolerant [2]. Interaction between group members consisting of diverse backgrounds requires students to be able to manage differences of opinion and solve problems collectively. This process requires the development of negotiation and empathy skills, where students are required to understand other people's points of view while adapting to various social contexts. Constructive feedback from lecturers and joint reflection at the end of the project implementation further strengthen the social-emotional learning aspect, so that the formation of student character becomes more mature and prepared to face real-life challenges. The practical experience that students have during the project implementation provides them with the opportunity to integrate theoretical knowledge with actual social contexts. For example, case studies related to cultural conflicts require students to conduct in-depth analysis and formulate solutions that are appropriate to the conditions faced. This process not only increases students' intellectual capacity, but also forms a responsive attitude and respects cultural differences, thus strengthening an inclusive character and being able to have critical thinking and adapt effectively[31].

Likewise, the attitude of empathy formed through cross-cultural project implementation provides students with the opportunity to internalize an appreciation for differences emotionally, not just intellectually. This is in accordance with the results of Munawarah's research which shows empathy in her research [25]. For example, through simulation activities or discussions that address cultural issues, students experience firsthand the impact of discrimination and stereotypes, thereby fostering a deeper awareness of the importance of inclusive attitudes. With this foundation of empathy, students become better prepared to act as active agents of social change in promoting justice and diversity.

Time constraints are a significant obstacle in achieving an optimal learning process, considering that learning projects require a longer duration for discussion, collaboration, and in-depth reflection. In addition, the readiness of lecturers plays a crucial role in the success of implementation, because they are required to be able to design relevant projects and manage complex group dynamics effectively. Constraints related to resources, such as the availability of adequate technology and learning materials, also have an impact on the effectiveness of PjBL implementation. In addition, less objective character assessments pose challenges in ensuring the quality of learning outcomes, so that the development of more systematic, valid, and holistic evaluation instruments is needed.

Lecturers play a role beyond just delivering material; they also function as social mediators who support students in managing conflicts and cultural differences. Lecturers' competence in motivating, guiding, and providing personal assistance greatly influences the quality of interactions and the achievement of learning outcomes. Therefore, increasing lecturer training in cross-cultural pedagogy and project management aspects is very important to prepare them in managing the complexity of project-based learning effectively. Discussions and reflections that take place in a series of projects provide opportunities for students to explore and deeply understand the roots of socio-cultural problems and injustices that occur in society. The social awareness that is formed then encourages the growth of moral responsibility and motivation to contribute to efforts to create a more inclusive and just society. In this context, students do not only act as recipients of knowledge, but also as agents of change who actively participate in the process of social transformation.

Although the variation of cultural values and educational systems in each institution influences the implementation of PjBL, this method is still able to adapt to local needs without sacrificing the core of character formation. These findings indicate that PjBL has the potential to be developed as a scalable and sustainable learning model, as long as contextual adjustments are made carefully to maintain its relevance and effectiveness. Curriculum development needs to consider pedagogical and technical aspects in the implementation of PjBL, including strengthening lecturers' competence in designing and managing learning projects. Education policies must encourage innovation while providing supporting facilities, such as interactive learning technology. In addition, comprehensive learning evaluation needs to be developed so that the character assessment process can be carried out objectively, comprehensively, and sustainably, so as to significantly improve the quality of cross-cultural education.

This literature review emphasizes the importance of conducting more comprehensive empirical research to examine the effectiveness of project-based learning (PjBL) in the context of Cross Cultural

Understanding (CCU) with quantitative and qualitative approaches. Further studies are recommended using mixed methods to obtain more comprehensive data on the influence of PjBL on student character development. In addition, research also needs to explore innovations in learning technology that can strengthen intercultural interactions in order to improve the quality of the learning process [36]. The use of digital technology, such as online collaboration platforms, virtual reality, and cultural simulation applications, has the potential to create a more interactive, inclusive, and responsive learning atmosphere to students' needs in the era of globalization. Thus, subsequent research will not only fill the gap in valid empirical data but also provide a strong foundation for the sustainability and development of a more effective and innovative PjBL learning model in the realm of cross-cultural education. This approach is expected to open up opportunities for improving the quality of pedagogy while encouraging digital transformation that supports character learning as a whole.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course shows significant effectiveness in supporting the formation of student character. Through the implementation of projects that focus on cross-cultural issues, students not only gain theoretical understanding, but also experience the process of internalizing essential character values such as empathy, tolerance, social awareness, and intercultural communication skills. The learning process that involves interaction between group members with diverse backgrounds and critical reflection encourages the development of inclusive attitudes and solid social-emotional skills, so that students are better prepared to face the complexity of social dynamics in the real world.

In general, the results of this literature review indicate that the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach has significant potential in increasing the effectiveness of Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) learning, especially in efforts to shape student character. However, further studies are still needed to answer various implementation challenges and design a holistic and comprehensive evaluation model. Further research is recommended to adopt a mixed methods approach in order to obtain a more complete picture of the impact of PjBL, both from a quantitative and qualitative perspective.

The effectiveness of this PjBL is supported by the active role of lecturers as facilitators and mediators who are able to manage the complexity of cross-cultural interactions, as well as the application of a contextual and collaborative pedagogical approach. However, the success of the implementation of PjBL is highly dependent on the readiness of the institution, the availability of supporting resources, and the existence of character evaluations that are carried out systematically and objectively.

This study emphasizes the urgency of developing deeper empirical research with a mixed methods approach to gain a holistic understanding of the influence of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on the formation of student character in the context of the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course. Further research also needs to explore more widely the potential for utilizing innovative learning technologies that can strengthen cross-cultural interactions, such as the use of digital collaborative platforms, virtual-based simulations, and interactive learning applications. The integration of this technology is expected to create a learning ecosystem that is more inclusive, adaptive, and responsive to the dynamics of student needs in the era of globalization and digital transformation of education. Thus, the development of a PjBL learning model that is integrated with the latest technology and accompanied by a comprehensive character evaluation system will provide a strategic contribution to improving the quality of cross-cultural education and strengthening student character continuously.

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