

An Analysis of Civic Education Learning Models and Student Engagement in Three Elementary Schools in Lampung, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Civic Education plays an important role in developing students' civic knowledge, character, and responsibility as citizens. The selection of appropriate learning models is essential to create meaningful and student-centered learning experiences in elementary schools. This study aims to identify the learning models used in Civic Education, describe their implementation, and analyze their influence on student engagement. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis conducted in three elementary schools, namely SDIT Mutiara Miftahul Jannah Sabah Balau, SD Negeri 1 Kertosari, and SD Negeri 3 Poncowarno. The findings revealed that teachers applied various learning models, including Problem-Based Learning (PBL), role-playing, discussion, simulation, portfolio-based learning, and habituation activities. These learning models encouraged students to participate actively, think critically, collaborate with peers, and practice civic values in their daily lives. The study concludes that innovative and student-centered learning models significantly improve student engagement in Civic Education learning. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to continue developing learning strategies that are aligned with students' characteristics and learning needs.

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INTRODUCTION

Civic Education (PKn) plays a significant role in preparing students to become responsible citizens who understand and are able to implement their rights and obligations in accordance with the national ideology and the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia. At the elementary school level, teachers have an important responsibility in fostering students' moral values, attitudes, and character development. Therefore, Civic Education is not only intended to develop students' knowledge but also to cultivate democratic values, integrity, and good citizenship. Through Civic Education, students are expected to become individuals who demonstrate positive behavior and actively participate in social life.

The success of Civic Education learning is strongly influenced by the learning models implemented by teachers in the classroom. Learning models serve as instructional frameworks that guide the delivery of learning materials and support the achievement of educational objectives. Students' interest and engagement in learning are essential factors that contribute to successful learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers are required to design and implement learning models that are aligned with students' characteristics, developmental stages, and learning needs.

However, the implementation of Civic Education learning has not always achieved the expected outcomes. Several challenges remain, including the limited use and development of learning media, the less optimal implementation of teaching methods and learning models, and the use of instructional approaches that are not fully aligned with learning objectives. In addition, some teachers still experience difficulties in developing learning models and instructional media for Civic Education, while limited supporting facilities in schools may also affect the effectiveness of the learning process.

Learning models and instructional media based on contextual and differentiated learning principles are increasingly important in supporting meaningful learning experiences. Learning media function as tools that stimulate students' thoughts, feelings, attention, and competencies, while appropriate learning models encourage active participation throughout the learning process. Furthermore, well-designed learning models can assist teachers in planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction more effectively. These perspectives are closely related to learning theories and instructional strategies that emphasize student-centered learning and active engagement.

Although previous studies have discussed various learning models in Civic Education, studies examining the implementation of different learning models across several elementary schools and their influence on student engagement remain limited. Therefore, this study provides empirical insights into the implementation of Civic Education learning models in different elementary school settings and their contribution to improving student participation in learning activities.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to identify the Civic Education learning approaches implemented in elementary schools, examine their implementation, and analyze their influence on student engagement. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of the selection and application of learning models that are appropriate for students' characteristics and learning materials, thereby supporting the effectiveness of Civic Education learning.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the learning process by analyzing the interactions between teachers and students. This approach was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of phenomena occurring in the educational setting and facilitates the investigation of participants' perspectives and experiences regarding the effectiveness of the learning models implemented in schools.

Data were collected through field observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Field observations were conducted to identify the conditions and processes of classroom learning, while in-depth interviews were carried out to obtain detailed information on participants' experiences and perceptions of the implemented learning models. Document analysis was used as supporting evidence to strengthen the findings obtained from observations and interviews.

The study was conducted in several elementary schools, namely SDIT Mutiara Miftahul Jannah Sabah Balau, located in Tanjung Bintang District, South Lampung Regency; SD Negeri 1 Kertosari, located in Tanjung Sari District, South Lampung Regency; and SD Negeri 3 Poncowarno, located in Kalirejo District, Central Lampung Regency. The research activities were carried out on Saturday, April 11, 2026, at each research site.

Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting and focusing on information relevant to the research objectives. Subsequently, the data were presented descriptively and analytically to identify patterns emerging from the observation and interview findings. The final stage involved drawing conclusions by interpreting the findings inductively and relating them to relevant theories and contemporary concepts of learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning Models Implemented in Civic Education under the Merdeka Curriculum

Learning models or strategies are theoretical frameworks used to organize teaching and learning activities in the classroom to ensure that learning objectives are achieved. Learning strategies do not merely deliver instructional content; they also help teachers create active, creative, and meaningful learning environments (Wahid, 2021). Within the Merdeka Curriculum, educators are expected to implement student-centered learning strategies that actively engage learners in the educational process. Learning models such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL), discussions, simulations, and role-playing have become increasingly popular because they encourage students to think critically, collaborate with others, and develop solutions to real-life problems. Jean Piaget's theory of constructivism argues that learners construct their own understanding through direct experience and interaction with their environment (Mu'min, 2013). In line with this perspective, social interaction plays a significant role in the learning process, and collaborative activities such as group discussions contribute to students' cognitive development (Babullah, 2022).

The interview findings with elementary school teachers revealed that the selection of learning models is strongly influenced by students' characteristics and grade levels because elementary school students are generally in the concrete operational stage of cognitive development (Babullah, 2022). Teachers in lower grades tend to employ simple and enjoyable learning models, such as role-playing activities and habituation practices, whereas teachers in higher grades adopt more complex approaches, including role-playing and singing activities that require greater cognitive engagement. These findings are consistent with Piaget's theory of cognitive development, which emphasizes that children's thinking abilities develop gradually through direct experiences and interactions with their surroundings. Practical activities and real-life experiences help elementary school students understand concepts more effectively because they are closely related to their daily lives (Mu'min, 2013). Consequently, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is considered an effective instructional model as it enables students to understand learning materials in a concrete and meaningful manner (Barrows, 1986). The diversity of learning models also indicates that teachers implementing the Merdeka Curriculum are required to be flexible and creative in designing learning activities. Their role extends beyond delivering knowledge to facilitating active student participation throughout the learning process.

Based on interview data from several informants, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) emerged as one of the most frequently implemented learning models in the Merdeka Curriculum. The first informant stated, "Problem-Based Learning (PBL) applies a constructivist, contextual, and student-centered approach. Through this approach, students actively construct knowledge by solving real-life problems and collaborating with their peers in group activities." The primary objective of implementing this model is to train students to identify and solve social problems encountered in the classroom and school environment, thereby making learning more meaningful and concrete. The same informant further explained, "Problem-Based Learning is the instructional model I use most frequently in Civic Education (PKn). I believe that PBL is more suitable for elementary education." Since the learning

process is based on problems encountered by students in their daily lives, they can understand the material more easily while actively participating in finding solutions and developing critical thinking skills.

The second informant emphasized that PKN learning in elementary schools should be adapted to students' characteristics and developmental stages, stating, "Civic Education learning in elementary schools is quite diverse and should be adjusted to students' characteristics. The learning models I frequently use include discussions, role-playing, portfolios, singing activities, and habituation practices. Since I teach first-grade students who are still in the early stages of development, they require simple and enjoyable learning approaches." Meanwhile, the third informant highlighted the use of simulation and collaborative learning strategies by stating, "I use learning models such as simulations, question-and-answer sessions, and group discussions. I also frequently use charts and concept maps when explaining Civic Education materials. Since I teach sixth-grade students, simulations help them understand the subject matter more effectively. They are capable of directly understanding and internalizing the values being taught."

The differences in these instructional approaches indicate that grade level and student characteristics significantly influence the selection of learning models. In lower grades, learning activities focus on simple, enjoyable, and concrete experiences, whereas higher-grade students benefit from more complex activities involving problem-solving and critical analysis. In practice, each informant adapted the learning model to meet students' specific needs. The first informant emphasized adjusting instructional materials to students' learning contexts, while the second informant utilized media such as games and educational videos to accommodate different learning styles. The third informant reported that simulations and active student participation through discussions and classroom agreements effectively promoted Civic Education values within the school environment. Nevertheless, all three informants acknowledged several challenges in implementing these strategies, including students' lack of concentration, difficulties in retaining information, limited instructional time, and varying student abilities within the same classroom. These findings suggest that the implementation of learning strategies does not always proceed according to plan and that teachers must remain flexible and creative in addressing classroom challenges.

Piaget's theory of cognitive development further explains that children are naturally exploratory and continuously attempt to interpret their surroundings, enabling them to construct an understanding of the environment they experience (Mu'min, 2013). According to Piaget, effective teaching involves encouraging students to explore, manipulate objects, ask questions, solve problems independently, compare new findings with their personal experiences, and discuss their discoveries with their peers. Problem-Based Learning represents an instructional approach that presents students with authentic problems and encourages them to work collaboratively in finding solutions. Through this process, students engage in meaningful social interactions that connect stimuli and responses within the learning environment. Barrows (1986) argued that PBL aims to prepare students for real-life situations while helping them understand the roles and responsibilities expected in adulthood.

The findings indicate that the implementation of various learning models provides benefits not only for students but also for teachers by creating creative and participatory learning environments. Students become more enthusiastic, confident in expressing their opinions, and effective in collaborating with their peers. The use of diverse instructional models supports students in mastering Civic Education materials according to their developmental stages while simultaneously fostering the internalization of Pancasila values and the development of critical thinking skills. These findings are in accordance with Piaget's constructivist perspective, which emphasizes active student participation in the learning process (Mu'min, 2013), and support the view that Problem-Based Learning provides meaningful and contextual learning experiences (Barrows, 1986). Overall, the findings indicate that Civic Education learning should not merely focus on knowledge acquisition but should also contribute to the development of students' character as responsible and competent citizens. The interview results,

supported by Piaget's constructivist theory and previous studies (Mu'min, 2013; Babullah, 2022; Barrows, 1986), demonstrate that the implementation of diverse and student-centered learning models within the Merdeka Curriculum promotes meaningful learning experiences while fostering students' cognitive, social, and civic development.

Implementation of Learning Models in Civic Education under the Merdeka Curriculum

Implementation refers to carrying out an activity that has been previously planned. Implementation can be defined as an activity, action, process, or mechanism undertaken by a system to achieve certain objectives. The implementation of learning models refers to the application of learning models during the teaching and learning process to achieve educational objectives. The Merdeka Curriculum prioritizes student involvement in teaching and learning activities (Darmawan et al., 2026). Educators are not merely expected to deliver learning materials but also to guide students in understanding them contextually. This condition is consistent with Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, which argues that learners construct their own understanding through direct experience and interaction with their environment (Mu'min, 2013). According to Piaget, elementary school students are in the concrete operational stage of cognitive development. Implementation can therefore be understood as an activity, action, process, or mechanism carried out by a system to achieve predetermined goals.

According to the research findings, the first informant implemented learning models by using contextual materials such as simulations of mutual cooperation, storytelling strategies, and role-playing activities. Through these activities, students were encouraged to apply the values of Pancasila in their daily lives. Students were also trained to become more participatory, investigative, and capable of solving problems encountered in the school environment. During the learning process, the teacher organized study groups to support students who experienced learning difficulties and provided additional guidance through scaffolding (Salsabila & Muqowim, 2024).

The second informant implemented learning models by adopting a flexible approach and utilizing innovative media such as educational videos. Through this approach, students were provided with opportunities to participate directly in learning activities and engage actively in discussions with the teacher.

The third informant implemented learning by connecting Civic Education (PKn) lessons with students' daily experiences. To facilitate students' understanding of the subject matter, the teacher employed concept maps, simulations of deliberation activities, and group discussions. The teacher also established classroom agreements together with the students. These agreements were written down and displayed on the classroom walls as reminders of the values and commitments that had been collectively established.

Although the learning models were implemented in different ways, all three informants emphasized the importance of student involvement in the teaching and learning process. This finding indicates that the student-centered approach promoted by the Merdeka Curriculum is appropriate for classroom implementation (Herawati et al., 2022). Students can acquire knowledge through both direct experiences and teacher explanations. This is in line with Jean Piaget's perspective, which emphasizes that learners should actively participate in the learning process to make learning more meaningful (Mu'min, 2013). Through activities such as discussions, simulations, role-playing, and Problem-Based Learning (PBL), students not only develop cognitive understanding of the learning materials but also practice analyzing situations, collaborating with others, and solving problems encountered in their surroundings.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL), also known as problem-oriented learning, is one of the most commonly implemented learning models in the Merdeka Curriculum. PBL teaches students how to solve problems and develop critical thinking skills (Simatupang et al., 2024). This model encourages learners to solve problems through discussions and collaborative group work. The implementation of innovative learning models in Civic Education demonstrates that instructional approaches should not

merely focus on the delivery of learning materials but also on creating dynamic, meaningful, and engaging learning experiences that are appropriate for the developmental characteristics of elementary school students.

The Influence of Learning Models on Student Engagement in Civic Education under the Merdeka Curriculum

Civic Education (PKn) discusses how children are educated to assume their responsibilities and roles as citizens, particularly through the role of education, which includes schooling, teaching, and learning. This reinforces the idea that Civic Education (PKn) is a value-based subject. One indicator of the successful implementation of learning models is student engagement in the learning process, particularly in Civic Education, where the focus of learning is not only on understanding the subject matter but also on developing attitudes and the characteristics of good citizens. The appropriateness of teachers' selection of learning models and students' characteristics greatly influences student learning outcomes, as every stage implemented within a learning model has the potential to affect students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development (Sari et al., 2023). Students who learn in active and enjoyable learning environments tend to be more engaged than those who learn passively.

The selection of learning models by teachers and the characteristics of students greatly influence learning outcomes, and students who learn in active and enjoyable environments are more likely to participate actively than those who experience passive learning situations. Active student engagement in Civic Education learning is strongly influenced by how teachers design and implement the learning process. When teachers rely solely on the lecture method, students tend to receive information passively and have limited opportunities to think critically, speak, or express their opinions. Such conditions not only result in lower cognitive understanding of Civic Education materials but also hinder the development of civic attitudes and values that should emerge through contextual and meaningful learning experiences.

Before innovative learning models were implemented, students tended to sit, listen, take notes, and think passively. This condition indicates that Civic Education learning had not sufficiently encouraged students to think critically, develop confidence, and internalize civic values. However, students' behavior and classroom participation began to change after the three informants implemented Problem-Based Learning (PBL), role-playing, group discussions, and simulations. Students demonstrated greater confidence in expressing their opinions in front of their peers, became more concerned about their surroundings, showed a greater willingness to cooperate, and developed stronger responsibility within group activities. Over time, students who were previously quiet and less involved in classroom activities became more interested in participating in discussions, simulations, and role-playing activities designed by the teachers.

As a result of implementing innovative learning models in Civic Education, students became more aware of civic principles such as responsibility, tolerance, democracy, and collaboration rather than merely achieving intellectual learning outcomes (Tambunan et al., 2023). Their understanding of these concepts began to be practiced directly in everyday learning activities rather than simply being memorized. This phenomenon indicates that appropriately selected learning strategies or models, adapted to students' characteristics and developmental stages, can promote more meaningful engagement that encompasses not only intellectual development but also attitudes and practical skills.

Based on the direct research findings, various perspectives were obtained from the informants. The first informant stated, "I believe that this Problem-Based Learning model has truly transformed Civic Education learning. Students are now more active in asking questions, speaking, and even expressing their opinions in front of their classmates than they were before, when they tended to be quiet and passive. Learning begins with real-life problems, encouraging them to collaborate, think critically, and find solutions. I have also observed positive changes in their behavior, as they have become more respectful of their friends' opinions, more responsible in group discussions, and more

concerned about their surrounding environment. Most importantly, civic values such as democracy, tolerance, and cooperation can be directly observed and practiced during the learning process."

The second informant expressed the opinion that, "In my opinion, interesting learning models that are appropriate to the material greatly influence students' activeness. If the material is boring, children become sleepy and fail to understand the lesson. However, when we use suitable models, such as role-playing for deliberation topics, students become active, confident in expressing their opinions, and find it easier to remember the material because it is connected to direct experiences. Although changes in attitudes require time and effort, they will eventually produce positive results. I believe this model is highly effective because civic values become embedded within students and are not merely understood theoretically."

The third informant also explained, "I think the influence of this learning model is very positive. Students seem more enthusiastic about sharing their experiences and participating in group discussions. They also learn not to prioritize their own interests and to consider every opinion through deliberation activities. Students who were previously indifferent and self-centered have become more caring and respectful of rules, such as asking for permission or submitting letters when leaving the classroom. This is the most noticeable behavioral change. Regarding its effectiveness in instilling civic values, I believe it is quite effective within the school environment because students can practice these values directly. However, the outcomes outside the school environment are still not entirely clear."

The research findings indicate that all three informants agreed that innovative learning models increase student engagement in Civic Education learning. Although each informant placed emphasis on different aspects, they agreed that Problem-Based Learning (PBL), case studies, discussions, and deliberation activities enhance students' participation in Civic Education. Students who were previously passive became more willing to ask questions, express opinions, and participate in classroom discussions. The informants also agreed that these learning models help students develop critical thinking skills. Students are encouraged to analyze problems, identify connections between concepts and real-life situations, and express their opinions without imposing them on others. In addition, gradual improvements in students' behavior became evident, including increased self-confidence, stronger responsibility, greater environmental awareness, and respect for the opinions of others.

Teacher involvement in the Civic Education learning process is directly related to students' participation in learning, particularly in supporting their developmental stages, including cognitive, social, and practical development. Critical thinking development models are implemented during the learning process to guide students in reasoning logically and systematically, while creative dialogue models are used to develop social and practical thinking skills. These aspects can be enhanced through interactive learning environments.

The findings demonstrate that interactive learning strategies and models based on active participation can increase student engagement in Civic Education learning. Before these models were implemented, teachers relied mainly on lectures and textbooks as the primary instructional media, resulting in students becoming relatively passive. After implementation, students became more active because learning activities were designed to involve psychomotor abilities, including listening, observing, and thinking. Students were encouraged to ask questions, express opinions, collaborate in groups, and independently discover solutions. This process created positive educational interactions between students and teachers.

The role-playing learning model has a positive influence on student engagement and learning achievement in elementary school Civic Education (Tambunan et al., 2023). Before this model was implemented, most students had not achieved the minimum competency standards and tended to participate passively in learning activities. By allowing students to act out situations and values contained within Civic Education materials, including the values of Pancasila, the role-playing model encourages active participation. It also helps students develop critical thinking skills, solve problems, share responsibilities, understand the perspectives of others, and make decisions collaboratively.

Compared with the lecture method, which often results in passive participation, role-playing creates a more meaningful and enjoyable learning experience.

The discussion learning model also improves student engagement and learning outcomes in elementary school Civic Education (Wahyuni & Yulia, 2023). Prior to its implementation, Civic Education learning was generally centered on lectures, requiring students to sit, listen, write, and memorize information without active participation. Following the implementation of discussion-based learning, the classroom atmosphere became more democratic, collaborative, and constructive. Students no longer merely received information but actively participated in discussions, solved problems, and interacted with both teachers and classmates.

The implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has demonstrated significant improvements in student participation and critical thinking skills in Civic Education learning (Simatupang et al., 2024). Before this model was introduced, students tended to be passive because learning activities relied heavily on lectures, causing students to memorize information without fully understanding its relevance to real-life situations. After PBL was implemented, student participation increased considerably. By being confronted with problems encountered in everyday life, students were encouraged to think critically, engage in discussions, and seek solutions both individually and collaboratively. As a result, students found it easier to connect Civic Education concepts, such as the values of unity and solidarity, with their own experiences while simultaneously developing cooperation and respect for the opinions of their peers.

CONCLUSION

The research and discussions conducted in three elementary schools, namely SDIT Mutiara Miftahul Jannah Sabah Balau, SD Negeri 1 Kertosari, and SD Negeri 3 Poncowarno, led to several conclusions. The findings indicate that Civic Education (PKn) learning models implemented in elementary schools are diverse and adapted to students' grade levels and characteristics. The first informant applied Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which focuses on solving real-life problems. The second informant implemented portfolio-based learning, role-playing, discussions, singing activities, and habituation practices that are appropriate for lower-grade students. Meanwhile, the third informant also applied Problem-Based Learning (PBL) by emphasizing the solution of authentic problems. Although different learning models were implemented across the three schools, all informants emphasized the importance of student-centered, contextual, and meaningful learning. Through these approaches, teachers encourage students to think critically, collaborate with others, and practice the values of Pancasila in their daily learning activities.

The findings also demonstrate that innovative learning models positively influence student engagement in Civic Education learning. Students who were previously passive and relied mainly on listening to teachers became more active, confident in expressing their opinions, capable of critical thinking, and demonstrated positive behaviors such as responsibility, respect for others' opinions, and concern for their surroundings. However, the effectiveness of instilling civic values beyond the school environment remains unclear and requires further attention. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers continue to implement learning models that are adapted to students' characteristics and developmental stages while creating meaningful and interactive learning experiences. Future efforts may also focus on strengthening the application of civic values beyond the classroom to support students' development as responsible citizens.

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