DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIZING EVENTS AND MEETINGS INCENTIVES CONFERENCES EXHIBITIONS BASED ON PROJECT BASED LEARNING TO IMPROVE CAREER MATURITY OF VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN BULELENG REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the development of a learning model for organizing Events and Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) based on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) to enhance the career maturity of vocational high school students in Buleleng Regency. The tourism and creative industries demand graduates who are not only technically competent but also possess strong soft skills, leadership abilities, and career readiness. However, many vocational students face challenges in linking theoretical knowledge with real-world applications, particularly in dynamic fields such as MICE. This approach encourages active learning, collaboration, critical thinking, and self-directed exploration. The research employs a Research and Development (R&D) method, involving needs analysis, model design, implementation, and evaluation stages across several vocational schools in Buleleng. Data collection methods include observation, questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. More importantly, it fosters a greater sense of responsibility, self-efficacy, and future career orientation. Teachers reported increased student engagement and initiative, while students expressed higher confidence in their career planning and readiness for the MICE industry. This study concludes that a PjBL-based MICE curriculum is a strategic innovation for vocational education, aligning with the demands of the 21st-century workforce. It is recommended that similar models be adopted in other regions to bridge the gap between education and industry, thereby supporting the development of skilled, mature, and career-ready graduates.

Keywords: meetings incentives conferences and exhibitions, project-based learning, career maturity

INTRODUCTION

Creative business Meeting, Incentive, Convention, Exhibition (MICE) has had a variety of impacts on the types of service industry activities that are identical to service and hospitality, one of which has a positive impact on the economy of a region. Even the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy stated that the MICE Business is expected to be the backbone of the tourism sector in Indonesia (Kemenparekraf, 2021). The MICE business also provides great benefits for MICE business actors and can benefit many parties because the MICE industry is a complex business and involves many related industries such as vendors, supporting staff and supporting suppliers.

Indonesia with its strategic area and has many unique attractions for foreign tourists, so it can provide opportunities for MICE business to grow rapidly in developing countries (Getz and Page, 2016; Buathong and Lai, 2019). MICE business activities have also opened up new jobs that not only create seasonal workers, but have also created permanent jobs for the Indonesian people (Murdopo, 2011).

Vocational education has a strategic role in preparing a workforce that is ready to compete in the industrial world. Vocational High Schools as vocational education institutions are expected to be able to produce graduates who have skills according to the needs of the business world and the industrial world. One of the industrial sectors that is growing rapidly and provides great opportunities for graduates is the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) industry and organizing events. This sector is an important part of the tourism industry and the creative economy which is growing, especially in areas with high tourism potential such as Buleleng Regency, Bali.

However, based on initial observations and literature reviews, there is still a gap between the competencies possessed by vocational high school students and the needs of the MICE and event organizing industry. Many vocational high school graduates do not yet have sufficient career maturity to enter the workforce professionally. Career maturity includes aspects of technical skills, mental readiness, and understanding of applicable industry standards. Therefore, a more applicable and project-based learning model is needed so that students can gain real experience in managing MICE events and activities.

One approach that can be used to improve the career maturity of vocational high school students is project-based learning. This method allows students to learn actively through direct involvement in real projects relevant to the MICE industry. PBL not only improves technical skills, but also trains soft skills such as teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and time and resource management. Thus, the application of PBL in developing competencies in organizing events and MICE is expected to bridge the gap between the world of education and the needs of the industry.

Buleleng Regency as one of the tourism destinations in Bali has great potential in the development of the MICE industry and organizing events. With the increasing number of local, national, and international scale events held in this area, the need for competent professionals in this field is increasing. Therefore, this study aims to develop a project-based learning model in the field of organizing events and MICE in order to improve the career maturity of vocational high school students in Buleleng Regency.

In recent years, vocational education in Indonesia, especially in Vocational High Schools, has shown great attention to strengthening students' work competencies. However, there is a quite striking gap between the technical competencies of vocational high school students and their readiness to enter the workforce maturely and professionally, especially in the creative industry such as Organizing Events and MICE.

Previous studies have focused more on strengthening the cognitive aspects and technical skills of vocational high school students, but not many have explored how a project-based learning approach can be developed systematically and contextually in the field of Events and MICE, to foster career maturity, which includes aspects of self-confidence, career planning, and readiness to face the world of work.

On the other hand, although there has been the implementation of PjBL in a number of vocational schools, its implementation is often general and not specific to a particular industry, so it does not touch the real needs in the MICE industry sector which is very dynamic, multidisciplinary, and based on real collaboration. In addition, studies that directly link the development of project-based learning models in the MICE field with increasing career maturity of vocational high school students are still very limited, both in terms of number and depth of analysis. Therefore, research is needed that specifically develops project-based learning models in the field of organizing events and MICE, which are designed contextually with industry needs and oriented towards developing career maturity of vocational high school students, to bridge the gap between the world of education and the world of work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocational education aims to prepare a competent workforce ready to enter the industrial world (Widarto, 2019). One of the main challenges in vocational education is ensuring that graduates have sufficient career maturity to compete in the world of work (Super, 1980). Career maturity includes an understanding of career choices, mental readiness, technical skills, and the ability to make future-oriented decisions (Savickas, 2013). Previous research has shown that learning based on practice and real experience can increase the career maturity of vocational high school students (Wibowo & Santoso, 2021). Therefore, the project-based learning approach can be an effective learning alternative in building career readiness for vocational high school students, especially in the fields of organizing events and MICE.

The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism industry and creative economy (Davidson & Cope, 2003). This sector requires workers who have skills in event management, communication, negotiation, and logistics and budget management (Rogers, 2013). Jones & Sanderson (2019), the skills needed in the MICE industry include problem solving, adaptability, and teamwork. Vocational schools as providers of middle-level workers need to ensure that their graduates have these skills so that they can be well absorbed in the MICE industry.

Project based learning is a learning approach that focuses on real project-based learning experiences. Thomas (2000), PBL can improve students' skills in critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. In the context of vocational education, PBL allows students to be directly involved in the world of work and understand the real challenges they will face (Bell, 2010). Research conducted by Markham (2011) shows that PBL increases students' motivation and independence in learning. In the context of the MICE industry, the implementation of PBL can provide opportunities for students to develop skills in designing, managing, and evaluating events directly. A study conducted by Krajcik & Blumenfeld (2006) also confirmed that this approach is effective in building practical skills needed in the world of work.

The Project Based Learning model is used to train students to analyze problems, then explore, collect information, interpret, and evaluate in working on projects related to the problems being studied. This learning allows students to develop their creativity in designing and creating projects that can be used to solve problems. Project Based Learning is based on constructivism theory and is active student learning.

Learning through the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model can also be used as a learning method to develop students' abilities in planning, communicating, solving problems, and making decisions. Based on several definitions, researchers conclude that the Project Based Learning model is a learning model that can encourage students to actively learn collaboratively to solve problems so that they can construct the core of the lesson from the findings in the tasks/projects carried out.

METHOD, DATA, AND ANALYSIS

This study uses a research and development (R&D) approach with the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation). This model was chosen because it can produce a systematic Project Based Learning-based learning model and can be applied in the context of learning organizing events and MICE in cheese high school vocation.

The subjects of this study were vocational high school students in Buleleng Regency who have expertise programs in tourism, hospitality, or event organizing. In addition, the study also involved teachers, principals, and MICE industry practitioners as the main respondents in the process of developing and validating the model. The location of the study will be carried out in several vocational high schools that have related study programs. The subjects of this study were vocational high school students in Buleleng Regency who have expertise programs in tourism, hospitality, or event organizing. In addition, the study also involved teachers, principals, and MICE industry practitioners as the main respondents in the process of developing and validating the model. The location of the study will be carried out in several vocational high schools that have related study programs. This research will be conducted in five stages according to the ADDIE model:

Analysis

Identifying needs and problems in learning organizing events and MICE in vocational schools. Conducting literature studies and interviews with stakeholders to understand the competencies needed by the industry. Analyzing the gap between competencies taught in vocational schools and the needs of the MICE industry.

Design

Drafting a Project based learning model for organizing events and MICE. Determining the learning tools to be used, including modules, project scenarios, and assessment rubrics.

Development

Developing learning materials and evaluation instruments based on the design results. Conducting expert validation of the learning model and learning tools developed. Conducting limited trials with small groups of students and teachers to assess the feasibility of the model.

Implementation

Implementing the PBL-based learning model in several vocational schools that are the research samples. Conducting training for teachers in implementing the developed learning model. Observe and document the learning process and student responses to the applied model.

Evaluation

Evaluate the effectiveness of the PBL-based learning model on improving student skills in organizing events and MICE. Reflect and revise the model based on the evaluation results. Prepare recommendations and guidelines for implementing the PBL-based learning model to be applied in other vocational schools.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in organizing MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) activities at vocational high schools in Buleleng Regency has yielded positive outcomes in multiple domains. Through structured projects involving the planning, execution, and evaluation of real or simulated events, students demonstrated increased engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking. Teachers reported that students were more active in discussions, showed greater initiative, and were able to apply theoretical concepts to practical contexts.

Field observations revealed that students involved in PjBL-based MICE projects developed key competencies, including event management skills, communication techniques, time management, and customer service orientation. In several schools, students successfully organized school-wide seminars, tourism exhibitions, and mock conferences, which were attended by stakeholders from the tourism industry and local government. Based on a career maturity assessment (adapted from Super's Career Development Inventory), students involved in the PjBL-MICE program showed improvement in five key dimensions: career planning, career exploration, decision-making, world-of-work information, and career confidence. Interviews with students indicated a greater awareness of their professional goals and a clearer vision of their career paths within the tourism and creative industry sectors.

Based on a career maturity assessment, students showed improvement in planning, exploration, decision-making, and confidence. A pre-test and post-test comparison indicated a significant increase, especially in decision-making and planning.

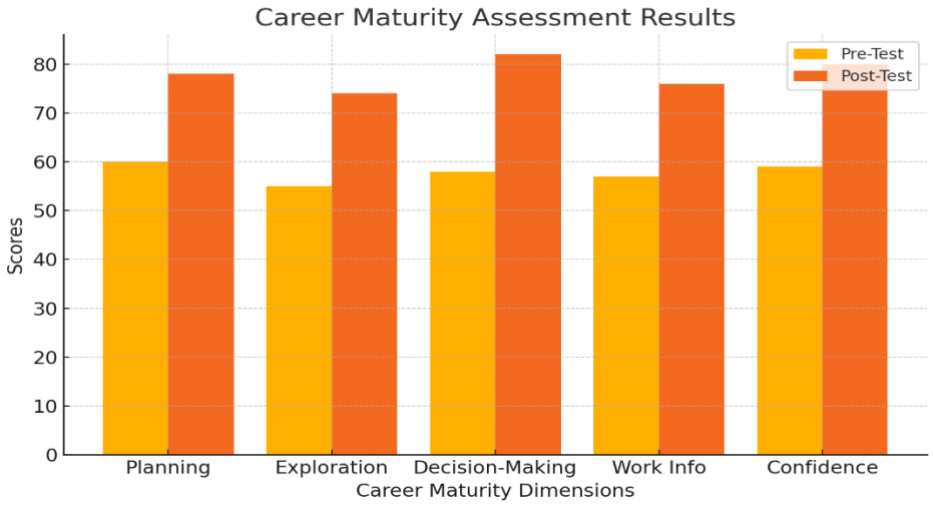

Figure 1. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores on Career Maturity Dimensions

Quantitative data from pre-test and post-test comparisons indicated a significant increase in the average score of career maturity, with the most prominent improvement observed in decision-making and career planning dimensions. This suggests that PjBL not only provides practical skills but also contributes to the development of students' self-concept and future orientation. The findings align with existing literature that supports the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in vocational education (Bell, 2010; Markham et al., 2003). By engaging students in real-world projects, PjBL fosters meaningful learning experiences that bridge the gap between school and industry expectations. In the context of Buleleng, where the tourism sector is a key economic driver, aligning vocational training with MICE competencies enhances local workforce readiness. Moreover, involving students in the actual process of organizing events cultivates soft skills, such as leadership, adaptability, and problem-solving—skills highly demanded in today's job market. The authentic nature of the projects also contributed to students' motivation and sense of accomplishment, which are critical for developing a strong professional identity.

Challenges were noted in the initial stages, particularly in resource availability and teacher readiness. However, continuous professional development and collaboration with industry partners helped mitigate these issues. It was also found that support from school leadership and community stakeholders significantly influenced the program's success.

The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the context of MICE activities at vocational high schools in Buleleng Regency demonstrates significant pedagogical and developmental advantages. In aligning learning objectives with real-world industry practices, PjBL bridges the traditional gap between education and employment readiness. This approach allows students to engage in meaningful learning that fosters not only technical skills but also soft skills such as collaboration, leadership, adaptability, and professional communication.

Notably, the authentic tasks involved in organizing MICE events mimic the actual responsibilities of professionals in the tourism and hospitality industry. This direct exposure creates a transformative learning environment where students are not only consumers of knowledge but also active producers and implementers. The project format encourages iterative learning—students plan, act, reflect, and adjust, which mirrors the dynamic processes found in real-world workplaces. Moreover, the collaborative nature of PjBL promotes social learning and peer accountability. Teams composed of diverse learners often had to negotiate tasks, resolve conflicts, and manage time effectively, reflecting the realities of team-based professional settings. These conditions help in shaping students' work ethics and professional behavior from an early stage, contributing directly to the development of their career maturity.

In addition, the integration of industry mentors into the learning process played a crucial role. Their feedback not only validated students' efforts but also provided nuanced insights that enhanced the quality of outcomes. This mentorship model also opens pathways for internships and future employment, further strengthening the education-to-career pipeline. From an institutional perspective, the PjBL model pushes schools to become more responsive and flexible in curriculum implementation. Curriculum alignment with regional economic strengths—in this case, tourism and event management—ensures that vocational education remains relevant and supportive of local development goals. It also fosters a sense of community involvement and stakeholder ownership in the educational process.

However, sustainability remains a key challenge. Continued support from educational leaders, industry players, and policy makers is necessary to embed PjBL as a standard pedagogical approach.

Infrastructure, funding, and capacity building must be systematically addressed to ensure long-term success. Ultimately, the success of this initiative reaffirms that when students are placed in authentic, high-expectation environments with adequate support, they can achieve both academic success and professional readiness. The MICE-based PjBL approach offers a replicable model for other vocational schools aiming to produce industry-ready graduates with strong career maturity and social capital.

CONCLUSION

The development of organizing Events and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) based on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has proven to be a strategic and effective pedagogical approach to enhance the career maturity of vocational high school students in Buleleng Regency. Through this model, students are not only exposed to real-world industry practices but also engaged in meaningful, collaborative projects that simulate actual professional experiences. The integration of PjBL in the MICE learning context has fostered students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, communication skills, teamwork, and project management competencies all of which are crucial elements of career readiness. Furthermore, the implementation of this learning strategy has increased student motivation and engagement, thereby improving both their academic and professional preparedness.

Empirical findings from this study indicate a significant improvement in students' career maturity indicators, including self-awareness, career planning, decision-making capabilities, and understanding of the world of work. This demonstrates that PjBL is not only relevant to the curriculum of vocational education but also instrumental in bridging the gap between school learning and industry demands. In conclusion, the development and application of MICE-based PjBL serve as an innovative educational framework that aligns with the needs of the tourism and creative economy sectors in Buleleng Regency. It is recommended that vocational schools adopt and further refine this model to ensure the sustained growth of student competencies and the successful transition of graduates into the professional world. The implementation of Project-Based Learning in the context of MICE activities has significantly improved the career maturity of vocational high school students in Buleleng Regency. Students gained practical experience, increased motivation, and demonstrated enhanced skills in event management, communication, and decision-making. The involvement of stakeholders and real-world project exposure were key contributors to the program’s success.

IMPLICATION/LIMITATION AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of this study indicate that the application of Project-Based Learning in developing Event and Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions organizing skills has a positive impact on increasing the career maturity of vocational high school students in Buleleng Regency. The implementation of this learning model provides authentic and contextual experiences that are relevant to the world of work in the tourism industry and the creative economy, while strengthening students' technical competencies and soft skills. The practical implication of this study is the need for project-based curriculum integration in vocational learning, especially in expertise programs related to event organizing and tourism. This application can encourage active collaboration between schools and industry to create meaningful learning experiences, adaptive to job market demands, and support students' career development in a more mature and focused manner.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered: First, the study was only conducted in Buleleng Regency, so generalization of the results to other areas with different characteristics still requires further research. Second, the study was limited to students, teachers, and industry partners who were directly involved in the MICE-based PjBL program. This can limit the variation of perspectives on the effectiveness of the program. Third, the duration of the PjBL implementation in this study was relatively short (one semester), so it has not been able to evaluate the long-term impact on students' careers after graduation.

Based on the results and limitations of this study, some suggestions that can be given for further development are: 1) Expansion of the Study: Similar research needs to be developed in other regions or on a national scale to test the validity of the model in a broader and more diverse context. 2) Wider Partnership: It is recommended to expand collaboration with MICE industry players more intensively so that students gain a comprehensive understanding and practical skills that are in accordance with market needs. 3) Strengthening Long-Term Evaluation: A longitudinal study is needed to assess the extent to which PjBL influences alumni career success in the long term, including employment and career mobility. 4) Development of Implementation Guidelines: It is necessary to develop modules or technical guidelines based on research results to facilitate teachers in integrating project-based learning in relevant subjects.

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