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Implementation of Experiential Learning to Enhance Students' Historical Thinking Skills

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Abstract

This study explores the implementation of Experiential Learning in enhancing students' historical thinking skills. Historical thinking is a critical competency that enables students to analyze, interpret, and critically evaluate historical events, moving beyond rote memorization. However, history education in Indonesia is predominantly lecture-based, limiting student engagement and analytical skill development. This research adopts a qualitative case study approach conducted at a high school in Pontianak, involving history teachers and students. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. The findings indicate that Experiential Learning, through methods such as historical field trips, reenactments, and project-based learning, significantly improves students' chronological understanding, awareness of historical causation, and empathy for historical figures. The study also identifies challenges, including resource constraints and the need for more effective instructional strategies. The research concludes that Experiential Learning promotes a deeper, more meaningful understanding of history, empowering students to construct knowledge through firsthand experiences actively. Future research should focus on developing scalable models for integrating Experiential Learning in diverse educational settings.

Keywords Experiential Learning; Historical Education; Historical Thinking

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1. INTRODUCTION

Historical thinking is a fundamental skill for students in today's rapidly globalizing and information-driven world. This skill not only aids in understanding past events but also fosters critical, analytical, and reflective thinking abilities, essential for navigating present and future challenges (Ofianto et al., 2024; Pratama et al., 2024). Historical thinking empowers students to carefully examine information, discern biases and multiple perspectives, and develop a comprehensive understanding of how societies and civilizations have evolved. Going beyond the mere memorization of facts and dates, it equips students with the ability to interpret historical evidence, understand cause-and-effect relationships, and draw lessons from the past to inform contemporary contexts (Dozono, 2022; Hardy & Iwatani, 2021; Meral et al., 2022).

One pedagogical approach that holds significant potential for nurturing students' historical

thinking is Experiential Learning. This approach emphasizes the importance of students' direct experiences as the core of the learning process. Rooted in Kolb's theory (Kolb, 2015)It suggests that effective learning occurs through a cycle of experience consisting of four stages: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation (Krishnasamy, 2025). This cycle is dynamic and iterative, as students progress through the stages, reflecting on their experiences, conceptualizing new ideas, testing these ideas in real-world situations, and then revisiting the cycle based on new experiences (Kolb, 2015). Kolb's model highlights the connection between past experiences and future learning, allowing students to construct new knowledge based on reflections from their prior experiences (K. D. Lewis et al., 2021).

Kolb's model will analyze the data collected from history teachers and students in this study. The model's stages—Experience, Share, Process, Generalize, and Apply—will guide understanding of how experiential learning is implemented to enhance historical thinking skills. The Experience stage involves direct engagement with historical content, while the Share stage allows for discussions and reflections on those experiences. The Process stage focuses on critically analyzing these shared experiences, leading to the Generalization stage, where students formulate concepts or conclusions from the observations. Finally, the Apply stage enables students to experiment with and test these new ideas in practical or real-world contexts, completing the cycle of experiential learning (Kolb, 2015).

In the context of history education, Experiential Learning can be implemented through various activities such as field trips to historical sites, simulations of historical events, interviews with historical figures, analysis of ancient artifacts, and historical research projects (Thomas, 2024). This experiential approach integrates the strengths of theory and practice, combining research and theoretical knowledge with real-world applications, thereby significantly enhancing student learning outcomes (Hills et al., 2020). Moreover, it encourages more active student engagement, sharpens their critical thinking skills, and strengthens teacher-student relationships (Purwowidodo, 2024).

Experiential Learning is particularly relevant to advancing students' historical thinking because it provides opportunities for active participation in learning (Coleman et al., 2024). Through firsthand experiences, students do not merely absorb information passively but develop a deeper understanding of historical concepts. They learn to observe, analyze, interpret, and critically evaluate historical evidence (Wang, 2024). Furthermore, Experiential Learning fosters reflective thinking—students' ability to reflect on their experiences and connect them with their existing knowledge. This skill is crucial in historical thinking, as it helps students understand the relevance of past events to their present lives (Bartle, 2015).

However, a significant gap exists between the theory and practice of history education in Indonesia. History instruction in schools often relies heavily on lectures and rote memorization, making it less effective in cultivating students' historical thinking skills (Lewis & Williams, 1994). In contrast, Experiential Learning holds substantial promise in bridging this gap by offering students more contextual, engaging, and meaningful learning experiences. Consequently, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) How can implementing Experiential Learning enhance students' historical thinking skills? (2) What specific aspects of historical thinking are developed through Experiential Learning?

This research aims to significantly contribute to developing an effective model for implementing Experiential Learning (EL) in history education. The findings will guide history teachers in designing and delivering more innovative, student-centered instruction. Additionally, this study aspires to inspire further research into Experiential Learning and historical thinking. Ultimately, it is hoped that the quality of history education in Indonesia will improve, equipping students with robust and relevant historical thinking skills to confront the challenges of globalization (Ozmen, 2015; Pratama et al., 2022).

Recent studies have highlighted the importance and effectiveness of Experiential Learning (EL) in various educational contexts. For instance, Radović et al. (2021) Explored the challenges of integrating

EL into higher education programs, particularly in teacher education. They identified the key pillars of EL design—authenticity, reflection, and collaboration—and emphasized the need for alignment between theoretical and practical learning elements to foster deeper engagement. Similarly, Duchatelet et al. (2024) Reviewed the features of EL environments, focusing on how design elements like individual agency and group work influence the development of generic learning outcomes such as critical thinking and communication skills. While these studies underline the role of EL in enhancing academic skills, their scope is broader and does not delve deeply into the application of EL specifically in history education.

Another relevant study by Kong (2021) Examined how EL contributes to students' motivation and classroom engagement across various educational settings, highlighting its positive impact on academic success by promoting active participation and reflection. However, Kong's research is more generalized and does not focus specifically on the application of EL in history education or its integration into subject-specific content areas like history, which differentiates this study by targeting the enhancement of historical thinking skills.

Furthermore, a review by Varman et al. (2025) assessed EL interventions promoting healthy eating and physical activity in children's museums, emphasizing the interactive and hands-on aspects of EL activities. While this study demonstrates the application of EL in informal learning environments, it does not explore its implications for formal educational settings or specific disciplines like history.

Additionally, the study by Awidi and Paynter (2019) The flipped classroom approach in higher education is relevant to this research. They evaluated the impact of the flipped classroom on students' learning experiences, focusing on student satisfaction, engagement, and motivation in a more interactive and experiential learning context. However, their research focuses on the flipped classroom model, which, while aligning with EL's goal of student engagement, is not specifically applied to history education, making this study distinct in its focus on historical thinking and content-specific applications.

In contrast to these studies, this research specifically investigates how EL can be applied in history classrooms, exploring its potential to enhance historical thinking by integrating experiential activities into history teaching practices. This focused approach allows for a more in-depth examination of the unique challenges and opportunities presented by EL within the context of history education.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative case study approach, which is particularly well-suited for gaining an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the implementation of Experiential Learning in enhancing students' historical thinking skills. Qualitative research design offers flexibility, beginning with broad research questions that evolve as the researcher's understanding of the context and participants' experiences deepens, thus guiding further data collection (Taylor et al., 2016). This research was conducted at five senior high schools (SMA) and *Madrasah Aliyah* (MA) in Pontianak City, including SMA Negeri 1 Pontianak, SMA Negeri 2 Pontianak, SMA Negeri 3 Pontianak, MAN 1 Pontianak, and MAN 2 Pontianak. These schools were selected based on their active engagement in innovative history teaching methods, with teachers and students playing a key role in implementing Experiential Learning.

Data collection methods for this research included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Qualitative data can take various forms, such as open-ended interviews, observations, documents, photos, and maps. These data can generally be categorized into two main types: field research (including ethnography, participant observation, and in-depth interviews) and historical-comparative research (Neuman, 2014).

In-depth interviews were conducted with history teachers and students to gather insights into their experiences with Experiential Learning and their views on the effectiveness of this approach in enhancing historical thinking skills. The interviews involved history teachers from the selected schools and students actively engaged in the Experiential Learning process.

Participant observation was carried out during the implementation of Experiential Learning in the classroom, allowing the researcher to observe teacher-student interactions and the learning activities directly. The researcher observed the application of Experiential Learning strategies in history classes, focusing on how students interacted with the material and developed their historical thinking skills.

Documentation, including lesson plans, teaching materials, and student work, was also collected to complement the data obtained from interviews and observations. These documents were analyzed to assess how Experiential Learning was integrated into history education and to evaluate the materials used in the process.

Data analysis in this study was inductive, beginning with specific data and progressing towards identifying general themes. The analysis utilized content and thematic analysis of qualitative data. Content analysis was applied to documents such as lesson plans and teaching materials to evaluate the integration of Experiential Learning in history education. Thematic analysis was conducted on the interview and observation data to explore the experiences of teachers and students and identify the historical thinking skills developed through this approach.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Concept of Experiential Learning in History Education

Experiential Learning is an approach that emphasizes the importance of direct experience in the learning process. This concept is based on Kolb (2015) Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) posits that learning occurs through a cyclical process of four main stages. The first stage, Concrete Experience, involves students directly engaging with historical phenomena, such as visiting historical sites, interviewing historical figures, or participating in historical event simulations. In the Reflective Observation stage, students reflect on their experiences, compare them with their existing knowledge, and link them to the material they have studied. The Abstract Conceptualization stage follows, where students synthesize their reflections, connecting them with historical theories and forming new concepts or hypotheses. The cycle concludes with Active Experimentation, during which students apply their newfound understanding in new contexts, such as conducting historical analyses, writing experience-based essays, or presenting their findings. This approach has been widely applied in education, including history education, as it emphasizes learning through real-world interaction.

Chang et al. (2023) affirm that experiential learning not only aids in understanding content but also fosters the innovative application of knowledge. In history education, this approach enables students to go beyond rote memorization of events and develop critical thinking skills by analyzing and interpreting various historical sources. Krishnasamy (2025) highlights that various methods can effectively implement Kolb's learning cycle in history education. For example, students may directly observe historical artifacts or visit museums (Concrete Experience). They then reflect on these experiences through group discussions (Reflective Observation), link them to historical theories (Abstract Conceptualization), and finally, apply their insights in historical analysis or event simulations (Active Experimentation).

Goel (2021) Experiential learning produces deeper, longer-lasting understanding than passive methods such as reading or listening to others' accounts. For example, students will better understand the impact of colonialism through role-playing various parties involved, rather than merely reading about it. Furthermore, Hickcox (2010) Notes that experiential learning methods can transform the

teacher-student dynamic, shifting the teacher's role from a mere transmitter of knowledge to an active learning facilitator. As a result, students become more involved in the learning process, improving their understanding of the material while developing critical and reflective thinking skills.

By applying Experiential Learning in history education, students gain a deeper understanding of historical events and enhance their critical, analytical thinking, and communication skills. This aligns with the goals of history education, which aims not only to transfer information but also to foster a more nuanced and contextual understanding of the past.

Concrete Experience

The Concrete Experience stage in Experiential Learning emphasizes active student involvement in experiences or observations related to historical content. Students are no longer passive recipients of information; they are actively engaged in the learning process. This active engagement can be realized through various activities that stimulate students' senses and emotions, making learning more vivid and memorable (Chang et al., 2023). In this study, the Concrete Experience involved visits to historical sites and simulations of historical events. These experiences allowed students to directly interact with history, providing a tangible connection to the past. This stage aligns with Kolb's Experience indicator, as students actively engage with historical phenomena, moving beyond the passive consumption of knowledge to active participation in the historical context (Kolb, 2015b).

For example, visits to museums or historical sites offer students direct exposure to artifacts, historical buildings, and environments linked to the events they are studying (Lee et al., 2023). Simulations of historical events provide another effective way for students to engage directly with history, helping them to understand the perspectives and motivations of historical figures involved in those events (Mcdougall, 2014). These experiences fulfill Kolb's Experience component by immersing students in real-world historical contexts.

Reflective Observation

Following the Concrete Experience stage, students enter the Reflective Observation stage, where they critically reflect on the experience. At this stage, students not only recall what happened but also think deeply about their feelings, observations, and lessons learned during the experience (Chamdani et al., 2022). This reflection is crucial as it allows students to transform their concrete experiences into meaningful understanding. This phase corresponds to Kolb's Share component, as students engage in discussions and reflections that allow them to compare their personal experiences with the historical content studied (Kolb, 2015).

Methods for reflection may include group discussions, writing reflection journals, or creative writing exercises (Oteng et al., 2023). Group discussions allow students to share their perspectives on the experiences, while reflection journals allow them to document their thoughts systematically. This reflective process helps students develop a more comprehensive understanding of historical events and hone their critical thinking skills (Brown et al., 2023).

By reflecting on their experiences, students form deeper connections between their direct experiences and their existing knowledge of history, facilitating a richer understanding of the historical events studied.

Abstract Conceptualization

The Abstract Conceptualization stage bridges students' concrete experiences with a broader and deeper understanding of history. At this stage, students begin to relate their experiences to historical theories, understand causal relationships, and formulate new concepts based on their reflections (Krishnasamy, 2025). This stage aligns with Kolb's Process indicator, as students analyze and process the knowledge gained from their experiences and reflections (Kolb, 2015).

Teachers play a vital role in helping students conceptualize their experiences by providing relevant explanations, additional readings, and facilitating deeper discussions (K. D. Lewis et al., 2021). Activities in this stage may include reading historical texts, watching documentaries, and engaging in discussions with historians or experts (Hidalgo, 2024). By linking their experiences to theory, students not only gain a factual understanding of history but also develop insights into the broader implications of historical events for the present and future (Thomas, 2024).

The Abstract Conceptualization phase allows students to apply critical thinking, drawing connections between their lived experiences and historical theories, thus synthesizing information in ways that go beyond surface-level understanding.

Active Experimentation

The Active Experimentation stage marks the culmination of the Experiential Learning cycle, where students apply their newfound understanding to new contexts. After engaging with real experiences, reflecting on them, and conceptualizing them, students can test their understanding and see how historical concepts can be applied in different situations (Hawtrey, 2010). This stage corresponds with Kolb's Apply component, where students experiment with their new knowledge through practical application.

Activities in this stage might include historical research, creating multimedia projects about historical events, or participating in historical debates (Ciliotta-Rubery & Levy, 2000). For example, students can design their historical research projects by selecting a topic of interest, gathering data from various sources, and producing a comprehensive research report (Bindal, 2022). Through active experimentation, students test their understanding of historical concepts and develop critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills and the ability to communicate and collaborate effectively (Thomas, 2024).

This stage solidifies the learning process, as students use their new insights to engage with history in innovative and meaningful ways, applying what they have learned to solve problems or create new interpretations of historical events.

Following the Experiential Learning cycle makes history education more dynamic and relevant. This approach not only enhances students' historical understanding but also encourages the development of cognitive and social skills that are essential for reflective and analytical thinking in addressing future challenges (Jones, 2024).

Experiential Learning Strategies in History Education

Historical Field Trips

Historical field trips, an integral component of Experiential Learning at SMAN in Pontianak City, offer transformative experiences for students. This method not only enhances their understanding of historical facts (Purwiyastuti et al., 2024), but also fosters an engaging and enjoyable learning atmosphere (Sondarika et al., 2017). Visits to historical sites, such as the Pontianak State Museum and the Kadriah Palace, serve as learning vehicles that stimulate curiosity and foster a deeper understanding of history.

These field trips, typically conducted within a brief duration (less than 24 hours), align with the concept of excursions in tourism, which emphasize economic planning and direct experience (Purwiyastuti, 2022). Direct observation during these visits shows that students do not merely passively observe artifacts and historical buildings but actively engage in exploration. This interaction with historical objects sparks critical questions and discussions among students. As Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) posits, learning begins with Concrete Experience (CE). In this context, students directly experience historical sites, creating meaningful connections between the past and the present through sensory-rich encounters with artifacts and environments. These concrete experiences are

foundational to fostering deeper engagement and emotional connections with historical material (Kolb, 2015).

The field trip method is consistent with Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), which connects learning resources with real-life experiences and the material studied (Herdianti et al., 2021). The students' active participation in exploring and questioning historical artifacts aligns with Reflective Observation (RO) in Kolb's learning cycle. After engaging in the field trip, students reflect on their direct experiences, formulating questions, discussions, and new insights about the historical topics they encountered. After participating in these activities, interviews with history teachers revealed increased students' interest in history (Kolb, 2015). Students became more proactive in asking questions, engaging in discussions, and seeking additional information related to historical topics. They reported that directly interacting with historical artifacts helped them better understand abstract historical concepts and cultivated a sense of pride and attachment to their homeland.

Field trips can also be understood through the lens of constructivist theory, which suggests that learning occurs when students connect new experiences with prior knowledge, as proposed by Piaget. As students visit historical sites and engage with artifacts, they connect the new information and their existing knowledge, reinforcing their understanding of historical narratives. This connection is strengthened when they reflect on the experience and conceptualize new insights, aligning with Kolb's Abstract Conceptualization (AC) stage. Additionally, Lave and Wenger's situational learning theory emphasizes the importance of social context in learning, further reinforced through direct interaction with historical sources. This social interaction creates a collaborative learning environment where students can share their reflections and deepen their understanding together (Kolb, 2015).

Despite the numerous benefits of historical field trips, challenges such as budget constraints and difficulties in arranging visit schedules remain. Collaboration between schools, parents, and local communities is key to overcoming these challenges. Support from various parties, including local governments and foundations, alongside meticulous planning, can ensure the success of field trips as a student-centered, innovative learning strategy. This collaborative effort, if well-executed, can lead to Active Experimentation (AE), the final stage of Kolb's learning cycle, where students apply their newfound historical insights in future scenarios or projects. In this case, students can use the knowledge from the field trip in discussions, written projects, or even community-based activities, demonstrating the real-world application of historical understanding.

Historical Reenactment

Historical reenactment is another valuable strategy within Experiential Learning, offering students a unique, immersive learning experience. Historical reconstruction is essential in shaping public understanding of the past, closely linked to collective memory and popular culture (Pawleta, 2018). This strategy allows students to go beyond reading or hearing about history—they actively "experience" how historical events unfolded.

Historically reenactment requires attention to "era appropriateness" to maintain authenticity (Decker, 2009). Students involved in reenactment strive to understand the characters and motivations of the historical figures they portray, an approach rooted in anthropological and cultural studies (Gapps, 2002). The reenactment process aligns with Concrete Experience (CE) in Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), where students physically and emotionally engage in historical events. By acting out scenes and portraying historical figures, students transform abstract historical knowledge into real-world experiences. The active participation required in reenactments makes the learning process more tangible and impactful, helping students connect with historical material more profoundly than through traditional learning methods (Kolb, 2015).

Observations show that students are enthusiastic when acting as historical figures, engaging in discussions, and collaborating to create an engaging and dynamic simulation. This excitement

highlights the Reflective Observation (RO) stage of Kolb's learning cycle, where students reflect on their roles, the events they reenact, and the implications of their actions. This reflective process enables them to critically analyze historical events and consider alternative perspectives. Students' collaborative efforts to reconstruct history also enhance their communication and teamwork skills, which are crucial in the Active Experimentation (AE) phase, where students apply what they've learned in new contexts or future simulations (Kolb, 2015).

The benefits of historical reenactment include enhanced understanding of cause-and-effect relationships in history. Through simulations, students witness the interconnectedness of events and their consequences. This is a direct application of Kolb's Abstract Conceptualization (AC), where students conceptualize the historical connections and analyze the cause-and-effect chains they have acted out. Additionally, reenactment fosters empathy for historical figures, as students gain insight into their perspectives and motivations. By inhabiting the roles of historical figures, students are encouraged to empathize with the challenges, conflicts, and decisions these figures faced. This process can deepen their emotional connection to historical events.

This strategy also develops students' social and collaboration skills, as they learn to work together, communicate effectively, and appreciate differing viewpoints. These social interactions reinforce the situational learning theory proposed by Lave and Wenger, which emphasizes the importance of social context in learning. As students collaborate on reenactments, they learn from one another, share ideas, and co-create knowledge about historical events, deepening their collective understanding of history.

Historical reenactment can also be associated with role-playing learning theory, which underscores the significance of social interaction in understanding concepts, as proposed by Vygotsky. Students actively contribute to the learning process by engaging in role-play, building meaning through social interaction, and shared experience. Additionally, Bruner's cognitive theory suggests that simulation learning enhances student engagement and retention of the material being studied. When students actively participate in reenactments, they become more invested in the material, leading to higher retention and a deeper understanding of historical events.

However, like field trips, reenactments face challenges such as limited resources for costumes and props. Creativity and collaboration are essential to overcoming these obstacles. Teachers can use simple materials to create props and involve students in making them. This hands-on approach allows students to contribute to the learning process actively, reinforcing the experiential learning cycle. Additionally, selecting relevant historical events and designing compelling scenarios can ensure the success of reenactment activities, further engaging students in the process.

By integrating field trips and historical reenactment into history education, students gain more meaningful learning experiences, increase their engagement with history, and develop critical analysis and reflective thinking skills. Combining observation, interviews, and documentation in these methods creates an innovative and effective approach to history education. Through these experiential learning strategies, students gain knowledge and develop a deeper connection to history, fostering a lifelong interest and appreciation for the subject.

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in History

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is considered a more effective method than conventional teaching approaches, such as lectures, because it encourages students to actively seek information and solve problems within the context of their projects, rather than simply receiving knowledge from the teacher (Lim et al., 2023). PjBL also has the potential to help students form their scientific identities by offering them opportunities to think and act like scientists. Student involvement in research and scientific practice is crucial for successful learning and the development of self-identity (Tierney et al., 2025).

As an Experiential Learning strategy, PjBL implemented at SMAN in Pontianak City allows students to engage in in-depth and contextual learning through research projects. This approach aligns

with Concrete Experience (CE) in Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), where students not only passively receive information but actively participate in formulating research questions, collecting and analyzing data, and presenting their findings through creative and innovative products. Students are exposed to real-world scenarios and problems by working on research projects, making learning more tangible and meaningful. The direct involvement in research allows students to experience the historical inquiry process firsthand, turning abstract knowledge into concrete, actionable insights (Kolb, 2015).

Observations during the implementation of PjBL showed that students were enthusiastic and motivated while working on their projects. They collaborated in groups, exchanged ideas, and actively participated in discussions to complete their projects. This reflects Kolb's Reflective Observation (RO), where students engage in self-reflection and group discussions, analyzing their experiences and interpreting historical data. The collaborative nature of PjBL further supports the social constructivist perspective (Vygotsky), where learning is seen as a socially-mediated activity, enhancing the development of critical thinking and creativity. This method encourages students to think critically about the historical content they encounter, reflecting on its significance, cause-and-effect relationships, and implications (Kolb, 2015).

History teachers reported that PjBL is an effective strategy for enhancing students' historical understanding. They noted that students became more engaged in seeking information, thinking critically, and developing their creativity through PjBL. This involvement in historical research connects directly with Kolb's Abstract Conceptualization (AC) stage, where students synthesize the information they've gathered into meaningful conceptual frameworks. Students must understand the historical data and make connections, draw conclusions, and develop new insights based on their research. These higher-order cognitive skills are crucial for deepening their historical understanding and academic growth.

Interviews with students also provided positive feedback regarding their experience working on history projects. Students felt challenged and motivated to produce high-quality outputs. They found it easier to understand historical content because they were directly involved in research and analysis. This hands-on, active learning process supports Active Experimentation (AE) in Kolb's learning cycle. In this stage, students apply the new knowledge acquired in real-world contexts. The products students create, such as research reports, documentaries, historical articles, or models, are tangible evidence of their active engagement and demonstrate how they apply their learning in practical scenarios.

The analysis of the research findings revealed that PjBL offers significant benefits. First, it improves students' critical and creative thinking skills. Students learn to formulate research questions, evaluate information from various sources, and develop creative solutions through the project process. Second, PjBL enhances students' research and analytical skills. Students learn to use diverse research methods, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, and critically evaluate the data they gather. Third, PjBL improves students' communication and presentation skills. Students learn to present their research findings creatively and communicate their ideas effectively, further developing essential skills for academic and professional success.

Despite its benefits, PjBL in history education faces several challenges, such as time and resource limitations. Furthermore, students' lack of familiarity with historical research methods can pose difficulties. Teachers and schools must provide adequate support and resources to overcome these challenges. Teachers can guide students through each project stage, from formulating research questions to presenting results. Schools should also provide necessary resources, such as books, journals, and internet access. Training in historical research methods will also help students gain the knowledge needed to succeed in their projects.

PjBL can be a highly effective strategy for enhancing students' historical understanding and interest by addressing these challenges. Integrating observation, interviews, and documentation will provide a comprehensive and in-depth analysis, making PjBL a valuable and student-centered approach to

history education. Through this approach, students learn historical facts and develop a deeper connection to the subject, enhancing their academic skills and personal growth.

Implications of Experiential Learning on Historical Thinking

Experiential Learning not only makes history education more engaging, but it also significantly enhances students' historical thinking skills. Below are some key implications of Experiential Learning for historical thinking:

Developing Chronological Awareness

Chronological awareness is a critical aspect of historical thinking. Understanding the sequence of events and their temporal relationships is fundamental for a comprehensive understanding of historical developments. Experiential Learning contributes significantly to developing students' chronological awareness through activities that involve direct, hands-on experience.

Observations made during history learning activities at SMAN in Pontianak City reveal that students who participated in Experiential Learning, such as museum visits or simulations of historical events, demonstrated a better grasp of the sequence of events and their interrelationships. They could logically arrange historical events and more accurately identify historical periodization. Interviews with history teachers confirmed that Experiential Learning is highly effective in helping students understand the concept of time in history. Teachers noted that students found it easier to comprehend how events influenced one another after experiencing them firsthand or seeing tangible historical evidence.

Interviews with students further support this view, with students expressing that it was easier to understand the sequence and relationships between events because they could directly "see" and "feel" how history unfolded. Students reported increased interest in learning more about history, as they could connect past events to their present lives. Documentation, in the form of photos and videos taken during Experiential Learning activities, serves as concrete evidence of students' active engagement in developing their understanding of historical chronology. These photos capture students observing artifacts, participating in historical simulations, or discussing event sequences, while short videos documenting learning activities also provide valuable resources.

The integrated analysis of research findings reveals several benefits of Experiential Learning in developing chronological awareness. First, it helps students understand the sequence and temporal relationships between events. Through direct experience, students can observe how events occur before or after others and how these events are interconnected. Second, Experiential Learning enhances students' ability to logically arrange events chronologically. Students learn to order historical events based on their occurrence through activities like simulations or artifact analysis. Third, Experiential Learning helps students understand historical periodization, as they learn to group events into relevant historical periods by understanding their sequence and interrelationships.

Despite these benefits, implementing Experiential Learning to develop chronological awareness faces challenges, such as students' limited understanding of historical context and the lack of relevance between learning materials and students' lives. Careful preparation and contextual presentation of materials are essential to address these challenges. Teachers can provide sufficient background information about historical contexts before conducting Experiential Learning activities and help students relate the learning material to their daily lives, allowing them to see the relevance of history in their present reality.

By overcoming these challenges, Experiential Learning can be an effective strategy for developing students' chronological awareness. A well-integrated approach involving observation, interviews, and documentation will produce a comprehensive and in-depth analysis, contributing significantly to the development of innovative and student-centered history education.

Enhancing Understanding of Historical Cause and Effect

Understanding cause-and-effect relationships in history is another essential aspect of historical thinking. The ability to identify and analyze the causes and consequences of historical events enables students to grasp the dynamics and complexity of history. Experiential Learning plays a vital role in developing this understanding through direct, interactive experiences.

Observations during history learning activities at SMAN in Pontianak City show that students engaged in Experiential Learning, such as historical simulations or debates, demonstrate a better understanding of cause-and-effect relationships. They can identify the factors that led to events and understand their consequences. Interviews with history teachers revealed that Experiential Learning is particularly effective in helping students comprehend historical causality. Teachers noted that students became more critical and analytical in understanding the relationship between events after experiencing or discussing them.

Interviews with students also highlight positive outcomes. Students reported that it was easier to understand the causes of historical events because they could directly "see" and "feel" how certain factors led to those events. They also expressed increased interest in learning history, recognizing the relevance of past events to their current lives. Photos and videos taken during Experiential Learning activities prove students' active involvement in understanding historical cause and effect. These images capture students discussing the factors behind events or engaging in complex historical simulations.

The integrated analysis of research findings reveals that Experiential Learning significantly enhances students' understanding of historical cause and effect. First, it helps students identify the factors that led to historical events. Through direct experiences, students can observe how various social, economic, political, and cultural factors interact and contribute to events. Second, Experiential Learning improves students' ability to analyze the consequences of historical events. Students learn to view events in isolation and understand their broader implications for society, humanity, and civilization. Third, Experiential Learning helps students appreciate the complexity of cause-and-effect relationships in history. Students learn that a single factor rarely causes historical events but typically results from multiple interconnected factors.

While Experiential Learning offers significant benefits in enhancing understanding of historical cause and effect, challenges exist, such as students' lack of understanding of historical context and difficulties interpreting historical evidence. To address these challenges, teachers should ensure that sufficient background information on historical context is provided before Experiential Learning activities. Teachers can also help students interpret historical evidence and connect it to historical cause-and-effect relationships.

By addressing these challenges, Experiential Learning can be an effective strategy for enhancing students' understanding of historical cause and effect. Integrating observation, interviews, and documentation will yield a comprehensive and in-depth analysis, thereby significantly contributing to the development of innovative, student-centered history education.

Building Historical Empathy

Historical empathy—the ability to understand and appreciate the experiences, perspectives, and emotions of people from the past—is a crucial component of historical thinking. This skill enables students to understand the complexity of history, avoid oversimplifications, and appreciate the diversity of human experience. Experiential Learning plays a significant role in building historical empathy by directly allowing students to interact with "traces" of the past.

Observations during history lessons at SMAN in Pontianak City show that students participating in Experiential Learning activities, such as role-playing historical figures or interviewing historical witnesses, exhibit a marked increase in historical empathy. They develop a deeper understanding of the motivations and perspectives of historical figures and gain a greater appreciation for the diversity of human experiences in history. Interviews with history teachers indicate that Experiential Learning is

particularly effective in fostering empathy and appreciation for historical experiences. Teachers noted that students became more open and tolerant of differences after experiencing firsthand what it was like to live in the past.

Students also shared positive feedback on their experiences in developing historical empathy. They felt more connected to history because they could "feel" what it was like to live in the past. Students expressed greater interest in learning about history, as they could see the relevance between historical experiences and their own lives. Photos and videos taken during Experiential Learning activities provide concrete evidence of students' active involvement in building historical empathy. These materials document students role-playing historical figures with respect, or engaging in discussions with historical witnesses about their personal experiences.

The integrated analysis of research findings reveals that Experiential Learning significantly enhances students' historical empathy. First, it helps students understand human experiences across various historical contexts. By interacting with historical "traces," students can gain insight into how people lived, worked, and interacted in the past. Second, it improves students' ability to understand the perspectives and motivations of historical figures. By playing roles in reenactments or participating in simulations, students can better understand the actions of historical figures and the reasoning behind them. Third, Experiential Learning fosters empathy and appreciation for the diversity of human experiences in history. Students learn to avoid simplistic generalizations and appreciate the complexity of historical narratives.

Despite its benefits, implementing Experiential Learning to build historical empathy faces challenges, such as inadequate teacher facilitation and insufficient preparation. Effective teacher facilitation and deep reflection by students are essential to overcome these challenges. Teachers can guide students in reflecting on their experiences by posing questions that stimulate critical thinking and empathy. Additionally, careful preparation, including selecting appropriate activities, crafting compelling scenarios, and assigning roles suited to students' interests and abilities, is crucial for the success of Experiential Learning activities.

By overcoming these challenges, Experiential Learning can be a highly effective strategy for building students' historical empathy. A well-integrated approach, combining observation, interviews, and documentation, will provide a comprehensive and in-depth analysis, significantly contributing to the development of innovative, student-centered history education.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that implementing Experiential Learning in history education significantly enhances students' historical thinking skills. Through direct engagement with historical experiences, students develop a stronger sense of chronological awareness, improve their ability to critically analyze historical causation, and cultivate a deeper empathy toward historical figures. The findings suggest that Experiential Learning promotes active learning, making history more relevant and meaningful for students. However, its successful implementation depends on adequate resources, effective teacher facilitation, and proper integration into the curriculum. Future research should focus on strategies to address these challenges and explore scalable models for incorporating Experiential Learning into diverse educational contexts.

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