Applying Project-Based Learning Based on Playful Learning in Primary Schools: A Study in Indonesia And Finland

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the differences in the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) based on Playful Learning in elementary schools in Finland and Indonesia. The primary focus of the research is on planning, implementation, facilities, and the evaluation of the learning process. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation conducted at two schools: Norden International School in Finland and SDN 06 Pahauman in Indonesia. The findings reveal significant differences between the two schools. At SDN 06 Pahauman, lesson planning is conducted simply and adapted to the limited facilities available. As a result, the Playful Learning approach cannot be fully maximized. However, the learning process still emphasizes hands-on experiences and active student involvement. In contrast, Norden International School benefits from advanced technological infrastructure, which supports digital-based projects. This allows for optimal creative exploration and collaboration during the learning process. Differences are also observed in the evaluation methods. SDN 06 Pahauman focuses primarily on the final project outcomes, whereas Norden International School employs both formative and summative evaluations, complemented by continuous feedback.

Keyword: Project Based Learning, Playful Learning, Elementary School

INTRODUCTION

Education is a cornerstone of national development, and improving its quality remains a critical focus for many countries, including Finland and Indonesia. Finland's education system is often recognized for its inclusive and research-based approaches, emphasizing creativity, collaboration, and holistic development (Kangas et al., 2019). In contrast, Indonesia faces significant challenges, including disparities in resource allocation, geographic barriers, and varying teacher competencies, which hinder the consistent implementation of innovative teaching methods (Laisaiba, 2023). One innovative approach to teaching English at the elementary level is the integration of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) with Playful Learning. PjBL focuses on engaging students in real-world projects that foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative skills (Quintana & Zambrano, 2022). When combined with Playful Learning, which emphasizes enjoyable and exploratory activities, this method creates an

interactive and student-centered learning environment. Research suggests that such integration can significantly enhance student engagement and learning outcomes (Yuliana et al., 2022). However, the implementation of PjBL and Playful Learning varies significantly between Finland and Indonesia. In Finland, schools benefit from advanced infrastructure, continuous teacher training, and a flexible curriculum that supports experimentation and innovation. Conversely, Indonesian schools often grapple with limited access to technology and materials, requiring teachers to adapt their methods to the local context (Rosmana et al., 2022). Operationally, this research defines Playful Learning as a pedagogical approach that incorporates games, role-playing, and hands-on activities to make learning engaging and meaningful. PjBL is defined as a teaching strategy where students actively explore real-world problems and create tangible projects as part of their learning process. The study explores how these approaches are implemented in different educational settings, highlighting their potential to transform English education in elementary schools.

The integration of various learning models in the current educational landscape, especially in the digital learning era, has significantly transformed teaching and learning practices. Digital-based learning models, readily available on numerous platforms, have made education more flexible, enabling both teachers and students to achieve their learning objectives effectively. According to Joyce and Calhoun (2024), learning models serve as structured frameworks that provide teaching strategies to help students acquire specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These models are designed to facilitate teaching, enhance student engagement, and support optimal learning outcomes (Arends, 2022). Furthermore, Eggen and Kauchak (2021) emphasize that learning models act as systematic guides for educators to plan and deliver instruction to meet educational goals, promoting critical thinking and content understanding. Slavin (2020) highlights that learning models not only serve as methods and approaches for teaching but also as foundational tools for organizing educational content, increasing student engagement, and achieving learning outcomes systematically and effectively. Therefore, learning models play a crucial role in ensuring structured and impactful teaching processes. Playful Learning emerges as an effective and enjoyable approach suitable for elementary education, fostering creativity and student interest in learning. Kangas et al. (2019) define Playful Learning as a learning activity embedded in play, aiming to support creativity development in children. It allows students to explore their interests, develop routines, and enable teachers to enhance learning effectiveness. Baker et al. (2023) further elaborate that Playful Learning involves strategies that allow students to directly engage with learning instructions, giving them the freedom to shape their understanding actively. This model offers students autonomy in their learning process and connects educational experiences with real-world contexts, such as drama, storytelling, music, and art (CBSE Academic Unit, 2020).

Process of Playful Learning
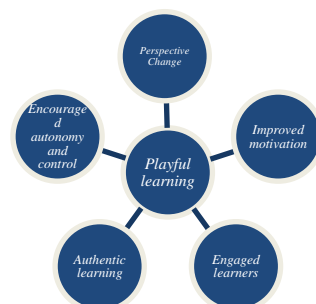
CBSE Academic Unit. 2020

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) complements Playful Learning by engaging students in meaningful projects, tailored to their needs and interests. Aldabbus (2019) explains that PjBL focuses on authentic, content-rich tasks introduced in an engaging manner, involving students in collaborative problem-solving and independent research. According to Dinda and Sukma (2021), PjBL actively involves students in individual or group tasks to achieve learning objectives through the production of tangible outcomes. This approach emphasizes decision-making, research, and project execution, encouraging collaboration and integration of various skills (Fathonah et al., 2022). The integration of PjBL and Playful Learning has proven to be an effective strategy for fostering student engagement and enhancing learning outcomes. By creating opportunities for students to explore real-world applications, collaborate with peers, and receive constructive feedback, these methods address the complexities of modern education. Usman (2014) asserts that PjBL enables students to tackle complex tasks, develop communication and collaboration skills, and engage in meaningful learning experiences that optimize their motivation and performance. As a result, the combined approach of PjBL and Playful Learning not only facilitates skill development but also creates a dynamic, student-centered learning environment that aligns with contemporary educational demands.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach to understand the experiences and perspectives of educators and students in the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and Playful Learning in elementary schools. The research subjects include students and teachers from Norden International School in Finland and SDN 06 Pahauman. The research is conducted from October 2023 to May 2024, using instruments such as observation guidelines to record learning activities, semi-structured interviews to explore the perspectives of research subjects, and supporting documents such as lesson plans and students' project outcomes. The research procedure encompasses preparation, data collection, and data analysis using the interactive model by Miles and Huberman, which involves three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, irrelevant information is filtered to focus on key data that supports the research objectives. The data presentation stage involves organizing data in the form of matrices, charts, or narratives, enabling researchers to identify patterns and relationships. The conclusion drawing stage integrates findings from all data sources to achieve a holistic understanding of the implementation of PjBL based on Playful Learning at both research sites. This study analyzes the key patterns emerging from the data to identify critical issues related to the phenomenon experienced by the research subjects. In this process, constructivist theory is employed as a framework to understand how students build knowledge through interactions within their learning environment. Additionally, the concept of Playful Learning, based on Whitton's (2018) theory, is applied to create enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences. Formative evaluation is utilized as an approach to support the sustainability of project-based learning, focusing on continuous improvement and development of the learning process.
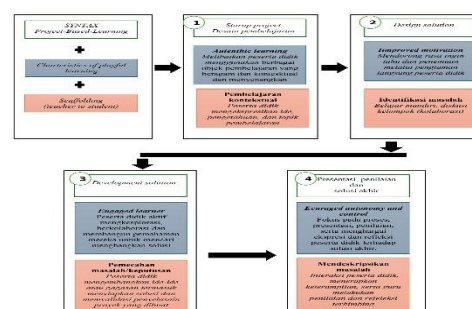

Figure 1 Framework Project Based Learning Based on Playful Learning

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Lesson Planning

Lesson planning in Finland and Indonesia demonstrates significant differences, particularly in the integration of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and Playful Learning. In Finland, flexible curriculum-based planning allows teachers to design projects that are relevant to students' real-life experiences. At Norden International School, teachers employ technology-based and collaborative approaches to create innovative learning activities. Conversely, at SDN 06 Pahauman, lesson planning tends to be simpler and often constrained by available resources. Teachers face challenges in adopting innovative approaches due to infrastructural limitations but strive to engage students through small, locally relevant projects.

Lesson Implementation

The implementation of PjBL in both locations reflects their unique contexts. At Norden International School, learning is supported by advanced technological infrastructure, such as tablets and interactive software, enabling students to collaborate on digital-based projects. Playful Learning is applied through simulations, role-playing, and exploratory activities designed to enhance student engagement. In Indonesia, PjBL implementation at SDN 06 Pahauman focuses more on manual approaches, utilizing simple tools such as posters, sketchbooks, and recycled materials. Despite challenges, teachers succeed in creating student-centered learning environments by emphasizing creative activities that foster active engagement.

Facilities and Infrastructure

Significant differences are evident in facilities and infrastructure. Norden International School boasts modern amenities, including computer labs, technology-based classrooms, and sufficient internet access, which support the optimal implementation of PjBL. In contrast, SDN 06 Pahauman faces limitations, such as a lack of technological devices and adequate teaching materials. Teachers at SDN 06 Pahauman overcome these challenges by adapting teaching methods with simple tools, demonstrating creativity and dedication in integrating Playful Learning.

Evaluation and Assessment

The evaluation systems in Finland and Indonesia also reveal striking differences. At Norden International School, formative assessment is consistently used to provide feedback that supports students' progress, while summative assessment is applied to evaluate final project outcomes. At SDN 06 Pahauman, evaluations focus more on project outcomes due to time and resource constraints. However, teachers attempt to incorporate formative assessment elements by providing feedback during the learning process to help students improve their work.

Table 1 Educational Practices in Finland and Indonesia

Aspect	Finland Norden International School	Indonesia SDN 06 Pahauman
Lesson Planning and Implementation		
Lesson Plans	Teachers always involve students in planning learning projects.	Teachers typically plan projects independently and then instruct students.
PjBL Implementation	Consistent across all classes, involving all students in the learning process.	Inconsistent, implemented in only some classes, but involves all students in the process.
Playful Learning	Interactive and activity-based, involving all students in the learning process.	A combination with conventional learning, involving all students in the learning process.

Teacher and Student Engagement	Teachers are directly involved in student learning. Teachers act as facilitators, and students are highly active.	Teachers dominate, with varying levels of student engagement. Teachers are directly involved in student learning.
Facilities and Infrastructure		
Classroom Facilities	Classroom facilities are highly adequate to support learning.	Classroom facilities are still inadequate to fully support learning.
Educational Technology	Equipped with the latest technology. Facilities are complete and routinely used.	Facilities are limited and unevenly distributed. Not yet equipped with the latest technology.
Teaching Materials	Digital and interactive-based.	Digital and interactive-based.
School Environment	Supports creative and collaborative learning, well-organized, and highly supportive of student learning activities.	Traditional environment, limited open spaces, not well-organized, and not optimal in supporting student learning activities.
Evaluation and Assessment System		
Evaluation Criteria	Focuses on conceptual understanding, practical skills, creativity, and engagement.	Focuses on conceptual understanding, creativity, engagement, and attitude.
Feedback	Routine and in-depth, involving parents and guardians through a digital system.	Less routine, formal, and brief, involving parents and guardians through a manual digital system.
Assessment Methods	Diverse, including projects and portfolios.	Uses project and portfolio assessments.
Assessment Results	Provides constructive feedback integrated with a digital assessment system, covering learning outcomes reporting, assessment categories, success criteria, follow-up actions, continuous evaluation, and transparency.	Formal and limited feedback, connected to digital-based assessments but not maximized, covering learning outcomes reporting, assessment categories, student success criteria, follow-up actions, and continuous evaluation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that there are significant differences in the implementation of project-based learning (PjBL) based on playful learning between SDN 06 Pahauman and Norden International School. At SDN 06 Pahauman, lesson planning is simpler and tailored to the limitations of available resources and facilities, resulting in the playful learning approach being less optimal. However, the focus of learning remains oriented toward hands-on experiences and active student engagement. Conversely, Norden International School is supported by technological infrastructure that enables collaborative digital-based projects, which more effectively support the optimal application of playful learning through creative exploration and student interaction. These differences are also reflected in facilities and infrastructure, where SDN 06 Pahauman faces challenges due to limited facilities and technology access, while Norden International School benefits from modern facilities that support technology integration in learning. The differences extend to evaluation and assessment systems, where SDN 06 Pahauman tends to focus on project outcomes, while Norden International School applies formative and summative assessment approaches with continuous feedback that supports the development of students' English language skills. This demonstrates that better infrastructure and more holistic assessment approaches can support more effective PjBL implementation.

Research Implications

The findings indicate that despite significant differences in context and resources, the core principles of PjBL and Playful Learning can be applied in both locations with appropriate

adjustments. Finland illustrates how robust infrastructure and a flexible curriculum can support innovative learning, while Indonesia's experience highlights the importance of teachers' creativity in overcoming limitations

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