



## The Effect of Project-Based Differentiation Approach on Students' Civic Engagement in Social Studies Learning at SMPN 4 Subang

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effect of a project-based differentiated learning approach on students' civic engagement in social studies learning. The study employed a quantitative method with a predictive correlational design. The population consisted of 1,146 students from grades VII, VIII, and IX at SMP Negeri 4 Subang, with a sample of 297 students selected using proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected through structured Likert-scale questionnaires measuring project-based differentiated learning and civic engagement. The instruments were validated through expert judgment and item analysis, and their reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, prerequisite tests (normality and heteroscedasticity), and simple linear regression analysis. The results show that the implementation of project-based differentiated learning is categorized as good and has a significant positive effect on students' civic engagement ( $\beta = 0.901$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The strength of the relationship is also supported by a strong correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.740$ ). Furthermore, the effect is consistently observed across all dimensions of civic engagement, including active participation, social responsibility, democratic decision-making, and civic action. These findings indicate that integrating differentiated instruction with project-based learning creates a more adaptive, contextual, and student-centered learning environment that promotes meaningful social involvement. In conclusion, project-based differentiated learning serves as an effective instructional approach to enhance students' civic engagement in social studies. This approach is recommended for fostering not only academic achievement but also students' social awareness and responsible citizenship behavior.

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## PENDAHULUAN

Social Studies education at the junior high school level has a strategic mandate in shaping students as active, critical, and socially responsible citizens (Sapriya, 2017). This goal is in line with the direction of national education, which emphasizes not only cognitive mastery but also the strengthening of social attitudes, civic values, and participatory skills in community life (Sujana, 2019). Within this framework, the concept, *civic engagement* is an important indicator of the success of social studies learning, as it represents students' real involvement in social activities, concern for the surrounding environment, ability to make democratic decisions, and responsible social actions. However, social studies learning practices in schools are still dominated by conventional, teacher-centered approaches, so the space for student participation in learning is relatively limited (Yanzhuri *et al.*, 2024). Students tend to be passive recipients of information, less involved in discussions, collaborative work, or contextual activities that connect subject matter to social reality. This condition results in the underdevelopment of the dimensions of *civic engagement* optimally in social studies learning, even though the current curriculum through the Independent Curriculum emphasizes differentiated, contextual, and student-centered learning (Syahbana *et al.*, 2024).

The differentiation approach provides opportunities for teachers to adapt the learning process to the readiness, interests and learning styles of students, while *project-based learning* (PjBL) provides contextual learning experiences through collaborative and reflective project activities (Sulistiyosari *et al.*, 2022). Integrating these two approaches in social studies learning has the potential to create a participatory learning experience while simultaneously encouraging students' real social involvement. Thus, a *project-based* differentiation approach is seen as relevant for developing *civic engagement students* in social studies learning. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of the *project-based* differentiation approach on *civic engagement students* in social studies learning at SMPN 4 Subang, which includes the dimensions of active participation, social responsibility, democratic decision making, and real action (*civic action*).

A number of previous studies have shown that differentiated learning and *project-based learning* effective in improving student learning outcomes, motivation, creativity, and learning participation. Andini & Fadly (2024) found that *project-based* differentiation improved junior high school students' writing skills. Sakti & Ainiyah (2024), Putra Andika *et al.* (2024), as well as Maharani *et al.* (2024a) shows that the integration of differentiation and PjBL is able to significantly improve student learning outcomes. Sari & Saino (2024) also found that PjBL increases student engagement in learning. However, most of these studies still focus on cognitive aspects, learning motivation, or academic outcomes, and use Classroom Action Research (CAR) designs oriented towards improving learning practices. Studies that specifically examine the effect of integrating a *project-based* differentiation approach on *civic*

*engagement* students' participation in social studies learning is still relatively limited, especially at the junior high school level and in the context of implementing the Independent Curriculum. However, civic engagement is an essential goal of social studies learning which is directly related to the formation of students' civic character.

Based on these gaps, this study has novelty in several aspects. *First*, this study focuses on the dependent variable civic engagement, not just on learning outcomes or motivation. *Second*, this research integrates a differentiation approach with *Project Based Learning* conceptually in the context of social studies learning. *Third*, this study uses a quantitative approach with inferential statistical analysis to empirically test the inter-variable influences. *Fourth*, this study was conducted at the junior high school level in the context of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which has rarely been examined in previous studies. Therefore, this study is expected to provide conceptual and empirical contributions to the development of social studies learning strategies oriented toward strengthening students' understanding of the subject civic engagement student.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a predictive correlational design to test the effect of a *project-based* differentiated learning approach on civic engagement students in social studies learning. The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Subang from November 2025 to March 2026. The study population was 1,146 students from grades VII, VIII, and IX. The sample was determined as 297 students using the technique *proportionate stratified random sampling* so that each grade level and study group is represented proportionally. Respondents in each study group were selected randomly to minimize sample selection bias.

Data collection used a closed Likert scale questionnaire consisting of two instruments, namely a project-based differentiated learning approach instrument consisting of 15 statement items and a *project-based* differentiated learning approach instrument consisting of 15 statement items civic engagement as many as 20 statements. The preparation of the X variable instrument refers to Tomlinson's concept of differentiation and characteristics *project-based Learning*, while the Y variable is arranged based on indicators civic engagement Hopkins adapted to the context of social studies learning in junior high schools. Documentation is used as supporting data to strengthen the research context.

The validity of the instrument was tested through *expert judgment* and item-total correlation, while reliability was tested to ensure the internal consistency of the instrument. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, analysis prerequisite tests (normality and heteroscedasticity), and simple linear regression analysis with the help of statistical software. Regression analysis was used to determine the magnitude of the effect of the project-based differentiated learning approach on civic engagement students as a whole and in their dimensions, namely active participation, social responsibility, democratic decision making, and real action (*civic action*).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Instrument Validity Test Results

Instrument validity testing was carried out using the technique *Pearson Product Moment Correlation*, namely by comparing the values *r-count* with *r-table*. Based on the number of respondents as many as 85 people, the value obtained *was-table* of 0.213 at a significance level of 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). A statement item is declared valid if the value-count is greater than *r-table* (*r-count* > *r-table*). The results of the instrument validity test were carried out for the *Project-Based* differentiation approach variables (X) and civic engagement. Based on the validity test results in Table 1., it is known that the *project-based* differentiation approach variable consisting of 21 statement items shows that 20 items are declared valid and 1 item is declared invalid, namely item X5. The invalidity of the item is indicated by the calculated *r-value* of 0.171 which is smaller than the *r-table* value of 0.213.

Furthermore, in the civic engagement variable, which consists of 28 statement items, all items have a calculated *r-value* greater than the *r-table* (0.213), so all items are declared valid. Thus, only items that meet the validity criteria are used as research instruments. As for invalid items, the researcher carried out follow-up in the form of revising the statement wording to make it simpler, clearer, and easier for students to understand. Revisions were also made by adjusting the language used to the level of cognitive development of junior high school students, without changing the meaning or substance of the indicators being measured, and still referring to the operational definition of the variable.

### Instrument Reliability Test Results

Reliability testing was conducted to determine the level of consistency of the research instrument. Reliability testing in this study used the method Cronbach's alpha. A variable is declared reliable if it has a value Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.70. The results of the instrument reliability test are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Reliability Test Results

| Variable                      | Cronbach's alpha | Critical Point | Information |
|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Project-based differentiation | 0.852            | 0.7            | Reliabel    |
| Civic Engagement              | 0.953            | 0.7            | Reliabel    |

Based on Table 1, it is known that the Cronbach's alpha value for the *project-based* differentiation approach variable is 0.852, while the civic engagement variable is 0.953. Both values are greater than the critical point value of 0.70, so it can be concluded that both instruments have a very good level of reliability. Thus, the questionnaire instrument used in this study is declared reliable, consistent, and suitable for use to measure the effect of the project-based differentiation learning approach on student civic engagement in social studies learning at SMPN 4 Subang.

## Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis in this study aims to describe respondents' perceptions of the application of the project-based differentiation approach as an independent variable and civic engagement students as the dependent variable in social studies learning. Analysis was conducted using the mean and standard deviation values for each indicator.

The analysis results show that project-based differentiated learning tends to be in the good category and is able to encourage students' social engagement throughout the learning process. This is evident in increased active participation, social responsibility, democratic *decision-making* skills, and student involvement in *real-life* actions. These findings indicate that adaptively and contextually designed learning contributes positively to strengthening students' social and civic engagement.

### a. Description of Project-Based Differentiation Approach Variables

The *project-based* differentiation approach variable is measured through three main indicators: learning differentiation (learning choices and needs), *project-based* learning, and active involvement in the project process. These three indicators represent the implementation of learning that is adaptive to student characteristics.

The analysis results show that all indicators are in the good category. The learning choices and needs indicator indicates teachers' efforts to adapt learning strategies to students' abilities by providing alternative learning methods. In the *project-based* learning indicator, project activities were deemed effective in increasing learning interest while strengthening contextual understanding of the material. Meanwhile, the indicator of active involvement in the project process showed the highest achievement, reflecting high student participation in discussions, idea sharing, and task implementation. This finding confirms that the *project-based* differentiation approach is capable of encouraging more participatory and *student-centered* learning.

### b. Variable Description Civic Engagement

Variables civic engagement measured through indicators of communication, cooperation, and empathy which represent students' social involvement in learning. The results of the analysis show that in general the level of civic engagement students are in the good category. In terms of active participation, students demonstrated a high level of engagement in the learning process, such as paying attention to explanations, asking questions, and engaging in discussions. This indicates that the learning implemented was able to capture students' attention and encourage active participation.

The social responsibility indicator also showed positive results, even achieving one of the highest scores. Students demonstrated a sense of responsibility in completing group assignments, fulfilling their respective roles, and respecting differences of opinion. This indicates the development of mutual respect in learning. In the democratic decision-making indicator, students demonstrated the ability to engage in discussions and reach



consensus. Project activities provided a space for students to participate in the deliberation process and openly accept group decisions. Meanwhile, indicators for concrete actions also fell into the good category. Students showed a tendency to participate in collaborative activities, such as working together on project assignments and demonstrating concern for the surrounding environment. These findings indicate that learning not only impacts cognitive aspects but also fosters *real-life* social practices in students' lives.

## Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the *project-based* differentiation approach on civic engagement students in social studies learning. This analysis aims to test the extent of the influence of the independent variable (*project-based* differentiation approach) on the dependent variable (civic engagement) partially.

### a. Classical Assumption Test

*Measurement model assessment* done by testing *convergent validity*, *discriminant validity*, and *composite reliability*.

#### 1). Normality Testing

Normality testing was conducted to determine whether the data in the research variables were normally distributed before conducting hypothesis testing. The normality test in this study used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with the aid of a statistical program. The results of the data normality test are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Normality Test Results

| Model            | P-Value | Criteria | Conclusion           |
|------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|
| Residual Model 1 | 0.200   | > 0,05   | Normally distributed |
| Residual Model 2 | 0.200   | > 0,05   | Normally distributed |
| Residual Model 3 | 0.200   | > 0,05   | Normally distributed |
| Residual Model 4 | 0.200   | > 0,05   | Normally distributed |
| Residual Model 5 | 0.200   | > 0,05   | Normally distributed |

Based on Table 2, the significance value (*p-value*) for all residual models is 0.200, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that the data in the research model involving the *project-based* differentiation approach and civic engagement variables are normally distributed. Therefore, it can be concluded that the normality assumption has been met, making the research data suitable for inferential analysis and hypothesis testing regarding the effect of the *project-based* differentiation approach on student civic engagement in social studies learning.

#### 2). Heteroscedasticity Test

Heteroscedasticity testing was conducted to determine whether there was inequality in residual variance in the regression model in the study. The heteroscedasticity test in this study

was conducted using the Glejser method and supported by Scatterplot analysis, namely by looking at the relationship between residual values and predicted values. The results of the heteroscedasticity test of the data showed that the significance value (*p-value*) in all models was greater than 0.05, namely 0.740 in the civic engagement model, 0.290 in active participation, 0.396 in social responsibility, 0.368 in democratic decision-making, and 0.731 in concrete actions. Thus, it can be concluded that the regression model in this study did not experience symptoms of heteroscedasticity, thus fulfilling one of the classical assumptions and is suitable for use in further regression analysis regarding the effect of the project-based differentiation approach on student civic engagement in social studies learning.

### b. Correlation Coefficient

The correlation coefficient was used to determine the closeness of the relationship between the *project-based* differentiation approach variable as the independent variable and the student civic engagement variable as the dependent variable in social studies learning. The correlation analysis was conducted to see how strong the relationship is between the implementation of the *project-based* differentiation approach and aspects of civic engagement which include active participation, social responsibility, democratic *decision-making*, and real action.

The correlation coefficient (*r*) value ranges from 0 to 1. The closer the value is to 1, the stronger the relationship between the variables, while a value closer to 0 indicates a weak relationship. The results of the correlation coefficient analysis are presented in the following table.

**Table 3.** Correlation Coefficient

| Model          | Dependent Variable         | <i>r</i> | Relationship Category |
|----------------|----------------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Model 1</b> | <i>Civic engagement</i>    | 0.740    | Strong                |
| <b>Model 2</b> | Active participation       | 0.696    | Strong                |
| <b>Model 3</b> | Social responsibility      | 0.654    | Strong                |
| <b>Model 4</b> | Democratic decision making | 0.668    | Strong                |
| <b>Model 5</b> | Real action                | 0.624    | Strong                |

## DISCUSSION

### The Impact of *Project-Based* Differentiation Approach on Civic Engagement

The results of the regression analysis show that the *project-based* differentiation approach has a very strong influence on civic engagement students ( $\beta = 0.901$ ;  $t = 18.877$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The magnitude of the coefficient indicates that learning design plays a major predictive role in shaping students' civic engagement in social studies learning civic engagement. In this context, it's not just about actively participating in lessons, but also encompasses comprehensive social engagement throughout the learning process. Students demonstrate participation, responsibility, deliberation practices, and concrete actions related to the social issues they're learning about.

The findings of this study strengthen the theoretical framework civic engagement. Hopkins (2013), which places active participation, social responsibility, *decision-making*, and concrete action as indicators of civic engagement. In the context of social studies learning, this engagement is not effectively built through a transmissive approach, but through contextual and participatory learning experiences. *Project-based* differentiation provides space for students to engage according to their interests, readiness, and learning profiles, so that the resulting engagement is authentic and meaningful.

The consistency of these findings with differentiation theory Tomlinson (2017). Studies have shown that adapting learning strategies based on individual needs directly increases student participation. Integration with *project-based* learning reinforces this effect through real-world *problem-based* activities that demand collaboration, social responsibility, and shared decision-making. Social studies projects, which stem from social and environmental issues, transform the classroom into a space for civic practice, not simply a space for knowledge transfer.

Empirically, these results are in line with Putra Andika *et al.* (2024) as well as Sakti & Ainayah (2024), which shows that PjBL integrated with differentiation increases student engagement and activeness. However, the novelty of this research lies in the placement civic engagement as the main variable, not just a side effect of improving cognitive learning outcomes. The findings of Kamaruddin *et al.* (2023) and Maharani *et al.* (2024b) also reinforces that project experience contributes to increased civic knowledge which is the foundation of civic engagement.

Study Rasyid Lafahrozi Pramudita (2024) and Rohimah (2023), shows that participatory social studies learning is able to develop social literacy, critical thinking, and collaboration, which are essential components civic engagement. Thus, *project-based* differentiation not only enhances understanding of social studies concepts but also fosters participatory attitudes, social responsibility, and democratic *decision-making* skills. This approach is relevant for directing social studies learning toward the development of citizenship character in a more operational and contextual manner.

### **Influence on Active Participation**

The significant effect of this approach on active student participation ( $\beta = 0.914$ ;  $t = 16.666$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) indicates that *project-based* differentiation effectively encourages student engagement in discussions and group work. Students are more confident in expressing their opinions because the tasks given are aligned with their interests and abilities. This situation creates a communicative and interactive classroom during the learning process.

Active participation is an early indicator of civic engagement because it reflects the involvement of individuals in collective social activities. Bell (2010) explains that the project encourages interaction, whereas Tomlinson (2017) emphasizes the importance of providing learning choices. When these two approaches are combined, students have an intrinsic reason



to engage. This engagement arises not from teacher demands, but from the inclusive learning design.

The findings of this study reinforce the results of previous studies which confirmed that *project-based* learning encourages active student involvement through real and contextual learning experiences. Bell (2010) shows that the main characteristic of PjBL lies in providing space for participation through collaborative activities that require interaction between students during the learning process. In line with that, Zifa Nabilla Zahra et al. (2025) emphasizes that effective learning is learning that is able to create classroom conditions that facilitate the active involvement of students in each stage of learning.

The results of this study are also consistent with the findings Ariyanto *et al.* (2023) which shows that the implementation of project-based differentiated learning has an impact on increasing student engagement, as reflected in the improvement in learning completion in each cycle. Although the study focuses on learning outcomes, this improvement cannot be separated from increased active student participation during the learning process. This means that learning engagement is an important mediating factor in achieving optimal learning outcomes.

Study Mona & Rachmawati (2023) also demonstrated that integrating *project-based* learning with differentiated learning is effective in improving the quality of the learning process through discussion, collaboration, and collaborative project completion. However, this study still focused on learning outcomes as the primary outcome. Meanwhile, Berliana Alvionita Pratiwi *et al.* (2024) shows that this approach also contributes to the development of students' creativity and critical thinking skills which has implications for increasing learning engagement. Thus, the results of this study not only confirm previous findings, but also extend them by placing active participation as an integral part of civic engagement in social studies learning. The *project-based* differentiation approach has been proven to create an interactive, collaborative, and student-centered learning environment, so that the active involvement that emerges not only impacts academic achievement but also the formation of students' more comprehensive civic engagement.

### **Impact on Social Responsibility**

The regression coefficient value for the social responsibility dimension ( $\beta = 0.892$ ;  $t = 14.847$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) indicates that collaborative projects shape students' collective awareness. Students learn to maintain group commitment and recognize that task success depends on the contribution of each member. This interaction forms a social awareness that is internalized during learning.

The findings of this study are consistent with the *project-based* learning framework according to Bell (2010), which places collaboration, empathy, and individual contribution at the heart of the learning process. During project implementation, students engage in intensive social interactions through group work, discussion, and shared *decision-making*. This situation

demands the ability to collaborate effectively, respect differing perspectives, and demonstrate empathy toward group members. Thus, projects serve not only as a means of completing academic tasks but also as a platform for developing social and citizenship skills (*civic skills*).

This role is strengthened when integrated with the principle of learning differentiation (Tomlinson, 2017). Providing choices in learning processes and products encourages students to manage, reflect on, and take responsibility for their own learning. Differentiation not only addresses diverse learning needs but also builds independence, discipline, and accountability as part of 21st-century competencies. The combination of PjBL and differentiation creates a learning environment that positions students as active subjects with a significant role in the group's success.

Empirically, this finding is supported by Rati *et al.* (2017) and Maruanaya & Scholar (2023) who showed that *real-life* problems in projects increase students' social awareness. Maharani *et al.* (2024b), Jufri *et al.* (2026), as well as Asmaul Rizal *et al.* (2024) also confirmed that the integration of PjBL and differentiation increased student engagement, collaboration, and responsibility in learning. The increased learning completion reported in these studies is inseparable from increased student commitment and responsibility throughout the project process.

Furthermore, research Musi'in (2022) shows that project-based learning encourages the development of collaborative skills, critical thinking, and social awareness. Involvement in contextual projects fosters *sense of ownership* towards tasks, so that the resulting responsibility is not only individual but also collective. In the context of social studies, this condition is reflected through a caring attitude, a willingness to cooperate, a commitment to completing tasks, and a concern for the social issues discussed.

Thus, project-based differentiation contributes significantly to fostering students' social responsibility as an integral part of civic engagement. Social studies learning that is designed in a differentiated and project-based manner not only strengthens conceptual understanding, but also builds attitudes of caring, cooperation, and social commitment that are relevant to community life.

### **Influence on Democratic Decision Making**

The significant effect on democratic *decision-making* ( $\beta = 0.928$ ;  $t = 15.431$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) indicates that the project process trains students to deliberate. Students discuss, express opinions, and reach a collective agreement. This practice reflects democratic values in the classroom context. These findings are consistent with the theoretical framework. *Project-based learning* as proposed by Bell (2010), projects are positioned as a medium for authentic problem-based collaborative learning. In this context, student interaction is not merely a supporting activity but a primary mechanism for fostering cooperation, empathy, and collective responsibility. Project activities require each student to contribute significantly through discussions, role-sharing, and shared *decision-making*. This situation demonstrates that *project-based learning*

inherently facilitates the formation of social experiences relevant to the development of citizenship skills.

Conceptually, this process is strengthened by a differentiated learning approach that provides students with autonomy to engage according to their interests, readiness, and learning profiles. This learning autonomy encourages individual accountability in group work while simultaneously fostering independence in managing the learning process. Thus, differentiation serves not only as a strategy for meeting diverse learning needs but also as a mechanism for fostering social responsibility in collaborative learning contexts.

A number of empirical studies support this finding Rati *et al.* (2017) shows that *real-world problem-based* projects are effective in increasing students' social awareness. Maros *et al.* (2023) confirms that authentic project contexts strengthen social awareness because students are directly involved in issues that are relevant to their lives. Justina (2019) also shows that the integration of differentiation and PjBL increases student involvement and responsibility in completing group assignments, although the study still places learning outcomes as the main output.

In the context of social studies learning, these findings suggest that social responsibility is not formed through the mere delivery of concepts, but through structured, collaborative learning experiences. Contextually designed projects enable students to learn to appreciate differences, maintain group commitment, and understand the importance of individual contributions to shared goals. Thus, a *project-based* differentiation approach plays a strategic role in shaping the dimension of social responsibility as an integral part of the curriculum civic engagement student.

### **Influence on Real Action (Civic Action)**

The effect on *real-world* action ( $\beta = 0.861$ ;  $t = 13.733$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) indicates that students are able to implement social studies concepts through contextual projects. Learning becomes a *hands-on* experience that connects theory with social reality. Students do not stop at understanding, but move on to practice.

The students' concrete actions in this study were reflected through their direct involvement in project implementation, their ability to apply social studies concepts to everyday life contexts, their concern for social issues in their surroundings, and their participation in collaborative, solution-oriented activities. *Project-based* differentiation places students in situations where they are challenged to learn *learning by doing*, so that conceptual understanding doesn't stop at the cognitive realm but is manifested in *real-life* behavior. This contextual learning experience makes the classroom a space for social practice relevant to students' lives.

This finding is in line with Rizmayannudin & Nuroh (2024) which shows that PjBL promotes active engagement, critical thinking, and collaboration through authentic projects. Engaging in these meaningful activities encourages students not only to understand the

material but also to act on their understanding. Thus, projects serve as a bridge between academic knowledge and social practice.

Research result Satriani *et al.* (2025) also reinforces that *project-based* learning improves civic knowledge which impacts students' participatory awareness in the context of citizenship. Civic knowledge gained through project experiences tends to be more operational because it is directly connected to social reality. In this context, concrete actions emerge as a logical consequence of contextualized understanding. Besides that, Silmi *et al.* (2025) emphasizes that differentiated learning increases student engagement because it is tailored to interests, readiness, and learning profiles. When students are given the space to contribute according to their potential to projects, a sense of ownership of the learning process emerges, encouraging more concrete participation. This demonstrates that concrete actions are not merely the result of instruction, but rather the result of meaningful engagement.

Thus, *project-based* differentiation in social studies learning contributes significantly to the emergence of students' real actions as a form of civic engagement contextual, collaborative, and social *problem-solving* projects encourage students to engage cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally in civic practices in the classroom.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that a *project-based* differentiated learning approach has a positive and significant impact on students' civic engagement in social studies. This approach has been proven to increase students' active participation, strengthen social responsibility, train democratic *decision-making* skills, and encourage involvement in real action (civic action). The integration of differentiated learning and *project-based* learning creates an adaptive, contextual, and *student-centered* learning environment, providing space for students to engage according to their interests, readiness, and learning profiles. Furthermore, the strong relationship between the variables indicates that learning design plays a significant role in shaping students' civic engagement. Learning designed through meaningful and collaborative project activities allows students to directly experience the process of social interaction, develop empathy, and practice civic values in the learning context. This approach not only contributes to academic achievement but also to strengthening students' social competence and civic character. Teachers are advised to implement this approach more optimally. Future research is expected to examine other variables and more diverse contexts to enrich the research findings.

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