

Improving the Understanding of Respecting Collective Decisions through the Role-Playing Method in Civic Education for Fifth-Grade Students in the Second Semester at SDN 1 Purwosari, Babadan District, Ponorogo Regency

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Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of the role-playing method in improving fifth-grade students' understanding of respecting collective decisions in Civic Education (PKn) at SDN 1 Purwosari, Babadan District, Ponorogo Regency. Grounded in principles of democratic education, experiential learning, and participatory pedagogy, the research employs a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design conducted in two cycles, each comprising planning, action, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through observations, learning outcome tests, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using qualitative and quantitative approaches. The findings reveal substantial improvement in students' cognitive understanding, social interaction, and affective appreciation of collective decision-making. Students demonstrated increased participation, clearer expression of opinions, greater respect for peers' viewpoints, and stronger willingness to accept group decisions. Test scores showed significant gains from Cycle I to Cycle II, and qualitative evidence confirmed enhanced cooperation, communication, and democratic behavior. Factors supporting success included effective scenario design, teacher guidance, balanced group composition, media support, and reflective dialogue. The study concludes that role-playing is an effective pedagogical strategy for strengthening democratic values in elementary Civic Education. It recommends systematic integration of role-playing into PKn lessons, provision of teacher training, development of contextual scenarios, and expansion of research to broader contexts. The findings contribute to character education and the preparation of responsible young citizens.

Keywords: Civic Education, Collective Decision-Making, Elementary School; Democratic Values. Role-Playing,

I. Introduction

Civic Education (PKn) at the elementary school level plays a crucial role in shaping students into citizens who understand and can fulfill their rights and responsibilities, allowing them to grow into intelligent, skilled, and character-driven individuals in accordance with the values of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (Depdiknas, 2006). At this foundational stage, PKn does not merely introduce civic concepts but also cultivates attitudes, dispositions, and behavioral competencies that guide students in becoming responsible members of society. Through structured learning experiences—such as discussions, collaborative tasks, and practical civic activities—students begin to internalize principles of justice, mutual respect, cooperation, and social responsibility. Moreover, early exposure to civic values prepares students to navigate social life with awareness and empathy, equipping them to respond constructively to diversity and collective challenges. PKn thus serves as a platform for nurturing the moral and intellectual foundations required for democratic participation. As students learn to understand rules, contribute to group decisions, and recognize their obligations within the community, PKn strengthens the formation of national identity while also supporting the development of globally competent citizens. (Magdalena, Haq, and Ramdhan 2020).

Civic Education at the elementary level plays a vital role in fostering democratic values, social responsibility, and respect for collective norms among young learners. It also serves as an essential medium for instilling the core principles of Pancasila—particularly humanitarian and personal values that form the basis of both national and global citizenship. This aligns with the overarching goals of PKn, which emphasize early character formation and the development of national identity. Theoretically, this study seeks to examine how Civic Education contributes to the implementation of Pancasila values in elementary school students. To achieve this, a qualitative approach was employed, drawing on documentation from a range of sources such as academic articles, journals, books, news reports, and official organizational statements. (Mutia, Ndonga, and Setiawan 2022).

Building on these foundations, Civic Education further emphasizes a deep understanding of citizens' rights and obligations so that students' actions align with the nation's goals and ideals. This subject is taught from early childhood through higher

education to cultivate competent future generations who are prepared to participate responsibly in national life (Magdalena, 2020). Consistent with this perspective, Soemantri (2001) explains that PKn aims to equip learners with essential knowledge and skills related to the relationship between citizens and the state. When introduced at the elementary level, these competencies reinforce the development of democratic attitudes, national identity, and civic responsibility outlined in the earlier sections, ensuring that learners internalize Pancasila values as guiding principles for their participation in society. (Lubis et al. 2022).

In a broader international context, the development of Civic Education also reflects policy discussions beyond Indonesia. In the United Kingdom, for example, citizenship education has long been intertwined with national political and educational agendas. A significant policy milestone was the establishment of the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools—commonly known as the Crick Group (Crick, 1998). Formed in 1997, the Crick Group was mandated to accomplish two key tasks: to formulate an operational definition of citizenship education and to provide recommendations for its effective implementation in schools.

When connected to the earlier discussion, the work of the Crick Group illustrates how nations worldwide recognize the importance of structured civic learning in fostering democratic participation. This aligns with the aims of PKn in Indonesia, which similarly seeks to define, systematize, and implement civic values—particularly Pancasila principles—through formal education from an early age. (Kerr 2003).

Civic Education, therefore, stands as a political-democratic learning program enriched by diverse knowledge sources and supported by schools, communities, and families. Its overarching aim is to cultivate critical and analytical thinking while shaping democratic attitudes and behaviors grounded in the values of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. More broadly, education itself functions as a crucial medium for instilling life values and guiding individuals toward personal development. Through structured learning, one's innate potential is fostered into character, integrity, and strong learning capacity, enabling individuals to become confident and competitive within a rapidly changing global landscape (Tanu, 2016). At the national level, Indonesia mandates twelve years of compulsory education to equip citizens with essential life skills, including the capacity to act as democratic participants in society. For this reason, democratic values

must be introduced from the elementary years, particularly through Civic Education, which provides a foundational understanding of rights, responsibilities, and social duties. Early cultivation of democratic principles becomes increasingly important amid the pressures of globalization and the influx of foreign cultural influences. Democracy itself is a defining characteristic of the Indonesian nation, emphasizing respect for individual rights and the recognition of each person's inherent dignity. As Santoso (2010) asserts, the highest authority resides in the people, implemented by the people, and for the benefit of the people. In alignment with this principle, one of the core democratic values emphasized in the Indonesian National Curriculum is the ability to respect collective decisions—an essential competency for responsible and active citizenship. However, traditional teacher-centered instructional approaches often fall short in providing meaningful experiences that reflect authentic democratic processes. As a result, many students engage with democratic concepts only at a theoretical level, without opportunities to practice deliberation, negotiation, and shared decision-making—skills necessary for genuine democratic participation. (Arief Wahyudi 2020).

The role-playing method is an instructional technique that engages learners in dramatizing behaviors, facial expressions, body movements, and speech patterns to represent a particular character, situation, or event. Through this simulation, students assume specific roles that allow them to understand social contexts, interpersonal relationships, and the dynamics of interaction within a given scenario. This process not only enables learners to recognize and analyze behavioral patterns but also enhances their communication skills, empathy, and ability to interpret the underlying meaning of actions and responses in social situations. In the context of Civic Education, these experiential elements are particularly valuable. Role playing creates opportunities for students to practice democratic behaviors—such as expressing opinions respectfully, negotiating differences, participating in group problem-solving, and reaching shared decisions—within a safe and structured environment. Such experiences directly address the limitations of traditional teacher-centered instruction by providing students with authentic settings in which to apply civic values in practice. Consequently, role playing serves as an effective pedagogical bridge between the theoretical understanding of democracy and the lived experience of democratic engagement in the classroom. (Pratiwi 2020).

The role-playing method also serves as an effective alternative for fostering students' creative thinking skills. By actively engaging in the enactment of various situations, learners are encouraged to articulate ideas, explore solutions from multiple perspectives, and make decisions with greater flexibility. Such active participation during dramatization not only creates an enjoyable and meaningful learning experience, but also strengthens students' capacity for imaginative reasoning and innovative problem-solving. Within the context of Civic Education, this approach aligns closely with curricular goals that emphasize participation, social interaction, and the understanding of democratic processes. As previously discussed, democratic learning requires students to navigate diverse viewpoints, engage in collaborative deliberation, and reflect critically on collective outcomes. Role playing provides a structured space for these competencies to develop naturally, enabling students to internalize democratic values through experience rather than mere theoretical explanation. In doing so, the method reinforces the development of both cognitive and socio-emotional skills that are essential for active and responsible citizenship. (Rahayu 2023).

A growing body of research demonstrates that role playing effectively enhances students' communication skills, empathy, cooperation, and civic reasoning. These benefits align closely with the broader aims of Civic Education, which emphasize democratic engagement and social understanding. Because every individual possesses unique thoughts and perspectives, learning to accept and appreciate differences is essential for healthy social interaction. Such skills must be nurtured from an early age so that children develop the social competencies needed to navigate diversity, with empathy serving as a fundamental component. During the early childhood "golden age" (0–6 years), children are especially receptive to environmental stimuli. Experiences and interactions—whether intentionally designed or naturally occurring—leave a lasting impact on their attitudes, character, and future choices (Halifah, 2020). For this reason, early education must be structured to instill foundational values, including the ability to understand differences and demonstrate empathy. Role playing supports this developmental need by providing meaningful opportunities for children to practice social interaction, adopt multiple perspectives, and engage in cooperative problem-solving in a supportive learning environment. (Meliana, Kenedi, and Irawan 2023).

In line with the earlier discussion, the role-playing method functions as an effective medium for developing these essential abilities. By engaging in simulated roles, children practice dialogue, interaction, and social scenarios that reflect diverse perspectives. This experience fosters empathy, cooperation, and respect for shared decisions—values that align with the democratic principles emphasized in Civic Education. Such learning also supports Vygotsky's view that social interaction is a crucial vehicle for cognitive and emotional development. Role playing is categorized as a behavior-based learning approach that involves completing tasks through observable, sequential actions. Often described as pretend play, fantasy, or symbolic activity, it allows children to imitate roles and situations imaginatively. Piaget noted that role play begins when children apply narratives to objects and repeat enjoyable experiences, marking the emergence of higher symbolic functioning referred to as *collective symbolism*. He also highlighted children's self-directed speech during play as *idiosyncratic soliloquies*. These ideas reinforce the connection to earlier points: role playing provides a meaningful space for children to understand others' perspectives, build empathy, and strengthen social skills necessary for democratic life. Through direct interaction and hands-on experience, children learn to accept differences, communicate effectively, and collaborate—foundational values that support social and moral development from an early age. (Hilmi 2018).

In summary, fostering respect for differences, empathy, and social skills from an early age aligns strongly with the principles of role-playing. Learning experiences that involve direct interaction, dialogue, and social scenarios not only expand children's understanding of their environment but also cultivate character traits essential for democratic and harmonious living. Initial observations at SDN 1 Purwosari revealed that fifth-grade students struggled to understand and apply the attitude of respecting collective decisions. Many were reluctant to participate in discussions, had difficulty accepting group outcomes, and demonstrated limited conceptual understanding. These challenges highlight the need for a more participatory, learner-centered instructional approach. Therefore, this study aims to improve students' understanding of respecting collective decisions through the implementation of the role-playing method in Civic Education, as well as to analyze the factors that contribute to its effectiveness.

II. METHOD

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Kemmis and McTaggart spiral model, encompassing planning, action, observation, and reflection. Two cycles were conducted to assess and refine the use of the role-playing method. The subjects were fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Purwosari who had previously demonstrated difficulties in deliberating and respecting group decisions (Maliasih 2017). The instruments used included observation sheets to assess participation, communication, cooperation, and respect for collective decisions; pre-cycle and post-cycle II learning outcome tests; interviews with students and teachers; and documentation in the form of photographs, field notes, and worksheets. Data were collected through observation, tests, interviews, and documentation, with triangulation to ensure validity. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data followed the Miles and Huberman model of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The success of the action was characterized by students meeting the Minimum Competency (KKM) for Civics, increasing test scores in each cycle, and behavioral changes indicating an improved ability to respect collective decisions in accordance with democratic learning objectives.

III. RESULT

Definition of the Role-Playing Method

The role-playing method is a learning activity in which students portray characters or objects from their surroundings, allowing their imagination and understanding of learning material to develop. It allows learners to observe human behavior directly while exploring emotions, attitudes, values, and personal perceptions, as well as enhancing problem-solving skills through varied learning experiences (Joyce & Weil, 1980). Henriksen (2004) emphasizes that role play immerses students in simulated roles and environments, enabling active participation and interaction with the situations being studied. Similarly, Seaton, Dell'Angelo, Spencer, and Youngblood (2007) note that role playing fosters an interactive learning environment that encourages students to understand diverse social perspectives. (Jaspar Jas 2020).

Vygotsky emphasizes that during play, children are freed from the constraints of real-life situations, allowing them to think more abstractly. In this state, they engage in symbolic representation, experiment with ideas, and explore roles beyond their immediate

experiences. Such cognitive freedom supports higher-order thinking and enables children to internalize concepts through meaningful social interaction. (Sartika 2018).

This condition can be used to stimulate children's development optimally (Lusianti, 2021). According to Maghfiroh and Usman (2020), citing Dr. Soegeng Santoso, the role-playing method encompasses two essential dimensions in education: the personal and the social. On the personal dimension, role-playing helps children derive meaning from their environment and develop problem-solving abilities with the support of their peers. On the social dimension, it provides opportunities for collaboration and for analyzing social situations, particularly those involving interpersonal interactions. (Dewi Astuti 2023).

2. Implementation of the Role-Playing Method in Civic Education

In Civic Education, the role-playing method is highly relevant because it provides students with concrete experiences of democratic processes such as deliberation, collective decision-making, conflict resolution, and the exercise of rights and responsibilities. Civic Education aims to equip learners with the ability to think critically, rationally, and creatively about civic issues; to participate actively and responsibly in societal and national life; to develop democratic character consistent with Indonesian values; and to engage globally through the use of information and communication technologies. Achieving these goals depends greatly on the teacher's role, as emphasized in the Indonesian National Education System Law (UU No. 20/2003, Article 3), which states that education must develop capabilities and build a dignified national character, guiding students to become faithful, knowledgeable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizens. (Mulyawati 2022).

Through contextually designed scenarios, students learn to assume roles such as group leaders, deliberation participants, mediators, or citizens expressing their views. This approach makes learning more dynamic and meaningful, while simultaneously mirroring real democratic practices expected in Civic Education. By engaging directly in these simulated roles, students internalize democratic values not only as abstract concepts but as practical skills that support active and responsible citizenship. (Ibrahim 2018).

3. Results of Cycle I and Cycle II

The students' learning outcomes reflect their cognitive achievement after the implementation of the role-playing method in Civic Education for Grade V at SDN 1

Purwosari, Babadan District, Ponorogo Regency. In Cycle I, two students obtained the lowest score of 30, while one student achieved the highest score of 100. In Cycle II, the number of students achieving a perfect score increased to three. However, several students still scored ≤ 65 due to limited understanding of the material and difficulty performing role-play activities—likely because they were not yet accustomed to this method. Since role playing is intended to provide opportunities for questioning and deepening understanding, unfamiliarity with the technique affected their evaluation results. Despite these challenges, most students achieved individual mastery. The indicator of success required at least 75% of students to reach cognitive mastery, and this criterion was met, indicating improved learning achievement, attainment of basic competencies, and enhanced teacher performance. By Cycle II, both the class average and overall mastery levels showed substantial improvement. The engaging nature of role-play activities helped students retain information longer, enabling them to perform better on evaluations even when the tests were not administered immediately after learning activities.

4. Impact of the Role-Playing Method on Students and Teachers

Impact on Students

- Increased activeness and confidence in speaking.
- Improved cooperation and negotiation skills.
- Enhanced empathy, listening ability, and acceptance of group decisions.
- Better understanding of deliberation, democracy, and social responsibility.
- Greater enthusiasm, enjoyment, and meaningful engagement in learning.

Impact on Teachers

- More creative in designing instructional scenarios.
- Improved understanding of students' characteristics and potential through observation.
- Ability to adopt more participatory and inclusive teaching strategies.
- Strengthened teacher–student interaction due to dynamic and dialogic learning.

5. Evaluation of the Role-Playing Method in Civic Education

Overall, the role-playing method proved effective in Civic Education, enhancing students' conceptual understanding, social skills, and democratic attitudes. Nevertheless, its success requires careful preparation, including appropriate scenario design, fair role distribution, effective time management, and strong teacher facilitation. Findings indicate that the effectiveness of this method is influenced by student readiness, teacher support, relevant learning materials, and a conducive classroom environment. When implemented properly, role playing becomes an interactive, character-building instructional strategy that aligns well with the democratic values emphasized in Civic Education.

IV. Conclusion and Suggestions

The role-playing method proved effective in enhancing fifth-grade students' understanding of respecting collective decisions in Civic Education at SDN 1 Purwosari. Through structured simulations, students demonstrated improved mastery of democratic concepts as well as stronger communication, cooperation, and problem-solving abilities. The method also nurtured essential civic values—including empathy, tolerance, responsibility, and respect for group outcomes—reflecting the core competencies required for active democratic participation. Evidence from test results, classroom observations, interviews, and documentation confirmed significant progress. Moreover, role-playing contributed to creating a more dynamic, inclusive, and democratic learning environment in which students felt encouraged to participate and engage meaningfully.

Suggestions

For Teachers

- i. Integrate role-playing activities consistently into Civic Education lessons to reinforce democratic concepts.
- ii. Design relevant and engaging scenarios that reflect real-life civic situations faced by students.

For Schools

- i. Offer ongoing professional development for teachers on active and participatory learning strategies.
- ii. Provide institutional support, resources, and policies that encourage innovative instructional practices.

- iii. Promote schoolwide democratic practices—such as student forums, class meetings, and student councils—to reinforce civic engagement beyond the classroom.

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