

# The Effectiveness of Case-Based Learning Strategies in Improving Elementary School Students' Understanding of Legal Norms

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## Abstract

This research aims to examine the effectiveness of case-based learning strategies in increasing understanding of legal norms in elementary school students. The method used is literature study by analyzing various sources such as scientific journals, books and related research reports. The research focus includes the concept of case-based learning, characteristics of elementary school students' cognitive development, as well as their application and impact on understanding legal norms. The results of the analysis show that case-based learning strategies have significant potential in increasing elementary school students' understanding of legal norms. This approach allows students to explore real situations, develop critical thinking skills, and connect abstract concepts of legal norms with everyday experiences. However, the effectiveness of this strategy depends on several factors such as the suitability of the case to the student's level of cognitive development, teacher facilitation skills, and appropriate integration in the curriculum. This research concludes that case-based learning is a promising strategy for improving elementary school students' understanding of legal norms, with recommendations for further research regarding its practical implementation in the context of basic education in Indonesia.

**Keyword:** Case-based learning, legal norms, elementary school students, literature study

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding legal norms is a fundamental aspect in forming responsible citizens who contribute positively to society. Instilling this concept early on, especially at the elementary school level, is crucial considering that this period is a formative stage in children's cognitive and moral development (Piaget, 1932; Kohlberg, 1984). However, teaching abstract concepts such as legal norms to elementary school students is often a challenge for educators, considering the characteristics of elementary school children's thinking which is still concrete operational (Santrock, 2011). In this context, case-based learning strategies emerge as a promising approach. This method involves the use of real-life narratives or scenarios as a starting point for conceptual exploration and the development of problem-solving skills (Merseth, 1991). By presenting concrete situations relevant to students' everyday lives, case-based learning has the potential to bridge the gap between abstract theories of legal norms and their practical applications. Several previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of case-based learning in various disciplines. For example, a study conducted by Williams (2005) demonstrated a significant increase in critical thinking skills of law students taught using the case method. Meanwhile, Hmelo-Silver (2004) found that a case-based approach can increase learning motivation and knowledge retention in medical students. However, research on the application of this strategy in the context of legal norm education at the elementary school level is still limited. The need for effective learning methods for legal norms in elementary schools is increasingly urgent considering the increasingly complex social challenges in the digital era. The phenomena of cyberbullying, the spread of false information, and online privacy violations are some of the contemporary issues that require a strong understanding of norms and ethics from an early age (Livingstone & Haddon, 2009).

Therefore, exploring the potential of case-based learning in this context is very relevant and important. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the development of effective learning strategies for legal norm education at the elementary level. By understanding how case-based learning can be optimized for this context, educators and policymakers will have a stronger foundation in designing relevant and

effective curricula and teaching methods. In the context of legal norm education at the elementary school level, case-based learning offers an opportunity to contextualize abstract concepts into scenarios that students can relate to. This approach is in line with Piaget's cognitive development theory, which states that children at elementary school age (7-11 years) are at the concrete operational stage, where they begin to be able to think logically about concrete objects and events (Ojose, 2008). Several previous studies have shown the effectiveness of case-based learning in various disciplines. For example, a study conducted by Kim et al. (2006) found that this approach can improve students' problem-solving and knowledge transfer abilities. Meanwhile, Herreid (2011) emphasized that case-based learning encourages active student involvement and improves long-term knowledge retention. However, the application of this strategy in the context of legal norm education for elementary school students is still relatively limited. Given the complexity of legal concepts and the cognitive characteristics of elementary school students, it is important to further examine how case-based learning can be optimized to improve their understanding of legal norms.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a literature research method. The literature method is a research method carried out by collecting and analyzing information in various literature sources related to the research topic, (Danial, E., & Warsiah, 2009). This method involves collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing data from various relevant secondary sources. The sources used include scientific journal articles, textbooks, research reports, and other academic publications related to case-based learning strategies and legal norm education for elementary school students.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Case-based learning is an effective method in improving elementary school students' understanding of legal norms. In a study conducted, students involved in case-based learning showed a significant increase in their understanding of legal norms compared to conventional learning methods. This method allows students to analyze and discuss legal situations that are relevant to their daily lives, making learning more contextual and interesting. Case-based learning strategies have been proven effective in improving students' understanding of various concepts, including understanding of legal norms in elementary school students. Based on research conducted by Widodo (2019), case-based learning helps students relate abstract concepts to real situations that they face every day. This is very relevant in learning legal norms which are often considered complex for elementary school students. The implementation of case-based learning strategies in legal norm education provides students with the opportunity to analyze concrete situations and develop critical thinking skills. Sulistyowati's (2020) research shows that students who are taught using the case study method have a 35% higher level of understanding compared to conventional methods. Students become more active in learning because they can identify legal problems in contexts that are familiar to their lives. An important aspect in the success of this strategy is the selection of cases that are appropriate to the cognitive level of elementary school students. According to Rahman (2021), the cases used should be simple and close to students' daily experiences, such as school regulations, family norms, or rules for playing with friends. This approach helps students build a deeper understanding of the concept of legal norms gradually.

The use of supporting learning media also plays an important role in the effectiveness of case-based strategies. Handayani's (2018) research revealed that the use of visual media such as images, videos, or role-play can increase student engagement in case-based learning by up to 45%. Learning media helps students visualize the legal situation being studied. Evaluation of learning outcomes shows a significant increase in students' understanding of legal norms. A longitudinal study conducted by Pratama (2022) for one semester found that students who were taught using case-based strategies showed a 42% increase in understanding compared to before the implementation of this method. In addition, students also showed an increase in their ability to apply understanding of legal norms in everyday life. Parental involvement and the social environment also contribute to the success of case-based learning strategies. Nugroho's (2021) research highlights the importance of collaboration between schools and families in strengthening students' understanding of legal norms. Parental support in providing examples and reinforcement at home helps students integrate learning at school with everyday practice. The challenge in implementing this strategy lies in the teacher's ability to facilitate discussions and direct students to the right conclusions. According to Kusuma (2020), teachers need to be equipped with special training on case-based learning methods in order

to optimize learning outcomes. Teacher competence in managing class discussions and providing appropriate scaffolding greatly determines the success of this strategy.

#### *Enhanced Conceptual Understanding*

Case-based learning strategies have been shown to be effective in improving students' conceptual understanding of legal norms. By presenting real scenarios and cases, students can more easily connect abstract concepts with concrete situations. Research conducted by Widodo et al. (2020) showed a significant increase in the conceptual understanding scores of 5th grade elementary school students after participating in case-based learning for one semester, with an average increase of 27% compared to the control group using conventional learning methods.

#### *Critical Thinking Skills Development*

Case-based learning encourages students to analyze situations from multiple perspectives, identify problems, and evaluate potential solutions. A longitudinal study conducted by Pratiwi and Sulistyowati (2021) on 150 elementary school students in three different schools showed a consistent increase in critical thinking skills over two years of implementing this strategy. Students showed better abilities in analyzing moral and legal dilemmas, as well as providing more structured and logical arguments.

#### *Increasing Student Motivation and Engagement*

The use of real cases that are relevant to students' daily lives has been shown to increase their motivation and engagement in the learning process. Qualitative research by Nurhalimah (2022) revealed that 85% of students felt more interested and enthusiastic in learning legal norms when presented through case studies compared to traditional lecture methods. Students reported that they felt more connected to the material and could see its relevance in their lives.

#### *Problem Solving Skills Development*

Case-based learning strategies provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge in a problem-solving context. An experimental study conducted by Kusuma et al. (2023) showed that students exposed to case-based learning showed significant improvements in problem-solving skills, with an average score of 32% higher on a legal problem-solving test than the control group.

#### *Increased Knowledge Retention*

Case-based learning has also been shown to be effective in increasing long-term knowledge retention. A longitudinal study by Wijaya and Prasetyo (2022) involving 200 elementary school students over three years showed that students who learned through case-based methods had a higher level of legal norm knowledge retention, with 72% of students able to remember and apply key concepts one year after learning, compared to only 45% in the control group.

#### *Developing Empathy and Social Perspective*

Through the analysis of cases involving moral and legal dilemmas, students develop empathy and the ability to understand the perspectives of others. Ethnographic research conducted by Sutopo (2021) in five elementary schools showed a significant increase in students' ability to consider the social impact of legal decisions and show empathy for the parties involved in the cases studied.

#### *Implementation Challenges*

Although effective, the implementation of case-based learning strategies also faces several challenges. A study conducted by Rahmawati (2023) identified several major obstacles, including:

- a) Time constraints in a busy curriculum
- b) Lack of teacher training in implementing this method effectively
- c) Difficulty in selecting cases that suit the cognitive level of elementary school students
- d) The need to adapt materials to suit local contexts

### *Supporting Factors for Success*

A meta-analysis of 15 studies conducted by Gunawan et al. (2024) identified several key factors that support the successful implementation of case-based learning strategies in the context of legal norms for elementary school students:

- a) Selection of relevant and age-appropriate cases
- b) Effective facilitation of discussions by teachers
- c) Integration of technology to present cases in an engaging way
- d) Collaboration between students in case analysis
- e) Structured reflection and feedback

### *Characteristics of Effective Case-Based Learning for Elementary School Students*

Literature analysis shows that case-based learning (CBL) has significant potential in improving understanding of legal norms in elementary school students. However, its effectiveness is highly dependent on the design and implementation that are in accordance with the cognitive characteristics of elementary school students.

### *Appropriateness to Stage of Cognitive Development*

Referring to Piaget's cognitive development theory, elementary school students are at the concrete operational stage (Ojose, 2008). At this stage, children begin to be able to think logically about concrete objects and events, but still have difficulty with abstract concepts. Therefore, the cases used in PBK for elementary school students must:

- a) Concrete and Relatable: Cases must reflect situations that are close to students' daily experiences. For example, Nurfaizah (2019) found that the use of school life-based scenarios was more effective in teaching legal norms compared to formal legal cases.
- b) Simple but Meaningful: The complexity of the case must be adjusted to the cognitive abilities of students. Astuti et al. (2020) suggest using simple narratives with a focus on one or two aspects of legal norms in one case.

Case-based learning is an effective method in improving elementary school students' understanding of legal norms. In a study conducted, students involved in case-based learning showed a significant increase in their understanding of legal norms compared to conventional learning methods. This method allows students to analyze and discuss legal situations that are relevant to their daily lives, making learning more contextual and interesting. The results showed that students were more active in participating in group discussions, which helped them to understand different perspectives on legal norms. Case-based learning also encourages the development of critical thinking skills, where students are invited to solve problems related to real legal situations. In this way, students not only learn about legal norms theoretically, but also how to apply them in practical situations. Further discussion reveals that the success of this method is highly dependent on the quality of the cases used and how the teacher facilitates the discussion. Relevant and interesting cases can increase students' motivation to learn and contribute to the discussion. In addition, the social interactions that occur during the learning process also contribute to a deeper understanding of legal norms. Overall, case-based learning has proven effective in improving the understanding of legal norms among elementary school students.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on a comprehensive literature analysis, it can be concluded that case-based learning strategies have significant effectiveness in improving elementary school students' understanding of legal norms. This method not only improves conceptual understanding, but also develops critical thinking skills, problem solving, and social empathy that are important for students' development as responsible citizens. However, the successful implementation of this strategy depends on several factors, including teacher readiness, appropriate case selection, and adequate curriculum support. Therefore, a holistic approach is needed in integrating case-based learning strategies into the civic education curriculum at the elementary school level.

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