

Raising environmental sustainability care character through Project Based Learning in English class

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Abstract: The need for environmental sustainability awareness is rising rapidly and one way to achieve it is through education. This study aimed at unraveling the environmental sustainability care character building through project-based learning in the English for Specific Purpose classroom. This study applied qualitative research with a case study design. This study was conducted at the Politeknik Negeri Bali, and the participants were 39 students from the Tour and Travel Operation Study Program. The data were collected through observation, documentation, and interview with the students and the lecturers to triangulate the data. The data were then analyzed by data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This study revealed that the project-based learning method can integrate character-building explicitly by giving a video project on how to take care of rubbish in tourism destinations. Positive responses were also given by the students toward the process of video creation and most of them agreed that they need to take action in taking care of the environment.

Keywords: *education, moral, value, wayang wahyu*

Introduction

Tourism has become one of the economic potentials in Indonesia. It has been concerned as the major aspect of the national development urged by the government of Indonesia since 2015 (Singgalen, Sasongko, & Wiloso, 2019). It becomes a matter since tourism has brought beneficial aspects, not only on economic, but also on social aspects, including prosperity, social values, and local cultures (Singgalen *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, the natural beauty of Indonesia, including lakes, cliffs, mountains, rivers, beaches, and forests, has taken lots of attention from traveling and photography addicts.

Despite its benefits, the increasing number of tourism activities in the tourism destination may result in some environmental issues as its drawback. The increase in tourism growth is followed by the rising number of environmental contamination (Khatter, White, Pyke, & McGrath, 2021; Pulido-Fernández, Cárdenas-García, & Espinosa-Pulido, 2019). From prior research conducted, it was found that the tourism activities, such as camping or hiking, can bring up some ecological problems, including erosion of soils, disturbance to wildlife, and littering (Roe, Hrymak, & Dimanche, 2014), which urged the air, water, and soil pollution (Joshi & Dhyani, 2009) and led the destruction of the ecosystem (Joseph, 2016). Consequently, these acts have endangered the living creatures and their ecosystem around the natural tourism destination.

To reduce the risk of ecosystem destruction in the tourism destination area, researchers agreed that maintaining human behaviors could become one solution to overcome the issues (Han, 2021). The action on promoting environmental sustainability is demanded and it requires collaborative work between the policymakers, the tourist organizations, and the visitors (Idahosa, 2018; Schianetz, Kavanagh, & Lockington, 2007). As one of the policy makers, the Government of Indonesia had put big attention in building the character of environmental sustainability. The Government of Indonesia through the Ministry of National Education has developed 18 character values that should be integrated into the learning process to encourage character education and put the environmental care character as one of the concerns of character education (Kemendiknas, 2011). Character education teaches individuals how to live and interact with each other within families, communities, and states as well as how to take responsibility for their actions (Sabila, Ulpa, Andini, *et al.*, 2022). The character education is believed to contribute a significant role in shaping good human resources with positive attitude and character (Muslim, 2020). From prior observation, character education



has been implemented in the high school curriculum and many English teachers have already inserted the characters in the learning process. However, the majority of these teachers admitted that they paid less attention to encouraging environmental care character since they could not integrate the environmental care values into the learning topic and classroom activities (Nova, 2017).

Dealing with character education insertion, two ways are possibly applied to insert character education in the classroom activities, namely implicit mode and explicit mode (Sugirin, 2011). In the implicit mode, the teacher provides learning instruction that inserts the character values implicitly, to enable the students to acquire the character values unconsciously, such as talking with the students during the classroom discussion (Sugirin, 2011). However, the students may not comprehend the character education as they are not aware of the implicit moral values discussed by the teacher. Otherwise, in explicit mode, the teacher has planned and arranged the classroom teaching and learning activities to integrate the learning topic with the character value and emphasize them in the learning discussion, including speech, discussion, and reading activities (Sugirin, 2011). This mode offers bigger opportunities to succeed in the character education insertion since the students are aware of the moral value and get on-hand experience being involved in the discussion.

Some previous works of literature also emphasize learning experience in character education integration. The character education program should provide an opportunity for the students to get involved in moral action (Özen, 2011) by offering the students a hands-on experience as the learning instruction (Kamaruddin, 2012). By providing various activities with hands-on experience, the students are aware of the existence of the character value and they gain valuable experience by emphasizing the character value in the discussion (Almerico, 2014; Pane & Patriana, 2016). Therefore, an explicit mode of character education with an experiential learning approach could be the proper method to raise students' awareness of character value.

One instructional approach which can accommodate both explicit mode of character education and experiential learning approach is project-based learning. Project-based learning is admitted as one instructional approach that can also give more value to students' learning. The students had their hands-on experience in implementing what they had learned in the classroom and applied it in the real situation to solve cases and issues (Chikurteva & Chikurtev, 2020; Hwang, Hsiung, & Chen, 2017). It also allows the students to practice their soft skills in working collaboratively and communicatively with their peers (Munawaroh, Suja'i, Afifah, & Putri, 2021; Susanti & Trisusana, 2017), to encourage them in accomplishing their responsibility (Amamou & Cheniti-Belcadhi, 2018; Maros, Korenkova, Fila, Levicky, & Schoberova, 2021), and to produce comprehensible output at the end of the project (Naviri, Sumaryanti, & Paryadi, 2021; Yacoman & Diaz, 2019). Furthermore, this instructional approach also promotes independent learning and motivates the students to actively participate in the classwork activities (Guo, 2021; Jamal & Tilchin, 2019).

To support the environmental sustainability and the character education program, one of vocational education institution in Bali, Politeknik Negeri Bali, has implemented project-based learning in promoting the environmental character through Green Tourism values. Different from the high school curriculum, the vocational education institution curriculum offers learning indicators that could discuss the environmental sustainability topic deeper. In vocational education, the topic of environmental sustainability has become a crucial issue that has been discussed by many scholars and still needs further investigation. With this concern, the environmental issues could be discussed in any subject in the classroom and the environmental sustainability care character could be inserted.

The current study aimed at unravelling the environmental sustainability care character building through project-based learning in the English for Specific Purpose classroom. The study identified the steps of conducting the project-based learning, starting from the preparation, implementation, and evaluation.

Method

In conducting the study, this study employed qualitative research with a case study design. The study was conducted at the Politeknik Negeri Bali. The participants were one English lecturer and 39 second-year students from Tour and Travel Operation study program. These students were selected purposively as they were enrolled in *English for Tour Operation* and have a special interest in tourism study cases.

The data was collected through observation and interviews. The observation was conducted during the learning session and the project-based learning implementation process. During observation, the study employed an observation sheet to record certain findings that related to the application of project-based learning to integrate environmental sustainability character building. Furthermore, to triangulate the observation, an interview was also conducted with the students and the lecturer. The interview was conducted in *Bahasa Indonesia* to make the students and the lecturer answer more accurately. The interview was conducted to identify the students' responses toward the project-based learning and the character-building on environmental sustainability. Moreover, the lecturer was also interviewed to gain further details of the process in implementing the project-based learning to raise students' environmental sustainability care character. An interview guide was prepared to be the guideline during the interview session.

Dealing with the data analysis, the data gained from the observation sheet and interview were then analysed qualitatively. Following the qualitative data analysis model (Miles & Huberman, 1994), the data were analysed through four stages, including data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To gain deeper insight, the data were also displayed in form of narration and interpretation.

Result and Discussion

Findings

In line with the research objectives mentioned above, the findings section would be divided into three different sections, including the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of environmental sustainability care character awareness rising through project-based learning.

The Preparation Phase

Before the project-based learning was implemented, the English lecturer decided on the learning indicators which could be suited to the environmental sustainability cases. From 21 learning indicators in English for Tour Operation subject, the lecturer emphasized the environmental sustainability cases on the 20th learning indicator, "students are able to demonstrate the use of English expressions in describing tourism destination". The selection of this learning indicator was based on its learning topic which discussed tourism destination descriptions those are closely related to nature tourism destinations. The lecturer mentioned that by describing nature tourism destinations in the classroom, the students could be aware of the environment around the tourism destination.

It is actually the perfect topic for the environmental sustainability case. If we think about environmental problem, where do you see them the most? (It is in) nature tourism destination, right? Like beach, lake, mountain, so I think, if we can make the students focus on nature tourism destination, we can make them aware on the real problem in the environment [E.L.].

After deciding the learning indicator, the English lecturer planned the learning activities and the learning output for the project. The lecturer arranged the learning activities with three phases; brainstorming, project discussion, and closing. The lecturer mentioned that he sought for some possible learning media to be integrated into the classroom, such as video and news items, during the brainstorming phase. This media was prepared to grab students' attention and focus on the learning activity.

I plan to start the class with some fun brainstorming activity, such as watching video or reading news about beach, mountain, or lake. I want to make the students engaged with the opening first so I can grab their attention easier. Then, I ask them about their destination preference, whether they like to go to the beach, or to the mountain, or somewhere else [E.L.].

In line with the project output, the lecturer decided to create a video project for the students. The selection of the video project was based on the features owned by the video which can attract people's attention. The lecturer saw it as a potential media to influence people.

As we know that, video contains pictures and audio. People tend to watch video rather than reading news, or listening to a podcast. They love the visualization and the explanation. With a video, it is possibly easier to promote an important message or moral value toward cases around us, and the watcher will enjoy it also [E.L.].

The Implementation Phase

The project-based learning was implemented for three weeks long. It was implemented from the thirteenth meeting until the fifteenth meeting. During these weeks, the lecturer and the students discussed their project progress and updates for the project.

At the thirteenth meeting, the English lecturer introduced the topic of tourism destinations. The learning was started by providing a short video “Wonderful Indonesia” and the lecturer asked the students to observe the video for a few minutes and let them watch it, without any interruption or questions to answer. After watching the video, the lecturer asked some questions to students, related to the types of the natural destinations they saw on the video, their favourite natural destinations that they had visited before, and their experiences during their visits to the natural destinations.

After having a short question and answer session, the lecturer began to discuss the rubbish case in the natural tourism destination. The lecturer opened the discussion by displaying some actual cases coming from news and articles which were related to the littering problem in natural tourism destination. Then, the lecturer invited the students to give their opinion on the cases. Some students gave their points of view on the littering problem and blamed the visitors since they did not obey the regulation.

I think the problem is coming from the visitors. Many people do not really care about the environment. They just want to visit the beach, enjoying the sunset or doing some fun activities, but they forget about their rubbish, like plastic bottles or snacks' bag [S.19].

I agree with the opinion. Many people are too lazy to bring their rubbish and prefer to keep it there [S.16].

Meanwhile, another student mentioned that the visitor might realize about the rubbish they had, but could not find any rubbish bin around to throw them away.

Maybe, they cannot find any rubbish bin around, sir. For example, like climbing the mountain, there is no rubbish bin in the mountain. So, they just threw it away [S.2].

In addition, another student also emphasized on visitor's responsibility on the rubbish they had and they had to carry it during their visit in natural tourism destination.

I want to add some opinion. For me, I agree that there is no rubbish bin in the mountain, but the climbers bring their bag, so they actually can put the rubbish inside the bag during climbing the mountain [S.21].

The discussion was then followed by the project explanation. The lecturer provided a short PowerPoint presentation to explain the project. The presentation was started by introducing the theme of the project, “Let's Trip and Cherish without the Rubbish”. Then, the explanation was continued by providing some details of the project. The students were required to work in groups in accomplishing the project. The project output was in a form of a video with three minutes until five minutes long. The students were required to shoot a short video blog (vlog) in one natural tourism destination, e.g. lake, beach, river, waterfall, and mountain, and to provide three pieces of information, including a description of the natural tourism destination, the reasons to visit the natural tourism destination, and the campaigns on no-littering in natural tourism destination. The lecturer asked the students to prepare the script for the video and opened a discussion about the writing matters. Then, the lecturer let the students work with their peers assembling their project ideas and closed the meeting with questions and answers session to assure the students' comprehension of the project.

At the fourteenth meeting, the lecturer focused the discussion on the content of the video. Some groups discussed their contents with the lecturer, including the script, the location for the project, and the duration of the video. During the discussion, the lecturer emphasized more on the environmental sustainability message that the students needed to attach to the closing part of the video. The lecturer gave some feedback and revisions for the students and also provided some examples on how to convey the moral value explicitly, such as doing some acting, bringing some posters, or putting some slogans. At the end of the meeting, the students were required to start their video recording on the tourism destination and submit the video at the fifteenth meeting.

At the fifteenth meeting, the lecturer asked the students to play the video in the classroom. Before playing the video, the students were required to provide a brief explanation about the video concept and the reason for selecting the place for the video recording. Then, the whole class watched the video together. During this session, the lecturer let each group present their video and gave an opportunity for the students to fully watch the video without any interruption.

The Evaluation Phase

In the evaluation phase, the lecturer reviewed the project which had been conducted by the students. The review process was conducted through a focus group discussion between the lecturer and the students. The lecturer gave several questions related to the project, including the aim of the project and the value earned after finishing the project.

Related to the aim of the project, the majority of the students answered that the project aimed to make people aware of the cleanliness of the tourism destination as the project required them to campaign on no-littering in natural tourism destinations.

I think, the purpose of making this project is to make people stop throwing rubbish in any tourism destination [S.10].

The aim is to make people clean the rubbish they bring to the tourism destination and be responsible to the cleanliness of the visited area [S.14].

Responding to the second question, most of the students admitted that they had the responsibility to keep the environment clean and to educate people in encouraging environmental sustainability in nature tourism destinations.

We as a part of tourism industry should take a part in environmental sustainability. It is not only for the visitors, but also for us, because if we do not start and give good example for the visitors, they will not take care of the environment [S.28].

For me, nature tourism will not last longer if we do not pay extra attention to the environment. We can enjoy the nature, but we also need to be responsible to the cleanliness of the tourism destination [S.16].

Discussion

The current study investigated the implementation of project-based learning to raise environmental sustainability character awareness. The project-based learning implemented took the form of a video project which was administered at the end of the semester, from the thirteenth meeting to the fifteenth meeting. The project aimed at employing students in having hands-on experience in demonstrating the campaign of environmental sustainability in nature tourism destinations. Within three weeks, the students had produced a short video conveying the importance of caring for the environment to achieve environmental sustainability.

The employment of video project in project-based learning has successfully implemented the explicit mode of character education insertion. In the explicit mode, the lecturer planned and arranged the classroom teaching and learning activities to integrate the learning topic with the character value and emphasize them in the learning discussion (Sugirin, 2011). This explicit mode had clearly been drawn in the teaching and learning process in the English for Tour Operation class.

From the planning phase, the English lecturer clearly emphasized that the learning process is planned to gain students' attention on nature problems and environmental sustainability issues. The lecturer had already selected the learning indicator which could cover the topic of environmental sustainability. The lecturer had also arranged a set of classroom activities that discuss the nature tourism destination and environmental sustainability issues. The discussion exposed in the classroom could support the students' communication skills in conveying their idea (Munawaroh et al., 2021). Moreover, the lecturer had also planned to integrate several learning media which could support the discussion on nature tourism's environmental problem. In line with the character education insertion classification (Sugirin, 2011), this deep consideration in planning the lesson and classroom activities could infer the lecturer's intention in using the explicit mode to raise students' awareness on environmental sustainability issues. At the beginning of the lesson, the lecturer has clearly shown his intention in inserting the environmental sustainability character in the teaching and learning process and indicated that the lecturer applies the explicit character education insertion mode.

In the implementation phase, the lecturer had employed several activities to encourage environmental sustainability character building. At the beginning of the project-based learning implementation, the lecturer invited the students to discuss the environmental problem by providing actual news and articles related to littering cases in nature tourism destinations. These cases displayed on the screen intentionally grabbed students' attention to focus on the problems that arise in nature tourism destinations and led the students to increase their awareness of the current environmental problem in nature tourism destinations. This initial discussion is one of the features provided in project-based learning to offer a hands-on experience for the students in solving cases and issues around them (Hwang et al., 2017). As the result, the students had actively participated in the discussion by providing various answers, including visitors' disobedience, visitors' carelessness, and visitors' irresponsibility. In line with prior studies, the implementation of project-based learning could encourage students' motivation in participating the classroom discussion actively (Jamal & Tilchin, 2019). Therefore, this technique has the potential to make the students aware of the existence of the character value as they are involved in the discussion (Pane & Patriana, 2016), by talking about the environmental problem and identifying the causes of the problem.

Furthermore, during the implementation phase, the students, working in a group, created the video on campaigning on no-littering in natural tourism destinations. This activity is one of the prime features exposed in project-based learning which could give opportunities to work collaboratively and communicatively with the other students (Munawaroh et al., 2021). They could discuss the concept of the video, the location, and the preparation for the video shooting. At the same time, they also received an authentic experience in being involved in real action by campaigning no littering and they have been aware of the character value emphasized in their campaigning. Accordingly, this learning activity has supported the application of explicit character education insertion by involving the students in a moral action (Özen, 2011) and providing them with a hands-on experience in their learning activity (Kamaruddin, 2012).

At the end of the project, the students had been aware of the character value inserted in the learning process. From the result of the questions and answers session, the students had realized the environmental sustainability character emphasis. The students mentioned several moral values that they have earned during conducting the video project, including the importance of nature cleanliness, the campaign of no littering in nature tourism destinations, and the urgency of the real action from tourism stakeholders to raise people's awareness on environmental sustainability. Their answers during the discussion could reflect that they have perceived the environmental care character and been able to provide detailed information on the environmental sustainability urgency. Directly, this is in line with the prior study which stresses that project-based learning could encourage students to learn the real cases surrounding them and solve them (Chikurteva & Chikurtev, 2020). Moreover, this also fulfil the prototype of character education which embrace the morality and virtues (McGrath, Han, Brown, & Meindl, 2022), by realizing the necessity of taking care of the environment. Therefore, this video project could increase the students' awareness of environmental sustainability and shape the environment care character to solve the environmental problems in tourism.

Conclusion

The urgency of environmental sustainability character awareness has become a common problem faced by tourism and hospitality stakeholder. The existence of character education insertion in vocational education could help the government to raise the younger generation's awareness toward this problem. With the help of the project-based learning application, the aim of increasing students' awareness of environmental sustainability character could be achieved. By involving them in the real action and providing them with hands-on experiential learning, the students could actively participate in the learning activities and sharpen their communication and problem-solving skills.

As the current study focused on using video as the output of the project, the researcher has been aware that different types of project output could give different results on character education insertion. Therefore, further research on the application of project-based learning with different project outputs is required to provide further evidence on the application of project-based learning as one learning instruction to increase students' environmental care character.

Acknowledgement

With the publication of this article the author would like to thank and gratitude to colleagues at the Politeknik Negeri Bali who helped complete the research and writing of this article. The author

also would like to thank all members of the editorial board of the Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter who accepted this article until it was published.

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