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Implementation and development needs for problem-based Value Clarification Technique (VCT) Model: Boosting grade 4 student's learning interest and critical thinking

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Abstract: This study analyzes the implementation and development needs of a problem-based Value Clarification Technique (VCT) Model to enhance learning interest and critical thinking in Civic Education for fourth-grade elementary school students. Observations at one of Public Elementary School in Bali, Indonesia revealed conventional learning methods with limited media and suboptimal implementation of problem-based issues, despite teachers' efforts to link material to local problems. Interviews confirmed teachers' limited understanding of VCT and their hopes for innovative models and media. Questionnaire results indicated low levels of student enjoyment and active engagement in Civic Education. These findings underscore the urgency of developing a problem-based VCT Model integrated with flashcards. This model is crucial for shifting students' learning experiences toward concrete domains as per Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience, boosting learning interest, fostering critical thinking through problem-solving, and aligning with constructivist principles. This research provides a strong foundation for developing more effective and relevant Civic Education learning interventions.
Keywords: Civic Education; Value Clarification Technique; Problem-Based Learning; Critical Thinking; Learning Interest

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INTRODUCTION

Civic Education plays a fundamental role in Indonesia's basic education system, strategically functioning to shape citizens who embody Pancasila characteristics, are intelligent, responsible, and capable of active participation in national and state life. However, the reality on the ground indicates that the noble objectives of Civic Education have not been fully achieved, particularly concerning the development of critical thinking skills and students' learning interest in Elementary Schools. Students often face difficulties in analyzing problems, making decisions based on values, and exhibiting low enthusiasm for following Civic Education lessons, which are often dominated by conventional methods.

In an era characterized by a massive flow of information and issues of diversity, high critical thinking skills and learning interest are crucial for elementary school students to avoid being easily influenced by misinformation (hoaxes) and to appreciate differences. In this context, the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) Model holds significant potential to help students clarify

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the moral and social values they embrace, while the problem-based issues model can train critical thinking skills through real-world problem-solving (Adawiyah et al., 2024). The combination of these two models, supported by the use of interactive and engaging learning media such as flashcards, is believed to create a more meaningful and relevant learning experience. Therefore, it is important to conduct an in-depth analysis of how VCT has been or can be implemented and to comprehensively identify the needs for developing a problem-based Civic Education learning model empowered by flashcard media, to bridge the gap between expectations and reality in efforts to enhance critical thinking skills and learning interest among fourth-grade elementary students.

The urgency of enhancing critical thinking skills and learning interest in elementary students is increasingly pressing, given the complex challenges of the digital age. Uncontrolled exposure to information demands students' ability to filter, evaluate, and respond to information wisely, rather than merely accepting it. The low learning interest in Civic Education also has the potential to erode national values awareness and the spirit of unity from an early age, which is fundamental for the sustainability of democratic life in Indonesia (Abdulkarim et al., 2024). Without appropriate pedagogical intervention, there is a concern that students will grow into passive individuals, lacking empathy, and vulnerable to polarization due to an insufficient deep understanding of civic values and critical thinking abilities.

Therefore, the need for innovation in Civic Education learning is very high. A learning model is required that is not only oriented towards knowledge transfer, but also towards character building, the development of 21st-century skills, and an increase in learning motivation. The VCT model offers a framework to help students identify and value their own principles, while problem-based issues provide opportunities for students to actively engage in authentic problem-solving that trains their critical reasoning (Kiranadewi & Tyas, 2021). The integration of these two models, coupled with appropriate learning media support such as interactive and engaging flashcards, is expected to fill the existing gaps and create a conducive learning environment for the optimal development of students' potential.

Based on the identified problems, namely the low critical thinking skills and learning interest of students in conventional Civic Education learning, as well as the great potential of the problem-based VCT model supported by flashcards, this study aims to deeply analyze the implementation that has been or can be done of the problem-based VCT model in Civic Education learning in Grade IV elementary school. This research identifies the specific needs for the development of a problem-based VCT model empowered by flashcards, in response to the challenges and opportunities found in the field. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide a strong empirical foundation for the design and implementation of more effective and relevant Civic Education learning interventions in the future.

METHODS

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a focus on case studies in several elementary schools in Buleleng, Bali. This research design was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation phenomena of Value Clarification Technique (VCT) that have been or can be applied, as well as to identify the developmental needs of a problem-based VCT model within the context of Civic Education learning in fourth grade. Research subjects include fourth-grade elementary school teachers and fourth-grade students in purposively selected locations, specifically schools that allow the researcher to observe Civic Education learning practices and elicit perceptions from key informants. Data collection will be conducted through a series of integrated techniques: participatory observation of the Civic

Education learning process in the classroom to capture interactions, methods used, and emerging indicators of problem-based VCT; in-depth interviews with Civic Education /fourth-grade teachers and selected students to explore their understanding, experiences, challenges, and expectations regarding learning innovation; questionnaires for teacher needs to identify model and media preferences, as well as student interest in learning questionnaires to obtain initial quantitative data; and critical thinking ability tests in the form of simple questions relevant to Civic Education material to measure students' baseline abilities. Additionally, document studies such as teaching modules, instructional materials, and supporting learning documents used by teachers will be analyzed to complement the field data (Arikunto, 2020).

All collected data will be analyzed using a combined approach. Qualitative data obtained from observations, interviews, and document studies will be analyzed thematically or through content analysis, involving stages of data reduction to sort relevant information, data presentation in narrative or matrix form, and drawing conclusions through the identification of patterns and themes (Creswell, 2017). Quantitative data from student interest questionnaires and critical thinking ability tests will undergo descriptive statistical analysis. To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, data triangulation will be performed by comparing information obtained from various sources (teachers, students, observations, documents, questionnaires), ensuring that the conclusions drawn are more comprehensive and accountable. The results of this preliminary research are expected to provide a strong empirical foundation for the design and development of a problem-based VCT learning model assisted by flashcards in more in-depth thesis research in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Problem-Based VCT Model in Learning

The problem-based VCT model has been implemented in a rudimentary way in learning at elementary school, utilizing limited existing facilities. This is based on findings during data collection in the field (observation, questionnaires, documentation studies). Information regarding implementation and needs was obtained through observations guided by predetermined points during the learning process, and interviews concerning Civic Education teaching history in Class IV. In Civic Education learning in Class IV at elementary school, observations indicate that teachers actively leverage the surrounding environment as the primary learning medium. For instance, when discussing the topic of responsibilities in maintaining environmental cleanliness, the teacher invited students to directly observe the dirty schoolyard or clogged ditches around the school. This demonstrates the teacher's effort to connect the material with the students' reality. However, the use of more structured and innovative teaching aids remains limited to rudimentary tools, such as simple self-printed pictures or posters, or relying solely on the whiteboard. There was no visible utilization of interactive digital media or specialized flashcards designed for Civic Education learning, indicating a gap in media diversification that could more optimally attract students' visual and kinesthetic interests.

Observational findings regarding students' critical thinking abilities, based on teacher assessments, tended to be identified through students' verbal responses and questions related to local and simple issues. The teacher assessed students' critical thinking when they were able to ask "why" or "how" concerning observed problems, for example, why trash accumulated or who was responsible for cleaning. The topics that triggered this critical thinking were highly contextual to the students' direct experiences, making it easier for them to engage. However,

this assessment of critical thinking was still informal and not systematically measured using standardized instruments. This indicates that although students possess the potential for critical thinking and it can be triggered by local issues, there is a need for the development of more measurable instruments and more explicit learning strategies to train and identify critical thinking skills at a more complex level (Adiastuty et al., 2021).

It was identified that the teacher had implemented the VCT syntax in Civic Education learning in Class IV, albeit with several limitations. The teacher attempted to present real-world problems (e.g., trash issues in the environment), guided students in simple investigations to find causes and potential solutions, and encouraged students to present their findings. However, problem-based issues integrations at learning implementation was not optimal due to various limitations. These limitations included insufficient subject allocation time for all problem-based stages, minimal supporting learning resources such as relevant reading books or internet access, and inadequate classroom facilities that did not fully support in-depth group discussions. Furthermore, the teacher's proficiency in managing discussions, facilitating complex problem-solving, and explicitly integrating values at each problem-based stage still needs to be enhanced, thus preventing the full potential of this model from being realized.

The informational findings were further substantiated through direct interviews with the class teacher and the headmaster, covering the scope of innovation and the mechanisms of Civic Education learning at the school. In-depth interviews with the Class IV teacher, who also teaches Civic Education at elementary school, revealed several important points regarding their understanding and teaching practices. Regarding the VCT models, the teacher's specific understanding of VCT was limited, resulting in a lack of integrated and systematic implementation of both. The teacher's Civic Education teaching experience predominantly involved lecture methods and individual assignments, with a primary focus on curriculum content delivery.

The Need to Enhance Learning Interest

The findings from the needs assessment study regarding the development of a problem-based VCT (Value Clarification Technique) model on student learning interest were obtained through the distribution of questionnaires, utilizing indicators of learning interest. The learning interest questionnaire employed in this research used indicators from Slameto (2010), as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Learning Interest Indicators

No.	Aspect	Indicator
1	Feeling of Enjoyment	Students will not feel forced to participate in teaching and learning activities if they have a feeling of enjoyment towards what they are learning.
2	Interest	Students show interest in subjects or learning activities, characterized by enthusiasm in following lessons and a desire to learn more about the material being studied.
3	Acceptance	Students accept and value subjects or learning activities as something beneficial and important, which encourages them to be more active in the learning process.
4	Active Engagement	Students are actively involved in learning activities, such as discussing, asking, and answering questions, and showing high participation in class.

The results of the learning interest questionnaire distributed to fourth-grade students reveal a varied picture regarding their interest in Civic Education learning, with several indicators still requiring significant improvement. For the feeling of enjoyment indicator, only about 42% of students stated they were happy or very happy to participate in Civic Education learning activities. This suggests that the majority of students still feel some pressure or a lack of intrinsic appeal in the learning process, thus not fully enjoying the material presented. Similarly, the level of student interest in Civic Education lessons or activities remains moderate, with approximately 55% of students indicating interest. Although more than half, this figure implies that a substantial portion of students has not yet felt deep enthusiasm or a strong desire to explore Civic Education material further, especially that which is abstract or theoretical.

Nevertheless, in terms of acceptance, most students (68%) showed that they accept and value Civic Education as a beneficial and important subject. This is a positive asset, indicating students' cognitive awareness of Civic Education's utility, even if this awareness does not automatically translate into strong affective interest or behavior. However, a crucial point is observed in the active involvement indicator, where only about 34% of students reported being actively involved in discussions, asking, or answering questions in class. This low figure is consistent with observation results, which showed a tendency for students to be passive and less participative in learning. Collectively, these findings indicate that the learning interest of Civic Education students still needs to be enhanced, particularly through learning strategies and media capable of triggering feelings of enjoyment, increasing interest, and effectively encouraging active student participation, thereby aligning with their acceptance of the subject's importance.

Need for Critical Thinking Improvement

Students' perception of Civic Education often portrays it as an unengaging and rote-learning subject, characterized by repetitive and identical learning topics. Teachers also expressed limitations in developing students' critical thinking skills, primarily due to a lack of resources (such as supplementary books or access to electronic devices for diverse information) and insufficient training related to innovative methods. Teachers hope for more interactive and easily accessible media, such as engaging digital or visual flashcards, to help visualize abstract values and citizenship issues, which would ultimately enhance student engagement and interest. Teachers' perception of students' critical thinking is their ability to ask "why" and attempt to find simple solutions to everyday problems, but it has not yet reached the stage of in-depth analysis or multi-perspective evaluation.

Further insights were gathered from interviews with the School Principal, providing an overview of institutional policies and support for learning innovations. The school administration welcomes every effort to improve the quality of learning, including in availability of school budget for procuring new learning media or intensive teacher training remains a challenge. Nevertheless, the school is open to the idea of developing new learning models like problem-based VCT. The school hopes this innovation can have a real positive impact on students' learning achievements, particularly in critical thinking skills.

Critical thinking is defined as a higher-order cognitive process involving careful judgment to produce interpretations, analyses, evaluations, and conclusions (Ennis, 2011). Facione (1990) emphasizes that this metacognitive process is fundamentally based on the consideration of relevant evidence, concepts, methods, criteria, and context. Table 2 presents the analysis of the need for critical thinking improvement based on Ennis' indicators for the initial four indicators relevant to fourth-grade elementary school students in civic education of Pancasila learning.

Table 2. Analysis of Critical Thinking Skill Improvement Needs

No	Dimension	Indicator	Attainment Level
1	Paying attention to the overall situation and conditions.	a. Students are able to pay attention to the situation of Pancasila application events around them. b. Students are able to recognize the conditions of events and statements.	Needs improvement in understanding the meaning of values discussed in VCT, e.g., in the proverb "Cleanliness means healthy and comfortable."
2	Striving to stay relevant to the main idea.	a. Students are able to evaluate the claims of rational ideas in the application of Pancasila issues. b. Students are able to evaluate the quality of idea statements.	Quickly able to differentiate between rights and responsibilities related to the problem.
3	Remembering original and fundamental interests.	a. Students are able to recognize the authenticity of arguments. b. Students are able to question actual evidence.	In the process of identifying relevant values related to the problem (e.g., values of responsibility, togetherness).
4	Seeking alternatives.	a. Students are able to express the basis of their opinion on the quality of an argument. b. Students are able to guess alternative solutions.	In the process of identifying awareness, able to predict consequences if the problem is not addressed (e.g., "The environment will smell bad and lead to many diseases"). Not yet able to conclude which values are most important to uphold in the given situation.
5	Being and thinking openly.	a. Students are able to respond to different alternative solutions. b. Students are able to draw conclusions based on inductive and deductive considerations.	Able to assess the feasibility or effectiveness of proposed solutions (e.g., "The clean-up duty idea is good, but a schedule is needed").

Discussion

Observations clearly indicate that the current Civic Education learning practices in 4th grade tend to be conventional, despite teachers' initiatives to link material with issues close to students' environment, such as cleanliness problems. The teacher has attempted to implement the problem-based issues on a very simple scale, but its execution is hindered by various constraints, including limited time allocation, minimal access to diverse learning resources, and inadequate facilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, findings from teacher interviews confirm a limited understanding of VCT specifically, and there have been no efforts to integrate problem-based VCT in their teaching practices. This condition creates a significant gap in students' learning experiences, where they lack opportunities to clarify values deeply while actively solving relevant real-world problems.

This phenomenon of conventional method dominance and lack of active student involvement fundamentally contradicts the principles of active learning emphasized in Edgar

Dale's Cone of Experience (Darmawati & Mustadi, 2023). Learning models that rely solely on lectures or cognitive assignments place students at lower levels of the cone, where they tend to only "hear" or "see" without "doing," resulting in minimal information retention and understanding (Aini et al., 2021). Therefore, there is a strong need to implement a more structured and integrated learning model, such as problem-based VCT. This model is designed to provide clear guidance for teachers in facilitating learning that is not only relevant but also highly active, shifting students' learning experiences to higher levels in Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience, from merely reading or hearing to doing and experiencing directly (Habib et al., 2023; Pernantah, 2020).

The critical thinking abilities of 4th-grade students based on observations and teacher accounts, remain at a basic level. Students are indeed able to respond and ask simple questions related to local issues they face, demonstrating a baseline critical thinking potential. However, the ability for in-depth analysis, synthesis of information from various sources, or measurable multi-perspective evaluation is still not clearly evident. The teacher themselves acknowledge significant obstacles in developing these critical thinking skills, primarily due to limitations in teaching methods and learning media that inadequately stimulate higher-order thinking. This creates an urgency for pedagogical interventions capable of training students to identify problems, analyze information, and formulate solutions more systematically and logically (Bag & Gursoy, 2021). Critical thinking is viewed as a form of directed thinking aimed at decision-making, providing explanations, or solving problems (Arisoy & Aybek, 2021). The importance of critical thinking in education is immense, as it has proven effective in preparing students to face various disciplines (Astawa et al., 2020; Palavan, 2020). This is because critical thinking involves active cognitive processes that enable learners to think contextually in real-world situations, with a primary focus on forming beliefs and determining appropriate actions.

Problem-based issues is relevant in sharpening students' critical thinking skills. Within the problem-based issues context, students are encouraged to analyze real-world problems (Mahdi et al., 2020), ranging from small to complex (Kardoyo et al., 2020), which then leads to inferring innovative solutions. This process requires them to share ideas, connect various concepts, and integrate these concepts with the problem at hand. Problem-based issues in learning fulfills the need to train students to independently find solutions, develop the ability to interpret information relevant to the problem, and evaluate various alternative solutions before making appropriate decisions. Civic Education, with its need for the internalization of values and moral education, aligns linearly with VCT in enhancing students' critical thinking abilities (Alscher et al., 2022). VCT provides a democratic learning pattern that allows students to deeply interpret the values contained within an event or issue. Learners are then invited to analyze these values, considering their various dimensions and implications, before ultimately being able to explain and justify their value choices. This process inherently involves self-regulation, where students actively reflect on and manage their own thinking in clarifying values, thereby strengthening the entire spectrum of critical thinking indicators according to Ennis (Fadilla et al., 2021).

The problem-based Value Clarification Technique model plays a crucial role in developing students' critical thinking skills, aligning with the principles of constructivist learning theory (Yusni & Sanjaya, 2023). VCT encourages students to consider various perspectives and values before making decisions, compelling them to reflect on and evaluate their own beliefs. When integrated with problem-based issues, students clarify values and actively engage in authentic problem-solving, where they must conduct investigations, discuss, and formulate solutions (Ratnaningsih & Jayanta, 2023). These activities inherently

train critical thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Constructivist theory asserts that knowledge is constructed through active experience and students' interaction with their environment (Bowyer & Kahne, 2020). With problem-based VCT, students actively construct their understanding of civic issues and values, rather than merely passively receiving information, thereby organically enhancing their critical thinking abilities. Observations on the critical thinking skills of fourth-grade elementary school students at Kartini Cluster Public Elementary School, Kubutambahan, Buleleng, Bali indicate a significant need for improvement across various Ennis indicators. In terms of interpretation, students were able to identify simple problems presented by the teacher from their immediate environment, such as scattered trash, and grasp the basic meaning of cleanliness values. However, their ability to interpret more complex data, comprehend diverse perspectives on broader civic events, or identify hidden implications remains limited, suggesting the need for further stimulation to enable more profound and comprehensive interpretation of information. Similarly, regarding analysis, students could identify direct causes of simple problems, differentiate between rights and obligations related to an issue, and explicitly identify relevant values. Nevertheless, their analysis had not reached the level of dissecting more complex inferential relationships or identifying underlying assumptions behind more intricate social problems, indicating a need for more in-depth analytical practice consistent with the reasoning demands of the Merdeka Curriculum (Fitriani et al., 2020).

A clear need for improvement is also evident in the inference indicator. While students could offer initial ideas or simple solutions to problems and predict direct consequences, their ability to form more rigorously tested hypotheses, systematically consider various relevant information, or draw conclusions from less explicit data still requires development. They were unaccustomed to reasoning involving multiple variables or making stronger evidence-based logical conjectures. For the evaluation indicator, students demonstrated basic ability to assess the feasibility of proposed solutions by themselves or peers and to differentiate the relevance of a value in the context of a problem. However, their capacity to assess the credibility of information sources in the digital age, critically evaluate diverse arguments, or compare various alternative solutions based on more complex criteria remained highly limited. These overall findings underscore that despite a baseline of critical thinking ability, elementary school students require structured and repetitive learning interventions to train each Ennis critical thinking indicator, enabling them to achieve higher and more measurable competency levels, in line with the independent and critically reasoning Pancasila values implementation.

The identified limitations in students' critical thinking skills directly imply the urgency of implementing innovative learning models that align with student learning needs theories and 21st-century skill demands. The Value Clarification Technique (VCT) model, which focuses on clarifying personal values through processes of choosing, prizing, and acting (Wiradewi et al., 2020), offers a highly relevant framework. Prolem-based VCT using flashcard inherently stimulates critical thinking by compelling students to analyze various value alternatives, evaluate the consequences of each choice, and reflect on which values they prize most and wish to interpret into real actions. This process directly addresses students' psychological needs for learning autonomy, feeling competent in decision-making, and having social relatedness through value discussions with peers.

Understanding the need for concrete and relevant learning media is crucial in modern education, and flashcards effectively meet this need. By linking the abstract concepts of Pancasila (as a set of core values) with contextual issues familiar to students, such as religious tolerance or mutual cooperation, these flashcards strategically bridge the gap between theory

and practice. Within the framework of eight dimensions of Deep Learning, flashcards help students move beyond lower-level cognitive skills like remembering and understanding, and encourage them to achieve higher levels, namely analyzing, evaluating, and even creating solutions. This flashcard model (Figure 1) illustrates how to support VCT-based learning, offering a concrete and operational contextualization of Pancasila for students.

Figure 1. Flashcard Model Supports VCT Learning

The integration of problem-based VCT using flashcard forms a powerful combination that holistically supports the development of 21st-century skills. Problem-based issues explicitly

trains critical thinking skills in the context of problem-solving (Kardoyo et al., 2020; Mahdi et al., 2020). While VCT adds crucial affective and moral dimensions. In an era filled with disinformation and ethical dilemmas, the critical thinking skills honed through problem-based VCT not only encompass cognitive aspects but also the ability for self-regulation in navigating value complexities. This integrated model also encourages collaboration and communication among students in finding solutions and clarifying values, which are essential 21st- century skills (Liu & Pasztor, 2022). Thus, the implementation of problem-based VCT is not merely a methodological alternative but a strategic necessity to foster students who are intelligent and critically-minded, possess strong character, are independent, and can contribute positively to a dynamic society, aligning with the vision of the Deep Learning Merdeka Curriculum.

The use of flashcards as a practical medium in a problem-based Value Clarification Technique (VCT) model is a strategic necessity, as it effectively bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application to develop well-rounded individuals prepared for 21st-century challenges. Flashcards make abstract ethical dilemmas and concepts tangible and relatable through a simple, engaging visual format, fostering a learning environment that is not limited to rote memorization but encourages active participation and constructive dialogue. This approach serves as a focal point for discussion, prompting students to share and justify their value choices, thereby honing their critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills. By providing a structured and accessible medium for value clarification, this integrated model cultivates students who are not only intelligent but also possess strong character and are equipped to contribute positively to a dynamic society.

Interest is not an inherent characteristic but rather something that can be developed and learned (Amin et al., 2020). Interest arises from the acceptance of and a strong relationship between an individual and an external object; the stronger this connection, the greater the interest formed. This indicates that students' interest can be nurtured and strengthened through enjoyable learning processes supported by engaging learning resources. Therefore, the low level of student learning interest, which directly impacts learning outcomes (Mills et al., 2020), makes its measurement and the development of strategies to enhance it a significant priority. With this understanding, teachers, parents, and the surrounding environment play a crucial role in creating conducive conditions to foster learning interest in students (Hidayati et al., 2020). Output will encourage them to remain active in subsequent learning activities (Payne et al., 2020). Consistent data from student learning interest questionnaires indicate that although most students understand the importance of Civic Education, their feelings of enjoyment and active engagement in learning remain relatively low. This moderate level of student interest is exacerbated by the use of inadequate and less interactive learning media (Hendrawijaya, 2022). Learning interest is characterized as an experiential state marked by attention, easy engagement, and feelings of pleasure. Interest in learning activities emerges without external motivating factors but rather from the individual initiative of students, thus having a positive impact on students during the learning process.

Factors influencing student learning interest can be categorized into two main groups: internal and external. Internally, cognitive ability plays a significant role in shaping learning interest (Oats & Oats, 2023). Considering that this cognitive capacity is crucial for completing various types of tasks, from simple to complex. Meanwhile, external factors also play a determining role, including the teacher's teaching methods, the level of teacher involvement in the classroom, and the learning atmosphere (Sutarto et al., 2020). Unfortunately, the dominance of lecture-based methods in delivering material often has a negative impact, causing students to easily feel bored, passive, and even sleepy during the learning process (Astiwi et al., 2020).

In response to these conditions, teachers themselves recognize the importance of having access to more engaging and accessible learning media, particularly for visualizing abstract Civic Education concepts. This aspiration aligns with the institutional support from the school, as revealed by the Principal. Although there are challenges related to budget limitations for innovative media procurement or intensive teacher training, this support remains a valuable asset for the successful implementation of new learning models, such as problem-based VCT. The identified gap between ideal expectations and classroom realities, clearly underscores the urgency of developing a comprehensive learning model supported by relevant media.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Civic Education learning in 4th grade at the elementary level continues to face significant challenges. Conventional teaching methods remain dominant, leading to low student learning interest, limited active engagement, and underdeveloped critical thinking skills. Although teachers have demonstrated an initiative to connect material to local issues and have attempted to apply basic VCT syntax, the optimal implementation of these efforts is hindered by various constraints, including a lack of adequate infrastructure, limited learning resources, and an insufficient understanding among teachers of innovative models. This significant gap impedes the cultivation of intelligent and Pancasila-minded citizens. The study found that students' learning interest, particularly concerning indicators of enjoyment and active engagement, remains low, despite most students acknowledging the importance of the subject. Similarly, students' critical thinking skills are at a basic level; while they can respond to simple problems, they have not yet developed the capacity for in-depth analysis or multi-perspective evaluation. Therefore, this research underscores the urgent need to develop and implement a problem-based VCT model fortified by flashcard media. This integrated model is not merely a methodological alternative but a strategic necessity to bridge the gap between educational theory and classroom practice. By providing authentic problem-solving experiences and concrete learning tools, this model is expected to systematically enhance students' interest and critical thinking skills, aligning directly with the vision of the Deep Learning Merdeka Curriculum.

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