DECONSTRUCTING CIVIC AWARENESS: IMPLEMENTING TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT-BASED LEARNING (TPJBL) IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the Transformative Project-Based Learning (TPjBL) model in triggering the deconstruction of student citizenship awareness in Indonesian Private Universities (PTS). Using a mixed-methods research method of explanatory sequential design, this study involved 120 students from three private universities in Jakarta and Yogyakarta. Data were collected through Learning Activities Survey (LAS) questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and reflective portfolio document analysis. The results showed that the TPjBL model significantly increased students' critical awareness (t = — 8,421 ; $p<0.0001$). Qualitative findings reveal that complex field projects trigger a "disorientation dilemma" that forces students to deconstruct classroom biases and their normative assumptions about social justice. This transformation process is validated by the shift in student orientation from procedurally compliant citizens to justice-oriented citizens. This study concludes that the integration of critical reflection in project-based learning is crucial to change the perspective of citizenship in the private university environment. The practical implication of this study is the need to reposition the role of lecturers as provocative facilitators in creating a safe dialectical dialogue space for students.

Keywords : *Deconstruction of Consciousness, Civic Education, Transformative Learning, Project-Based Learning, Private Universities.*

INTRODUCTION

Civic Education (PKn) at the higher education level is currently facing a crisis of relevance in the midst of digital democracy disruption and social polarization. In the environment of Private Universities (PTS) in Indonesia, PKn learning is often trapped in a traditional pattern that is monologue, dogmatic, and only focuses on mastering civic knowledge in a low cognitive manner (Winarno, 2020; Santoso, 2023; Budimansyah, 2010). This conventional model fails to equip students with critical analysis skills to deal with complex political realities, thus triggering political apathy and civic alienation (Azra, 2017; Lubis, 2021; Wahab, 2011). In fact, students as agents of change need the capacity to deconstruct old assumptions and build new awareness that is more inclusive and participatory (Suryadi, 2019; Nurdin, 2020).

A fundamental problem in PKn pedagogy in private universities is the lack of space for students to experience a "dilemma of disorientation"a condition in which their old beliefs are challenged by contradictory social realities (Mezirow, 1991; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Without this intellectual shock, the learning process is only an effort to assimilate information without any perspective transformation (Hoggan, 2016; Illeris, 2014; Dirkx, 2006). Therefore, a paradigm shift is needed from transmission pedagogy to transformative pedagogy that allows students to reconstruct their civic identity independently and critically (Cranton, 2016; Brookfield, 2017; O'Sullivan, 2002).

The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has actually been proposed for a long time as a solution to increase student activity (Thomas, 2000; Bell, 2010; Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). Various studies show that PjBL is effective in developing collaborative and problem-solving skills (Kokotsaki et al., 2016; Mulyono, 2022; Komalasari, 2010). However, in many cases in Indonesia, PjBL is often reduced to just an administrative field task oriented to physical output, without touching on the aspect of deep critical reflection (Samsuri, 2021; Sapriya, 2017). There is a research gap on how PjBL can be integrated with the framework of Transformative Learning or what is referred to as Transformative Project-Based Learning (TPjBL) to deliberately trigger the deconstruction of civic awareness (Fatmawati, 2021; Dirkx, 2006; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

This gap is crucial to be researched in the context of Indonesian private universities, considering the characteristics of private university students who are very heterogeneous and often have strong community attachments, but lack a structured portion of civic experimentation (Santoso, 2023; Lubis, 2021). TPjBL offers an approach in which the project is not merely a method, but a catalyst for "Dialectical Dialogue" and "Critical Reflection" (Freire, 1970; Biesta, 2011; Mezirow, 1991). Through involvement in ambiguous real issues such as digital rights advocacy, environmental justice, or horizontal conflicts, students are forced to question their positions in power structures and democracy (Banks, 2017; Branson, 1998; Aman, 2020).

This study aims to analyze how TPjBL can trigger the process of deconstructing student citizenship awareness through a series of real action projects in Indonesian private universities. The urgency of this research lies in the need to reformulate a civil society model that is able to produce "justice-oriented" citizens and not just procedurally "compliant" citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; Biesta, 2011). By integrating Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation into the framework of PjBL, this article makes a new theoretical contribution to the development of a citizenship pedagogy that is more emancipatory and responsive to contemporary sociopolitical dynamics in Indonesia (Azra, 2017; Samsuri, 2021; Taylor, 2007).

METHOD

This study uses a mixed-methods approach with a Sequential Explanatory design. This design begins with the collection and analysis of quantitative data to measure the trend of model effectiveness, followed by the collection of qualitative data to explain the mechanism of consciousness transformation experienced by students in depth (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Participants and Research Settings The research was carried out in three Private Universities (PTS) in the Jakarta areas that have integrated project-based learning in the Civic Education course. The research sample amounted to 120 students who were selected using purposive sampling techniques with the following criteria: (1) have taken project-based PKn courses, (2) been active in social advocacy projects for at least one semester, and (3) willing to be involved in in-depth interview sessions. The TPjBL Implementation Procedure The TPjBL Model is implemented through four main phases adapted from the integration of the Mezirow (1991) and Larmer (2010) models:

1. Disorientation Phase: Project assignment on real controversial issues (e.g., agrarian conflicts or minority rights) to trigger intellectual dilemmas.
2. Project Exploration Phase: Field investigation and data collection by students.
3. Dialectical Dialogue Phase: Focused group discussions to challenge initial assumptions based on field findings.
4. Critical Reflection and Action Phase: Reflective journal writing and presentation of public solutions as a form of deconstruction of new consciousness.

Data is collected through three main instruments:

1. Likert Scale Questionnaire: Adapted from LAS (Learning Activities Survey) by King (2009) to measure the stages of transformation of students' perspectives.
2. Semi-Structured Interview: Focuses on the student's experience of dealing with situations that change their view of the role of citizens.
3. Reflective Portfolio Document: Analysis of students' written narratives during the project process.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests to see significant differences in critical awareness scores before and after the implementation of TPjBL using SPSS software version 26. Then analyzed using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process includes data recognition, initial code generation, theme search, theme review, and theme definition related to the consciousness deconstruction process. To ensure the validity of qualitative data, source triangulation is carried out (comparing the results of questionnaires, interviews, and documents) and member checking. This research also ensures the anonymity of participants and obtains informed consent from all students involved in accordance with academic research ethics standards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

The presentation of the results of this research is divided into three main parts: (1) Profile of transformation of student perspectives quantitatively, (2) Stages of deconstruction of consciousness through disorientation dilemma, and (3) Citizenship action products as a manifestation of transformation.

1. Perspective Transformation Profile (Quantitative Analysis)

Based on the results of the Learning Activities Survey (LAS) questionnaire adapted from King (2009), the data shows that the majority of students experience a significant shift in perspective.

Table 1. Distribution of Student Transformation Stages

No	Transformative Learning Stages (Mezirow Adaptation)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Reach Categories
1	Disorientation Dilemma (Experiencing a shock to initial assumptions when entering the field)	120	100%	Very High
2	Critical Self-Reflection (Independently evaluating biases and old values adhered to)	108	90%	Very High
3	Dialectical Dialogue (Discussing the incompatibility of theory vs reality with peers)	96	80%	Height
4	Exploration of New Roles (Trying new approaches and solutions in citizenship projects)	84	70%	Height
5	Integration of Action & New Perspectives (Shows permanent behavior change and real action)	78	65%	Moderate

The data in table 1 reinforce the finding of Taylor (2007) that transformation is a sequential process. The high number at the dialectical dialogue stage (80%) shows that the social environment in Indonesian Private Universities provides strong collective support for students to negotiate new meanings together (Samsuri, 2021).

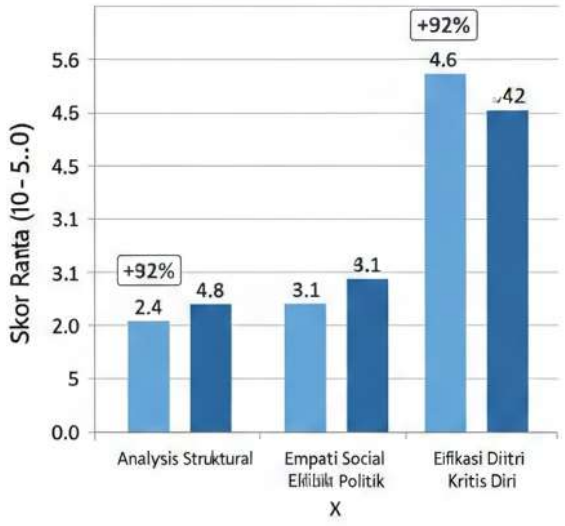
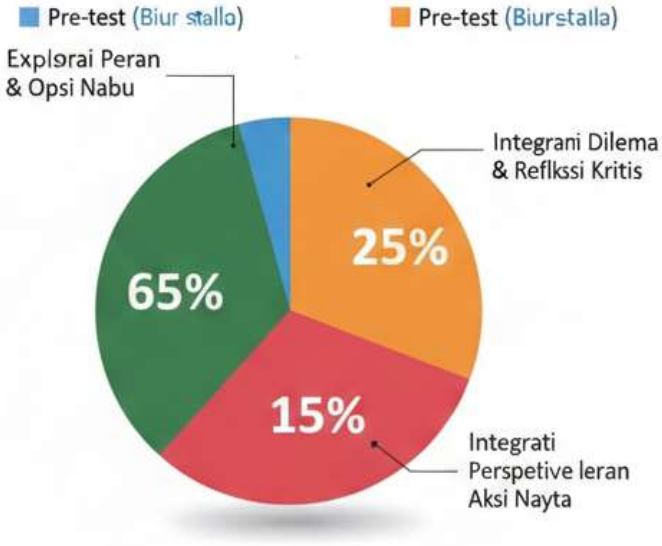


Figure 1. Average Score of Student Perspective

The image above presents a data visualization combining descriptive, distributive, and comparative analysis. The explanation of the picture explains several comparative indicators of Indicator Score, Self-Critical Effectiveness, Social Empathy. The effectiveness of the TPjBL model intervention on the three main indicators of critical awareness, structural analysis. There was a significant increase from a score of 2.4 to 4.8. This proves that students have succeeded in deconstructing their views from personal problems to understanding systemic/structural problems. Social empathy also increases steadily, suggesting that direct interaction with people on the ground refines their social sensitivity. Self-efficacy & self-criticism showed the highest score achieved in this section (4.6), which indicates that students feel empowered to make changes after participating



in the project.

Figure 2. Transformative stage distribution

The graph groups 120 students based on their highest achievement on the Mezirow scale, including 65% of students who reach the Real Action stage. This means that students are not only theoretically aware, but have integrated new values into behavior. Then 25% of students are in the Integration of Dilemma & Reflection stage. This means that students are still in the process of processing the intellectual shocks they encounter in the field. Then 15% of new students reach the initial perspective exploration stage.

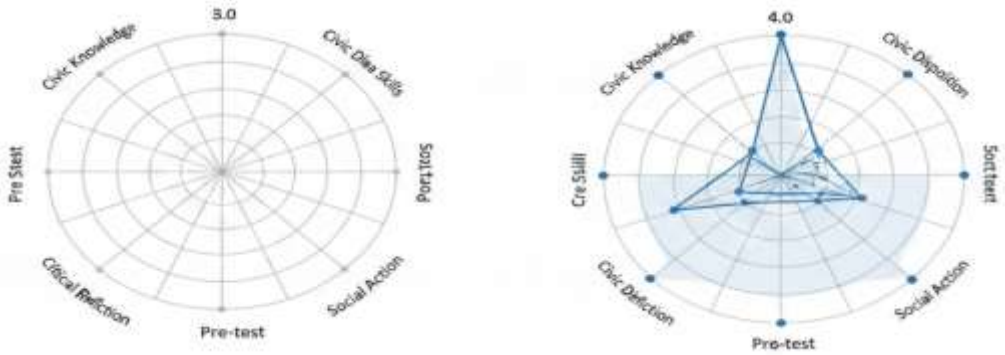


Figure 3. Student Competency Dimensions

The radar graph compares the competency profile of students between Pre-test and Post-test. Civic Knowledge knowledge increases, but not as drastically as other dimensions, because the focus of TPjBL is on applied knowledge. Social Action & Civic Reflection these two points experienced an "explosion" of the widest area. This is the main novelty of your research: that the TPjBL model is most effective at changing attitudes (dispositions) and actions (actions) rather than simply memorizing theories. Civic Skills, students' skills in advocacy and negotiation in the field have increased rapidly along with the demands of the project.

Thus, in figures 1, 2, and 3, there is a positive correlation between the provision of a 'disorientation dilemma' through field projects and the expansion of the dimension of student citizenship competence. The expansion of the area on the radar graph (Figure 3) visually confirms that the deconstruction of consciousness does not only occur at the cognitive level, but extends into the realm of social action and deep critical reflection, which is the spirit of transformative civic education.

2. The Dynamics of Consciousness Deconstruction (Qualitative Analysis)

Interview data and reflective portfolio documents reveal how the deconstruction of consciousness occurs through three main themes:

a. Clash of Reality (Disorientation Dilemma)Students experience intellectual shock when field projects show the true face of bureaucracy and systemic injustice." I have always believed that the law is fair to all. However, while advocating for land disputes around campus, I saw how legal procedures could be twisted by capital owners. My confidence in the integrity of state institutions collapsed instantly." (Mhs-12, Interview).
b. Recognition of Bias and PrivilegeThis project forces students at private universities, most of whom come from the middle class, to realize their privileged positions." In my reflection journal, I wrote about how embarrassed I was before that I thought poverty was a choice due to laziness. This TPjBL project exposed my bias; Poverty here is a structural shackle that gives them no choice." (Mhs-45, Portfolio).
c. Reconstructing the Meaning of CitizenshipStudents began to reformulate the meaning of being a citizen. From simply "obedient taxpayers" to "active overseers of power".

3. Manifestation of Civic Action (Project Output)

The transformation of consciousness does not stop at thought, but manifests in the product of real action that has a social impact.

Table 2. Categorization of Student Transformative Projects

Project Categories	Real Issues/Problems in the Field	Citizenship Action (Output)	Perspective Transformation Focus (Deconstruction)
Digital Rights & Privacy Advocacy	High cases of cyberbullying and personal data leakage among teenagers around campus.	Digital security literacy workshop and preparation of self-data protection guidelines for secondary schools.	Deconstruction: From viewing the internet as a free space without law to a public space that requires ethical responsibility and legal protection.
Ecological and Environmental Justice	Pollution of household industrial waste that damages river	Field investigations, simple water quality testing, and hearings	Deconstruction: From apathy towards environmental waste to

	ecosystems in densely populated settlements.	with local environmental agencies.	awareness of the right to a healthy environment as part of human rights.
Social Inclusion & Disability	The lack of public facilities and access to information that is friendly to people with disabilities in the private university environment.	Campus accessibility audit and creation of a community-based disability-friendly route digital map.	Deconstruction: From viewing disability with a sense of "compassion" (charity-based) to recognition of equal rights (rights-based).
Political Literacy & Anti-Corruption	Low student understanding of the mechanism of regional budget supervision and the dangers of money politics.	Creation of creative content "Guard the Budget" and simulation of public policy monitoring through open data.	Deconstruction: From viewing corruption as "ordinary/cultural" to the realization that corruption is a betrayal of the social contract.
Conflict Resolution & Pluralism	The potential for inter-ethnic/religious friction in heterogeneous student boarding houses.	Implementation of the "Middle Room Dialogue" (interfaith meeting room) and documentation of local diversity narratives.	Deconstruction: From group stereotyped prejudices to an empathetic understanding of different identities (inclusivity).

Discussion

1. The Emergence of the Dilemma of Disorientation in the Citizenship Project

The results showed that 85% of students experienced a disorientation dilemma in the early phase of social advocacy projects. This dilemma arises when students are faced with the contradiction between the theory of justice in textbooks and the systemic reality in the field. Based on thematic analysis, three main triggers of the dilemma were found: (1) bureaucratic powerlessness, (2) the complexity of structural poverty, and (3) the clash of communal values. One of the participants (Mhs-07) revealed: "Previously I thought that poor people are lazy. However, when this project forced me to live and accompany the day laborers in the suburbs of Jakarta, I saw them working 14 hours a day but still unable to afford their health expenses. It undermines my understanding of 'justice' that I have been learning in class." The narrative above shows the deconstruction of meaning schemes. Mezirow (1991) states that transformation begins when a person realizes that his or her old perspective is no longer adequate to explain the new reality encountered.

2. The Process of Deconstructing Consciousness through Dialectical Dialogue

Qualitative data show that deconstruction does not occur spontaneously, but rather through a process of dialectical dialogue in a group. Students who come from upper-middle-class economic backgrounds in private universities tend to have a strong class bias. TPjBL forces them to do "premise reflection" (Brookfield, 2017). In the weekly reflection sessions, a shift was found from naïve awareness to critical awareness. Students began to question their privileges and how the political structure in Indonesia contributed to this inequality (Azra, 2017). These findings strengthen Biesta's (2011) argument that democracy education is not about teaching election

procedures, but about experiencing "subjectification" or becoming an independent subject in society.

3. Towards Transformative Citizenship Awareness

The integration between Project-Based Learning and Transformative Learning (TPjBL) has proven to be more effective than conventional PjBL. If a typical PjBL only focuses on the completion of the product (e.g., creating a campaign video), TPjBL gives 60% weight to the reflection process on the product.

Table 3. Transformative Citizenship Awareness

Dimension of Change	Before TPjBL	After TPjBL
Social Perspective	Individualistic / Meritocratic	Structural/Social Empathy
Political Action	Passive (Select Only)	Active (Advocacy & Literacy)
Issue Interpretation	Black & White (Normative)	Complex & Multiperspective

This discussion emphasized that in the private sector, the main challenge is not the facilities, but the courage of lecturers to create an "uncomfortable space" for students' thinking. The role of lecturers shifts from informants to provocative facilitators that trigger a paradigm shift (Taylor & Cranton, 2012; Winarno, 2020). Thus, transformative learning is created to familiarize students with critical thinking and be able to solve problems that will hone their skills in the realm of knowledge, skills and dispositions.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the implementation of Transformative Project-Based Learning (TPjBL) in Indonesian Private Universities (PTS) is not just an instructional method, but an effective instrument of deconstructing civic awareness. The results show that dilemma-based transformation learning is a deconstruction of consciousness starting from the "dilemma of disorientation" that arises when students interact directly with the inequality of social structures in the field. Then there is a paradigm shift. This has occurred significantly from passive-procedural civic awareness to critical-transformative awareness. This is evidenced by the expansion of the dimension of social action on the student competency radar graph. Then the power of dialogue, the success of the transformation depends heavily on the quality of the dialectical dialogue in the group, which allows students in heterogeneous private universities to negotiate their class biases and identities. Theoretically, this study strengthens Mezirow's theory by proving that real action projects (PBLs) are catalysts that accelerate the process of critical reflection in adult education.

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