

Improving Students' Learning Participation through the Snowball Throwing Learning Model

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Abstract

This classroom action research aims to overcome the problem of low student participation in Civics learning, specifically on the material of Citizens' Rights and Obligations in class X-1 of SMAN 5 Palangka Raya. The study applied the Snowball Throwing cooperative learning model to describe its implementation and analyze its impact on increasing student participation. The research method used was Classroom Action Research with the Kemmis & McTaggart model, conducted in one cycle involving 42 students. Data were collected through observation and documentation. The results showed that the implementation of the Snowball Throwing model was carried out effectively with a high level of success. Furthermore, there was a significant increase in all indicators of student participation, including activeness in asking questions, answering questions, group discussion, expressing opinions, and completing tasks on time, with an average increase of 23.4%. It was concluded that the Snowball Throwing model is an effective innovative solution to increase student participation and create a dynamic and interactive Civics learning atmosphere.

Keywords: *Snowball Throwing, Learning Participation, Civics, Rights and Obligations, Classroom Action Research*

INTRODUCTION

Pancasila and Civic Education plays a strategic role in developing students' civic knowledge, democratic attitudes, sense of responsibility, and willingness to participate in social life. Learning about citizens' rights and obligations should therefore extend beyond the memorization of constitutional concepts. Students need opportunities to examine civic issues, formulate questions, express arguments, respond to different viewpoints, and relate the material to situations encountered in everyday life. Active participation is particularly important because the competencies expected in Civic Education include not only conceptual understanding but also communication, collaboration, critical reasoning, and responsible decision-making.

Evidence from international surveys supports the importance of an open and participatory classroom environment in Civic Education. The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2022, involving 24 participating education systems, found significant associations in all participating countries between students' perceptions of an open classroom climate for discussing political and social issues and their civic knowledge. On average, a one-standard-deviation difference in students' perceptions of classroom openness was associated with a 14-point difference in civic knowledge, or approximately 11 points after student characteristics and socioeconomic factors were considered. An open classroom climate is characterized by opportunities for students to raise issues, discuss different perspectives, express their opinions, and listen respectfully to others (Schulz et al.,

2023). These findings indicate that participation and open discussion constitute important elements of meaningful civic learning rather than merely supplementary classroom activities.

The need to develop students' participation is also relevant to the Indonesian context. A U-Report survey involving 1,683 young respondents found that only 13% had participated in formal participation platforms such as *Musrenbang* or *Forum Anak*. Among those who had not participated, 35% reported that they did not know how to participate, while 23% stated that they had never been invited. Nevertheless, 95% expressed an interest in learning how to participate in community decision-making (Octarra et al., 2022). Although the survey concerned participation in community platforms rather than classroom activities, its findings reveal a broader gap between adolescents' willingness to participate and the opportunities, knowledge, and confidence required for meaningful participation. Schools can contribute to addressing this gap by providing safe and structured learning experiences in which students regularly formulate and communicate their views.

Preliminary observations in Class X-1 of SMA Negeri 5 Palangka Raya indicated that students' participation in Civic Education learning had not yet developed optimally. Several students tended to wait for directions from the teacher, hesitated to ask or answer questions, and were not consistently involved in group discussions. Participation was also uneven because classroom interaction tended to be dominated by students who were already confident in speaking. Consequently, some students had limited opportunities to articulate their understanding of citizens' rights and obligations, respond to their peers' arguments, and actively construct meaning from the material. These conditions indicate the need for a learning model that distributes opportunities to participate more evenly and involves students in structured questioning, answering, and discussion activities.

From a constructivist perspective, students develop understanding by actively processing information, connecting it with prior experience, and interacting with other people. Social interaction enables students to test their ideas, receive responses, reconsider their reasoning, and construct a more comprehensive understanding of a concept (Piaget, 1980; Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of Civic Education, such interaction is essential because civic issues frequently involve different perspectives, value considerations, and reasoned arguments. A learning environment dominated by one-way explanations may provide insufficient opportunities for students to practice these competencies. Therefore, the instructional model should not only present civic knowledge but also create a structured space for students to ask questions, communicate ideas, and respond to different viewpoints.

One cooperative learning model that can facilitate these activities is Snowball Throwing. In this model, students work in groups, formulate questions related to the learning material, write the questions on paper, roll the papers into "question balls," exchange them, and answer the questions they receive. The answers are subsequently discussed and clarified with the teacher. This sequence positions students not only as recipients of information but also as question creators, respondents, and discussion participants. It can also provide wider opportunities for students who are usually reluctant to speak because participation begins with a written question before moving to oral interaction. Previous studies have reported that Snowball Throwing can support learning motivation, communication skills, classroom

activity, participation, and learning outcomes in Civic Education and other subjects (Setiawati, 2017; Rindawan & Wanggu, 2020; Sadiyah, 2022; Nasution, 2023; Putri, 2024; Ja'is, 2024; Siagian et al., 2025).

Despite these positive findings, previous research has generally emphasized learning outcomes, motivation, communication skills, or students' learning activities as aggregate measures. The studies have also been conducted across different educational levels, subjects, and learning materials. Consequently, further classroom-based evidence is needed regarding how the Snowball Throwing model is implemented in senior high school Civic Education and how students' participation develops across specific observable indicators. The present study focuses on five forms of participation: asking questions, answering questions, engaging in group discussions, expressing opinions, and completing learning tasks on time. It also examines the implementation process of the model, rather than reporting participation outcomes without describing how the learning action was conducted.

Accordingly, this study addresses two questions: how is the Snowball Throwing learning model implemented in the topic of Citizens' Rights and Obligations in Class X-1 of SMA Negeri 5 Palangka Raya, and how does students' learning participation develop following its implementation? This study aims to describe the implementation of the Snowball Throwing learning model and examine the improvement in students' learning participation during Civic Education learning. The findings are expected to provide practical evidence for teachers seeking a cooperative learning strategy that promotes more inclusive, interactive, and participatory classroom practices.

METHODS

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach because it focused on improving the learning process and learning outcomes through planned actions carried out collaboratively with the teacher. According to Susanto et al. (2025), Classroom Action Research is a research method aimed at improving the quality of learning practices through action cycles consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. This approach is appropriate for the purpose of this study, which is to improve students' learning participation through the Snowball Throwing learning model.

The type of research used in this study was Classroom Action Research based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of several cycles. Each cycle includes four main stages: planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. This design was selected because it allows the researcher to conduct continuous evaluation and improve learning actions based on field data. Classroom Action Research is also in line with Rahayu's (2025) view that action research is relevant in educational contexts to address real problems in the classroom.

The subjects of this study were the students of Class X-1 at SMA Negeri 5 Palangka Raya, consisting of 42 students. The selection of this class was based on preliminary observations indicating low student learning participation in Civics Education, particularly in the topic of Citizens' Rights and Obligations. The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 5 Palangka Raya, located on Jalan Tingang Km 3.5, Jekan Raya District, Palangka Raya.

The study was conducted on November 14, 2025. The research schedule was adjusted to the Civics Education timetable of Class X-1 so that the action could be implemented directly in the teaching and learning process.

The instruments used in this study were developed based on the principles of educational research data collection described by Susanto et al. (2025), namely that instruments must be valid, reliable, and appropriate to the characteristics of the variables. The instruments used included a student participation observation sheet, which was used to identify changes in students' participation during the learning process. The observation indicators included students' activeness in asking questions, courage in answering questions, involvement in group discussions, ability to express opinions, and participation in creating and answering Snowball Throwing questions.

A teacher observation sheet was also used to assess the implementation of the Snowball Throwing steps, including classroom management, the delivery of instructions, and the provision of learning stimuli. In addition, documentation was used in the form of activity photos, field notes, and documentation of the learning process outcomes. The instruments were developed and validated through discussions with the Civics Education teacher to ensure their suitability with classroom conditions and the needs of the study.

The research procedure followed the Classroom Action Research flow based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model as explained by Susanto et al. (2025), as well as the principles of educational action development proposed by Rahayu (2025).

The research stages included planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. In the planning stage, the researcher identified problems related to students' learning participation through preliminary observation, prepared the lesson plan using the Snowball Throwing model, provided the necessary media, question sheets, and observation instruments, and coordinated with the Civics Education teacher as a collaborator. In the action implementation stage, the teacher began the lesson by providing apperception and a brief explanation of the topic of Citizens' Rights and Obligations. Students were then divided into small groups. Each student created one question related to the material. The question papers were rolled into balls and thrown or exchanged among students. Students who received the question balls answered the questions individually or in groups. The teacher then provided reinforcement and clarification.

In the observation stage, the researcher and the collaborating teacher observed students' activities during the learning process, particularly based on the indicators of participation. They also recorded field findings, obstacles, and students' responses to the learning model. In the reflection stage, the observation data were analyzed to determine the success of the action. The weaknesses that needed improvement in the next cycle, if more than one cycle was conducted, were also identified. Furthermore, improvement recommendations were formulated so that students' participation could continue to increase.

This procedure ensured that the learning action could be evaluated continuously and could have a real impact on students' learning participation. Data were collected through observation and documentation. The data analysis was conducted using qualitative descriptive analysis and quantitative descriptive analysis.

Qualitative descriptive analysis was used to describe changes in students' behavior and participation during each stage of the learning process. Meanwhile, quantitative descriptive analysis was used to calculate the percentage of students' participation based on the observation sheet. The formula used was:

$$\text{Participation Percentage} = \text{Number of Fulfilled Indicators} / \text{Total Number of Indicators} \times 100\%$$

This mixed qualitative–quantitative analysis is in line with the principles of educational research proposed by Susanto et al. (2025), which emphasize the use of technique triangulation to improve the validity of research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of the Snowball Throwing Learning Model

The implementation of the Snowball Throwing learning model on November 14, 2025, in Class X-1 of SMA Negeri 5 Palangka Raya was carried out according to the lesson plan scenario prepared during the planning stage. The learning process lasted for 2×45 minutes and involved all 42 students. In general, the implementation of this model followed the main steps, namely group formation, question creation, exchange of question balls, and the process of answering and discussion.

Learning Implementation

The implementation of the Snowball Throwing learning model was carried out through a series of structured learning activities, beginning with apperception and motivation and ending with teacher reinforcement. During the learning process, students were actively involved in forming groups, creating questions, exchanging question balls, answering questions, and presenting the results of their discussions. Each stage was designed to provide students with opportunities to participate both individually and collaboratively. The observations also showed variations in students' responses across the stages, particularly in answering initial questions, completing question-writing tasks, responding to the questions received, and expressing ideas during classroom discussions. A detailed description of the implementation stages and students' responses is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Implementation Stage

Activity Stage	Implementation Description	Student Response
Apperception and Motivation	The teacher provided initial understanding of Citizens' Rights and Obligations.	20% of students actively answered the initial questions.
Group Formation	Students were divided heterogeneously into seven groups.	All students followed the instructions.
Question Creation	Each student wrote one question on paper and rolled it into a "ball."	Students appeared enthusiastic, and 85% completed the task on time.
Question Ball Exchange	The "balls" were thrown or randomly exchanged among students.	The classroom atmosphere became dynamic, and participation increased.
Answering Questions	Students read and answered the questions they received.	76% were able to answer correctly.
Presentation and Discussion	Group representatives presented their answers and engaged in discussion.	Five to six students began to show the courage to speak.
Teacher Reinforcement	The teacher clarified concepts and provided reinforcement.	Students' understanding became more directed.

The observation results showed that the mechanism of throwing and catching the “question balls” created a more active and enjoyable learning atmosphere, in accordance with the characteristics of Snowball Throwing as a model that encourages simultaneous interaction among students.

Observation Data on the Implementation of the Snowball Throwing Model

To evaluate the fidelity of the Snowball Throwing learning model implementation, observations were conducted using a structured teacher observation sheet. The assessment covered several key aspects, including the clarity of instructions, students’ involvement in group activities, the quality of the questions formulated by students, participation in exchanging question balls, activeness in answering questions, the smoothness of classroom discussions, and time management. The observation results indicate that the implementation varied across the assessed aspects. The highest percentage was recorded in the activity of throwing and receiving question balls, while the lowest percentage was found in the smoothness of classroom discussions. The detailed implementation scores for each observed aspect are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Implementation Scores

Observed Aspect	Implementation Percentage
Clarity of teacher instructions	92%
Student involvement in groups	88%
Quality of students’ questions	74%
Activity of throwing and receiving the question balls	95%
Students’ activeness in answering	78%
Smoothness of discussion	71%
Time management	90%

Based on the table, all stages of the Snowball Throwing model were implemented well, with very good category scores ranging from 80% to 100% and good category scores ranging from 60% to 79%. This indicates that, technically, the model could be effectively implemented in Class X-1.

Analysis of the Learning Implementation

Based on the observation results, the implementation of Snowball Throwing revealed several important findings. First, this model successfully created an active learning atmosphere. The physical activity of throwing the question balls motivated students to become involved in the learning process. This is in line with Setiawati’s (2017) view that Snowball Throwing creates an enjoyable learning atmosphere and increases students’ motivation. Second, student interaction increased. Group discussions and the process of answering questions encouraged students to communicate more intensively. This finding is consistent with Vygotsky’s theory, which emphasizes that social interaction accelerates cognitive development. Third, the questions created by students showed varied levels of initial understanding. Some questions were still simple, indicating that some students were not yet accustomed to formulating analytical questions. However, this process served as an initial step in developing critical thinking skills. Fourth, the teacher played an important role as a facilitator and concept reinforcer. At the end of the activity, the teacher corrected inaccurate answers so that the material remained well directed. Fifth, students who were

usually passive began to become involved. The observation recorded that nine students who previously tended to remain silent began to participate, at least by answering questions or taking part in group discussions.

Interpretation of the Results

The findings indicate that the Snowball Throwing model was implemented effectively in Class X-1. Its structured stages encouraged students to participate through questioning, answering, group discussion, and the exchange of question balls. These activities created a more interactive classroom atmosphere and provided students with broader opportunities to communicate their ideas and engage with the learning material.

The average implementation score of 84% shows that both the teacher and the students were generally able to carry out the learning activities as planned. Although several aspects, such as the quality of students' questions and the smoothness of discussion, still need improvement, the overall implementation proceeded without major difficulties. The model also supported the objectives of Pancasila and Civic Education, particularly in developing students' confidence, communication skills, collaboration, and willingness to express opinions.

These findings answer the first research question concerning the implementation of the Snowball Throwing model in the topic of Citizens' Rights and Obligations. The model is feasible as an alternative learning strategy in Pancasila and Civic Education because it can promote a more active, collaborative, and participatory classroom environment.

Improving Students' Learning Participation through the Snowball Throwing Learning Model

Brief Data Presentation

Students' learning participation was assessed in Cycle I and Cycle II using five indicators: asking questions, answering questions, participating in group discussions, expressing opinions, and completing tasks on time. The comparison between the two cycles was used to identify changes in students' participation following the implementation of the Snowball Throwing model. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Recapitulation of Students' Learning Participation

Participation Indicator	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (%)	Improvement (%)
Asking questions	55	81	+26
Answering questions	60	84	+24
Group discussion	70	92	+22
Expressing opinions	58	85	+27
Completing tasks on time	75	93	+18
Average	63.6	87	+23.4

As shown in Table 3, students' participation increased across all five indicators. The largest improvement occurred in expressing opinions, which increased by 27 percentage points, followed by asking questions at 26 percentage points and answering questions at 24 percentage points. Participation in group discussions increased by 22 percentage points, while completing tasks on time showed an improvement of 18 percentage points. The average participation score increased from 63.6% in Cycle I to 87.0% in Cycle II, representing

an improvement of 23.4 percentage points. These findings indicate that students became more actively involved in the learning process after the Snowball Throwing model was implemented and refined across the two cycles.

Data Analysis

The results in Table 3 show that the Snowball Throwing model had a positive effect on improving students' participation. This is consistent with Sadiyah's (2022) study, which found that the Snowball Throwing model was able to increase students' involvement in the topic of citizens' rights and obligations. Similar findings were also reported by Putri (2024) and Siagian et al. (2025), who stated that this model is effective in encouraging students to interact more actively and become more involved in the learning process.

In the indicator of expressing opinions, the improvement reached 27%. This shows that the activity of exchanging questions and answering the "snowball" papers provided students with a sense of safety to speak, because each student had an equal opportunity to participate. Rindawan and Wanggu (2020), as well as Nasution (2023), stated that Snowball Throwing creates a democratic learning atmosphere, enabling students to become more confident in expressing their ideas.

The indicators of asking and answering questions also showed significant improvement. This is in line with Ja'is (2024) and Setiawati (2017), who explained that this model trains students to read, understand, and process information quickly before communicating it to their peers. In other words, this model not only improves participation, but also develops students' critical thinking skills.

Interpretation of the Results

The findings indicate that the Snowball Throwing model contributed to a more active and participatory learning process. Students were involved in creating questions, exchanging question balls, discussing answers, and responding to their peers. These activities reduced the dominance of one-way instruction and provided more opportunities for students to participate both individually and collaboratively. This finding is consistent with Abrar (2015), who reported that Snowball Throwing encouraged students to participate in each stage of the learning process.

The increase in students' participation may also be explained by the social interaction created through group activities. Through discussion and peer interaction, students had opportunities to exchange ideas, receive support, and develop the confidence to speak. From Vygotsky's perspective, such interaction supports learning within the zone of proximal development, where students can improve their understanding with assistance from peers and teachers. This interpretation is in line with Siringoringo (2024), who reported that the model supported students' confidence in participating in learning activities.

In addition, the question-ball exchange created a more enjoyable and less monotonous classroom atmosphere. The physical and game-like elements of the activity appeared to encourage students to become more enthusiastic and willing to participate. This supports the findings of Azza (2025), who showed that enjoyable learning activities can strengthen students' motivation and engagement.

The model also appeared to support students' responsibility in completing learning tasks. The indicator of completing tasks on time increased by 18 percentage points from Cycle I to Cycle II. Although this indicator showed the smallest improvement among the five indicators, the result suggests that students became more consistent in carrying out the tasks assigned during the learning process. This finding is consistent with Siagian et al. (2025), who associated the implementation of Snowball Throwing with students' participation and learning independence.

Students' learning participation increased across all five observed indicators. The classroom became more active, communicative, and interactive, while students showed greater involvement in asking questions, answering questions, participating in discussions, expressing opinions, and completing tasks on time. The largest improvement occurred in expressing opinions, suggesting that the learning activities provided students with greater confidence and opportunity to communicate their ideas.

These findings support previous studies by Rindawan and Wanggu (2020), Putri (2024), and Ja'is (2024), which reported positive changes in students' learning activities after the implementation of the Snowball Throwing model. Therefore, within the context of this classroom action research, Snowball Throwing can be considered a feasible learning strategy for promoting students' participation in Pancasila and Civic Education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Snowball Throwing learning model in the topic of Citizens' Rights and Obligations in Class X-1 of SMAN 5 Palangka Raya was proven effective in improving students' learning participation. Technically, this model was successfully implemented with a high level of implementation, creating a dynamic, interactive, and enjoyable learning atmosphere through the activities of creating, throwing, and answering "question balls." The increase in student participation was shown by significant improvement in all indicators, namely activeness in asking questions, activeness in answering questions, involvement in group discussions, ability to express opinions, and punctuality in completing tasks, with an average increase of 23.4%.

The improvement contributed to the field of education, particularly learning methodology, is the provision of a practical and innovative tested solution to address the problem of low student participation in Civics Education learning. This model not only encourages active involvement equally among students, but also supports the achievement of the Pancasila Student Profile, including critical reasoning, creativity, and mutual cooperation. Therefore, it can be adopted as an effective alternative cooperative learning strategy.

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