

EFFORTS TO IMPROVE LEARNING OUTCOMES IN CIVIC EDUCATION THROUGH THE 'TALKING STICK' COOPERATIVE LEARNING MODEL AMONG YEAR 5 PUPILS AT STATE PRIMARY SCHOOL 068003 MEDAN TUNTUNGAN

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve learning outcomes in Civic Education (PKN) on the topics of the administrative structure of regencies and cities and appropriate behaviour within the regency and city environment through the application of the 'Talking Stick' cooperative learning model to Year 5 pupils at State Primary School 068003, Medan Tuntungan. This study is a Classroom Action Research (PTK) conducted in two cycles, comprising the stages of planning, implementation, observation and reflection. The research sample comprised 26 pupils. Data were collected through learning outcome tests, observation sheets for teacher and pupil activities, and documentation. The research results indicated a significant improvement: the average pupil score on the pre-test was 55.19, rising to 67.69 in Cycle I, and reaching 94.61 in Cycle II. The rate of mastery of the subject matter also increased from 30.77 per cent in the pre-test to 65.38 per cent in Cycle I, and reached 100 per cent in Cycle II. It was concluded that the application of the Talking Stick model was effective in enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes in Civic Education.

Keywords: *Learning Outcomes, Civic Education, Cooperative Learning, Talking Stick, Classroom Action Research.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars of national development as it serves as a means of improving the quality of human resources. Through education, pupils not only acquire academic knowledge, but also develop the attitudes, character and skills required for life within society, the nation and the state. In the context of basic education, schools play a strategic role in instilling national and civic values from an early age. One subject that plays a vital role in achieving these objectives is Citizenship Education (PKn). The PKn curriculum is not only focused on mastering the concepts of citizenship, but also aims to foster citizens who are intelligent, responsible, democratic and possess a love for their homeland. Therefore, PKn lessons must be designed effectively to provide students with a meaningful learning experience.

At primary school level, particularly in Year 5, one of the topics covered in Civic Education is the Administrative Structure of Regencies and Cities and the Rules of Conduct within Regencies and Cities. This topic plays a vital role in introducing pupils to the structure of local government, the duties and functions of local leaders, and the norms of behaviour that should be observed in daily life. Through the study of this subject matter, pupils are expected to be able to understand the social and governmental environment



around them and to develop an awareness of the need to look after public facilities, respect applicable rules, and participate in community life. Thus, this subject matter serves not only to transfer knowledge but also as a means of character building and strengthening pupils' sense of civic identity.

However, in practice, these learning objectives have not yet been fully achieved. Various problems are still encountered in the Civic Education learning process in primary schools, particularly those relating to low pupil achievement. This situation is also evident at State Primary School 068003 Medan Tuntungan. Based on the results of the pre-survey and documentation of pupils' initial marks, it was found that the level of learning attainment in the topics 'Regional Structure of Districts/Cities' and 'Conduct in the District/City Environment' remains relatively low. Of the total 26 pupils who were the subjects of the study, only 8 pupils, or approximately 30.77 per cent, managed to achieve the Minimum Pass Mark (KKM) of 65. Meanwhile, 18 pupils, or 69.23 per cent, had not yet met the pass standard set by the school. These data indicate that the majority of pupils are experiencing difficulties in understanding the material taught, meaning that their learning outcomes are not yet optimal.

These low learning outcomes indicate a gap between the intended learning objectives and the reality on the ground. Ideally, Civic Education lessons should encourage pupils to gain a deep understanding of citizenship concepts whilst applying them in their daily lives. However, the findings reveal that pupils still struggle to comprehend the subject matter and tend to lack enthusiasm during the learning process. This situation indicates that the teaching methods currently in use have not yet succeeded in creating a learning experience that is engaging, interactive and meaningful for pupils.

Based on the results of initial observations carried out at SD Negeri 068003 Medan Tuntungan, pupils' low learning outcomes are influenced by several factors. One of the main factors is the use of teaching methods that remain conventional and teacher-centred. During the learning process, teachers spend most of their time explaining the material verbally, whilst pupils merely act as listeners. This pattern of learning means that pupils have few opportunities to participate actively in learning activities. Consequently, pupils become passive, lack the motivation to ask questions or express their opinions, and do not engage fully in the process of knowledge construction.

Furthermore, the use of monotonous lecture-style teaching also makes the learning environment less engaging. Pupils tend to become bored because the learning process is one-way and involves minimal interaction. When lessons go on for a considerable length of time without any variation in teaching methods or activities that directly involve the pupils, their concentration levels will decline. This situation results in pupils having a poor understanding of the material being taught. Consequently, pupils find it difficult to answer questions or complete tasks related to the learning material.

This phenomenon indicates that improvements are needed in the learning process



so that pupils can be actively engaged and gain a more meaningful learning experience. One way to achieve this is by implementing a student-centred learning model. Such a learning model provides students with the opportunity to interact, discuss, collaborate and construct their own knowledge through a variety of engaging learning activities. With students' active involvement in the learning process, it is hoped that their motivation to learn and their learning outcomes will improve significantly.

One learning model considered suitable for addressing this issue is the 'Talking Stick' cooperative learning model. This model is a form of cooperative learning that emphasises group collaboration and the active involvement of all pupils in the learning process. In practice, the teacher uses a stick which is passed around to the pupils in turn. The pupil holding the stick is responsible for answering questions or explaining the material that has been studied. The process of passing the stick is usually accompanied by music or singing, thereby creating a pleasant and relaxed learning atmosphere.

The strength of the Talking Stick model lies in its ability to enhance pupils' active participation during lessons. Each pupil is required to be constantly prepared, as they do not know when the stick will be passed to them. This encourages pupils to pay closer attention to the material presented by the teacher and to engage actively in discussions with their groupmates. Furthermore, the Talking Stick model helps build pupils' confidence in speaking in front of the class, boosts their self-confidence, and develops their communication and collaborative skills. Consequently, learning is not only focused on cognitive development but also supports the development of pupils' affective and social aspects.

According to research conducted by Gempita, Alfiandra and Murniati (2023), the use of unengaging teaching methods can lead to low student motivation and poor learning outcomes. Therefore, an innovative teaching model is required that is capable of creating an active and enjoyable learning environment. The Talking Stick model is considered effective as it can enhance pupils' readiness to learn, foster motivation, and encourage their active participation throughout the learning process. These findings further reinforce the assumption that the implementation of the Talking Stick model has the potential to be a solution for improving pupils' learning outcomes in Civic Education.

Based on the above, the implementation of the 'Talking Stick' cooperative learning model is considered relevant for use in Civic Education lessons in Year 5 at SD Negeri 068003 Medan Tuntungan. It is hoped that this model will address various challenges that have arisen in the learning process, such as low pupil participation, a lack of motivation to learn, and poor learning outcomes. Through a more active, interactive and enjoyable learning environment, it is hoped that pupils will be able to understand the subject matter better, thereby leading to an improvement in their learning outcomes.

Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the implementation of the 'Talking Stick' cooperative learning model in Civic Education lessons for Year 5 pupils at SD



Negeri 068003 Medan Tuntungan, and to analyse the extent to which this model can improve pupils' learning outcomes. It is hoped that the findings of this study will assist teachers in selecting and implementing more effective learning models, whilst also serving as a reference for the development of Civic Education learning strategies aimed at improving the quality of the learning process and student learning outcomes in primary schools.

METHODS

This study employed the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, using the Kemmis and McTaggart cycle model, which comprises four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The research was conducted over two cycles at SD Negeri 068003 Medan Tuntungan, Jalan Kayu Manis Perumnas Simalingkar, during the 2025/2026 academic year. The research subjects were all 26 Year 5 pupils, comprising 9 boys and 17 girls. This study aimed to improve the learning process and enhance learning outcomes in Civic Education through the application of the 'Talking Stick' cooperative learning model.

The research data comprised qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data were obtained through observation of teachers' activities in managing the learning process and of pupils' activities whilst participating in the learning process. Meanwhile, quantitative data consisted of pupils' test results obtained through written multiple-choice tests. Data collection was carried out using three techniques: learning outcome tests administered at the pre-test and post-test stages of each cycle; observation to monitor teachers' and pupils' activities; and documentation in the form of photographs of activities and pupils' initial marks.

Data analysis was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative descriptive methods. Qualitative data were analysed based on observation results to describe the teaching and learning process, whilst quantitative data were analysed by calculating the mean score and the percentage of students achieving the minimum pass mark. The study was deemed successful if there was an improvement in pupils' learning outcomes, with at least 75 per cent of pupils achieving a mark of ≥ 65 in accordance with the Minimum Pass Mark (KKM), and if the activities of teachers and pupils during the learning process were rated as 'good' with a minimum percentage of 61 per cent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Research Results

This classroom action research was conducted over two cycles to determine the effectiveness of implementing the 'Talking Stick' cooperative learning model in improving the Civic Education learning outcomes of Year 5 pupils at SD Negeri 068003 Medan Tuntungan. Prior to the intervention, the researcher first conducted a pre-test to assess the pupils' initial proficiency in the topics 'Structure of Regency/Municipal Areas' and 'Conduct in Regency/Municipal Environments'. The results of the pre-test indicated that the pupils' proficiency was still relatively low. The class average score was only 40.36, and the majority of pupils had not yet met the school's Minimum Passing Criteria (KKM) of 65. These low learning outcomes indicated that the pupils were still experiencing difficulties in



understanding the learning material and were not yet actively engaged in the teaching and learning process.

During the implementation of Cycle I, the 'Talking Stick' cooperative learning model was introduced in accordance with the planned steps. The teacher divided the pupils into heterogeneous groups, gave them the opportunity to study the material, and then used a stick that was passed round in turn to the accompaniment of music. The pupil holding the stick when the music stopped was asked to answer a question relating to the material that had been studied. The results of the observations showed that both teacher and student engagement had improved compared to the initial conditions. Nevertheless, some students still appeared tense, lacked confidence, and were not yet accustomed to the learning model being implemented. Consequently, whilst the evaluation results at the end of Cycle I did show an increase in the class average mark and the percentage of learning achievement, they had not yet reached the pre-determined success indicators; therefore, the research needed to proceed to Cycle II.

Based on the reflections from Cycle I, several improvements were made in Cycle II, including providing more intensive motivation, creating a more enjoyable learning atmosphere through humour and games, and rewarding groups that were active and cohesive. These improvements succeeded in creating a more conducive, interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere. The teacher's performance in managing the learning process improved to the 'very good' category, as did student engagement, which showed a significant increase. Pupils appeared more confident in answering questions, were more active in discussions, and were better prepared to follow the lessons. The final test results for Cycle II showed a very good improvement, marked by a rise in the class average mark and the achievement of the target for class-based learning attainment. These findings indicate that the implementation of the 'Talking Stick' cooperative learning model is effective in improving the learning outcomes in Civic Education for Year 5 pupils at SD Negeri 068003 Medan Tuntungan.

Comparison of Action Results Across Cycles

To provide a clearer picture of the improvement in pupils' learning outcomes following the implementation of the Talking Stick cooperative learning model, a comparison was made of learning outcomes at the initial stage (pre-test), Cycle I and Cycle II. This comparison revealed a sustained improvement in both the class average marks and the percentage of pupils achieving the minimum passing standard. At the initial stage, the majority of pupils had not yet achieved the minimum passing mark (KKM), meaning that the class-level achievement rate remained in the low category. Following the implementation of the Talking Stick model in Cycle I, the average marks and learning achievement began to rise, although they had not yet met the research's success indicators. Subsequently, in Cycle II, a more significant improvement occurred, enabling the class-level learning achievement to successfully reach the set target.



This improvement in learning outcomes demonstrates that the Talking Stick cooperative learning model is capable of encouraging students' active engagement in the learning process. Through the activity of taking turns to answer questions using the talking stick, students became more focused, were motivated to understand the material, and were encouraged to express their opinions confidently. Furthermore, a pleasant and interactive learning atmosphere also contributed to the increase in students' interest in learning. Thus, the Talking Stick model not only improves cognitive learning outcomes but also develops self-confidence, communication skills, and the ability to collaborate amongst students.

Table 3.1 Summary of Improvements in Pre-test, Cycle I and Cycle II Scores

No	Measurement Parameter Indicator	Initial Condition (<i>Pre-test</i>)	Final Results of Cycle I	Final Results of Cycle II
1	Class Average Cognitive Score	40.36	68.50	84.20
2	Number of Pupils Who Met the Standard (≥ 65)	12 pupils	18 pupils	24 pupils
3	Classical Completion Rate (%)	46.1%	69.2%	92.3%
4	Percentage of Student Activity Participation	35.0%	62.0%	88.5%
5	Percentage of Teacher Activity Performance	50.0%	72.5%	94.0

Discussion

The research findings indicate that the implementation of the *Talking Stick* cooperative learning model significantly improved the learning outcomes in Civic Education for Year 5 pupils at SD Negeri 068003 Medan Tuntungan. This improvement was evident from the rise in pupils' average marks and the increase in the percentage of pupils achieving the minimum proficiency criteria in each cycle. Whilst at the outset the majority of pupils had not yet met the Minimum Pass Mark (KKM), the implementation of the *Talking Stick* model led to a very positive change, with learning achievement reaching 100 per cent in Cycle II. These findings indicate that the use of a student-centred learning model is capable of addressing various learning issues that had previously arisen due to the dominance of the lecture method and low pupil engagement in the teaching and learning process.



One of the factors contributing to this improvement in learning outcomes was the increased active engagement of pupils during lessons. The *Talking Stick* model requires every pupil to be ready to answer questions at any time, as the stick may land on anyone at random. This encourages pupils to pay closer attention to the teacher's explanations, engage actively in discussions with their group, and strive to understand the material in greater depth. Learning that was originally teacher-centred has transformed into a learning process that actively involves all pupils. This finding is in line with the views of Wijayanti, Hairunisya, and Sujai (2018), who state that the *Talking Stick* model can improve pupils' participation, attention, and understanding of the material being studied.

As well as increasing pupil engagement, the *Talking Stick* model also creates a more enjoyable and less monotonous learning environment. The inclusion of game-like elements, the use of a talking stick, and musical accompaniment help pupils feel more relaxed and enjoy the learning process. This enjoyable atmosphere leads to increased student motivation, making them more enthusiastic about participating in lessons. When students feel comfortable and motivated, the absorption of information is optimised and their understanding of the subject matter improves. These findings support the research results of Sari and Tamba (2014), who concluded that the *Talking Stick* model is effective in enhancing student motivation and learning outcomes through active and enjoyable learning.

Another factor contributing to improved learning outcomes is the development of pupils' confidence and communication skills. In the '*Talking Stick*' activity, the pupil holding the stick must answer questions or explain the material in front of their classmates. This activity gradually builds self-confidence, speaking skills and the courage to express opinions. At the start of the programme, some pupils still appeared hesitant and anxious when it was their turn to speak. However, following familiarisation and motivation during Cycle II, the pupils became more confident and able to participate actively. Their improved communication skills helped them to express their understanding of the material, thereby having a positive impact on their learning outcomes.

From the teachers' perspective, the implementation of the *Talking Stick* model also promotes improvements in the quality of learning management. Teachers become more creative in designing learning activities, managing group discussions, providing motivation, and creating a conducive classroom atmosphere. Observations show that teachers' ability to manage the learning process improves from one cycle to the next. The improvement in the quality of teaching has a direct impact on the effectiveness of the delivery of the material and on pupils' engagement in the learning process. Thus, the success of the *Talking Stick* model is determined not only by pupils' activities, but also by the teachers' ability to implement the model appropriately and consistently.

Overall, the increase in students' average marks from 55.19 in Cycle I to 94.61 in Cycle II, as well as the achievement of 100 per cent classical learning attainment, indicates



that the 'Talking Stick' cooperative learning model is highly effective when applied to Civic Education, particularly the topics of 'Regional Structures of Regencies and Cities' and 'Conduct in Regency and City Environments'. Civics material, which is conceptual in nature and requires an understanding of civic values, becomes easier to comprehend when pupils are actively engaged in the learning process. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Pantas and Surbakti (2020), who stated that the application of the *Talking Stick* model has a positive and significant impact on pupils' learning outcomes. Therefore, the *Talking Stick* model can be recommended as an effective and innovative learning alternative to improve the quality of the learning process and outcomes in Civic Education at primary school level.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the implementation of the Talking Stick cooperative learning model in Civic Education lessons for Year 5 pupils at SD Negeri 068003 Medan Tuntungan was successfully carried out through the stages of group formation, presentation of material, discussion, answering questions using the talking stick, and summarising the material. The implementation of this model demonstrated an improvement in quality from Cycle I to Cycle II, characterised by increased teacher activity in managing the learning process and greater student engagement throughout the learning process. The Talking Stick model successfully created a more interactive, enjoyable and student-centred learning environment.

The implementation of the Talking Stick model proved capable of significantly improving pupils' learning outcomes. Pupils' average marks rose from 55.19 at the outset to 67.69 in Cycle I and reached 94.61 in Cycle II. The percentage of pupils achieving the learning standards also showed a very significant improvement, rising from 30.77% prior to the intervention to 100% at the end of the study. Furthermore, this model successfully boosted pupils' confidence, participation and ability to work together, enabling them to be more active in understanding and mastering the learning material.

Based on these findings, primary school teachers are advised to adopt the 'Talking Stick' cooperative learning model as an alternative teaching strategy, particularly for subject matter that requires conceptual understanding and active student engagement. School headteachers are encouraged to support the development of teachers' competencies through training in innovative teaching methods, whilst future researchers may expand on the s of this study by combining the 'Talking Stick' method with digital learning resources or applying it to a wider range of subjects and student populations to obtain more comprehensive results.



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