

The Effectiveness of Mentoring in the Implementation of the Project-based Learning (PjBL) Model in the Independent Curriculum for PAUD Educators

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of mentoring the implementation of the Project-based Learning (PjBL) model in the Independent Curriculum for Early Childhood Education (PAUD) Educators. This study uses a quantitative approach with one group pretest-posttest. Respondents were 80 PAUD educators in Bruno District, Central Java, Indonesia, using a quota sampling technique. Data were collected as scores and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The study results indicate that mentoring in implementing the PjBL model effectively improves the competence of PAUD educators. The score of PAUD educators reinforces this finding, as mentoring participants show an average post-test score of 61.14. This score is higher than the pre-test result, which is 77.55, with a significance (sig.) of $0.000 < 0.05$. T-test calculation describes the difference where t_{count} is $0.445 > t_{table}$ is 0.220 . Thus, mentoring the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model can improve the competence of PAUD educators in supporting the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesia.

Keywords: Educators in Early Childhood Education, Independent Curriculum, Mentoring, Project-based Learning (PjBL).

Published Online: November 4, 2022

ISSN: 2736-4534

DOI : 10.24018/ejedu.2022.3.6.471

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I. INTRODUCTION

The quality of human resources plays an essential role in advancing the nation's welfare. The quality of human resources can be seen from the quality of education, one of which is the teaching carried out by educators in schools. The existing human resources also drive the quality of education in schools, including principals, teachers, and personnel who carry out their duties professionally in improving the quality of education. The Ministry of Education and Culture, as the leading sector, has a role in realizing the quality of human resources by realizing the goals of national education (Sherly *et al.*, 2021). This can be interpreted that the progress of national education is also closely related to the quality of education and the nation's progress.

Education is a self-development in individuals who are not only led to being smart but make the character in him more qualified in religion and skills so that it can be helpful for the nation and state (Raharjo, 2010). In addition, education is also needed to make individuals more productive, form a better and more focused attitude, and overcome the demands and challenges that will be faced. This means that education is a development that can change from time to time. Education follows the renewal of rules at any time. One of which is marked by the development of the curriculum.

The curriculum is an essential part of learning in educational institutions. The curriculum is part of the standard content of the subject matter-curriculum as a guide in planning school learning activities. The purpose of the curriculum as a director of learning will lead to the goals to be achieved. The development of the curriculum does not only apply in Higher Education (PT), but since Early Childhood Education (PAUD), Elementary School (SD), Junior High School (SMP), and Senior High/Vocational Schools (SMA/K) have experienced developments curriculum every year.

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) aims to foster knowledge, skills, and attitudes taught to children from birth to 6 years of age to prepare them for further education. Childhood at an early age is also known as the golden age. At this time, it is interpreted as the appropriate time to develop the potential of children, so children should get more and special attention related to the development of the educational curriculum through assistance from parents and educators in educational institutions (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017; Haller & Novita, 2021; Knopf & Swick, 2007).

The strategy used in improving human education resources is mentoring. Mentoring is an act of facilitating individuals or groups within an organization to improve their knowledge, skills, and attitudes (St-Jean & Audet, 2012). One of the mentoring strategies that can be applied to improve human resources in education is mentoring for

educators, especially regarding the new curriculum, which will later be applied in teaching and learning activities. In this regard, assistance must be aimed at educators regarding the Independent Curriculum, including in PAUD.

The curriculum currently applied in Indonesia is the Independent Curriculum. The Independent Curriculum is applied as a fun learning process for all parties involved, both educators, students, and parents when helping the learning process (Nasution, 2022). As a companion to the learning process, educators must know about the basic framework and structure of the curriculum, including (a) A curriculum structure that has flexible learning hours and is targeted to be applied for two semesters, (b) A focus on essential material, (c) Providing flexibility for assistants in using media and learning resources according to the needs and characteristics of students, and (d) Learning resources that provide various references to be developed in the application of teaching and learning activities.

The Independent Curriculum applied in PAUD units is the concept of learning while playing and being independent. This curriculum provides opportunities for educators and students to develop their imagination and creativity through various choices made during learning activities.

The Independent Curriculum is a form of learning recovery due to a long-term learning crisis exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The form of the Independent Curriculum in PAUD is (a) Freedom to learn equals freedom to play as the Ministry of Education and Culture's vision to realize quality education for optimal growth and development and school readiness; (b) Independent learning, namely freedom to play, as a derivative of the free learning policy for PAUD; and (c) Activities should provide a fun and meaningful experience.

Daga (2022) in his research explained that the core of the Independent Curriculum is freedom of thought broadly for educators and students, as well as freedom and fun in exploring knowledge, attitudes, and skills from the environment. On the other hand, creativity is also emphasized in the Independent Curriculum, especially in early childhood (Mulyasa, 2021). Creativity is essential for an early child to have a mindset that produces original work and comes from his imagination. In order to develop creativity in children, appropriate guidance is needed to realize their interests and talents.

In helping to create a positive mindset that will later be applied to develop children's creativity, schools as educational institutions can apply Project-based learning (PjBL) models. Some research results state that the purpose of the PjBL model is to stimulate children's creativity by training the mindset to always think critically in finding problem-solving and in making decisions from the problems they face (Cahyati *et al.*, 2022; Xu & Zhang, 2021). The PjBL is a learner-centered learning model to conduct in-depth investigations into a problem topic. Therefore, it is hoped that applying the PjBL model can be a solution for educators and students to achieve learning objectives (Dhundi Raj Giri, 2016; Dole *et al.*, 2015).

The learning model is one of the determinants of the success of learning activities. The PjBL model's implementation organizes learning by involving other

aspects such as complex tasks, mastery of the material to solve problems, involvement of students in making decisions, and working relatively independently. Currently, the PjBL model is centered on educators who are required to change by adapting a learning approach that is more directed at students. In PjBL, students are encouraged to be more active in learning, while the role of educators is as a facilitator and evaluators. While students' work is displayed in the project results, the existence of these products can encourage students' creativity in learning (Basalamah *et al.*, 2022).

In simple terms, PjBL is learning by linking technology with the problems faced by students daily. A PjBL supports the application of learning through real-life and experiential learning. In their research, Azizah *et al.* (2020) prove that the PjBL model has great potential to provide an exciting and valuable learning experience for students. The application of PjBL learning supports the creativity possessed by students according to their abilities. Creativity is related to providing new ideas that can be applied to solve problems in attitudes such as fluency, flexibility, and originality, and non-attitudes such as curiosity, who likes to ask questions and seek new experiences (Titu, 2015).

Based on some of the research results above, it can be interpreted that assistance regarding implementing PjBL in the Independent Curriculum for PAUD educators or teachers is essential. This is because the PjBL model applied in the Independent Curriculum provides provisions for children during their growth period and creates children's creative abilities based on experience. In the Independent Curriculum, students must actively learn, and educators function as facilitators and evaluators. This is in line with the concept of the PjBL model.

Implementing the PjBL model applied to the Independent Curriculum involves a process of action and interaction between educators in PAUD to be applied during the teaching and learning process. The assistance provided to PAUD educators emphasizes that this learning model is innovative and emphasizes contextual learning through complex activities.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in researching and assisting in implementing the PjBL model in the Independent Curriculum for PAUD educators. The researcher examines the effectiveness of the implementation of the mentoring of the learning model for PAUD educators in supporting the success of the Independent Curriculum.

II. THEORETICAL STUDY

A. The Project Based-Learning of Model

The Project-based Learning (PjBL) model is a learning model that provides opportunities for teachers to manage to learn in the classroom by involving project work. Project work contains complex tasks based on problems given to students as a first step in collecting and integrating new knowledge based on their experience in actual activities. It requires students to carry out design activities, investigate activities, solve problems, make decisions, and provide opportunities for students to work independently or in

groups. The result of the project work is a product that includes a written report, presentation, or recommendation. Project tasks are assessed from the planning process, working on project assignments, to the final project results (Jalinus *et al.*, 2017; Nurhidayah *et al.*, 2021).

A PjBL model is a long-term learning activity involving students designing, creating, and displaying products to solve real-world problems. Thus the PjBL model can be used as a learning model to develop students' abilities in planning, communicating, solving problems, and making the right decisions from the problems they face (Amini *et al.*, 2019).

The PjBL model allows students to work independently or in groups to produce project results from daily life problems. The principles of PjBL include (a) Decision (centrality), (b) Focusing on the question or problem, (c) Constructive or design investigations, (d) Autonomy, and (e) Realism. In addition, there are also stages of PjBL that can be carried out, namely: (1) Presenting problems; (2) Making plans; (3) Arranging the schedule; (4) Monitoring project creation; (5) Conducting an assessment; (6) Evaluation (Nurfitriyanti, 2016).

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that PjBL is learning that requires an extended period, focusing on the activities of students to understand a concept or principle by conducting an in-depth investigation of a problem and finding relevant solutions implemented in project work. So that students experience a meaningful learning process by building their knowledge. The emphasis of learning lies in the activities of students to solve problems by applying the skills of researching, analyzing, creating, and presenting learning products based on experience.

B. The Independent Curriculum

Freedom to learn is a new policy launched by Nadiem Makariem as the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Mendikbudristek) in Indonesia. The emergence of the concept of independent learning is Nadiem Makariem's desire to create a happy learning atmosphere without burdening specific assessments or values. Freedom to learn is the freedom to think. In addition, the teaching system will experience a change from in the classroom to outside the classroom. Learning will be more comfortable because students learn more by being creative with the teacher, learning with outing classes, and training children to be more independent, brave, intelligent, and character. Children do not have to follow the available curriculum but can use learning methods according to their interests (Fatmi *et al.*, 2021; Shodik, 2021).

The concept of independent learning is something new in the world of learning. Fifty years ago, Carl Rogers argued that schools are generally traditional, animated, bureaucratic, and resistant to change. To save the younger generation is through the freedom of learning. The concept of independent learning became the beginning of the Independent Curriculum. The curriculum is in line with the concept of learning in PAUD, which gives children the freedom to choose the learning activities they want and to fulfill their right to play. Therefore, PAUD can provide meaningful learning, not just teach children to read, write and count quickly. For the learning process in PAUD to be

meaningful, the subject matter given to children is adjusted to the child's immediate environment, using concrete/real media, and the activities carried out can create an atmosphere of learning while playing (Prameswari, 2020).

Based on several explanations about the Independent Curriculum, it can be concluded that the curriculum encourages students to demonstrate abilities and competencies in the learning process. Through the Independent Curriculum, students are expected to have critical thinking skills, communicate, be creative, and work together to adapt to any condition.

C. The Educator of Early Childhood Education (PAUD)

PAUD educators are responsible for planning, implementing, assessing, guiding, and training in learning for children aged 0-8 years as a whole. Educators at PAUD have more complex tasks than educators at the higher education level. This is because PAUD is the most basic level of education as the foundation for further education (Sumitra *et al.*, 2021).

The foundations built in PAUD require a strong structure for learning aspects of playing activities and developing children's potential. The concept will be favored if educators can create interesting stimulation programs to be followed in activities. Therefore, a PAUD educator is required to be able to design exciting and challenging activities and carry out fun learning. In addition, teachers can observe and record their students' growth and development processes and evaluate the program of playing or learning activities they have done (Purnamasari, 2022; Safira, 2020).

The importance of PAUD requires PAUD educators to be professional. Professional means working according to procedures, following professional ethics and PAUD science, and not making mistakes. This is clarified by Driscoll and Nagel (2008) that "a professional is someone who is educated, knowledgeable, dedicated to her profession, committed to the completion of a specialized course of study, and in possession of a knowledge base essential to her specialty areas."

The requirement for PAUD educators to be included in the professional work group has been proclaimed in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. Early childhood educators are professionals in charge of planning, implementing the learning process, assessing learning outcomes, and providing students guidance, care, and protection. PAUD educators in the formal education pathway consist of teachers and accompanying teachers, while PAUD educators in non-formal education consist of teachers, accompanying teachers, and caregivers.

Early childhood educators should be included in the standards set by the government. Teachers' academic qualifications are having a D-II PGTK diploma from an accredited university or a minimum high school diploma (SMA) or equivalent and having an accredited PAUD training/education/course certificate. The competence of PAUD educators is developed in a policy context by the standards of early childhood educators. Based on these references, educators must have four competencies: personality, professional, pedagogic, and social (Wardoyo, 2015).

The four competencies should be supported by the

essential characteristics that a PAUD educator must possess. Edgington (2004) wrote about several essential characteristics that must be possessed by early childhood educators, namely (a) Having a solid scientific foundation on child development and effective learning; (b) Being optimistic and having an “I can” approach; (c) Warm and empathetic; spontaneity and flexibility; (d) Have expertise in doing reflection and analysis; (e) Can communicate with many people; (f) Able to lead; (g) Playfully and be able to create fun learning activities; (h) Have high imagination and creativity; (i) Able to design programs and implement the learning that refers to the analysis of children's needs; and (j) The ability to continuously document and assess development in children.

III. METHOD

This research was formulated to see the assistance in implementing the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model in the Independent Curriculum for PAUD educators. The study was conducted in July 2022. The quasi-experimental research method was used in this study. The pre-test was conducted before PAUD educators were assisted in implementing the PjBL model in the Independent Curriculum. After PAUD educators know and receive assistance, a post-test is carried out. Therefore, this study was conducted 2 (two) times by comparing the scores of the two tests. The population of this study was 80 PAUD educators in Bruno District, Central Java, Indonesia, which was determined by quota sampling. The data collected is the value of the pre-test and post-test. Various questions in the pre-test and post-test must also be tested for validity and reliability. Test the validity using the Shapiro-Wilk formula. In contrast, reliability refers to the instrument as a data collection tool. Researchers tested the reliability of this study using Cronbach's Alpha.

The questions from both tests are valid and reliable because the validity test obtained from Pearson's Product-moment shows that $r_{\text{count}} > r_{\text{table}}$ with $r_{\text{count}} 0.445 > r_{\text{table}} 0.220$. Cronbach's Alpha reliability test has a value of 0.609 or greater than 0.60. These questions can be used further to extract the necessary data.

The data normality test was carried out using Shapiro-Wilk. The significance value for the pre-test group was 0.156, and the significance value for the post-test group was 0.137 or > 0.05 , so it can be concluded that the data from the pre-test and post-test results were normally distributed. The homogeneity test obtained a value of $0.090 > 0.05$, so the research sample was homogeneous. Inferential data were analyzed using paired sample T-test and data processing using SPSS 26.00.

IV. RESULTS

This study used a one-group pre-test and post-test research design. This study aims to see the effectiveness of mentoring the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model in the Independent Curriculum for PAUD Educators. Therefore, to achieve the research objectives, the researcher conducted 2 (two) tests to

compare the results.

Based on the data collected, it is known that the scores of 80 PAUD educators who were respondents in this study are as follows (Table I).

Table I shows the mean, median, mode, lowest, and highest pre-test and post-test scores. The mean score on the pre-test was only 61.14 and increased to 77.55 on the post-test. The test results showed a significant increase in the pre-test scores compared to the post-test.

TABLE I: THE RESULTS OF THE PRE-TEST DAN POST-TEST

Test	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Lowest Score	Highest Score
Pre-test	80	61.14	61	53	47	77
Post-test	80	77.55	77	77	65	91

The normality test results using the Shapiro-Wilk test with $N=80$ and a significance level $=0.05$. Based on the results of the pre-test normality test showed a value of 0.156. In comparison, the results of the post-test normality test showed a value of 0.137. Thus, it can be concluded that the pre-test and post-test data are normally distributed.

The homogeneity test in this study is the significance/probability based on the mean $=0.090 > 0.05$. Based on the test criteria H_0 , which states that the variance of homogeneous values is accepted. It can be concluded that the variance of assistance in implementing PjBL models toward increasing the competence of PAUD educators in the pre-test and post-test groups is homogeneous.

The research hypotheses were tested using the T-test technique. The analysis of the results was carried out by comparing the pre-test and post-test scores. T-test analysis calculation obtained:

$$t_{\text{count}} 0.445 > t_{\text{table}} 0.220$$

With a significance (sig.) $0.000 < 0.05$. Based on these findings, there is a difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. The average score of PAUD educators after receiving assistance in implementing PjBL models is 77.55. This score is higher than the score of PAUD educators before receiving assistance which was only 61.14. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant increase in the competence of PAUD educators towards implementing the PjBL model in the Independent Curriculum after receiving assistance. The following graph presents the calculations in this study.

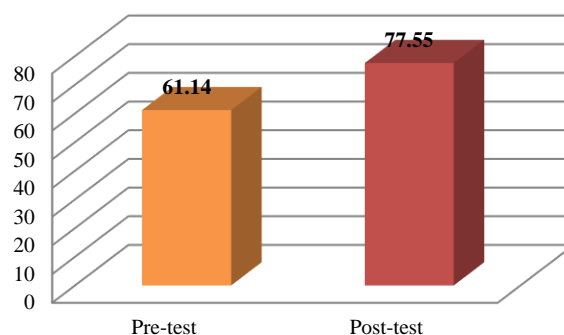


Fig. 1. Graph of the Results of Mentoring in Implementing PjBL Models in the Independent Curriculum for PAUD Educators.

Based on the information in the graph above, the pre-test score is 61.14, while the post-test score is 77.55. Therefore, it can be concluded that the assistance in implementing the PjBL model in the Independent Curriculum that we developed is very effective in improving the competence of PAUD educators.

V. DISCUSSION

The concept of Freedom to Learn (Merdeka Belajar) is a concept that has an excellent opportunity to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, especially if it starts from early childhood education (PAUD) and is prepared carefully. Through Freedom to Learn, students will be directed to have 21st century competencies: communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking (Sugiman *et al.*, 2021).

Freedom to Learn is in line with the concept of learning in PAUD, which gives children the freedom to choose the learning activities they want and to fulfill their right to play. Therefore, PAUD can provide meaningful learning, not just teach children to read, write and count quickly (Prameswari, 2020).

Meaningful learning for early childhood can also be applied by providing opportunities for children to gain learning experiences through observing, questioning, reasoning/gathering information, associating, and communicating. To implement such learning, teachers must understand how to prepare a conducive learning environment, learn effectively, provide opportunities for children to interact with their environment, recognize children's learning speed and respect them as individuals who can learn independently. PAUD teachers or educators can implement PjBL models for students in this regard.

The dynamics of the world of national education are entering a new phase. This is, of course, unavoidable. The dynamics in science and the development of the times certainly impact learning loss (loss of knowledge and abilities of students, either expressly or in general). The Independent Curriculum emerged as a solution officially launched by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Nadiem Anwar Makarim.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology developed this Independent Curriculum to restore learning from the crisis experienced by Indonesian children, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic. Previously known as the Prototype Curriculum, the curriculum was developed as a more flexible one, focusing on essential materials and developing students' character and competencies. The election of the Independent Curriculum, in general, is an effort to improve the quality of education.

In the Independent Curriculum, the material reduction was carried out significantly. The materials presented are limited to essential materials. Reducing the substance provides opportunities for students to explore the material more freely. Another advantage of this curriculum is that it can make students more "independent" in their interest in learning. In addition, student involvement is more dominant and makes the class more interactive. Implementation of the

Independent Curriculum uses a project approach called Project-based Learning (PjBL), (Dianawati, 2022; Wahyuni *et al.*, 2022).

The research of Kusadi *et al.* (2020) and Uktolseja *et al.* (2022) explained that PjBL is innovative learning that is student-centered and sets the teacher as a motivator and facilitator. This model becomes a learning that involves many projects in the learning process. In addition to making students more active, PjBL is a bridge in strengthening the character of the Pancasila student profile, as stated in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 22 of 2020. Pancasila students embody Indonesian students as lifelong students who have global competence and behave by Pancasila values. Through PjBL, which is developed by discussing actual and contextual issues, it is hoped that it can support character development that supports strengthening the profile of Pancasila students.

Nugroho and Dewi (2022), and Ahmadi and Ibda (2021) explained that PjBL is a learning model that focuses on students. In practice, students carry out actual projects and activities in groups. This is what can trigger the active involvement of students in learning. In PjBL, teachers can at least play the following roles as project planners. Teachers can determine the activities flow, provide examples, create implementation strategies, and make project assessment rubrics. *Second*, the teacher is a facilitator. In its application, the teacher provides facilities for students to complete projects based on their interests. *Third*, the teacher is a companion. The teacher's job is to guide and accompany students while working on projects. Teachers can also help students if they encounter difficulties while working on a project. *Fourth*, the teacher acts as a resource person. In this role, the teacher provides various knowledge information regarding projects, facilitates, and advises students on mastering skills. *Fifth*, teachers as supervisors and consultants. The teacher supervises and provides direction, input, and advice to students in project achievement. *Finally*, the teacher acts as a moderator who will guide students in discussion activities.

Of course, integrating PjBL in implementing the Independent Curriculum cannot be separated from several obstacles. This condition requires students to carry out the investigation process and resolve problems correctly. For this reason, the teacher's role is significant in contributing to PjBL.

To the role of teachers who can carry out PjBL, it is necessary to assist PAUD teachers/educators. In this study, assistance to PAUD educators has been carried out to improve their competence in supporting the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Based on the information in the graph above, the pre-test score is 61.14, while the post-test score is 77.55. Therefore, it can be concluded that the assistance in implementing the PjBL model in the Independent Curriculum that we developed is very effective in improving the competence of PAUD educators.

The research results also align with the importance of increasing competence in educators, including PAUD educators. Arifudin & Yulianti (2022) in their research, states that, in general, educators must have four competencies, namely personality competence, professional competence, pedagogic competence, and social competence.

Increasing competence is undoubtedly closely related to professionalism. The quality of one's professionalism is supported by several competencies, such as the desire always to display behavior close to ideal standards. In addition, continuously improve and maintain the profession's image, constantly develop opportunities to improve and improve the quality of knowledge and skills, and pursue quality and ideals in the profession (Christianti, 2015).

Therefore, professional teachers are teachers who can run professionally and desire to continue to improve their profession by learning a lot to increase knowledge related to their profession. Thus, the professionalism of early childhood educators is the attitude of early childhood educators who seek to improve their abilities professionally in educating early childhood. Related to this professionalism, one of the efforts made to improve the quality of PAUD educators is to assist teachers. In this case, it is related to the PjBL model's assistance in the Independent Curriculum's success.

The selection of the PjBL model in the Independent Curriculum is in line with the advantages of the PjBL model. Hmelo-Silver (2004), Nurfitriyanti (2016) and dan Simamora *et al.* (2017) in their research describes the advantages of the PjBL model including (1) Increasing students' learning motivation to learn to encourage their ability to do meaningful work, and they need to be rewarded; (2) Improve problem solving ability; (3) Making students more active and successful in solving complex problems; (4) Enhance collaboration; (5) Encourage students to develop and practice communication skills; (6) Improve students' skills in managing resources; (7) Providing students with experience in learning and practice in organizing projects and making allocations of time and other resources such as equipment to complete assignments; (8) Provide a learning experience that involves students in a complex and designed to develop according to the real world; (9) Involving students to learn to take information and demonstrate their knowledge, then implement it in the real world; (10) Make the learning atmosphere fun, so that students and educators enjoy the learning process.

On the other hand, in terms of its effectiveness, the PjBL model also positively impacts students. Abdi (2021), in his research, proves that the PjBL model can effectively improve integrated thematic learning for students. In addition, Farida & Rasyid (2019) also proved in their research that PjBL could significantly improve social development and make students more active in the classroom.

The ability of teachers or educators to master the PjBL model so that it can be applied to students is closely related to pedagogic competence. Pedagogic competence is the ability to plan the activities of education, care, and protection programs, implement processes, and carry out assessments of the processes and outcomes of education, care, and protection. This ability is a form of the educator's ability to:

- 1) Prepare annual, semester, monthly, weekly, and daily activity plans.
- 2) Determine to play activities that support the level of achievement of children's development.

- 3) Plan activities organized by age group.
- 4) Manage activities according to plans prepared by age group.
- 5) Using learning methods through playing according to the characteristics of children.
- 6) Choose and use media that are appropriate to the child's activities and conditions.
- 7) Motivate to increase children's involvement in activities.
- 8) Guide according to the child's needs.
- 9) Choose the methods of assessment by the objectives to be achieved.
- 10) Carry out assessment activities by predetermined methods.
- 11) Manage the results of the assessment.
- 12) Use the results of the assessment for various educational purposes.
- 13) Document the results of the assessment.

From this broad scope, it can be interpreted that from a policy perspective, improving the competence of PAUD teachers can produce ideal or professional early childhood educators. Therefore, to maximize these competencies, the Indonesian government also makes various efforts, including assisting. The implementation of mentoring must be adequate for PAUD educators to improve pedagogic competence and professional competence, as the results of this study.

On the other hand, the development of personality and social competencies must also be developed by educators through teacher interactions with children, parents, or fellow educators. Educators also practice developing programs that suit the needs of children through the curriculum.

VI. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that assistance in implementing the Project-based Learning (PjBL) model in the Independent Curriculum is very effective for PAUD educators, especially in improving their competence. This finding is reinforced by the parents' score, which shows a pre-test score of 61.14 compared to the post-test result, which is 77.55, with a significance (sig.) of $0.000 < 0.05$. T-test calculation describes the difference where:

$$t_{\text{count}} 0.445 > t_{\text{table}} 0.220$$

Thus, mentoring the implementation of the PjBL model can improve the competence of PAUD educators in supporting the Independent Curriculum.

In this broad scope, it can be interpreted that assistance regarding implementing PjBL in the Independent Curriculum for PAUD educators or teachers is essential. This is because the PjBL model applied in the Independent Curriculum provides provisions for children during their growth period and creates children's creative abilities based on experience. In the Independent Curriculum, students must actively learn, and educators function as facilitators and evaluators. This is in line with the concept of the PjBL model.

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