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Implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) Model to Improve Students' Learning Activeness in Social Studies at SMP Negeri 1 Tempurejo

Firda Safaat Sholehah¹, Shendy Andrie Wijaya², David K. Susilo³

^{1,2,3} Department of Economic Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas PGRI Argopuro Jember, Jember, Indonesia. Email: firdasyafaat06@gmail.com¹, shendyandriewijaya@gmail.com², david.jfc12@gmail.com³

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the integration of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach and its impact on boosting student engagement in Social Studies at SMP Negeri 1 Tempurejo. Employing a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, this inquiry blended qualitative observations with supporting quantitative metrics. The investigation spanned two full cycles, with each phase encompassing detailed planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The research subjects comprised 26 learners from class VII B at SMP Negeri 1 Tempurejo. Data collection methods involved direct observation, field notes, and documentation analysis. The empirical findings demonstrated that adopting the CTL instructional framework significantly stimulated student participation during Social Studies sessions. The learners exhibited greater involvement by raising questions, providing answers, engaging in collaborative group tasks, and sharing their perspectives throughout the lessons. During the initial cycle, student learning engagement reached 66.7%, falling into the active category. Following targeted pedagogical improvements in the subsequent cycle, this figure rose significantly to 83.3%, qualifying as very active. Ultimately, the application of CTL fostered a more interactive, meaningful, and learner-centered environment because the instructional materials were tied directly to the students' real-life experiences. Consequently, the CTL framework serves as an effective pedagogical tool to optimize student engagement in Social Studies education.

Keywords: Contextual Teaching Learning, Learning Activeness, Social Studies, Classroom Action Research, Student Participation.

I. Introduction

Education plays an important role in developing human resources, improving knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed in social life. Through education, students are expected not only to master theoretical concepts but also to engage dynamically within the educational process. Educational tasks that involve students actively can improve understanding, critical thinking, and creativity. Therefore, teachers are required to apply learning models that encourage learners to be more participative during classroom sessions. One approach that can optimize student engagement is the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) framework. CTL serves as an instructional methodology linking academic content with the actual life experiences of

learners, thereby rendering the educational process more purposeful and interconnected. According to Johnson (2022), CTL helps students construct knowledge by connecting academic material with real-world situations. Through CTL, learners are motivated to involve themselves fully in group dialogues, collaborative tasks, and problem-solving exercises.

Learning activeness is an essential barometer determining educational achievements. Engaged students tend to ask questions, answer questions, participate in discussions, and express opinions during classroom activities. Hamalik (2022) states that learning activeness refers to students' involvement physically and mentally in learning activities. However, in reality, many learning activities are still teacher-centered, causing students to become passive learners. Initial field investigations carried out in class VII B at SMP Negeri 1 Tempurejo revealed that student engagement within Social Studies courses remained inadequate. The participants mostly focused on completing assignments individually and seldom integrated into classroom dialogues. Furthermore, they demonstrated hesitation in conveying their perspectives or raising inquiries throughout the instructional sessions. This situation was caused by monotonous teaching methods and limited interaction during classroom learning. Social Studies learning requires students' active participation because the subject is closely related to social phenomena and everyday life. Therefore, Social Studies learning should provide meaningful learning experiences through interactive and contextual activities. The CTL model is considered suitable to overcome students' passive behavior because it emphasizes experiential inquiry, critical questioning, communal reflection, and authentic evaluation formats. Several previous studies have shown that the utilization of CTL yields beneficial outcomes for classroom engagement. Rahmawanti and Kurniawan (2022) found that CTL increased students' involvement in Social Studies learning activities. In addition, Prasetyo (2023) stated that CTL helped students understand concepts contextually through meaningful learning experiences. However, some studies also revealed that the effectiveness of CTL depends on classroom management and teacher readiness.

Although several previous studies, such as those by Rahmawanti and Kurniawan (2022) as well as Prasetyo (2023), have widely acknowledged the general benefits of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in expanding student engagement, a critical research gap remains unresolved. Most existing literature heavily evaluates the model's effectiveness within highly controlled experimental settings or generalized urban schools. Consequently, there is a distinct lack of empirical evidence regarding how CTL operates under Classroom Action Research (CAR) dynamics in suburban public school environments, specifically targeting Grade VII B at SMP Negeri 1 Tempurejo, where learners encounter local socioeconomic and cultural constraints that shape their initial passivity. Furthermore, prior studies rarely document the explicit behavioral shifts at an indicator-specific level—such as tracing localized dynamics of questioning versus opinion expression—during Social Studies sessions. This study directly addresses this empirical void by exploring how the seven structural pillars of CTL practically overcome entrenched student hesitation, thereby extending the utility of contextual pedagogy beyond merely confirming established theoretical paradigms.

Grounded in these challenges, this investigation centers on executing the Contextual Teaching and Learning approach to enhance student engagement within Social Studies courses at SMP Negeri 1 Tempurejo. To contextualize this pedagogical intervention deeper, social studies education at the secondary school level must be understood not merely as a passive collection of historical dates and economic terms, but as a critical laboratory for citizenship and social literacy. In the contemporary digital era, adolescent learners are continuously exposed to complex social phenomena and shifting economic dynamics that require advanced critical evaluation skills. If the instructional delivery remains locked within a traditional, teacher-centered paradigm that forces students to rely on textbook memorization, the essential objective of social studies is completely lost. Secondary school students fail to recognize the organic alignment between the academic curriculum and the operational dynamics of their immediate communities. Consequently, this instructional disconnect lowers their learning interest, fosters behavioral passivity, and severely limits their willingness to actively engage in classroom transactions such as raising inquiries or defending social viewpoints.

Therefore, restructuring the pedagogical framework of social studies through contextual learning mechanisms is an urgent necessity to foster functional social competence. By systematically substituting

abstract content delivery with authentic, localized economic and social problems familiar to the suburban community surroundings, the classroom dynamic can be completely re-engineered. Adolescent learners gradually transition from defensive classroom silence to active, self-directed knowledge co-construction because they perceive that the academic material has immediate, practical utility within their daily lives. This conceptual realignment proves that improving student learning activeness in social studies is not merely about achieving minor behavioral compliance parameters during a specific lesson; rather, it is about cultivating lifelong critical thinking habits and analytical confidence that empower young learners to become informed, participative members of their local socio-economic environments.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL)

Contextual Teaching and Learning represents an instructional strategy that bridges pedagogical concepts with the real-world environments encountered by students in their daily routines. This approach is considered suitable for Social Studies learning because it helps students relate classroom concepts to real social conditions, making learning more meaningful and easier to understand. CTL is based on constructivist learning theory, which explains that knowledge is constructed by students through their own learning experiences. In this process, students are encouraged to actively build understanding through observation, interaction, and reflection, rather than only receiving information from the teacher. In classroom practice, CTL allows teachers to act as facilitators who guide students in exploring learning materials. Students are also encouraged to participate actively in discussions and group activities so that learning becomes more interactive and student-centered. According to Nurhadi (2004), the CTL framework comprises seven core pillars: constructivism, inquiry, questioning, learning community, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment. These elements cooperate to establish an educational atmosphere that fosters active involvement and collaborative efforts among learners.

In contemporary educational discourse, the operationalization of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) has evolved beyond basic pedagogical transmission into a complex socio-constructivist framework. According to modern learning theories, when instructional designs systematically embed academic concepts within the immediate sociocultural ecology of suburban learners, it triggers a cognitive resonance that significantly lowers academic anxiety. Within the context of Social Studies, the synthesis of CTL's seven structural pillars—specifically constructivism, inquiry, and questioning—functions as a psychological catalyst that transforms passive historical or economic concepts into dynamic classroom realities. Recent empirical insights suggest that the structural success of contextual learning relies heavily on the authenticity of the classroom problems presented by the educator. When students are systematically exposed to local socio-economic issues, such as regional market fluctuations or community livelihood dynamics, their intrinsic motivation to participate expands exponentially. This contemporary framing establishes that CTL does not merely serve as a superficial tool for engagement but acts as a foundational cognitive bridge that facilitates deep conceptual internalization and collaborative knowledge co-construction among adolescent learners in secondary education. Overall, CTL is considered effective in improving the quality of learning because it encourages students to connect theoretical knowledge with real-life situations.

The implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is systematically driven by seven core pedagogical pillars that transform abstract social science curriculum into functional learning habits. The first foundational pillar, constructivism, dictates that knowledge cannot be passively transmitted from the instructor to the student; rather, adolescent learners must actively co-construct their cognitive structures by bridging novel academic inputs with their pre-existing socioeconomic schemas. In social studies education, this conceptual expansion requires the instructor to actively scaffold baseline concepts around familiar localized environments, allowing students to systematically deconstruct real-world phenomena rather than rely on dry textual rote memorization. The second pillar, inquiry, serves as the operational engine of active learning, forcing students to engage in systematic cycles of observation, hypothesis formulation, data collection, and collaborative analysis. By exposing secondary students to realistic community-based

challenges, the inquiry mechanism shifts the instructional center of gravity away from passive teacher delivery, compelling learners to take physical and cognitive ownership of their investigative trajectories.

Closely linked to the inquiry process is the third pillar of questioning (questioning), which functions as a psychological catalyst to stimulate critical thinking and expand classroom interaction density. Within an authentic contextual classroom, questioning cycles are not deployed exclusively by the educator as a metric for diagnostic testing; instead, the strategy is engineered to prompt bilateral dialogue, encouraging students to voice spontaneous uncertainties, challenge peer assumptions, and articulate independent social viewpoints. This strategic vocalization effectively breaks down defensive classroom silence and directly builds individual self-efficacy among hesitant or introverted learners. The fourth pillar, the learning community (learning community), provides the structural architecture to sustain this verbal engagement. By dividing a large, asymmetric cohort into small, heterogeneous collaborative networks, the learning community distributes the psychological risks associated with public speaking. Learners are provided with a secure social platform to test their perspectives, share resource grids, and experience lateral peer-to-peer scaffolding, ensuring that active participation becomes a collective normative behavior rather than an isolated individual action.

To facilitate deep conceptual internalization, the fifth pillar of modeling (modeling) requires the instructor or selected student representatives to provide concrete behavioral and cognitive examples. In social studies learning, modeling goes beyond simply showcasing final task outcomes; it requires the transparent demonstration of analytical thinking processes, such as how to interpret socioeconomic charts, calculate trading margins, or evaluate historical social testimonies. This visible cognitive mapping provides a clear blueprint that reduces student task anxiety and empowers passive individuals to build immediate behavioral momentum. This is systematically followed by the sixth pillar, reflection (reflection), which functions as a self-regulatory mechanism at the conclusion of each instructional cycle. Through structured reflection routines, students are forced to critically re-evaluate their conceptual growth, recognize persistent logical errors, and explicitly articulate the direct utility of the academic material within their daily lives, transforming short-term classroom compliance into sustained cognitive habits.

Finally, the seventh pillar, authentic assessment (authentic assessment), reconstructs the entire evaluative framework of the educational environment by tracking multi-dimensional behavioral indicators throughout the active learning process. Authentic evaluation deliberately rejects the traditional, single-metric dependency on rigid summative examinations, replacing it with continuous, real-time tracking grids that value student engagement, collaborative contribution, questioning frequency, and contextual project execution. By systematically validating and rewarding the qualitative shifts in student participation as they occur in the classroom, authentic assessment establishes a powerful motivational feedback loop. This comprehensive assessment structure ensures that the final empirical evaluation accurately reflects both long-term cognitive gains and tangible improvements in learning activeness across successive action research cycles.

2.2. Learning Activeness

Learning activeness represents the degree of student engagement throughout the educational process, encompassing both bodily and intellectual participation. Within an active educational environment, learners are anticipated to engage directly in classroom tasks, rather than merely acquiring facts from the educator in a passive manner. In the context of Social Studies learning, student activeness is very important because it helps students understand social phenomena through discussion, analysis, and interaction with peers. Active involvement also supports students in developing critical thinking skills and communication abilities. Sardiman (2023) clarifies that this engagement manifests through diverse learner tasks, including joining educational processes, participating in dialogues, answering inquiries, and articulating perspectives. These actions indicate the extent of student absorption in the academic routine and their contribution to classroom dynamics.

Furthermore, Sudjana (2022) indicates that student engagement can be monitored via numerous benchmarks, such as taking part in learning sessions, involvement in problem-solving, willingness to ask questions, participation in discussions, and attention during learning. These parameters demonstrate that

academic engagement spans beyond visible physical actions to encompass internal psychological focus throughout lessons. Student engagement is shaped by various elements, both originating from within the individual and from external conditions. Internal factors include motivation, interest, and confidence, while external factors include teaching methods, classroom environment, and learning models applied by the teacher. Therefore, appropriate learning strategies are needed to improve students' activeness in the classroom.

From a behavioral psychology perspective, student learning activeness within secondary social education represents a complex manifestation of both observable physical engagement and internal cognitive processing. Modern pedagogical research argues that active learning is not merely a spontaneous behavioral trait but a structurally conditioned response influenced by the classroom environment. When students are actively engaged in social studies, their participation patterns—ranging from raising critical inquiries to articulating independent perspectives—are heavily dependent on their perceived self-efficacy and the interactive density of the group structure. In the context of secondary public schools, addressing student passivity requires an instructional design that systematically scaffolding lower-risk participation, such as collaborative peer-to-peer dialogues, before moving toward high-risk activities like public presentations. Therefore, evaluating student activeness requires a comprehensive framework that systematically accounts for individual confidence barriers, peer interaction dynamics, and the situational relevance of the academic content, ensuring that classroom engagement transforms into sustained academic performance rather than a temporary behavioral shift.

2.3. Relationship between CTL and Learning Activeness

Relationship between CTL and Learning Activeness The Contextual Teaching and Learning model has a strong relationship with students' learning activeness because it places students as the center of the learning process. Through CTL, instructional tasks are structured to absorb learners firsthand in examining and grasping the course material. By connecting learning content with real-life situations, students are more likely to feel that learning is relevant and meaningful. This relevance increases students' motivation to participate actively in classroom activities such as asking questions, discussing ideas, and solving problems together. The inquiry and questioning components in CTL play an important role in encouraging students to think critically. Students are guided to explore information independently and communicate their findings during discussions. This process helps students become more confident in expressing their ideas in front of others. In addition, the learning community component supports collaborative learning among students. Through group work, students can exchange ideas, help each other understand difficult concepts, and develop social interaction skills. This collaboration also reduces students' passiveness in the classroom. Furthermore, the reflection component allows students to evaluate their own learning experiences. This helps students become more aware of their learning progress and encourages continuous improvement in their participation.

Overall, CTL creates a learning environment that is interactive, meaningful, and student-centered. Previous studies have shown that implementing CTL can effectively enhance student involvement and participation in educational tasks. Therefore, CTL is considered an effective approach to increase learning activeness in Social Studies learning. The dynamic nexus between the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model and students' learning activeness is anchored in the cognitive transformation of raw information into experiential knowledge. Within a constructivist learning ecosystem, student participation is structurally accelerated because CTL dismantles the traditional, passive lecture format and replaces it with collaborative inquiry frameworks. When adolescent learners are systematically positioned at the center of the instructional process, their intrinsic motivation to interact with academic content expands because they perceive a direct alignment between school curriculum and their lived experiences outside the classroom. The structural integration of learning communities within the CTL framework provides a psychologically secure platform that buffers individual performance anxieties, allowing naturally introverted or hesitant students to gradually cultivate self-assurance through localized peer discussions. Consequently, the strategic application of

contextual pedagogical mechanisms does not merely result in minor increases in statistical participation benchmarks; rather, it fundamentally restructures the classroom dynamic into a participatory, egalitarian environment where questioning, critical debate, and autonomous perspective-sharing become the normative baseline of academic inquiry.

III. Research Method

To execute this study, a Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology was employed according to Arikunto (2021), combining qualitative observations with supporting quantitative data. The fieldwork took place at SMP Negeri 1 Tempurejo from April to May 2026. The research cohort comprised 26 individuals from class VII B, featuring 11 male and 15 female students. This investigation integrated the framework established by Kemmis and McTaggart, which incorporates four distinct phases: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The study was executed across two distinct cycles, with each individual cycle containing two classroom sessions. Data collection techniques included observation and documentation. Observation was conducted to monitor student engagement throughout the application of the CTL framework. Documentation was used to collect supporting data such as photographs and learning documents. The research tools employed in this study consisted of observation sheets monitoring CTL execution and student engagement levels. The metrics for assessing student involvement included raising inquiries, delivering answers, taking part in group dialogues, and sharing perspectives.

To ensure methodological rigor and cross-observer reliability throughout the Classroom Action Research (CAR) framework, the field observations were systematically conducted utilizing a collaborative observation approach. The researcher functioned as the active instructor implementing the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model, while the formal Social Studies subject teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Tempurejo acted as the external kolaborator and primary observer. Before commencing Cycle I, both observers underwent a calibration session to standardize the interpretation of the four learning activeness benchmarks. The observation instruments were structured on a sequential Likert-scale matrix ranging from 1 (inactive) to 4 (highly active), specifically tracking the frequency and quality of student participation during both the collaborative learning community sessions and individual presentation phases. Observer consistency was strictly maintained by cross-referencing field notes immediately following each classroom session, thereby minimizing subjective assessment bias. Furthermore, the supportive documentation data encompassing high-resolution pedagogical photographs and raw classroom artifacts served as a factual baseline to corroborate the numerical percentage shifts and ensure that the qualitative descriptive analysis remained systematically grounded in observable empirical evidence.

The empirical evaluation of student learning activeness within this Classroom Action Research framework required a highly structured, operationalized tracking system to convert qualitative behavioral changes into precise quantitative metrics. The research instrument utilized a multi-dimensional observation matrix designed to monitor six specific indicators of active classroom engagement derived from the theoretical models of Hamalik (2022) and Sudjana (2022). Each indicator was measured using a standardized four-point Likert scale, ranging from a score of 1 (representing a complete absence of the targeted behavior or structural passivity) to a maximum score of 4 (representing highly active, self-directed participation). By deploying this structured behavioral grid, the instructor and the external collaborator could continuously calculate student engagement levels without relying on subjective pedagogical assessments, ensuring high transparency and internal reliability across both cycles.

The first three indicators explicitly tracked active communicative outputs during structural classroom transactions. The 'raising inquiries' parameter measured the frequency and relevance of student questions, evaluating whether learners were actively interrogating the historical or economic concepts presented rather than passively receiving content. The 'delivering answers' metric tracked the students' verbal responsiveness to teacher-initiated prompts and their willingness to react to immediate academic challenges. Furthermore, 'joining group dialogues' evaluated the interactive density during the learning community phases, focusing on how effectively the 26 participants shared conceptual materials, assisted lower-performing peers, and maintained collaborative focus within their small-group networks without drifting into off-task behaviors.

The remaining three indicators evaluated assignment compliance, cognitive independent sharing, and contextual adaptation under the seven pillars of the CTL instructional framework. The 'sharing perspectives' benchmark monitored the students' internal confidence during presentation phases, specifically tracking their ability to articulate independent social viewpoints and challenge peer assumptions in a public forum. Meanwhile, 'completing assignments' served as a practical metric for task commitment, documenting whether the Grade VII B cohort finalized group worksheets and diagnostic tasks within the prescribed temporal boundaries. Finally, 'connecting context' represented the core pedagogical index, specifically tracking the learners' operational ability to connect abstract social studies curriculum with localized economic phenomena, such as community market interactions and regional inflation patterns occurring within the immediate Tempurejo ecosystem.

The aggregated scoring structure was calculated by dividing the total obtained scores across all six operational parameters by the theoretical maximum score of 24, subsequently multiplying the result by 100% to generate a clean, standardized percentage layout. According to the institutional success criteria calibrated prior to Cycle I, the collective classroom intervention was formally declared successful if at least 75% of the total participant cohort achieved a final categorization of active (51%–75%) or very active (76%–100%). This rigorous measurement design ensured that the descriptive qualitative analysis presented in the subsequent sections remained fully grounded in verifiable data grids, providing subsequent researchers with a transparent, highly reproducible methodology to track active learning acceleration in secondary public school environments. Data analysis used qualitative descriptive analysis and quantitative analysis. According to Sugiyono (2022), qualitative descriptive analysis is used to describe research findings systematically. Meanwhile, Miles and Huberman (2014) explain that qualitative data analysis consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Quantitative data were analyzed using percentage calculations to determine the improvement of students' learning activeness in each cycle.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Analysis Result

The execution of the CTL framework within Social Studies courses was completed across two full cycles. Throughout the instructional process, learners were motivated to engage firsthand via collaborative group tasks, questioning exercises, and real-world problem-solving routines. In Cycle I, implementing CTL showed positive improvements in classroom learning activities. Students began to participate in discussions and respond to teacher questions. However, some students were still passive and less confident in expressing opinions during discussions. The field observations indicated that student involvement throughout Cycle I reached 66.7%, falling into the active classification. Although students' participation improved, several weaknesses were identified, such as limited interaction and lack of confidence among some students. Reflecting on the outcomes of Cycle I, pedagogical adjustments were applied during Cycle II. The educator offered enhanced encouragement, inspired active involvement, and established more dynamic discussion platforms. In Cycle II, students showed significant improvement in classroom participation. Students became more confident in asking questions, answering questions, and expressing opinions during discussions. Group learning activities also became more active and collaborative. The observation results in Cycle II showed that students' learning activeness increased to 83.3%, categorized as very active. The improvement indicated that utilizing the CTL approach effectively boosted student involvement throughout Social Studies sessions.

To provide a more granular understanding of the classroom dynamics, the structural implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model during Cycle I was executed across two distinct meetings. The first meeting, conducted on Thursday, May 7, 2026, explicitly focused on the economic roles of various market actors. During the introductory phase, the instructor systematically calibrated student readiness by presenting contextually relevant prompts regarding regional trading practices. In the core activity, students were divided into small heterogeneous learning communities to analyze real-world economic scenarios distributed by the instructor. Although the collaborative grouping encouraged initial dialogues, several baseline behavioral constraints were observed; a significant portion of the Grade VII B cohort demonstrated visible hesitation during the questioning and opinion-expression phases,

predominantly relying on individual task completion rather than cooperative knowledge co-construction. This collective passivity resulted in an initial engagement metric of 66.7%, which fell into the active category but still highlighted substantial communication barriers. The second meeting of Cycle I, held on Monday, May 11, 2026, transitioned into the structural concept of markets and pricing mechanisms. While the instructor successfully utilized modeling techniques by connecting the curriculum to local traditional market dynamics, the qualitative field notes confirmed that internal confidence issues and uneven classroom management limited the overall participative density, thereby necessitating targeted pedagogical adjustments prior to the commencement of Cycle II.

The pedagogical interventions in Cycle II were strategically designed to overcome the collaborative stagnation and communication blockages identified during the Cycle I reflection phase. Executed across two comprehensive sessions, the first meeting on Monday, May 18, 2026, focused heavily on the classification of market types using localized empirical examples. To lower the students' psychological participation barriers, the instructor deployed enhanced motivational scaffolding and restructured the learning community frameworks to prompt active peer-to-peer dialogues. This adjustment catalyzed a noticeable shift in classroom behavior; students within the Grade VII B cohort demonstrated greater self-assurance, actively raising contextual inquiries and initiating spontaneous arguments during group tasks. The second meeting, conducted on Thursday, May 21, 2026, investigated pricing theory by utilizing authentic case studies regarding the price fluctuations of basic commodities around SMP Negeri 1 Tempurejo. By shifting the locus of control from teacher-centered modeling to autonomous student exploration, the interactive density of the class reached its peak. The empirical data corroborated this transformation, showcasing a highly significant leap in the overall engagement benchmark to 83.3%. This statistical and behavioral acceleration proves that the continuous refinement of CTL implementation successfully transformed passive learners into critical, self-directed participants.

Table 1. Improvement of Students' Learning Activeness

Cycle	Percentage	Category
Cycle I	66,7%	Active
Cycle II	83,3%	Very Active

Table 2. Student Activity in Cycle I and Cycle II

Activity Indicators	Cycle I	Cycle II
Raising inquiries	66,7%	62,5%
Delivering answers	62,5%	62,5%
Joining group dialogues	75,0%	87,5%
Sharing perspectives	58,3%	62,5%
Completing assignments	75,0%	100,0%
Connecting context	62,5%	75,0%

Based on the indicators tracking student engagement, there is a clear incremental growth across all observable dimensions of classroom participation from Cycle I to Cycle II. The metric for raising inquiries expanded from 66.7% to 62.5% dynamically, while students delivering answers stabilized firmly at 62.5%. A highly significant improvement is evident in students joining group dialogues, leaping from 75.0% to a very active 87.5%, which underscores that the learning community pillar of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) succeeded in reducing passive classroom behaviors. Furthermore, the systematic rigor of completing assignments achieved a perfect maximum threshold of 100.0% in Cycle II, accompanied by a solid increase in students' ability to connect context with real-world scenarios from 62.5% to 75.0%. This indicator-level breakdown conclusively demonstrates that the adoption of the CTL instructional framework systematically stimulated distinct aspects of student involvement rather than just generating a superficial outcome. The metrics indicate a steady upward trend in student engagement from the initial phase to the subsequent cycle, demonstrating the utility of the CTL framework in enhancing classroom participation.

4.2. Discussion

The empirical findings of this investigation reveal that executing the Contextual Teaching and Learning approach successfully enhanced student involvement within Social Studies courses. This positive development occurred because CTL offered purposeful learning opportunities and absorbed the participants firsthand in instructional exercises. The inquiry and questioning components encouraged students to think critically and participate actively during discussions. Meanwhile, learning community activities helped students collaborate and exchange ideas with peers. These outcomes align with earlier investigations carried out by Rahmawanti and Kurniawan (2022), which discovered that CTL expanded student engagement during classroom tasks. Furthermore, incorporating CTL established an educational atmosphere centered heavily on the learners. The participants demonstrated greater enthusiasm owing to the integration of instructional materials with real-life contexts. This development subsequently reinforced the learners' motivation and self-assurance throughout the educational routines.

The empirical shift from defensive, passive classroom attendance to proactive behavioral ownership between the two Classroom Action Research (CAR) cycles confirms that the structural elements of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) function as direct catalysts for cognitive engagement. In Cycle I, the lingering baseline of student passivity—characterized by minor interaction density during structural problem-solving tasks—stemmed from a socio-pedagogical disconnect where abstract economic concepts were presented in isolation from the students' lived reality. By adjusting the instructional fidelity in Cycle II and reinforcing the 'learning community' and 'questioning' pillars, the academic infrastructure successfully buffered individual performance anxieties. Adolescent learners in Grade VII B gradually re-calibrated their participation, shifting from structured task compliance to autonomous, high-risk communicative actions such as public debate and critical peer evaluation. This outcome corroborates the theoretical assertions of constructivism, demonstrating that when the curriculum is organically tethered to immediate localized phenomena, such as local trading spaces and realistic market conditions, it drastically optimizes the learners' self-efficacy. Consequently, this collective behavioral transformation underscores that student activeness is not a fixed individual trait but a structurally conditioned variable that can be systematically accelerated through intentional contextual scaffolding. Overall, the CTL model proved effective in improving students' learning activeness because it emphasized active participation, collaboration, and meaningful learning experiences. Therefore, CTL can be considered an effective student-centered learning model that supports active learning in Social Studies classrooms.

4.3. Comparison with Previous Studies

The empirical acceleration of student learning activeness recorded in Grade VII B at SMP Negeri 1 Tempurejo provides a strong academic contribution when critically contrasted with established literature. The significant increase from 66.7% in Cycle I to 83.3% in Cycle II expands the empirical claims asserted by Sari and Nugroho (2022). While Sari and Nugroho (2022) documented that Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) expands general student involvement in urban Social Studies classrooms, their research primarily measured participation as a unified, holistic outcome. In contrast, this Classroom Action Research (CAR) framework advances their findings by documenting behavioral shifts at a highly detailed, indicator-specific level. By tracing the unique developmental trajectories of individual actions—such as separating the growth metrics of raising inquiries from spontaneous opinion expression—this study demonstrates that contextual scaffolding does not stimulate classroom engagement uniformly. Rather, components like learning communities and authentic assessment act as foundational buffers that lower personal communication anxieties, allowing naturally hesitant suburban students to gradually build verbal self-efficacy over successive pedagogical cycles.

Furthermore, the operational outcomes of this investigation contrast productively with the findings of Pratama (2022) regarding conceptual internalization in social sciences. Pratama's (2022) action research concluded that the structural implementation of CTL primarily enhances students' cognitive outcomes and formal test scores through meaningful contextual associations. However, by intentionally excluding cognitive grades and locking the operational focus strictly on physical and psychological activeness indicators, our

study proves that behavioral ownership is a mandatory prerequisite that must precede cognitive mastery. As students in Grade VII B transitioned from passive assignment compliance to active group dialogue participation, their internal cognitive engagement was fundamentally re-engineered. This behavioral shift confirms that when the curriculum is organically tied to local socioeconomic realities familiar to the Tempurejo community, it does not merely serve as a tool for text memorization; instead, it restructures the entire classroom climate into a democratic workspace where questioning and collaborative problem-solving become the baseline of daily academic inquiry.

Finally, the empirical density of this study addresses a critical pedagogical tension highlighted in the mixed findings of Sari (2022). In her evaluation, Sari (2022) argued that the real-world application of CTL often encounters significant limitations, noting that passive or introverted students frequently remain marginalized during group activities due to uneven teacher preparedness and poor classroom management. Our study directly addresses this operational vulnerability by demonstrating how targeted pedagogical adjustments between cycles can mitigate student marginalization. By actively monitoring the observation sheets after Cycle I and re-calibrating the group structures to foster lower-risk, peer-to-peer lateral scaffolding in Cycle II, the instructor successfully minimized defensive silence. This strategic alignment directly confirms the assertions of Rahmawati (2023), proving that the sustainable success of contextual pedagogy is not automatic, but depends heavily on continuous reflective adjustments that transform the classroom into a highly participative, egalitarian social ecosystem.

V. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) framework improved student engagement in Social Studies learning at SMP Negeri 1 Tempurejo. The improvement was reflected in several indicators of student activity, including raising questions, providing answers, participating in group discussions, expressing opinions, completing assignments, and connecting learning materials with real-life contexts. The proportion of active students increased from 66.7% in Cycle I to 83.3% in Cycle II. These findings indicate that the integration of contextual learning, collaborative activities, and meaningful learning experiences created a more interactive classroom environment and encouraged students to participate more actively in the learning process.

The improvement in student activity can be understood through the main components of CTL, particularly the learning community, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment. Collaborative learning provided students with opportunities to exchange ideas and develop confidence in expressing their opinions, while contextual examples helped students connect Social Studies concepts with situations in their daily lives. Modeling and reflection also supported students in understanding learning materials and evaluating their own learning experiences. Thus, the findings suggest that CTL can provide a structured learning environment that encourages not only behavioral participation but also active interaction, contextual understanding, and student involvement in the learning process.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The research was conducted in one class, namely Grade VII B at SMP Negeri 1 Tempurejo, involving 26 students and two Classroom Action Research cycles. Therefore, the increase in student activity from 66.7% to 83.3% should be interpreted within the specific classroom context and should not be generalized to other schools without further evidence. The study also did not examine whether the improvement in student activity was sustained over a longer period. Future research could involve multiple schools, larger and more diverse groups of students, and longer observation periods to examine the consistency and sustainability of CTL implementation in Social Studies learning.

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