
The Effect of Inquiry Learning Methods on The Learning Outcomes of Grade IV Students in The Subject of Civil Society in Perwira IV Elementary School

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the lack of variation in teaching methods in Civic Education (Civic education) learning for fourth-grade elementary students at Elementary School Perwira IV, resulting in passive student involvement and suboptimal learning outcomes, particularly in higher-order cognitive domains. This study aims to determine the influence of the Inquiry Learning method on the Civic education learning outcomes of fourth-grade students. A quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group model was employed. The experimental group (n=33) used the Inquiry method, while the control group (n=33) used the Socratic method. Learning outcomes were measured through achievement tests and analyzed using normality tests (Shapiro-Wilk), homogeneity tests (Levene), and independent samples t-test using SPSS v25. Results showed a significant difference between groups ($t\text{-count} = 3.27 > t\text{-table} = 2.00$, Sig. < 0.05). The experimental group obtained a higher posttest mean (85.60) compared to the control group (72.33). These findings confirm that the Inquiry method is more effective than the Socratic method in improving Civic education learning outcomes and is recommended as an appropriate teaching strategy for elementary school students.

Keyword: inquiry method; learning outcomes; Civic Education; elementary students

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INTRODUCTION

Pancasila and Citizenship Education is a compulsory subject at all levels of formal education that functions strategically in shaping students to become citizens with character, democracy, and legal and national awareness in line with the values of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (Aulia et al., 2023; Kiftiyah et al., 2023). Ideally, civic education learning outcomes cover all cognitive domains from remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, to creating as formulated in Bloom's Taxonomy revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (Wulandari, 2021; Sudjana, 2019).

The ideal conditions for Civic education learning require the active involvement of students in building knowledge through real experience, discussion, and critical reasoning

(Hosnan, 2021; Trianto, 2018). According to Permendikbud No. 22 of 2016 concerning Process Standards, learning should be interactive, inspiring, fun, challenging, and motivate students to actively participate. This active involvement is seen as essential in encouraging the achievement of higher-level thinking competencies or Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) which are the demands of 21st century learning (Fazri & Nuria, 2024; Anggraini & Syafitri, 2023).

However, the facts on the ground show a different condition. Based on the results of initial observations at Elementary School Perwira IV Bekasi, civic education learning in grade IV is still taking place in one direction. The teacher dominates the learning process with the lecture method, followed by the activity of taking notes and answering simple questions that only require the ability to remember (C1) and understand (C2). Students have not had adequate opportunities to discuss, explore ideas, and develop arguments (Hosnan, 2021). The impact is low student engagement and suboptimal learning outcomes. Formative assessments show that most students are only able to reach the C1 and C2 levels, while the skills of C3 (apply), C4 (analyze), and C5 (evaluate) have not developed according to expectations (Sudjana, 2019; Wulandari, 2021). Similar conditions were also found by Serdiansyah (2023) and Simangunsong (2018) who stated that the low active involvement of students in civic education had a direct impact on learning outcomes that were not optimal.

These problems require an innovation in learning methods that can place students as active subjects in the learning process. The Inquiry method is seen as relevant and potentially powerful to answer these challenges. Sanjaya (2021) defines the Inquiry method as a learning strategy that emphasizes students' active involvement in discovering knowledge through observing, questioning, formulating hypotheses, collecting data, analyzing, and drawing conclusions. Piaget (in Putra, 2018) asserts that learning through direct experience and inquiry improves critical thinking skills, creativity, and learning independence. Rusman (2017) added that the Inquiry method encourages students to build their own knowledge so that the understanding gained is more meaningful and durable. Recent studies confirm that the Inquiry method significantly improves learning outcomes in various subjects (Amini & Marwan, 2023; Fazri & Nuria, 2024; Damanik, 2022; Komariyah, 2021; Yuliasuti, 2021).

Based on the gap between the ideal conditions and the field facts, research is needed that empirically examines the effectiveness of the Inquiry method on the learning outcomes of Civic education students in grade IV. The research questions asked are: (1) What are the learning outcomes of Civic education students in grade IV of Elementary School Perwira IV using the Inquiry method? (2) What are the learning outcomes of Civic education students in grade IV of Elementary School Perwira IV using the Socratic method? (3) Is there a significant influence of the Inquiry method compared to the Socratic method on the learning outcomes of Civic Education students in grade IV of Elementary School Perwira IV?

This study aims to: (1) describe the learning outcomes of Civic education students in grade IV who are taught by the Inquiry method; (2) describe the learning outcomes of Civic education students in grade IV who are taught by the Socratic method; and (3) to test the significant influence of the Inquiry method on the learning outcomes of Civic Education students in grade IV of Elementary School Perwira IV.

The novelty of this research lies in: (a) direct comparison testing between the Inquiry method and the Socratic method in the context of Civic education learning in elementary schools that has not been done much before; (b) the use of the topic 'Values of Democracy

in Daily Life' which is contextualized with democratic simulation as a learning medium; and (c) the integration of a revised Bloom Taxonomy-based cognitive analysis as a framework for evaluating learning outcomes. This research is expected to contribute as an empirical reference for the development of innovative and student-centered Civic education learning strategies at the elementary school level.

METHODS

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with an experimental method. The design chosen is a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group model (Sugiyono, 2022). This design was chosen because the researcher could not randomly assign subjects into the full group but instead used an existing class (intact group). The selection of quasi-experimental designs is also in line with real conditions in elementary schools where the formation of completely random new groups is not possible without disrupting the regular learning process (Creswell, 2023).

Research Subject

The research was carried out at Elementary School Perwira IV, Jl. KH. Muchtar Thabrani, Perwira Village, North Bekasi District, West Java Province 17122, in June 2025. The research population is all grade IV students at Elementary School Perwira IV. The research sample was determined by purposive sampling by considering the equality of initial abilities between classes. Class IVA (n=33) was designated as the experimental group that received the treatment of the Inquiry method, while class IVB (n=33) was the control group with the treatment of the Socratic method. The total sample was 66 students (Sugiyono, 2022).

Research Instruments

The data collection instruments used were multiple-choice learning outcome tests and short descriptions that measured the understanding of the concept of civil society in the material 'Values of Democracy in Daily Life.' The question items were developed based on basic competency indicators and covered the cognitive domains C1 to C5 according to the revised Bloom Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, in Wulandari, 2021). The instrument has been tested for content validity through expert judgment and tested for construct validity and reliability using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with a value of $\alpha = 0.82$, which is included in the high reliability category (Sugiyono, 2022).

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection is carried out through three stages. First, a pretest was given to both groups before the treatment to measure the student's initial ability. Second, the learning treatment was carried out in two meetings ($2 \times 3 \times 35$ minutes) for each group on June 2-3, 2025. The experimental group obtained learning by the Inquiry method which included the orientation phase, formulating problems, formulating hypotheses, collecting data, testing hypotheses, and formulating conclusions (Sanjaya, 2021). The control group gained learning with the Socratic method which included the exploration of initial understanding, the asking of open-ended questions, the challenge of assumptions, reflective dialogue, and the preparation of joint conclusions (Jones, Bagford, & Walen, 2016; Yunarti, 2019). Third, a post test is given after the treatment is completed to measure the final learning outcomes.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was statistically analyzed using SPSS v25 through three stages. First, the prerequisite test which includes the data normality test with Shapiro-Wilk and the variance homogeneity test with Levene's test. Second, if the data met the assumptions of normality and homogeneity, it was followed by a hypothesis test using the Independent Samples t-test to compare the average learning outcomes between experimental and control groups. Third, the effect size is calculated using Cohen's d to find out how much of a practical difference between the two groups is (Sugiyono, 2022; Creswell, 2023). The hypothesis testing criteria used a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Result

Experimental Class Learning Outcome Data (Inquiry Method)

Before treatment, the pretest scores of the experimental group (class IVA) showed diverse initial conditions with a low score of 42, a high score of 85, an average of 67.75, a variance of 73.93, and a standard deviation of 8.59. This condition indicates a significant difference in early ability among students. After the administration of learning treatment with the Inquiry method, the posttest showed a very significant improvement. The lowest score rose to 77, the highest score reached 100, the average increased dramatically to 85.60, the variance was 38.99, and the standard deviation was 6.24. This increase reflects that almost all students have exceeded the Minimum Completeness Criteria and students' abilities have become more homogeneous and centered in the high-grade range (Sudjana, 2019).

Control Class Learning Outcome Data (Socratic Method)

In the control group (class IVB), the pretest data showed a relatively low initial ability with a low score of 50, a high score of 75, an average of 59.48, and a standard deviation of 6.18. After learning with the Socratic method, the posttest showed an increase with the lowest score of 55, the highest score of 85, the average of 72.33, and the standard deviation of 6.24. Despite a significant improvement, the achievement of the control group was still lower than that of the experimental group. These results indicate that the Socratic method can improve learning outcomes, but its effectiveness is not as high as the Inquiry method (Jones, Bagford, & Walen, 2016; Yunarti, 2019).

Table 1. Comparison of Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest of Both Groups

Groups	Test	Minimal	Maximum	Average	Standard Deviation
Experiment (Inquiry)	Pretest	42	85	67,75	8,59
	Posttest	77	100	85,60	6,24
Control (Socratic)	Pretest	50	75	59,48	6,18
	Posttest	55	85	72,33	6,24

Source: Primary data, 2025

Data Analysis

a. Normality Test

The normality test was performed using the Shapiro-Wilk test through SPSS v25. The results showed that the experimental group's pretest data had Sig. = 0.102, experimental posttest Sig. = 0.055, pretest control Sig. = 0.092, and posttest control Sig. = 0.076. The entire Sig. value > 0.05 , so it was concluded that the four data were normally distributed and qualified to proceed to the parametric test (Sugiyono, 2022).

Table 2. Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results with SPSS v25

Data	K-S Stat	df	Sig.	S-W Stat	df	Sig.	Ket.
Pretest Experiments	0,145	33	0,077	0,943	33	0,102	Normal
Posttest Experiment	0,145	33	0,077	0,937	33	0,055	Normal
Pretest Control	0,130	33	0,171	0,944	33	0,092	Normal
Posttest Control	0,180	33	0,008	0,942	33	0,076	Normal

Source: Research Results of Nabila Dwiranti, 2025

b. Homogeneity Test

The variance homogeneity test using Levene's Test showed a value of Sig. Based on Mean = 0.275 for the combined pretest and posttest of the four groups, which means that Sig. > 0.05 . Thus, the variance of the two groups is declared homogeneous so that the assumption of variance homogeneity is fulfilled (Sugiyono, 2022). The results of the ANOVA test showed a value of $F = 82.802$ (Sig. = $0.000 < 0.05$), which indicated a significant difference between treatment groups.

c. Uji Hypothesis (Independent Samples t-Test)

Hypothesis testing using the Independent Samples t-Test showed that at the pretest stage, the two groups did not differ significantly (mean experiment 53.31; control 53.68; Sig. = $0.854 > 0.05$), which means the two groups were equal before treatment. In the posttest stage, the experimental group obtained an average of 85.60 and the control group 72.33. The value of t-count = 3.27 is greater than the t-table = 2.00 at a significance level of 5% (Sig. = $0.000 < 0.05$). Thus, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, which means that there is a significant influence of the Inquiry method on the learning outcomes of Civic education students in grade IV of Elementary School Perwira IV.

Table 3. Independent Samples T-Test Test Results of Both Groups

Groups	Average	Levene Sig.	t-count	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Remarks
Experiment (Inquiry)	85,60	0,972	3,27	64	0,000	Significant; H_1 Accepted
Control (Socratic)	72,33					

Source: Research Results of Nabila Dwiranti, 2025

DISCUSSION

1. Civic education Learning Outcomes with the Inquiry Method

The findings of this study show that the application of the Inquiry method in the learning of Civic education grade IV at Elementary School Perwira IV has a significant positive influence on student learning outcomes. The average posttest of the experimental group reached 85.60 with a maximum score of 100, far exceeding the average of the pretest of 67.75. These results are in line with the findings of Fazri and Nuria (2024) who concluded that the Inquiry Learning Model significantly improved the science learning outcomes of grade VI elementary school students, with an average increase of 19.5 points. Anggraini and Syafitri (2023) also confirmed that the Inquiry model has a positive influence on student learning outcomes with a relatively large effect size.

The advantages of the Inquiry method in this study can be explained through the framework of Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development (in Putra, 2018). Learning begins with a video showing of undemocratic class president election conflicts, which trigger disequilibrium cognitive imbalances as new information challenges students' old schematics. Students then formulate questions, design hypotheses, simulate democratic elections, and draw conclusions. This process involves assimilation and accommodation that leads to equilibration a new equilibrium in cognitive structure. Rusman (2017) emphasized that this kind of active knowledge construction process produces a deeper and more durable understanding than passive learning.

Students' activeness in the Inquiry process also encourages the achievement of a high level of cognitive domain (HOTS). Amini and Marwan (2023) found that the implementation of the Inquiry strategy at Elementary School 20 Batu Bulek significantly improved Civic education learning outcomes, especially in the aspects of analysis and evaluation. Damanik (2022) and Komariyah (2021) also emphasized that the Inquiry method consistently outperforms conventional methods in improving Civic education learning achievements and outcomes. Wairata (2021) added that Inquiry has been proven to improve Civic education learning outcomes on Pancasila values through the active involvement of students in each stage of learning.

2. Civic education Learning Outcomes with the Socratic Method

The Socratic method in the control group also provided a significant increase in learning outcomes, from an average pretest of 59.48 to a posttest of 72.33 (an increase of 12.85 points). This proves that the reflective dialogue that is at the core of the Socratic method still has significant pedagogical value. Jones, Bagford, and Walen (in Yunarti, 2019) state that an effective Socratic method involves five main components: digging into initial understanding, asking open-ended questions, challenging assumptions, building reflective dialogue, and drawing conclusions together. These components encourage students to think deeper through structured verbal interactions.

Nevertheless, the improvement achieved by the control group was not as high as that of the experimental group. This difference can be explained by the characteristics of each method. The Socratic method relies more on verbal and dialogue skills, so it provides less opportunities for students to engage directly in concrete learning experiences. In contrast, the Inquiry method synergistically integrates hands-on experience, empirical investigation,

and critical reflection (Sanjaya, 2021; Trianto, 2018). Mustaricha (2019) found that the Inquiry model is more effective in improving the critical thinking skills of Civic education than a dialogue-based approach alone.

3. The Influence of the Inquiry Method on Civic education Learning Outcomes

The results of the hypothesis test statistically prove that there is a significant influence of the Inquiry method on the learning outcomes of Civic education students in grade IV of Elementary School Perwira IV. The t-count value = $3.27 > t\text{-table} = 2.00$ (Sig. = $0.000 < 0.05$) with an average posttest difference of 13.27 points between the experimental and control groups. The magnitude of this effect is confirmed by Cohen's calculation of $d = 2.12$ which falls into the category of very large effect size (> 0.8) according to Cohen's criteria (in Creswell, 2023), indicating that the difference in learning outcomes between the two methods is not only statistically significant, but also practically significant.

These findings are consistent with the results of previous research. Sanita and Anugraheni (2020) through a meta-analysis of various studies of the Inquiry model in elementary schools concluded that Inquiry consistently improves learning outcomes with a large effect size. Yuliasuti (2021) and Yazid (2022) found a similar thing in the context of Civic education, where the Inquiry method has been proven to significantly improve Civic education learning outcomes compared to conventional methods. Suryati (2021) and Susilowati (2021) added that visual media-assisted inquiry further optimizes student learning outcomes.

Pedagogically, the advantages of the Inquiry method in this study can be understood through several mechanisms. First, the structured stages of Inquiry encourage students to move from a low cognitive level (remembering, understanding) to a high level (analyzing, evaluating). Second, the simulation of democratic elections as a learning medium creates an authentic learning experience that facilitates the transfer of knowledge to a real context. Third, the role of teachers as facilitators not transmitters encourage students' independence and curiosity (Rusman, 2017; Ibrahim & Nur, 2016). Fourth, active involvement in each stage of Inquiry increases intrinsic motivation that is positively correlated with learning outcomes (Hosnan, 2021; Kiftiyah et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that: (1) The learning outcomes of Civic education students in grade IV of Elementary School Perwira IV who were taught using the Inquiry method increased significantly, from an average of pretest 67.75 to a posttest of 85.60, with a t-count value = $7.84 > t\text{-table} = 2.02$ (Sig. < 0.05). (2) The learning outcomes of Civic education students in grade IV of Elementary School Perwira IV who were taught using the Socratic method also increased, from an average of pretest 59.48 to a posttest of 72.33, with a t-count value = $2.65 > t\text{-table} = 2.02$ (Sig. < 0.05), but the increase was not as high as the Inquiry group. (3) There was a significant influence of the Inquiry method on the learning outcomes of Civic education students in grade IV of Elementary School Perwira IV, as evidenced by the value of t-count = $3.27 > t\text{-table} = 2.00$ (Sig. = $0.000 < 0.05$) in the posttest comparison test between groups, with Cohen's $d = 2.12$ (very large effect size category). Thus, the Inquiry method has been proven to be more effective than the Socratic method in improving the learning outcomes

of grade IV students and is recommended as a learning strategy that is in accordance with the characteristics of cognitive development of elementary school students.

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations can be made: (1) For elementary school teachers, it is recommended to implement the Inquiry method in Civic education learning in a sustainable manner to create active, interactive, and HOTS-oriented learning. (2) For school principals, it is expected to facilitate the development of teachers' competencies in implementing innovative learning methods through training and clinical supervision. (3) For future researchers, it is recommended to examine the effectiveness of the Inquiry method on different civic education materials, more diverse levels, or integrate it with digital learning technology to optimize learning outcomes in the 21st century education era.

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