

Enhancing Students' Nationalist Attitudes Through the *Numbered Heads Together* Model in Grade 4 Civic Education Lessons

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Abstract

This study was motivated by the low level of nationalism among fourth-grade students at SDN Cimanggu in Bogor City in the subject of Civic Education (PKn). The purpose of this study was to determine the improvement in students' nationalistic attitudes through the application of the *Numbered Heads Together* (NHT) learning model. The method used was Classroom Action Research (CAR) with two cycles. The research subjects were 30 fourth-grade students. Data collection was conducted using a nationalism attitude questionnaire and an observation sheet for teacher and student activities. The results showed a significant improvement: in the pre-cycle, the average student score was 66 (fair category), increasing to 74 in Cycle I (good category), and reaching 91 in Cycle II (very good category). Teacher activities also improved from a score of 78 in Cycle I to 88 in Cycle II. It was concluded that the NHT learning model proved effective in improving students' nationalistic attitudes, particularly in the aspects of cooperation, responsibility, and the courage to express opinions.

Keywords: *Nationalism, Numbered Heads Together (NHT), Civic Education, Elementary School, Classroom Action Research*

Introduction

According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, education is one of the fundamental efforts to impart the spiritual values inherent in the lives of a cultured people to each new generation (cultural transmission), not merely for preservation but also with the aim of advancing and developing culture toward the entirety of human life. (. One of the important character values that must be instilled through education is a sense of nationalism, namely a love for the homeland manifested through the public's awareness to establish and maintain national sovereignty (Sari et al., 2024) .

Instilling nationalism starting in elementary school is crucial because children's characters are still developing at this stage, allowing national values to take deeper root. However, current trends indicate a decline in nationalistic attitudes among students, such as a lack of respect for national symbols, limited knowledge of national heroes, and low levels of cooperative spirit (Dewi et al., 2021; Kalkautsar et al., 2025) . Nationalism is a sense of love for one's homeland that arises from the public's awareness of the need to establish a nation and uphold its sovereignty. Instilling a sense of nationalism is crucial to begin as early as elementary school, as this is the stage when a child's character is still in the process of formation (Sari et al., 2024) . Indicators of a nationalistic attitude include cooperation, a sense of responsibility, respect for others' opinions, love for the homeland, and a spirit of nationalism. This awareness can unite the people within the nation and encourage them to

work together toward the goal of the nation's freedom and sovereignty. (Saragih & Batubara, 2024) The importance of nationalist values lies in instilling character education to shape an individual's character—such as love for the homeland, a sense of responsibility, national spirit, love for peace, independence, and discipline (Miritno, 2021). The spirit of nationalism is defined as an inner attitude inherent in an individual—both as a person and as part of the nation and state—manifesting as awareness and behavior that includes love for the homeland, maintaining unity and solidarity, and a willingness to sacrifice in defending the nation and state ((et al., 2021) It is important to build a sense of nationalism in the next generation of the nation, particularly children, because it can support the progress of the nation. Children who possess a strong sense of nationalism will more appreciate the nation's culture, language, and history.

Civics Education (PKn) is a required subject in elementary school aimed at shaping students into good and responsible citizens. However, in practice, the teaching of PKn still faces challenges. Many students view PKn as a boring subject because it tends to be teacher-centered and relies on conventional methods, leading students to become passive and fail to fully grasp the values of nationalism (Suharyati & Sakura, 2023). Patriotism is a manifestation of actions or behaviors aimed at defending the homeland, fostering a desire to protect it, cultivating a sense of love for culture, customs traditions, race, and ethnicity, as well as fostering an appreciation for the diversity within it, and cultivating a willingness to sacrifice beyond personal interests to realize the nation's aspirations (Love for the homeland of Indonesia must be instilled in a person from an early age, so that as the nation's future generation, they can demonstrate attitudes and behaviors that benefit the interests of society and avoid social deviations that undermine the norms and cultural values of the Indonesian nation (Ritonga et al., 2022)

Based on initial observations in the 4th grade class at SDN Cimanggu in Bogor City, it was found that the *Numbered Heads Together* (NHT) learning model had never been implemented. Instruction still relied on the lecture method, resulting in suboptimal student participation in discussions and group work. Therefore, this study aims to determine the improvement in the nationalistic attitudes of 4th-grade students at SDN Cimanggu in Bogor City through the implementation of the NHT learning model in the Civic Education subject. For this reason, the NHT learning model is necessary. It indirectly trains students to exchange information, listen carefully, and speak thoughtfully, thereby making students more active and productive in learning activities (Fitrianti et al., 2025). Research by Hilma & Santoso (2021) also demonstrates that the NHT cooperative learning model helps students develop critical and analytical thinking skills, enabling them to master the learning material comprehensively.

Numbered Heads Together (NHT) is a type of cooperative learning that emphasizes collaboration in small groups. In this model, each group member has the responsibility to understand and solve problems and be ready to answer questions (Diana et al., 2023). The steps of NHT include: (1) numbering — each student in the group is assigned a number; (2) the teacher poses a question; (3) group discussion; and (4) a number is called at random to answer the question. found that the implementation of cooperative learning models helps students develop critical and analytical thinking skills, enabling them to master the learning material comprehensively (Diana et al., 2023).

Method

This study employed the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, conducted in the 4th-grade class at SDN Cimanggu in Bogor City. The research subjects were 30 students. The

study was carried out in two cycles, each consisting of four stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection (Bektiarso et al., 2021) .

The data collection methods used were (1) a questionnaire on nationalist attitudes administered to students at the end of each cycle to measure the development of nationalist attitudes, with a maximum score of 80, and (2) an observation sheet for teacher and student activities evaluated by an observer (the homeroom teacher of 4th grade at SDN Cimanggu). Data analysis was conducted using quantitative descriptive methods by calculating the average scores and the percentage of student achievement in each cycle.

The research success indicators were established if the average score for students' nationalist attitudes reached the "good" or "very good" category, and there was a significant increase from one cycle to the next.

Results and Discussion

1. Pre-Cycle Results

Before the implementation of the NHT model, Civic Education instruction in Grade 4 at SDN Cimanggu still utilized conventional methods (lectures). The pre-cycle questionnaire results indicated that the average score for students' nationalist attitudes was only 66 (66%), with the dominant category being "adequate." Of the 30 students, the category distribution was as follows: 5 students (very low), 2 students (low), 13 students (fair), 9 students (good), and 1 student (very good). This condition reflects the low level of active student engagement in learning due to a method that did not sufficiently encourage participation.

2. Results of Cycle I

Cycle I was conducted on May 20–21, 2026, in two sessions using the *Numbered Heads Together* (NHT) learning model. The post-intervention questionnaire results showed an increase in the average score for students' nationalist attitudes to 74, or 74%, with the dominant category being "good." More specifically, out of a total of 30 students who were the subjects of the study, 12 students were in the "fair" category, 17 students were in the "good" category, and one student had reached the "very good" category. In line with the development of students' attitudes, the quality of teaching performance also showed positive results, with the teacher's activities in Cycle I achieving a score of 78, which falls within the "good" category.

Although there has generally been an improvement compared to the pre-cycle conditions, the implementation of activities in Cycle I was observed to still face a number of challenges in the field. These challenges are evident in the fact that some students remain less active during the learning process. In addition, some students also lack the confidence to express their opinions in front of the class. This situation is exacerbated by group collaboration that is not yet optimal, as students are still adjusting to the new model. Based on reflections on these shortcomings, the researcher then designed and implemented strategic improvements to be implemented in Cycle II in order to achieve maximum results.

3. Results of Cycle II

In Cycle II, the researcher implemented improvements aimed at boosting student motivation, encouraging students to express their opinions, and organizing groups more effectively. As a result, the average score increased significantly to 91 (91%), with the dominant category being "very good." Of the 30 students, 6 were in the "good" category and 24 achieved the "very good" category. Teacher activity increased from 78 to 88 (the "very good" category), indicating increasingly effective classroom management.

This improvement is due to the fact that students have become accustomed to NHT-style group discussions, making them more active, more willing to express their opinions, and better able to work together. The random roll call system also encourages all students to take responsibility for understanding the material.

Based on the research results presented for each cycle, there appears to be a significant and sustained increase in students' nationalistic attitudes. In the pre-cycle, the average student score was only 66, falling into the "fair" category. This condition was caused by the dominance of conventional methods, which made students passive, less involved in discussions, and resulted in low learning motivation. This is in line with the opinion of Suharyati & Sakura (2023), who stated that teacher-centered lecture methods make students less active and unable to understand the values of nationalism optimally.

Following the implementation of the Numbered Heads Together (NHT) learning model in Cycle I, the students' average score increased to 74, with "good" being the dominant category. This improvement indicates that the NHT model is beginning to have a positive impact on students' engagement and sense of nationalism. Students began to demonstrate cooperation within groups, the courage to express their opinions, and a sense of responsibility toward the assigned tasks. However, there were still 12 students in the "fair" category, indicating that the implementation of the NHT model in Cycle I had not yet been optimal because students were still in the adjustment phase. As stated by Diana et al. (2023), the NHT model requires practice so that all group members can participate actively and equally in every discussion session.

In Cycle II, following improvements such as more intensive motivation, more effective group organization, and encouragement for students to be more confident in expressing their opinions, the average score increased significantly to 91, with the dominant category being "very good." A total of 24 out of 30 students achieved the "very good" category, and no students fell into the "fair" or "poor" categories. These results demonstrate that the NHT model, when consistently applied and accompanied by improvements in each cycle, is capable of optimizing students' nationalistic attitudes. This finding is supported by the research of Fitrianti et al. (2025), which states that the NHT model has been proven to enhance students' interest and engagement in learning through the mechanism of structured group discussions.

The increase in nationalistic attitudes observed from the pre-cycle, Cycle I, to Cycle II was also accompanied by an increase in teacher activity. The teacher activity score rose from 78 in Cycle I to 88 in Cycle II. This increase reflects improved classroom management, clearer guidance for students, and the teachers' ability to create a conducive atmosphere for discussion. This aligns with the principles of the NHT model, which requires teachers to play an active role in facilitating, guiding, and motivating each group to ensure effective discussions (Imam & Taufik, 2022). Thus, the successful implementation of the NHT model depends not only on students' readiness but also on the quality of instructional management carried out by teachers. A summary of the increase in students' nationalistic attitudes at each stage of the study is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Summary of Changes in Students' Nationalist Attitudes

Stage	Number of Students	Average Score	Percentage	Dominant Category
Pre-Cycle	30	66	66%	Moderate
Cycle I	30	74	74%	Good
Cycle II	30	91	91%	Very Good

Source: Research data (2026)

Conclusion

Based on the results of the Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted over two cycles in the 4th grade class at SDN Cimanggu in Bogor City, it can be generally concluded that the implementation of the Numbered Heads Together (NHT) cooperative learning model has proven to be effective and significant in enhancing students' nationalistic attitudes in the Civic Education (PKn) subject. The effectiveness of this model is based on the following three generalizations of the main findings:

First, the implementation of the NHT model has transformed the Civic Education learning paradigm from a conventional, teacher-centered approach to an active, student-centered, and meaningful one. The steps of numbering students and calling out numbers at random encourage the equal mental and physical engagement of all students, ensuring that no student dominates the class or remains passive.

Second, improvements in students' nationalistic attitudes—specifically in terms of cooperation, responsibility, and the courage to express opinions—occurred gradually and consistently across each cycle. This improvement in quality is demonstrated by the quantitative data from the student questionnaires, where, in the pre-cycle phase, the average student score was only 66 (a “fair” rating) due to reliance on boring lecture-style methods. After the NHT model was implemented, the average score for nationalistic attitudes increased to 74 (good category) in Cycle I, and peaked in Cycle II with an average score of 91 (very good category).

Third, the success in enhancing students' sense of nationalism is directly proportional to the improvement in teachers' quality and competence in managing classrooms based on cooperative learning. The observation score for teacher activities increased from 78 (good category) in cycle I to 88 (very good category) in cycle II. This proves that the practice of the NHT model trains teachers to be more skilled in facilitating discussions, managing time, and providing motivational reinforcement conducive to the development of students' inner selves and patriotic behavior.

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