



Improving Interpersonal Intelligence Regarding Social Sensitivity Through the CTL Method in Social Studies Learning

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ABSTRACT

With the development of the times, marked by changes in social life, students' social sensitivity has decreased, including at the basic education level. On the other hand, the importance of developing 21st-century competencies encourages changes in the learning process (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). Achieving 21st-century competency goals requires development within the learning process, particularly by enhancing soft skills. Developing students' soft skills, combined with the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) method, is a solution to the problem of social sensitivity among students at SD Islam Cendekia. In this context, it is necessary to conduct research to measure students' social sensitivity using the CTL learning method. The research uses a quantitative, experimental approach, with data collected via Likert-scale instruments to measure students' social sensitivity. The instrument data obtained is then analyzed using descriptive statistics. Based on the data obtained and analyzed, there is a significant 19% increase in their social sensitivity attitude after CTL implementation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning is a process of change that concerns attitudes and behaviors. (Hammond and Wellington, 2019). The process includes a range of activities to achieve the set goals and competencies. (Rao, 2020). Teachers are the primary actors in this process, which directly affects their students. In the learning process, the teacher's role cannot be overlooked. Therefore, to achieve the best results in the learning process, coaching is needed to plan and direct activities. (Lau, 2001). Teachers are expected to plan, implement, and reflect on their work, thereby developing a strong sense of social sensitivity and respecting others.

Learning itself is "Learning is fundamentally about change—change in attitudes, behavior, beliefs, capabilities, mental models, skills, or a combination of these", meaning that learning is the basis for changes in attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs, mental abilities, skills, and others (Lederman and Abell, 2014). Learning is also: "... Learning is defined as a persistent change in human performance or performance potential; learning comes about as a consequence of the learner's experience and interaction with the world". Another opinion states that "learning is a relatively permanent change in behavioral potentiality that occurs as a result of reinforced practice".

According to Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, article 37, paragraph 1, states that "the curriculum of primary and secondary education must contain social studies subjects". Through social studies learning, students will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to understand the dynamics of people's lives and to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed in their own lives (Lau, 2001). Social studies learning in the classroom focuses not only on the cognitive realm but also on the affective and psychomotor realms. This is intended so that, through social studies learning, students are expected to solve various problems not only from a cognitive perspective but also to behave, actively participate in the life of the community around them, and show great social concern as part of their lives. The implementation of effective and efficient social studies learning in schools, especially at the basic education level, should be carried out by teachers with appropriate qualifications and competencies (Ciolan & Manasia, 2024). This is intended to create a fun learning process that motivates students and encourages active participation. In the process, social studies learning is also expected to develop students' social sensitivity so that, in practice, they can adapt to and socialize within community life. The growth and development of this social sensitivity is also accompanied by students' interpersonal intelligence, one of the multiple intelligences proposed by Gardner.

Young people need this interpersonal intelligence to understand how they feel in their surroundings. This is because interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand and relate to others. Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand differences in a person's mood, intentions, motivations, and feelings. Other aspects of interpersonal intelligence include sensitivity to sounds, facial expressions, and body movements; the ability to distinguish different types of cues; and the ability to respond pragmatically to them.

Social sensitivity is the extent to which a person is responsive to the expectations and social conditions in his environment, enabling him to act in accordance with the community's expectations. Social sensitivity in a person begins with maturity, allowing him to direct his personality in accordance with his heart and the ethical and aesthetic values of his society. The growth and development of social sensitivity in students is inseparable from their interpersonal intelligence. Social sensitivity is a person's ability to respond quickly and

appropriately to specific objects or social situations. Religiosity and social sensitivity are very important to be instilled in children, in this case, students, from an early age. These social sensitivities include sharing with others and being willing to help people in need. Another form of social sensitivity is the courage to apologize when you make a mistake, and an attitude of respect for others with different circumstances. Social sensitivity is also defined as the ability to understand individual behaviors, feelings, and motives, which are central to the psychological understanding of fundamental phenomena such as self-efficacy and its role in interactions within and between groups. Social sensitivity is also considered a stimulus that has the potential to cause anxiety and worry about a phenomenon or symptom that occurs both internally and externally.

Student sensitivity affects their daily attitudes and behaviors because, in social situations, they experience human feelings and instincts. Social sensitivity is an individual's ability to identify and understand social cues and to respect others. Having high social sensitivity can make a person liked and respected in their social relationships. Social sensitivity is the ability of individuals to understand and respond appropriately to others' feelings, needs, and social situations. Social sensitivity is a social aspect consisting of: a) Empathy is an understanding of others based on their perspectives, needs, and experiences. b) Prosocial behavior is a moral action that must be performed within a cultural context, such as sharing, helping people in need, cooperating with others, and expressing sympathy.

Social sensitivity plays an important role in various aspects of life, including personal relationships, the work environment, and participation in society. High social sensitivity can help individuals get along, avoid conflict, and create a conducive environment. Fostering a high level of social sensitivity can be achieved in social studies learning through appropriate methods tailored to students' characteristics, subject content, and goals, such as Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), which connects learning to real-world contexts. (Ciolan and Manasia, 2024). Among the various learning methods that can be applied in social studies to facilitate students' interpersonal intelligence and foster attitudes of high social sensitivity is the CTL method. This is because the CTL learning method is grounded in current realities, with principles such as constructivism and reflection that support the development of student competencies (Alamer and Almaghlouth, 2024).

There are three things from the concept of the contextual learning method/CTL, namely (1) the contextual learning method/CTL emphasizes the process of student involvement to find the material and in this process does not expect students only to receive the lesson but also the process of finding and finding the subject material themselves, (2) the contextual learning method/CTL encourages students to be able to find the relationship between the material learned and the real-life situation, (3) the contextual learning method/CTL encourages students to be able to apply it in life, meaning that the contextual learning method/CTL not only expects students to understand the material learned but how the material can color their daily behavior.

In this regard, the Ministry of National Education (Pendidikan, 2011) stated that there are five important characteristics of the contextual learning method (CTL), namely activating existing knowledge and reflecting on it to develop strategies (Rao, 2020). John Dewey originally developed the concept of contextual learning from his traditional learning experiences. According to him, students will learn well if what they learn is related to the knowledge and activities they already know and encounter. In relation to the above, the Ministry of National Education (Pendidikan, 2011) asks every teacher if applying the

contextual learning method/CTL must (1) students be seen as developing individuals, (2) every child tends to learn new things, (3) learning for students is the process of connecting new things with known things, (4) learning for children is the process of perfecting the scheme.

The contextual learning method (CTL) is a learning approach with seven principles that underlie its implementation: constructivism, inquiry, questioning, community learning, modeling, reflection, and assessment, according to the Ministry of National Education (Pendidikan, 2011). To achieve the same competence by using the contextual/CTL learning method, teachers carry out learning steps such as (1) introduction, (2) core consisting of activities in the field and in the classroom, and (3) conclusion. In addition, as a method for supporting social studies learning, the CTL method has seven principles that underlie its implementation: constructivism, inquiry, questioning, learning community, modeling, reflection, and assessment, which have been proven effective in increasing student performance through strategic learning interventions (Alamer & Almaghlouth, 2024).

2. METHODS

The approach used in this study is quantitative and experimental, employing the CTL method as the learning treatment (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The data collection process using non-test instruments, in the form of Likert-scale questionnaires, assesses students' social sensitivity, with responses on a 1-4 continuum (Cohen et al., 2002). To support the data, participant observation was conducted by directly observing the research object during classroom instruction and breaks in the school environment. In addition, documentation/photos of the implementation of learning activities in the classroom were collected. Before starting and conducting the research, initial observations and interviews were conducted with the Scholar Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher to obtain a description of the research object.

The data obtained after treatment will then be analyzed using descriptive statistics, which begin with tests of the validity and reliability of the social sensitivity instruments (Field, 2024). After testing the instruments' validity and reliability and learning the treatment using the CTL method, the students were given instruments to measure social sensitivity and were also observed by the researchers. The instrument data were analyzed descriptively to determine the level of social sensitivity among elementary school students. The study subjects were 5th-grade students at SD Islam Cendekia in the Purwakarta district. Sample determination is carried out using purposive sampling, namely, sampling based on specific criteria (Etikan et al., 2016). The selection of the sample was based on the following considerations:

- 1) Not in the preparation period to take the final school exam.
- 2) There are social studies learning materials related to social sensitivity.
- 3) Grade 5 is a class with a middle level among a row of grade levels in elementary schools.
- 4) Classroom students already have a social sensitivity to friends and the surrounding environment.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted in elementary schools, where Purwakarta Scholars administered the questionnaire instruments. It begins with making initial observations to gain an overall picture of the research subject. Questionnaires were used as an initial data collection method to assess students' social sensitivity before the treatment and presentation

were administered (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The material was provided, and the questionnaire was completed the next day. The facilities and infrastructure used during the research activities were laptops, internet quotas, whiteboards, markers, and projector screens. Before conducting the research, the team surveyed the elementary school where it would take place. The survey was conducted by issuing research permits to the principal, homeroom teachers of grade 5, and home teachers of grade 6. During this planning phase, the researcher communicates with the homeroom teacher regarding the activity schedule and prepares all necessary facilities and infrastructure.

The initial research began on July 23, 2024, in grade 5, by administering questionnaire instruments to assess students' initial understanding of social sensitivity. The questionnaire instrument contains statements about social sensitivity. Students fill in the instrument by giving a mark (v) in the column of the available answer sheet, namely by choosing one of the answers that best suit the situation in the SS column for Strongly Agree, S for Agree, TS for Disagree, and STS for Strongly Disagree. With the attitude category that refers to the range of score percentages, namely:

- 1) 76% - 100% = Have Very High Social Sensitivity;
- 2) 51%-75% = Have High Social Sensitivit;
- 3) 26% - 50% = Have Low Social Sensitivity;
- 4) 0% - 25% = Have Very Low Social Sensitivity (Cohen et al., 2002).

In the second study, grade 5 students were given material on social sensitivity before completing the instrument. This is done so that researchers can compare those who studied social sensitivity beforehand with those who have received social sensitivity material using the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) method.

Based on the results of data processing in the form of score percentages, where the score percentage shows the level of social sensitivity that students have before and after being given Contextual Teaching Learning about social sensitivity (Field, 2024). The discussion of the results of the research is focused on two things, namely (1) the level of social sensitivity in students before conducting Contextual Teaching Learning, and (2) the level of social sensitivity and student response after learning with the Contextual Teaching Learning method.

1. The level of social sensitivity in students before doing Contextual Teaching Learning

In the initial research activity in grade 5, students were given questionnaire instruments without Contextual Teaching and Learning. There are about 28 students in grade 5; each student answers the questionnaire statements individually. The diagram below shows the initial level of social sensitivity of students in grade 5. The following diagram is attached:

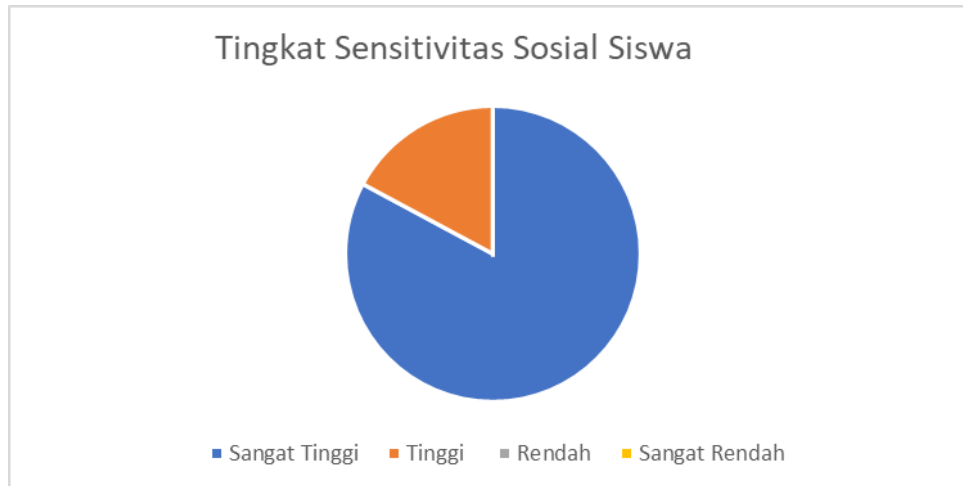


Figure 1. Social Sensitivity Pre Test

Of the 16 students in grade 5, 6 have a very high level of social sensitivity, and the other 10 are at a quite high level. In the diagram above, 82% of students have a very high level of social sensitivity, while the remaining 17% have a fairly high level. (Cohen et al., 2002). This shows that 5th-grade students at SD Islam Cendekia Purwakarta already have strong social sensitivity, as evidenced by their ability to cooperate, help, and empathize. This initial data has not been incorporated into the learning background using the Contextual Teaching and Learning method, so researchers have not been able to see how far they have developed social sensitivity in daily life. (Creswell and Creswell, 2017).

2. The level of social sensitivity and students' response after learning with the Contextual Teaching Learning method

In the second research activity in grade 5, students were given the same questionnaire, and Contextual Teaching and Learning was applied during learning activities, including during the distribution of materials (Johnson, 2002). Students develop an understanding of social sensitivity, including concepts, goals, factors that affect it, and the importance of awareness in recognizing and observing others' reactions and changes, both verbal and nonverbal, in daily life. There are about 16 students in grade 5, with data obtained on the results of the level of social sensitivity contained in the following diagram:

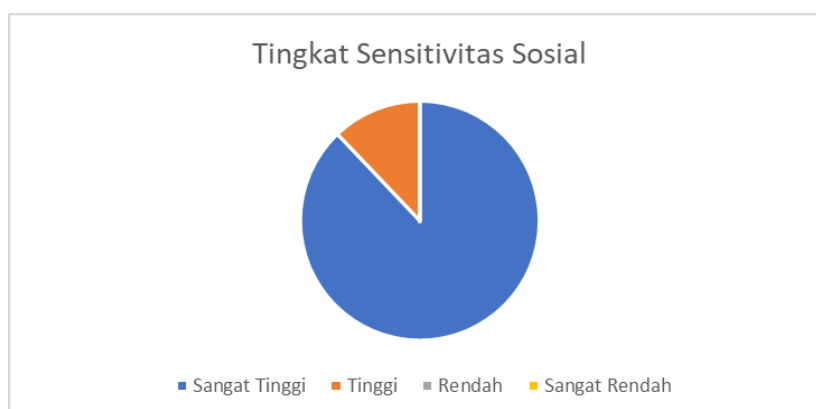


Figure 2. Social Sensitivity Post Test

Of the 16 students in grade 5, 14 have a very high level of social sensitivity, and 2 have a quite high level. According to the diagram above, 87% of 5th-grade students have a very high level of social sensitivity and can apply it in daily life (Gardner, 2011). Meanwhile, the other 12% of students have a high enough level of social sensitivity to apply it effectively. The data show that the Contextual Teaching and Learning method significantly influences learning outcomes (Johnson, 2002). If the same number of respondents is taken from each class, without reducing the number of students in the “high” social sensitivity category, the increase will be 19%. The increase is expected to continue, as awareness of social sensitivity is very important for everyone, especially elementary school students. This is based on the fact that social sensitivity is a dimension of interpersonal intelligence (Goleman, 2005). Interpersonal intelligence is a person’s ability to interact with others, communicate, and build and maintain social relationships.

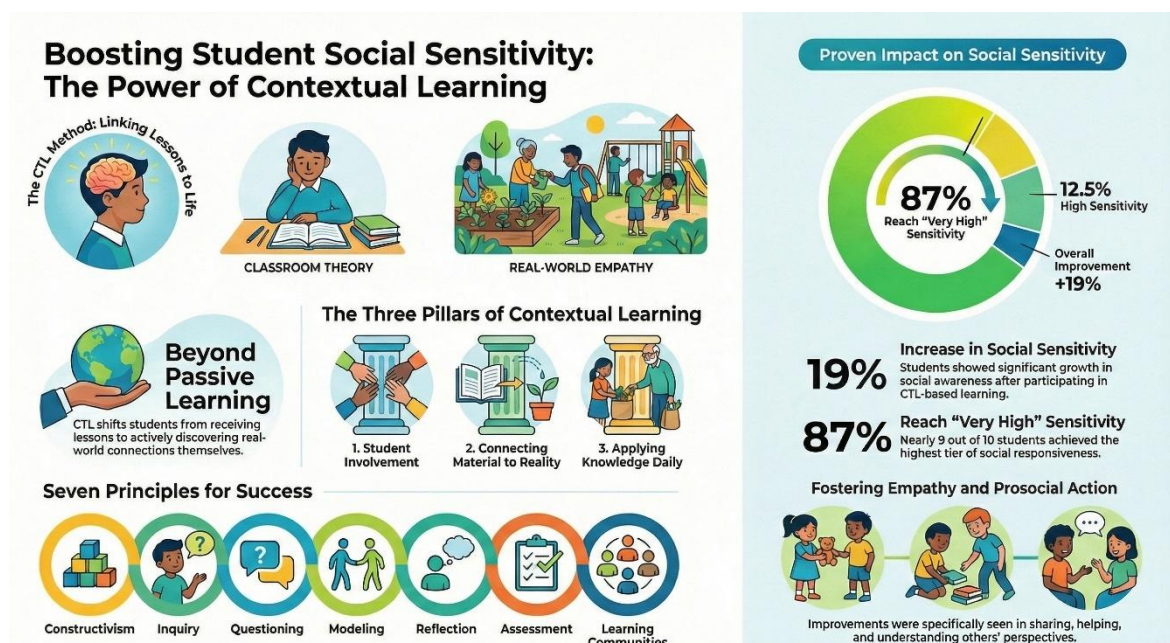


Figure 3. Research Results Infographic

This research article investigates how the CTL method can enhance social sensitivity and interpersonal intelligence in elementary school students. The authors argue that modern societal changes have led to a decline in students’ empathy, necessitating more effective Social Studies teaching strategies. Using a quantitative experimental approach, the study compares students’ awareness before and after exposure to lessons that link academic material to real-world situations. Results demonstrate a significant 19% increase in social sensitivity among fifth-grade participants at SD Islam Cendekia. Ultimately, the source concludes that the CTL method is a vital tool for developing the soft skills and moral behaviors required for successful community life.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, this study found that learning using the Contextual Teaching and Learning method increased students’ social sensitivity awareness by 19%. Student sensitivity is very important because it shapes their daily attitudes and behaviors, as social sensitivity involves feelings and instincts (Goleman, 2005). The Contextual Teaching and

Learning method can be appealing to students, helping them understand that social sensitivity is essential in daily life (Johnson, 2002). In addition, social sensitivity is closely related to interpersonal intelligence, as it involves interaction with friends and the surrounding environment (Gardner, 2011). The interaction is not limited to discussion and sharing feelings; it also involves understanding thoughts and feelings and responding appropriately.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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