



Enhancing Students' Soft Skills Through Project-Based Integrated Teaching and Learning in Women's Clothing Courses

St. Aisyah Hading*, Syarifah Suryana, Israwati Hamzar, Kurniati

Universitas Negeri Makassar

*Corresponding author. Email: st.aisyah@unm.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Soft skills are crucial in project-based learning environments, where collaboration, communication, and problem-solving are key components for successful fashion design learning processes. This descriptive study aims to identify the profile of soft skills levels among fashion design students in various aspects, including creativity, communication, precision, discipline, adaptability, interest in fashion, and self-confidence. The sample consisted of 38 students selected through purposive sampling. The results showed that the majority of students had a fairly good to excellent level of skills in all aspects studied. This finding provides a positive outlook on the competencies of fashion design students. However, there are still some aspects that need improvement. These findings have significant implications for the development of fashion design curricula and learning programs, enabling the production of graduates who are better prepared to face the challenges of the fashion.

Keywords: *Soft skills, Project Based Learning, Women's Fashion Learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly complex globalized era, soft skills have become invaluable assets for individuals, particularly in the workforce. Soft skills, encompassing communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities, are key to success in various fields, including fashion design. Research has shown that individuals with strong soft skills are more likely to succeed in their careers and are better able to adapt to change.

Soft skills are personality traits, goals, motivations, and preferences that are valued in the labor market and other fields. They predict life success, and programs that enhance soft skills are important for public policy [1]. Soft skills are crucial for navigating the complexities of the modern workplace, where collaboration and effective communication are key. Employers increasingly recognize the value of employees with strong soft skills, as they are better equipped to handle challenges and work well with others. Investing in programs that develop and enhance soft skills can result in a more productive and harmonious work environment, ultimately benefiting both individuals and organizations [2].

Soft skills are not merely complementary but serve as a robust foundation for building a successful career. In the modern workplace, the ability to collaborate, communicate effectively, and solve problems creatively is highly valued. Employers increasingly recognize that strong soft skills can enhance productivity, innovation, and

job satisfaction. Soft skills in fashion design encompass cognitive skills, social skills, and personal attributes. Cognitive skills include creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Social skills involve teamwork, professional ethics, and interpersonal skills. Personal attributes include responsibility, lifelong learning, and leadership [3].

In the context of fashion design, soft skills play a pivotal role. Creativity, attention to detail, and collaborative abilities are essential skills required to produce innovative designs that meet consumer needs. Project-based learning is an effective approach to developing these soft skills. This pedagogical approach provides a learning environment where students can apply theoretical knowledge directly to practical applications. By working on design projects, students not only hone technical skills such as sewing and pattern making but also cultivate soft skills such as creativity, problem-solving, and adaptability. Research has demonstrated that project-based learning can enhance students' motivation, conceptual understanding, and ability to work independently and collaboratively.

Soft skills such as creativity, communication, and teamwork are not merely complementary but fundamental to the success of a fashion designer. By adopting a project-based learning approach, educational institutions can ensure that graduates possess not only the technical expertise but also the interpersonal skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly complex industry. [4] Project-

based learning can significantly enhance adaptability in the fashion industry by providing students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts, design solutions to real-world problems, and collaborate within teams. This approach can better prepare students for the demands of an increasingly digitalized workplace.

Project-based learning is crucial in women's fashion courses as it facilitates superior student learning outcomes compared to traditional instructional strategies. [5] Implementing project-based tasks empowers students to become independent learners as they actively seek out resources and engage in deeper, more meaningful learning experiences by connecting theoretical knowledge with real-world applications. [5] Soft skills and project-based learning complement each other in developing competent fashion designers who are prepared for industry challenges. By integrating soft skills into the fashion design curriculum, we can produce graduates who not only possess strong technical abilities but also have the capacity

to innovate, adapt, and contribute to the evolution of the fashion industry.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research employed a descriptive method to ascertain and elucidate the soft skills of students after implementing Project-Based Learning in a women's fashion course. The population of this study comprised all students enrolled in the women's fashion course, totaling 112 individuals across three classes. A purposive sampling technique was utilized, selecting one class of 38 students from the Family Welfare Education Study Program with a concentration in Fashion Design. Data collection was conducted using a Likert scale questionnaire to measure the students' level of agreement with statements related to soft skills developed during the women's fashion design process.

Development of Soft Skills in Women's Fashion Design Education

Table 1. Soft skills categories

Category	Component
Creativity	Innovative ability, visual imagination, and divergent thinking
Communication	Ability to articulate ideas, accept criticism, and collaborate in a team
Attention to Detail	Focus on detail, analytical skills, and precision in work.
Discipline	Time management, responsibility, and consistency
Adaptability	Flexibility, willingness to learn new things, and ability to work under pressure.
Interest in Fashion	Staying updated on trends, demonstrating an interest in fashion history, and possessing a refined fashion sense.
Confidence	Ability to present work, resilience in the face of failure, and self-belief.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The data analysis employed a descriptive approach, whereby respondents were required to rate each

component according to their perceived level of soft skills proficiency:

Table 2. Assessment of Soft Skills in Women's Fashion Design Students

No	Creativity	Excellent	Satisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	Communication	43.6 %	48.7 %	5.1 %	0 %
2	Attention to Detail	46.2 %	43.6 %	7.7 %	0 %
3	Discipline	41.0 %	51.3 %	5.1 %	0 %
4	Adaptability	48.7 %	43.6 %	5.1 %	0 %
5	Interest in Fashion	56.4 %	33.3 %	7.7 %	0 %
6	Confidence	48.7 %	43.6 %	5.1 %	0 %
7	Creativity	43.6 %	38.5 %	15.4 %	0 %

The data from Table 2, which presents an evaluation of students' soft skills in women's fashion design across 7 categories, suggests that:

Firstly, the data on the 'Creativity' category reveals that approximately 43.6% of students demonstrated a high level of creativity. This indicates that they possess the ability to generate novel ideas, think outside the box, and solve problems in unique ways when designing fashion

products. Approximately 48.7% of students exhibited a satisfactory level of creativity, suggesting they are fairly creative, innovative, and capable of producing original ideas. Only 5.1% of respondents reported a low level of creativity, indicating that a small proportion of students may struggle with generating new ideas or thinking creatively in the context of fashion design. Notably, none of the respondents reported having no creativity at all.

Secondly, regarding the 'Communication' category in women's fashion design, approximately 46.2% of students exhibited excellent communication skills, indicating their ability to communicate effectively, actively engage in interactions, and build relationships with others. Around 43.6% of respondents demonstrated a moderate level of communication skills, suggesting that while they can communicate well in certain situations, they may lack confidence or experience difficulties in specific social contexts. Furthermore, 7.7% of respondents reported low communication skills, indicating challenges in expressing thoughts and feelings, or feeling awkward in social interactions. Notably, no respondents reported having absolutely no communication skills.

Thirdly, regarding the 'Attention to Detail' category in women's fashion design, approximately 41.0% of respondents demonstrated a high level of attention to detail, indicating that they are meticulous, detail-oriented, and highly focused on accuracy in their work. Furthermore, 51.3% of students exhibited a satisfactory level of attention to detail, suggesting that they are careful in completing tasks, pay attention to details, and tend to be accurate in their work. Only around 5.1% of respondents reported a low level of attention to detail, indicating a tendency to overlook details, make minor errors, or be less accurate in completing tasks. Notably, none of the respondents reported having absolutely no attention to detail.

Fourthly, regarding the 'Discipline' category in women's fashion design, approximately 48.7% of students demonstrated a high level of discipline. This indicates that they are likely to be highly organized, consistent in completing tasks, and capable of effective time management. Furthermore, 43.6% of students exhibited a satisfactory level of discipline, suggesting that they are generally disciplined but may need to improve certain aspects of their discipline. Only around 5.1% of respondents reported a low level of discipline, indicating that they may often struggle to follow rules, procrastinate, or have difficulty managing their time. Notably, none of the respondents reported having absolutely no discipline.

Fifthly, regarding the 'Adaptability' category in women's fashion design, approximately 56.4% of respondents demonstrated a high level of adaptability, indicating their ability to adjust easily to change, be flexible in new situations, and effectively cope with challenges. Furthermore, 33.3% of students exhibited a moderate level of adaptability, suggesting that while they can adapt in some situations, they may struggle in significantly different or rapidly changing circumstances. Only around 7.7% of respondents reported a low level of adaptability, indicating difficulties in accepting change, feeling uncomfortable in new situations, and requiring more time to adjust. Notably, none of the respondents reported having absolutely no adaptability.

Sixthly, regarding the 'Interest in Fashion' category, approximately 58.7% of respondents demonstrated a high level of interest in fashion, indicating that they frequently follow the latest trends, pay attention to details in dressing, and even have fashion-related hobbies such as designing or collecting clothing. Furthermore, 43.6% of students exhibited a moderate level of interest in fashion, suggesting that they are mindful of their appearance but may not closely follow the latest trends or have in-depth knowledge about fashion. Only around 5.1% of respondents reported a low level of interest in fashion, indicating that they may be less concerned with appearance or the latest fashion trends. Notably, none of the respondents reported having absolutely no interest in fashion.

Seventhly, regarding the 'Self-Confidence' category in women's fashion design, approximately 43.6% of respondents demonstrated a moderately high level of self-confidence, indicating that they feel fairly confident in various situations, are capable of making decisions, and have a positive self-perception. Furthermore, 38.5% of students exhibited a moderate level of self-confidence, suggesting that while they may feel confident in some situations, they may lack confidence in others or when faced with new challenges. Only around 15.4% of respondents reported a low level of self-confidence, indicating that they may frequently feel doubtful, anxious, or uncertain about their abilities. Notably, none of the respondents reported having absolutely no self-confidence.

4. DISCUSSION

This research investigates the soft skills that should be mastered by fashion design students during the women's clothing making learning process after the implementation of project-based learning. Seven categories of these skills were observed, ranging from creativity to self-confidence. The results showed that the majority of students (82.3%) had a fairly good to excellent level of creativity after the implementation of the project-based learning model, indicating the presence of creative talents that can be further developed. Nevertheless, there is still room to improve creativity in a small portion of students. These results can serve as a reference for fashion study programs to facilitate further development of creativity in the learning process. This research provides a positive picture of the potential creativity of students in the fashion industry. With the right learning support, these young talents can become the main drivers in developing a more innovative and competitive Indonesian fashion industry. This finding aligns with [6]'s assertion that to enhance creativity in fashion design education, the See Beyond method can be applied. This method focuses on broadening students' experiences, improving the teaching

and learning process, and increasing awareness of the design features required for a fashion collection.

The implementation of project-based learning in women's fashion design has proven effective in enhancing students' communication skills. Students have learned to collaborate with teammates, build networks, and articulate their ideas clearly. However, the research also indicates that there is still room for improvement in certain aspects of communication, such as self-confidence and the ability to interact in more complex social situations. These findings align with [7] who argued that project-based learning has been implemented in fashion design education to improve the quality of students. This approach helps engage students in the learning process and guarantees higher quality outcomes.

Project-based learning has successfully cultivated a high level of precision in most students during garment construction. This is evident in the research findings, which demonstrate students' potential to produce high-quality and accurate products. Precision in garment making and attention to detail in fashion design are crucial aspects of the fashion industry. Technical specifications play a vital role in translating design ideas into tangible garments, ensuring accuracy and quality throughout the production process [8] Moreover, garment design and manufacturing planning emphasize the importance of quality materials, production planning, and control to achieve the desired outcomes in a fashion collection. [9]

Our findings reveal a notable increase in student discipline following the implementation of project-based learning in women's fashion design, indicating a strong capacity for producing high-quality and timely outputs. Moreover, the research demonstrates that project-based learning has effectively enhanced students' adaptability to changes within the garment-making process. While the majority of students exhibited the necessary flexibility, there remains potential for further improvement, suggesting a need for more sophisticated learning models to address the dynamic nature of the fashion industry.

Project-based learning can positively influence adaptability in the fashion industry by providing students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts, designing solutions to real-world problems, and working collaboratively in teams. This can help students prepare for the demands of an increasingly digitalized workplace. [10] However, it is also crucial to consider the integration of technology and information in the learning process, such as digital literacy, computer programming, data analysis, and artificial intelligence, to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of learning in the 4.0 digital era [11].

The implementation of project-based learning has shown significant results in increasing students' interest in the fashion world and boosting their self-confidence. Data indicates a high level of student interest, suggesting a substantial market potential. This increased self-

confidence has the potential to yield high-quality works. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement, particularly in accommodating diverse student interests and continuing to enhance their self-confidence to prepare them for the challenges of the fashion industry. Project-based learning can enhance students' self-confidence in producing creative works as this model allows students to develop communication skills, learn independently, and take pride in their work beyond the classroom. Research indicates that the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) can enhance students' creativity in producing products in specific courses [12].

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that, in general, the students involved in this study exhibited a notably high level of creativity, communication skills, precision, discipline, adaptability, interest in fashion, and self-confidence. Creativity: The majority of students demonstrated a strong ability to generate novel ideas and think creatively within the context of fashion design. Communication: Most students were able to communicate effectively, both verbally and nonverbally. Precision: Students displayed a high level of precision in completing fashion design tasks, indicating a keen attention to detail. Discipline: The majority of students exhibited a strong sense of discipline, which is essential for completing complex design projects. Adaptability: Students generally demonstrated a high level of adaptability to changes and challenges in the garment-making process. Interest in Fashion: The high level of interest in fashion among the majority of students indicated their passion for the field. Self-Confidence: A significant proportion of students exhibited a high level of self-confidence, which is crucial for facing challenges in the design world. These research findings provide a positive outlook on the competencies of fashion design students. However, there is still room for improvement and further development. Consequently, the results of this study can serve as a foundation for developing more effective learning strategies that are aligned with the needs of the fashion industry."

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

St. Aisyah Hading: FIRST AUTHOR; CORRESPONDING AUTHOR & WRITING – ORIGINAL DRAFT

Email : st.aisyah@unm.ac.id

Universitas Negeri Makassar

Syarifah Suryana: SECOND AUTHOR; WRITING-REVIEW

Email : syarifahsuryana@unm.ac.id

Universitas Negeri Makassar

Israwati Hamzar : THIRD AUTHOR; EDITING
 Email : israwatihamsar@unm.ac.id
 Universitas Negeri Makassar

Kurniati : FOURTH AUTHOR;
 METHODOLOGY
 Email : kurniati@unm.ac.id
 Universitas Negeri Makassar

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to: Rector of UNM, Head of LP2M UNM, Dean of Faculty of Engineering UNM and all of the students who have been respondents in this research.

REFERENCES

- [1] B. chul, "The Importance of Soft Skills: Education beyond academic knowledge," *NAWA Journal of Language and Communication*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 146-154, 2008.
- [2] S. I. Marin, J. P. Román, C. Robledo and Maria, "oft skills, do we know what we are talking about?," *Review of Managerial Science*, vol. 16, p. 969–1000, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-021-00474-9>
- [3] T. A. Achmadi, A. . B. Anggoro, Irmayanti, L. S. Rahmatin and D. Anggriyani, "Analisis 10 Tingkat Soft Skills Yang Dibutuhkan Mahasiswa di Abad 21," *Jurnal Teknologi Busana dan Boga*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 145-150, 2020.
- [4] D. Jung and S. Suh, "Enhancing Soft Skills through Generative AI in Sustainable Fashion Textile Design Education," *Sustainability*, vol. 16, pp. 2-22, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16166973>
- [5] Jamilah and S. . E. Wahyuningsih, "The Students' Perceptions of the Hybrid Project-Based Learning Model in the Women's Clothing Production Course," *Jurnal Tekno Busana dan Boga*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 57-63, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.15294/teknobuga.v11i1.46299>
- [6] G. L. Junior and R. Zuanon, "The Foundation of the SEE BEYOND Method: Fashion Design and Neuroeducation Applied to the Teaching of the Project Methodology to Students with Congenital and Acquired Blindness," *Springer International Publishing*, p. . 528–546, 2017. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58697-7_40
- [7] Indarti, "Implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Final Collection to Improve the Quality of Fashion Design Student," *Innovation of Vocational Tchnology Education*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 22-30, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.17509/inovotec.v12i1.4500>
- [8] S. Donmezer, P. Demircioglu, I. Bogrekci and G. Bas, "Revolutionizing the Garment Industry 5.0: Embracing Closed-Loop Design, E-Libraries, and Digital Twins," *Sustainability*, vol. 15, no. 22, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su152215839>
- [9] J. Geršak, Design of Clothing Manufacturing Processes A Systematic Approach to Developing, Planning, and Control, 2 ed., Cambrigde: Elsevier, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-102648-9.00005-0>
- [10] A. Vuruskan and A. Burns, "An Approach To Develop Creativity By Understanding Structure In Fashion Design Education," *Textile and Apparel*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 74-82, 2017.
- [11] M. Akhyar, Iswantir M, S. Febriani and R. A. Gusli, "Strategi Adaptasi dan Inovasi Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam di Era Digital 4.0," *Instructional Development Journal (IDJ)*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 18-30, 2022.
- [12] S. S. Amalia and I. Alfiansyah, "Model Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek Dalam Mewujudkan Profil Pelajar Pancasila Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah," *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Keislaman*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 239-254, 2022.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

