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Improving creativity and collaboration through padlet-assisted project-based learning in civic education

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to improve students' creativity and collaboration through the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) assisted by the Padlet application in Civic Education (PPKn) learning. This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages. The research was conducted in three cycles involving Grade X students at SMA Negeri 8 Padang. Data were collected through observations, interviews, documentation, and project assessment rubrics measuring creativity and collaboration. The findings showed a continuous improvement in students' creativity and collaboration across the research cycles. Creativity increased from 45.59% in the pre-action stage to 88.60% in Cycle III, while collaboration improved from 36.76% to 83.00%. The integration of PjBL and Padlet encouraged active participation, idea generation, teamwork, and meaningful learning experiences. PjBL assisted by Padlet effectively enhanced students' creativity and collaboration in Civic Education learning.



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Introduction

Education in the twenty-first century requires students not only to master academic knowledge but also to develop competencies that enable them to adapt to rapid social, technological, and civic changes (Kaliappen, 2025; Mulenga & Ng'andu, 2022). Among these competencies, creativity and collaboration are increasingly recognized as essential skills for problem-solving, innovation, communication, and active participation in society (Agus et al., 2025; Rahmat et al., 2026). In the context of Civic Education (PPKn), these competencies are particularly important because students are expected to become responsible citizens who can analyze social issues, propose solutions, and work collaboratively to address community challenges. However, classroom observations at SMA Negeri 8 Padang indicated that many students remained passive during learning activities, demonstrated limited originality in expressing ideas, and showed low participation during group discussions, suggesting that creativity and collaboration still require substantial improvement.

Civic Education serves as a strategic subject for developing civic knowledge, democratic values, social responsibility, and commitment to the principles of Pancasila (Abdurohim et al., 2023; Rafzan et al., 2024). Nevertheless, instructional practices in many classrooms continue to rely heavily on teacher-centered approaches that emphasize content delivery rather than student engagement. Such learning environments often provide limited opportunities for students to explore authentic problems, exchange perspectives, and collaboratively construct knowledge. As a result, students tend to become passive recipients of information,

which may hinder the development of creativity, communication, and teamwork skills that are essential in contemporary society (Chanda, 2024; E. A. Damayanti & Mediatati, 2023). This condition highlights the need for innovative learning strategies that actively involve students in meaningful and participatory learning experiences.

One instructional approach that has been widely acknowledged for promoting active learning is Project-Based Learning (PjBL). Through authentic projects, students are encouraged to investigate real-world issues, generate solutions, create products, and present their findings collaboratively. Previous studies have shown that PjBL contributes positively to student engagement, critical thinking, creativity, civic participation, and collaborative problem-solving (Akirav, 2023; Idrus, 2022; Sundawa & Dahliyana, 2022). In Civic Education, project-oriented activities can provide meaningful opportunities for students to connect classroom knowledge with social realities while simultaneously developing creativity and collaboration. However, successful implementation of PjBL requires adequate support mechanisms that facilitate interaction, communication, and knowledge sharing among learners throughout the project process.

Recent advances in educational technology have provided new opportunities to strengthen project-based learning through digital collaboration platforms. One platform that has attracted considerable attention is Padlet, an interactive online workspace that enables students to share ideas, upload multimedia content, provide feedback, and engage in collaborative discussions asynchronously. Unlike conventional discussion tools, Padlet allows all students to contribute simultaneously, visualize collective ideas, and continuously refine project outcomes through peer interaction. These characteristics make Padlet particularly suitable for supporting creativity and collaboration in project-based learning environments (Koroh et al., 2022; Widiana et al., 2022). Furthermore, studies have reported that digital collaborative platforms can increase participation, communication, and engagement while fostering more inclusive learning experiences (Komalasari et al., 2021).

Although previous studies have reported positive effects of PjBL on civic learning outcomes, civic engagement, creativity, and critical thinking (Evcimik & Oruc, 2023; Indriyani et al., 2023; Maharani et al., 2024; Pirdaus, 2024), several limitations remain. First, most studies have examined creativity, collaboration, motivation, or academic achievement separately rather than investigating creativity and collaboration simultaneously as interconnected twenty-first-century competencies. Second, many studies have focused on the final outcomes of interventions without examining how these competencies develop progressively through iterative learning processes. Third, empirical studies integrating PjBL and Padlet within Indonesian secondary school Civic Education classrooms remain scarce, despite the increasing importance of technology-supported collaborative learning (Owen, 2024; Pevnaya et al., 2024). Consequently, there is still limited understanding of how digital project-based learning environments influence the gradual development of creativity and collaboration in Civic Education settings.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to investigate the improvement of students' creativity and collaboration through the implementation of Padlet-assisted Project-Based Learning in Civic Education at SMA Negeri 8 Padang. The novelty of this study lies in three aspects. First, it integrates Project-Based Learning with Padlet within a Civic Education context, an area that has received limited scholarly attention. Second, it simultaneously examines creativity and collaboration as complementary competencies that develop through social interaction and project engagement. Third, it employs a three-cycle Classroom Action Research design to capture the developmental progression of students' competencies across successive intervention stages rather than focusing solely on end-of-program outcomes (S. Damayanti et al., 2023; Sari et al., 2025). The findings are expected to contribute to the development of innovative pedagogical practices that promote meaningful, technology-supported, and student-centered learning in Civic Education.

Method

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, consisting of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The research was conducted in a Grade X Civic Education (PPKn) class at SMA Negeri 8 Padang during the 2025/2026 academic year and involved 34 students. Prior to the intervention, classroom observations and interviews were conducted to identify learning problems, particularly low creativity, limited student participation, and weak collaboration during group activities. To address these issues, Padlet-assisted Project-Based Learning (PjBL) was implemented through three action cycles, with each cycle consisting of two learning meetings. Students completed project activities related to the theme "Stop Bullying at School" through the development of reflective essays, digital posters, and collaborative videos. Reflection results from each cycle were used to refine instructional strategies in the subsequent cycle through improved scaffolding, clearer role distribution, and enhanced collaborative activities.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, project assessment rubrics, and documentation. Observation sheets and assessment rubrics were developed based on established indicators and validated by two experts in Civic Education and educational evaluation before implementation. Creativity was assessed using four indicators: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. Collaboration was evaluated through active participation, productivity, responsibility, flexibility and compromise, and mutual respect among group members. All indicators were rated using a four-point scale and converted into percentage scores. Documentation consisted of photographs, students' project products, presentation recordings, and Padlet interaction archives, while interviews were conducted with selected students to obtain deeper insights into their learning experiences throughout the intervention.

Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively by calculating the percentage achievement of each indicator and comparing results across cycles. The achievement criteria were categorized as Poor (<55%), Fair (55–69%), Good (70–84%), and Very Good (\geq 85%). The action was considered successful when at least 80% of students achieved the Good category or higher in both creativity and collaboration. Qualitative data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to identify behavioral changes during the learning process. Data credibility was strengthened through triangulation of observations, interviews, project assessments, and documentation to ensure consistency and trustworthiness of the findings.

Results and Discussions

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model assisted by Padlet in improving students' creativity and collaboration in Civic Education (PPKn), observations were conducted from the pre-action stage through three action cycles. The findings present changes in students' creativity and collaboration levels across each cycle, as well as the progressive improvement achieved through continuous refinement of learning strategies.

Table 1. Research Implementation Schedule

No	Activity	Date
1	Pre-Action	November 16, 2025
2	Cycle I Meeting 1	November 23, 2025
3	Cycle I Meeting 2	November 30, 2025
4	Cycle II Meeting 1	December 1, 2025
5	Cycle II Meeting 2	December 7, 2025
6	Cycle III Meeting 1	December 11, 2025
7	Cycle III Meeting 2	December 14, 2025

The classroom action research was conducted over seven learning sessions consisting of one pre-action observation and six intervention meetings distributed across three cycles. Each cycle included two meetings designed to implement and refine the Project-Based Learning model supported by Padlet. The gradual implementation allowed continuous evaluation and improvement of students' creativity and collaboration throughout the study period.

Table 2. Creativity and Collaboration Achievement Across Research Cycles

Stage	Creativity (%)	Category	Collaboration (%)	Category
Pre-Action	45.59	Low–Moderate	36.76	Low
Cycle I	49.00	Poor	45.07	Poor
Cycle II	69.94	Good	59.00	Good
Cycle III	88.60	Very Good	83.00	Very Good

Table 2 presents the development of students' creativity and collaboration from the pre-action stage to Cycle III. Prior to the intervention, students demonstrated relatively low levels of creativity (45.59%) and collaboration (36.76%). Following the implementation of Padlet-assisted Project-Based Learning, both variables showed continuous improvement across all cycles. Creativity increased from 49.00% in Cycle I to 69.94% in Cycle II and reached 88.60% in Cycle III, while collaboration improved from 45.07% to 59.00% and finally 83.00% over the same period. These findings indicate that the instructional intervention progressively enhanced students' ability to generate ideas, solve problems creatively, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively, culminating in a very good level of achievement in Cycle III.

Figure 1 illustrates the trend of students' creativity and collaboration from the pre-action stage to Cycle III following the implementation of Padlet-assisted Project-Based Learning. The graph provides a visual representation of the progressive improvement achieved throughout the intervention.

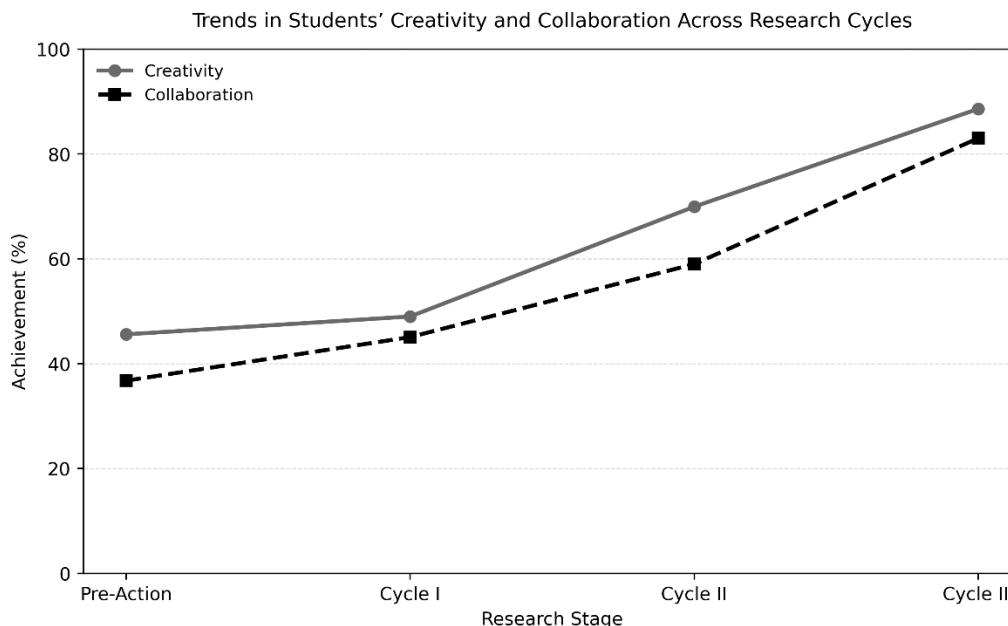


Figure 1. Trends in Students' Creativity and Collaboration Across Research Cycles

Table 3. Meeting-by-Meeting Development of Creativity and Collaboration

Cycle	Meeting	Creativity (%)	Collaboration (%)
Cycle I	Meeting 1	52.57	43.23
Cycle I	Meeting 2	59.19	46.91
Cycle II	Meeting 1	65.63	54.04
Cycle II	Meeting 2	74.26	64.00
Cycle III	Meeting 1	84.74	78.00
Cycle III	Meeting 2	92.46	88.00

Table 3 illustrates the progression of students' creativity and collaboration across individual meetings throughout the intervention. Both variables demonstrated a consistent upward trend from Cycle I Meeting 1 to Cycle III Meeting 2. Creativity increased from 52.57% in the first meeting to 92.46% in the final meeting, while collaboration improved from 43.23% to 88.00%. The gradual increase suggests that students became increasingly familiar with project-based learning activities and more proficient in utilizing Padlet as a collaborative learning platform. Continuous practice, structured group interaction, teacher scaffolding, and peer-feedback activities contributed to stronger participation, idea generation, communication, and teamwork throughout the learning process.

Table 4. Improvement of Creativity Across Research Cycles

Stage	Creativity (%)	Improvement (%)
Pre-Action	45.59	
Cycle I	49.00	+3.41
Cycle II	69.94	+20.94
Cycle III	88.60	+18.66

Creativity improved consistently throughout the intervention. The most substantial increase occurred between Cycle I and Cycle II, where creativity rose by 20.94 percentage points. This improvement reflects the effectiveness of enhanced scaffolding, structured brainstorming, and project refinement activities. By Cycle III, students had become familiar with project-based learning and digital collaboration, enabling them to generate more innovative and original products. Overall, creativity increased by 43.01 percentage points from the pre-action stage to the end of Cycle III.

Table 5. Improvement of Collaboration Across Research Cycles

Stage	Collaboration (%)	Improvement (%)
Pre-Action	36.76	–
Cycle I	45.07	+8.31
Cycle II	59.00	+13.93
Cycle III	83.00	+24.00

Collaboration demonstrated a continuous upward trend across all research cycles. The largest increase occurred between Cycle II and Cycle III, with an improvement of 24 percentage points. The enhancement was supported by clearer role distribution, more intensive teacher facilitation, active peer-feedback sessions, and optimized use of Padlet as a platform for communication and collaboration. By the final cycle, students displayed stronger teamwork, responsibility, communication skills, and engagement in group activities, indicating the successful development of collaborative learning behaviors.

Table 6. Summary of Creativity and Collaboration Achievement Across Cycles

Stage	Creativity (%)	Category	Collaboration (%)	Category
Pre-Action	45.59	Low-Moderate	36.76	Low
Cycle I	49.00	Poor	45.07	Poor
Cycle II	69.94	Good	59.00	Good
Cycle III	88.60	Very Good	83.00	Very Good

The overall findings demonstrate a clear and progressive improvement in both creativity and collaboration from the pre-action stage to Cycle III. Creativity increased from 45.59% to 88.60%, while collaboration rose from 36.76% to 83.00%. These results indicate that the implementation of Project-Based Learning supported by Padlet effectively fostered students' creative thinking and collaborative skills in Civic Education. The achievement of the "Very Good" category for both variables in Cycle III confirms that the research objectives and success indicators were fully attained.

The findings demonstrate that Padlet-assisted Project-Based Learning effectively improved students' creativity and collaboration in Civic Education. Creativity increased from 45.59% in the pre-action stage to 88.60% in Cycle III, while collaboration improved from 36.76% to 83.00%. These improvements indicate that the learning environment gradually shifted from teacher-centered instruction toward active student participation. Consistent with previous studies, project-based learning provides opportunities for students to investigate authentic problems, construct knowledge collaboratively, and engage in meaningful learning experiences that support civic competencies and active engagement (Akirav, 2023; Evcimik & Oruc, 2023; Indriyani et al., 2023; Maharani et al., 2024; Pirdaus, 2024). The findings therefore reinforce the view that Civic Education can serve not only as a vehicle for knowledge transmission but also as a medium for developing essential twenty-first-century skills.

The relatively limited improvement observed in Cycle I reflects students' initial adaptation to both project-based learning and the use of Padlet as a collaborative platform. Creativity increased only from 45.59% to 49.00%, while collaboration improved from 36.76% to 45.07%. Classroom observations indicated that many students were hesitant to express ideas, relied heavily on teacher guidance, and showed unequal participation within groups. Following reflection activities, several instructional refinements were introduced, including structured brainstorming sessions, clearer role allocation, and more intensive scaffolding. As a result, creativity increased substantially to 69.94% in Cycle II. This finding supports constructivist perspectives suggesting that creativity develops through repeated opportunities for exploration, reflection, and active knowledge construction (Akirav, 2023; Fariasih & Fathoni, 2022; Magjuka & Musil, 2023; Sabharwal, 2020; Sukisno et al., 2025).

The substantial increase in creativity during Cycles II and III was closely associated with the pedagogical use of Padlet. Rather than functioning merely as a digital repository, Padlet facilitated idea sharing, peer feedback, collaborative planning, and project revision. Students were able to upload project drafts, receive comments from peers, and continuously refine their work based on collective input. This process encouraged greater fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration in developing project products, ultimately contributing to the increase in creativity from 69.94% in Cycle II to 88.60% in Cycle III. These findings align with previous studies reporting that technology-supported collaborative environments can enhance student engagement, creative expression, and meaningful participation when integrated into authentic learning activities (Abendschön et al., 2022; Komalasari et al., 2021; Redondo-Corcobado & Fuentes, 2022; Temerbayeva et al., 2023).

Collaboration also improved progressively across the intervention, increasing from 45.07% in Cycle I to 59.00% in Cycle II and reaching 83.00% in Cycle III. The largest improvement occurred during the final cycle

after the implementation of clearer group responsibilities, peer-feedback activities, and stronger student accountability. Classroom observations showed that students became more willing to communicate ideas, negotiate decisions, and support one another in completing project tasks. The shift from teacher dependence toward learner autonomy enabled more balanced participation among group members and reduced passive behavior. These results are consistent with previous studies highlighting the role of project-based learning in promoting teamwork, communication, responsibility, and civic participation through collaborative problem-solving activities (Bhandari & Moncrieffe, 2022; Dow, 2025; Komalasari et al., 2021; Mandru, 2026; Obaid et al., 2025; Wegemer et al., 2026).

Another important finding is that creativity and collaboration developed simultaneously throughout the intervention. The continuous increase in creativity was accompanied by comparable growth in collaboration, suggesting a reciprocal relationship between the two competencies. Collaborative discussions enabled students to exchange perspectives, challenge assumptions, and refine ideas, thereby fostering more creative outcomes. Conversely, project tasks requiring creativity encouraged students to communicate, negotiate, and coordinate effectively within their groups. This synergy is particularly relevant to Civic Education because democratic participation and responsible citizenship require both innovative thinking and collaborative action. Therefore, Padlet-assisted Project-Based Learning not only improved individual learning outcomes but also created a participatory learning environment that supports the development of civic, creative, and collaborative competencies needed in contemporary society (Hourdakis & Ieronimakis, 2020; Mella-Núñez et al., 2021; Rauschert & Mustroph, 2022; Sarkadi & Fadhillah, 2020; Sulyman et al., 2025).

Conclusions

The findings of this classroom action research demonstrate that the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) assisted by the Padlet application effectively improved students' creativity and collaboration in Civic Education (PPKn) learning at SMA Negeri 8 Padang. Creativity increased progressively from 45.59% in the pre-action stage to 88.60% in Cycle III, while collaboration improved from 36.76% to 83.00% over the same period. These improvements were supported by the integration of authentic project activities, structured group collaboration, teacher scaffolding, peer feedback, and the utilization of Padlet as a digital platform for idea sharing, discussion, and project publication. The results indicate that the combination of PjBL and Padlet successfully created a more active, creative, and collaborative learning environment, enabling students to develop essential twenty-first-century competencies while actively engaging with Civic Education content. Therefore, PjBL assisted by Padlet can be considered an effective instructional strategy for enhancing creativity and collaboration among secondary school students.

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