

A STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF PROJECT BASED LEARNING ON DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT

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Project-based learning is a method of teaching in which students acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes by engaging in meaningful, real-world projects. Project-based learning has gained prominence as an innovative educational approach aimed at promoting entrepreneurship skills among students in modern times. Accordingly, this study bridges the gap between traditional learning methods and the field of literature. Additionally, the research gap illustrates, the need for entrepreneurial skills in an ever-changing global economy. The study's objective is to explore how project-based learning affects students' entrepreneurial skills. That is, the study aims provide insight into the effectiveness of project-based learning in fostering essential entrepreneurial skills. Accordingly, in this study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 20 members, including teachers, education officers, and students, within the Walasmulla education zone using the qualitative research method. Apart from this, project program reports were also examined to identify entrepreneurship skills that should be developed in the school. Thematic analysis was used to organize and interpret the data thus collected. Accordingly, the findings were categorized into five main themes: creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, risk taking, and self-efficacy. According to field data, it was clear that encouraging innovative thinking and exploring multiple solutions to real-world problems developed in students. The study found that project-based learning significantly increases students' creativity. It was also evident that collaborative learning contributes to the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills as students engage in complex tasks that require in-depth analysis and decision-making. In addition, the study also highlighted collaboration, where students learn to work effectively in teams, which is essential for entrepreneurial ventures. The study concludes that project-based learning is effective in transforming traditional education practices and equipping students with the entrepreneurial skills needed for 21st-century success. The study also recommends integrating project-based learning into the curriculum so as to foster innovative and self-reliant generations.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Skills, Junior Secondary Education, Project-Based Learning, School Students

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