



# Analysis of the Application of Project-Based Learning on Children's Independence: Case Study at the American Academy Casablanca Morocco

Nurhusna Kamil<sup>1</sup>, Haseena Sultan<sup>2</sup>

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia<sup>1</sup>, American Academy Casablanca, Morocco<sup>2</sup>

[nurhusnakamil643@gmail.com](mailto:nurhusnakamil643@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [hsultan@aac.ac.ma](mailto:hsultan@aac.ac.ma)<sup>2</sup>

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## Abstract

Independence is one of the life skills that individuals must possess, especially in early childhood. This ability must be introduced and instilled earlier in children. Independence has been taught by parents from home and even continues when children enter the world of education with the help of teachers. Parents will feel many impacts when instilling independence is implemented earlier, one of which is the absence of dependence on children to complete their tasks. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach. This research aims to use a case study approach to see the application of project-based learning for children's independence at the American Academy Casablanca in Morocco. The target research was aimed at the American Academy Casablanca school in Morocco with a large population of 10 children, all used as research samples with two teachers. Data sources were obtained from secondary data and primary data. The secondary data researchers obtained from one of the teachers who taught at the institution, while the primary data was obtained from books and articles related to the research. Data collection techniques include interviews and results of documentation. While data analysis starts from the stages of data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions, and verification as needed. The research found that there is a link between the application of this learning model to children's independence during the media selection process and activities during learning. The findings from this study show that there is a significant effect of the application of project-based learning on independence in early childhood so that it can be used as an alternative in applying this ability as well as other abilities according to the desired educational goals.

**Keywords:** Project Based Learning; Independence; Children.

## Introduction

Early childhood development during the golden age must receive special attention. Forms of special attention can be done by providing the right stimulus to children. Many aspects must be developed by educators and parents, including aspects of personality, which include independence. Independence is an attitude that must be developed by an individual during his development in various situations and conditions so that he can finally decide actions freely and independently without the help of others (Ariyanto et al., 2022). In addition, independence is the child's ability to express his thoughts freely by choosing and using learning tools and accepting certain consequences (Putri, 2020). Then another opinion says that independence is the child's ability to do his work without help from other people or adults. The independence that has been developed since the beginning of one's life will provide many benefits to children,

parents, and the environment. Independence is a form of attitude that a person has to determine the direction of his life so that the process of independence will continue according to the development period (Rizkyani et al., 2019).

Independence in early childhood is the ability to express oneself as freely as possible in carrying out various activities, which is characterized by the absence of parental involvement in solving problems faced by children (Lisefti Fatimah, Yulianingsih, and Syam'iyah 2020). Many benefits can be felt by children when independence is instilled from an early age, such as (a) having self-confidence; (b) have a sense of responsibility; (c) grow and develop physically and mentally strong; (d) increasingly have high creative power; (e) will give a good response in thinking and acting (Utami et al., 2017).

So independence in early childhood is a person's ability to be responsible for choices and be able to accept the consequences of things that have been chosen to be done without help from adults. In addition, independence is one of the formation of social life skills that must be possessed by someone, especially early childhood so that they are able to adapt to other people and their social environment.

One form of effort that can be made by teachers in developing social life skills in early childhood can use the project based learning model. Project based learning is an alternative form for teachers in providing teaching materials because this method is an inquiry-based learning process that involves children directly so that children work independently in solving problems and finding answers (Hayati & Syaikhu, 2020). In addition, project-based learning involves students actively and freely to solve the problems they face, whether carried out individually or in groups (Ariyanto, Sutama, and Markhamah, 2022).

The application of this learning model has been carried out by Amelia & Aisya (2021), which in its application is focused on center learning. Apart from that, Hayati & Syaikhu (2020) also did the same thing, who carried out this learning method in the development of learning media in early childhood education. In line with this, this learning model has also been implemented by Herlina, etc (2020) which explains that project based learning can improve students' critical thinking and can improve learning achievement.

Project based learning is an extension of the problem based learning model in an effort to provide real experiences for children to be actively involved during the activity process which has the ultimate goal of creating a project or work in solving problems through direct action (Lisefti Fatimah, Yulianingsih, and Syam'iyah 2020). Based on several research results (Ariyanto et al., 2022) it was found that the project based learning model has an increase in independence in early childhood so that this model can be a reference for developing other aspects of development.

Based on the results of research conducted by previous researchers, information was obtained that the application of project based learning models can improve several children's abilities such as learning outcomes, critical thinking, easy mastery of material because it uses

development in teaching material media, has a great curiosity, a great sense of environmental care and increased independence in children, so that the use of project based learning should be adjusted to the learning objectives to be achieved.

Project based learning is no stranger to the world of education, especially in early childhood learning. In fact, this learning model has been widely applied in various school education institutions, both schools in Indonesia and abroad. One foreign school that has implemented this learning model has even implemented project based learning in the vision and mission of the institution, namely at the American Academy Casablanca in Morocco.

American Academy Casabalanca is a formal Moroccan private school located in the suburb of Ville Virte, the city of Casablanca. American Academy Casablanca is the first affiliated academy school in North Africa to offer the International Baccalaureate program under the auspices of a privately operated American school that was first established in Boston, Massachusetts in 1996. This school implements project-based learning into the learning curriculum, so that every activity using this learning model to prepare students who are able to face the challenges of the world in the 21st century.

Based on the information the researcher got from one of the teachers at the American Academy Casablanca named Haseena, that this school uses project based learning in every learning activity. Both on a small, medium and large scale. Many student activities are involved using the project based learning model. The difference between this research and previous research lies in the subject to be studied. In previous research this learning model was used as an effort at center activities as well as to realize students who are able to think critically and creatively. While this study discusses the application of project based learning in the school curriculum so that it affects student learning activities which have implications for independence.

The update that will be carried out in this study discusses the implementation of project based learning on child independence, a case study of the American Academy Cabalanca school in Morocco with a qualitative approach. The benefit of this research is to examine that there is a significant effect if the project based learning model is applied to early childhood. In the current study the focus is on children's independence, so as to be able to give an idea to the reader that there is an attachment between the application of this learning model and one of the abilities the child wants to achieve.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Independence***

Independence is a social life skill that must be developed. In early childhood this aspect should be instilled and given more attention, especially from an early age, because the influence of independence is very large in one's life. Quoting the results of research conducted by Rosyid & Suyadi (2022 ) said that independence must receive more attention not only from teachers but also parents in order to prepare children to be able to solve problems and be responsible for the

decisions that have been made. In line with this, research conducted by Rizkyani et al (2019) explains that independence is something that parents and teachers must understand. Therefore the role of parents and teachers is very important in this formation effort. So that encouragement and support must be the main requirement for developing independence in children.

There are many ways that can be done by adults in developing independence in children, such as using animated media that has been done before. Previous research explained that animation media is able to undergo one of the bridges to increase independence in children. This has proven to be an effective alternative for us (Lisefti Fatimah et al., 2020). In addition, another way that can be used is the involvement of parents and teachers in designing and planning activities so that learning models can be used that support this. One of the learning models in question is to use project based learning.

### ***Project Based Learning***

Project based learning has been widely carried out in previous research which implemented that this learning model is very effective and efficient to use in early childhood in an effort to improve aspects of development, especially independence. This has been explained in the research results of Amelia & Aisya (2021). It is said that this learning model is able to increase independence in children because of the involvement of children in every aspect of learning, problem solving processes, and problem solving problem solving what is done is able to make children think critically and creatively.

### **Methods**

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. The case study approach is an in-depth study of an object or event in order to obtain information according to the needs of the researcher which is described descriptively through words (Abdussamad, 2021). This research was conducted at the American Academy School in Morocco to see the application of project based learning to children's independence. The research population consisted of 10 children with 2 teachers. For the method of taking the sample, the researcher uses a type of non-probability sampling with a saturated sample technique, meaning that it involves the entire population as the research sample.

Data collection techniques include interviews, and the results of documentation with one of the teachers who teach there. The data analysis used by researchers was carried out interactively and continuously. The steps taken are in the form of data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions and verification which are then adjusted to the needs of the research. The following is the research design used.

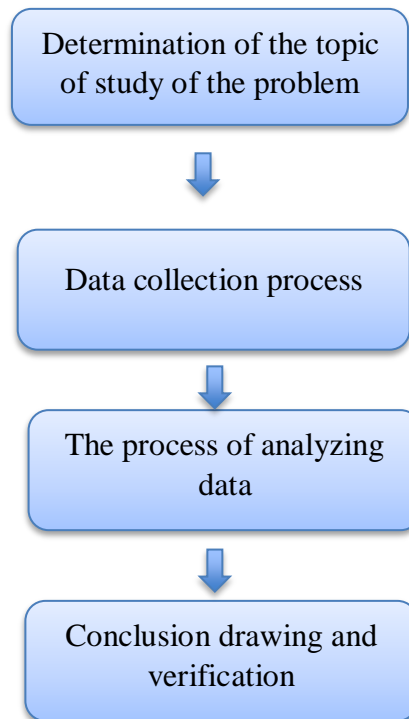


Figure 1. Research Chart Scheme

### Results/Findings

The application of the project based learning at this institution has indications of several aspects of child development, one of which is independence. With a learning model like this, children are actively and independently able to carry out activities independently and without the help of a teacher. The results of the interviews that the researchers found showed that some activities during the child's learning were only accompanied by the teacher and the teacher only acted as a facilitator and observer if there were difficulties in carrying out the activity. In the picture that the researcher described above, it is clear that children independently choose the type of book they want to read with their friends, besides that children are also free to choose a comfortable place according to them to carry out literacy activities.

Based on the result of the results of an interview conducted by a teacher at the American Academy Casablanca Morocco, it is known that this learning model has been applied in recent years. Even in its implementation, project based learning has been included in the school curriculum. So that every learning or activity uses this learning model, both activities on a small, medium or large scale. Efforts and support from the school as well as positive support from parents are concrete forms of realizing this model in every student activity. The school directly involves the parents of students in shaping the child's independence. One form of parental support in this regard is the involvement of parents once a month in teaching children with an

activity called "parent visits". In this activity, the parents of the students received a schedule to provide material to the children in the form of storytelling, mini field trips and storytelling without and using the media.

Based on the explanation above, it is known that the involvement of the school in realizing project based learning is not only in the form of curriculum but also the facilities provided in learning. Children are freed independently to carry out activities they like so that in developing ideas independently and actively children are no longer burdened but they are given the freedom to work so that they are able to be responsible for completing assignments.

Some of the preparations made by the teacher before the teaching and learning process activities such as; (a) the teacher prepares learning tools and materials to be used in the activity process; (b) the teacher explains to the children the theme and activities of the day; (c) the teacher oversees the process of ongoing activities.

The following is the result of the activities implemented by the American Academy Casablanca in implementing the based learning project in the small-scale learning process.



Figure 2. Children reading books independently without teacher guidance

In the two pictures, it can be seen that literacy activities are carried out by children with other children. Children are free to choose friends and the theme of the book they will read. In addition, children are given the widest possible freedom to choose wherever they like to read where they want to read. The difference between the two positions where children read is clearly visible in the picture above.



Figure 3. Another child who is enjoying reading a book and chooses a place according to his wish

The above activities also show the application of learning models to literacy activities. Children are free to choose places, friends and what media to use in the process of reading activities. In the picture you can't see the children reading with the teacher, but they are doing it with their peers. So that the objectives of project based learning can be achieved, namely child-centered learning and the teacher is only a facilitator.

### Discussion

Independence is something that must be developed by parents or teachers in early childhood. with the inculcation of independent values, children will be better prepared to deal with situations and conditions when they grow up (Rosyid & Suyadi, 2022). With independence, it is hoped that children will be able to solve problems and be able to take responsibility for every choice and decision they have made without help and without burdening others (Danauwiyah & Dimiyati, 2021) . In early childhood a form of independence can be in the form of when children are able not to depend on adults in completing their assignments, preparation before going to school or in terms of completing responsibilities given by the school in learning (Sukatin et al., 2019) . Various efforts can be made to increase independence in early childhood.

The form of the teacher's efforts as educators to implement independence in early childhood can be done through art learning as has been done by Melinda & Suwardi (2021), who explained that the application of art learning with this learning model has an influence on children through the division method Duty. Children are active and responsible in completing the tasks that have been given by the teacher. In addition, another form that can be applied to instill the value of independence in children is by using the storytelling method. This method

can be an alternative method used. Through this method, there is involvement of children and teachers or parents and the implications for instilling the value of independence (Pareira & Atal, 2019).

Meanwhile, research conducted by (Ariyanto et al., 2022) who has conducted research related to child independence uses a project based learning learning model. From the results of this study, it was explained that there was an increase and strengthening of children's independence using this learning model. Children are actively responsible for carrying out activities they choose independently without help from adults. So the results of this study say that this project based learning can be one of the efforts made by teachers or parents in increasing independence in children.

Project based learning is a learning model that is widely used in the 21st century. Updates to this learning model involve children actively and independently to be responsible for the activities they have chosen. The linkage of project based learning is able to provide an increase in independence in early childhood. This has been researched by Ariyanto et al., (2022) which explains that there is an increase in the character of independence in early childhood using this model so that it becomes information for teachers to be able to apply this learning model.

In addition, strengthening project based learning was also carried out by Imaduddin (2017). From these results, it is known that project based learning can be used for science learning in early childhood by redesigning the learning method using the STEAM model. Similar research was also conducted by Hayati & Syaikh (2020) which focused on research subjects on PAUD students in learning media courses. The results of the study indicate that there is active involvement of students both in terms of understanding the material in asking questions, providing information and in developing media as the output to be achieved.

The application of this learning model is a form of developing problem-based solving because students' thinking skills are required to be more creative so that it will create meaningful and enjoyable learning. So that the application of the two learning models in activities can be combined (Simbolon & Koeswanti, 2020). With the application of this learning model, it is hoped that children will be able to further explore and explore knowledge with their own thoughts.

There are many benefits from this learning model, learning that involves children actively participating and their participation in choosing and being involved in learning media results in long-term memory for children that learning in this way gives a deep impression (Amelia & Aisyah, 2021). In addition, the application of project-based learning will help children independently build their knowledge in solving problems and taking initiative to be able to translate ideas into real action (Mariamah et al., 2021).

Research related to the continuity between this learning model and children's independence has previously been carried out by Ariyanto et al., (2022) and Aulia et al., (2019) which explain that there is a relationship between these two variables. Project based learning is able to provide reinforcement of a person's independence besides that this learning model is able to significantly change the results to be achieved.



## Conclusion

Based on the results of research on the analysis of project based learning learning models that researchers conducted at the American Academy Casablanca School in Morocco, it is known that there are real implications felt by teachers, parents and children when independence is applied from an early age. When children carry out activities they no longer ask for help from adults or teachers so that the role of adults or teachers is only limited to providing a foothold or small assistance when children are unable to make a decision. From the picture above that the researcher described, it can be seen that there is no more teacher assistance during the learning process, the teacher only facilitates children in the form of reading books, a comfortable place and a conducive classroom atmosphere. So that children are free to choose their own books, places and friends in carrying out these activities.

In the results of the research above, it appears that children can independently carry out reading activities independently with their friends without a teacher accompanying them. The teacher only gives directions that the activity carried out is reading books by giving children the freedom to choose the type of book they want to read according to their individual interests. Apart from that, based on the pictures, the children independently were also able to choose a comfortable place for them to serve as a place to read books with their friends. In the future, this kind of learning model should be able to serve as a reference for educators to further develop other children's abilities, not only on independence. But it can be adjusted to the goals and directions of the education to be achieved so that the development of other children's abilities can be stimulated properly.

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