



Implementing Collaborative and Concrete Learning to Improve First Graders' Understanding of Children's Rights and Responsibilities through Thematic Activities

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Abstract

This study aims to improve first-grade elementary students' understanding of rights and responsibilities through the implementation of collaborative and concrete learning models in Civic Education (PPKn). The method used was Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in two cycles, consisting of the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through observations, tests, interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed using descriptive qualitative and quantitative methods. The results showed a significant improvement in students' ability to distinguish between rights and responsibilities, as well as increased participation and discipline both at school and at home. The collaborative and concrete learning models proved effective in creating an enjoyable and meaningful learning environment.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman siswa kelas I SD mengenai hak dan kewajiban melalui penerapan model pembelajaran kolaboratif dan konkret pada mata pelajaran PPKn. Metode yang digunakan adalah Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) dengan dua siklus, meliputi tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi, dan refleksi. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, tes, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan dalam kemampuan siswa membedakan hak dan kewajiban, serta meningkatnya keaktifan dan kedisiplinan mereka di sekolah dan rumah. Model pembelajaran kolaboratif dan konkret terbukti efektif menciptakan suasana belajar yang menyenangkan dan bermakna.

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Introduction

Character education introduced from an early age plays an important role in shaping future generations who are not only intellectually capable but also possess moral integrity, independence, and a strong sense of social and environmental awareness. Character education serves as a fundamental foundation that enables students to understand life values and apply them

in their daily lives (Fauziah & Ninawati, 2022). The rapid development of globalization also presents moral challenges, making character education a necessity so that children can grow into individuals with strong morality, discipline, and responsibility. Character formation is most effective when introduced at an early age, particularly during elementary school years. This stage is considered the golden age, which greatly influences children's personality development in the future (Magdalena et al., 2020). Appropriate education can help children distinguish between right and wrong, understand the importance of respecting others, and develop positive habits that may last throughout their lives. Therefore, elementary school serves as a strategic environment for building the character of the nation's future generation.

The subject of Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) plays an important role in instilling character values from an early age. PPKn is not only concerned with knowledge about the state and constitution but also with shaping attitudes, behaviors, and morals in accordance with the values contained in Pancasila. At the elementary school level, especially in first grade, PPKn becomes the primary medium for introducing basic concepts of rights, responsibilities, and obedience to rules in both home and school environments (Sunaryati et al., 2025).

According to Piaget's theory, first-grade elementary school students are in the concrete operational stage of cognitive development, in which children are not yet able to fully understand abstract concepts. As a result, the learning process must be presented in contextual and concrete ways. Learning approaches closely related to children's daily lives make it easier for them to understand moral concepts (Apriliani et al., 2021). Therefore, teachers are required to design PPKn learning activities that are engaging, interactive, and meaningful so that character values can be properly internalized by students.

First-grade students generally show enthusiasm for learning activities involving storytelling, drawing, singing, role-playing, and educational games. Such activities help children understand social values such as cooperation, honesty, and responsibility through direct experiences (Arni et al., 2025). Fun and contextual learning experiences make it easier for children to understand concepts of what is "allowed" and "not allowed" while also realizing the importance of rights and responsibilities as individuals within their social environment.

However, field observations indicate that many students still struggle to distinguish between rights and responsibilities, especially in relation to obedience to rules at home and school. Some children tend to understand only their rights without recognizing the responsibilities that accompany them (Hamzah et al., 2022). This condition may be caused by the lack of concrete and collaborative learning approaches, as well as limited parental involvement in reinforcing character values at home.

Several previous studies have examined character education and the teaching of rights and responsibilities in elementary schools. Research by Hamzah et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of habituation in developing students' awareness of responsibility, while Nurcahyanti and Tirtoni (2023) highlighted the effectiveness of educational games and activity-based worksheets in improving student engagement. Other studies also explored collaborative learning in elementary classrooms and found that group-based activities could improve communication and social interaction among students (Selvi et al., 2023). Nevertheless, most previous studies focused separately on either collaborative learning or concrete learning media, and only a few specifically investigated the integration of both approaches in teaching first-grade students about rights and responsibilities within thematic PPKn learning. In addition, previous research rarely connected these learning approaches with the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile and the involvement of both school and family environments.

These problems indicate the need for innovation and appropriate strategies in PPKn learning at the elementary school level. Collaborative and concrete learning models may serve as effective solutions to help children understand moral concepts. Through storytelling activities, picture matching, activity-based worksheets (LKPD), and educational games requiring teamwork, children can learn actively and enjoyably (Nurcahyanti & Tirtoni, 2023). This approach enables students to connect learning materials with real-life experiences, thereby naturally developing an understanding of rights, responsibilities, and obedience to rules.

In addition to learning strategies at school, synergy between teachers and parents is essential in the process of character building. The values taught at school must be reinforced through habituation and role modeling at home. Parents need to actively cultivate discipline, provide examples of rule-abiding behavior, and emphasize the differences between rights and responsibilities within the family context. Thus, character education becomes a shared responsibility between schools and families.

Active student involvement in the learning process is also a key factor in instilling moral values successfully. Children can more easily understand social concepts when they are directly involved in activities requiring interaction and reflection. Collaborative learning models allow children to learn through shared experiences with peers, develop empathy, and build self-awareness as members of a social group with shared rules and responsibilities (Selvi et al., 2023).

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the implementation of collaborative and concrete learning models in improving first-grade elementary students' understanding of children's rights and responsibilities. The study focuses on the topic "Obeying Rules, Rights, and Responsibilities," which is integrated with the Pancasila Student Profile. The novelty of this

research lies in the integration of collaborative learning and concrete learning approaches within thematic PPKn instruction specifically designed for first-grade students, while simultaneously strengthening character education through active participation, contextual activities, and collaboration between schools and families. Through this approach, students are expected to develop values of faith, devotion to God Almighty, creativity, independence, and collaboration, and to apply these values in their daily lives both at school and at home.

Methods

This study employed a cyclical Classroom Action Research (CAR) method aimed at improving first-grade elementary students' understanding of children's rights and responsibilities through the implementation of collaborative and concrete learning models in thematic learning activities. Each cycle consisted of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection stages. The research population included all first-grade elementary school students at the selected school, while the sample consisted of first-grade students (Phase A) participating in PPKn learning on the topic "Obeying Rules, Rights, and Responsibilities." Classroom teachers and parents were also involved as supporting informants in the data collection process. Data were collected through direct classroom observations to monitor student activities, participation in discussions, and understanding of rights and responsibilities using observation sheets. Additional data were obtained through evaluation tests, reflective questions, and student worksheets (LKPD) to measure improvements in students' understanding before and after the implementation of the actions. Interviews were also conducted with teachers and several parents to obtain supporting information regarding changes in students' attitudes and understanding at home.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively using both qualitative and quantitative approaches by comparing observation results, test and evaluation outcomes, and interview findings across cycles. Students' comprehension scores and participation levels were compiled based on lesson plan assessment guidelines and compared before and after the intervention to determine the effectiveness of the implemented learning model. The research instruments included observation sheets, student worksheets (LKPD), evaluation and test instruments, picture matching media, learning videos, cameras for documentation, and stationery. Supporting learning media consisted of worksheets themed around rights and responsibilities, traditional snack images for matching activities, short stories or texts about children's roles at home, and student and teacher reflection documents. The primary research subjects were first-grade students participating in PPKn learning on the topic "Obeying Rules, Rights, and Responsibilities," while

the informants included classroom teachers and several parents. The research was conducted in a first-grade classroom at the selected elementary school over a period of three weeks consisting of two research cycles. Data validity was ensured through triangulation techniques involving observations, tests, and interviews, member checking with teachers and students, and reflective discussions among researchers and informants.

Result and Discussion

The results of the study showed a significant improvement in students' understanding of the concepts of rights and responsibilities after the implementation of collaborative and concrete learning models. In the first cycle, most students were able to mention examples of rules at home and distinguish between rights and responsibilities with guidance from the teacher. In the second cycle, improvements were observed both in students' ability to construct simple sentences related to rights and responsibilities and in their participation during classroom discussions.

| Indicator | Average Score Before the Intervention | Average Score After the Intervention |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mentioning rules at home | 2.2 | 3.7 |
| Distinguishing rights and responsibilities | 2.0 | 3.8 |
| Participation in classroom discussions | 2.5 | 4.0 |
| Sentence construction | 2.1 | 3.6 |

The interview results with teachers and parents supported the findings, indicating that students demonstrated behavioral changes toward becoming more disciplined and responsible in carrying out their rights and responsibilities at home. Teachers reported that the learning process became more engaging, and students showed enthusiasm during storytelling and picture-matching activities. Parents also observed that their children more easily understood the concept of rules at home after participating in the learning activities.

This study successfully answered the research problem regarding the effectiveness of collaborative and concrete learning models in improving first-grade elementary students' understanding of rights and responsibilities. The improvement in students' understanding was evident from the evaluation and observation results, which showed that students' knowledge and disciplinary attitudes increased significantly after the implementation of two action cycles.

The findings were obtained through direct observations, evaluation tests, and confirmation from key informants, namely teachers and parents. These results indicate that collaborative and concrete learning models are highly relevant to the characteristics of early elementary school students, who still think concretely and require learning experiences based on direct practice. Data interpretation showed that collaboration between teachers and parents, as well as the use of concrete examples through storytelling and matching activities, greatly helped students understand the meaning and application of rights and responsibilities. This finding is consistent with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of real and social experiences in building children's knowledge.

Therefore, the results of this study support the theory that thematic learning based on concrete activities and collaboration can strengthen character education from an early age. This study also has the potential to contribute to the development of basic PPKn learning theory by integrating cooperative and reflective learning models, which were proven to be more effective for first-grade elementary school students.

Conclusion

The implementation of collaborative and concrete learning models in thematic learning for first-grade elementary school students proved effective in improving students' understanding of rights and responsibilities, as well as their disciplinary attitudes. Nearly all students were able to recognize, distinguish, and carry out their rights and responsibilities properly through enjoyable and meaningful learning activities. This study may serve as a reference and an alternative effective learning approach for creating engaging and meaningful learning experiences for students.

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