



Implementation of Contextual-Based Educational Games To Develop Students' Character and Conceptual Understanding on Legal Norms Material in Grade V of UPTD SD Negeri 5 Makmur

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 28 Sept 2025

Revised: 13 Oct 2025

Accepted: 25 Oct 2025

Published online: 05 Nov 2025

Keywords:

Conceptual Understanding

Contextual Learning

Educational Games

Legal Norms

Student Character

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Article Doi:

<https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.6.p.5370-5383>

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of contextual-based educational games in developing students' character and conceptual understanding of legal norms material in grade V at UPTD SD Negeri 5 Makmur. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Research subjects included grade V teachers, school principals, colleagues, and 5 representative students from 33 grade V students. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model strengthened by NVivo 15 coding software. The results showed: (1) Implementation of educational games proceeded very well (91.5%) through systematic planning, implementation, and evaluation stages; (2) Students' discipline and responsibility character developed significantly from external to internal discipline; (3) Students' conceptual understanding improved in identifying, explaining, and applying legal norms although still limited to simple cases; (4) Student and teacher responses were very positive with high enthusiasm (96.8%) and active involvement. This research confirms the effectiveness of contextual-based educational games as learning innovation that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in learning legal norms at elementary school.

1. Introduction

Pancasila, the foundation of the Republic of Indonesia, plays a fundamental role in shaping the direction of national life. Its values serve not only as normative guidelines but also as moral compasses that guide all citizens in their attitudes and actions within society. The five principles of Pancasila embody universal values such as justice, humanity, unity, and respect for religious freedom, which serve as the primary foundation for building a civilized society (Za'im Luthfy, 2020). Strengthening Pancasila values must continue through education as a key foundation for character building. Minister of Education and Culture Regulation

No. 20 of 2018 on Strengthening Character Education supports this by promoting balanced development of heart, mind, emotion, and body. The program integrates core values such as religiousness, nationalism, independence, mutual cooperation, and integrity in all learning activities (Pratiwi & Djatmika, 2023). The implementation of Pancasila values in elementary schools is integrated through thematic learning and daily habituation. Teachers play a key role in instilling these values by connecting lessons to students' real-life contexts. They can organize discussions or simulations on rules, justice, and responsibility. In the digital era, teachers are also expected to use technology and educational games to make learning more engaging and relevant (Aini & Husna, 2025).

Character development for students is a key focus of elementary education. Good character encompasses values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and empathy for others, which will provide students with moral support in facing life's various challenges (Mufidah & Tirtoni, 2023). Through meaningful learning, students not only acquire academic knowledge but also internalize moral values in their daily lives. Character education plays a crucial role in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also socially sensitive and capable of making positive contributions to society and the nation. Amidst the rapid flow of globalization and technological development, strong character is the primary foundation for students to maintain a clear sense of identity and direction in life (Atmaja, 2024).

In addition to character building, conceptual understanding is also a crucial part of the learning process in elementary school (Fadilah, 2023). Conceptual understanding refers to students' ability to understand and apply the basic ideas of a subject matter to real-life situations. Students with a strong conceptual understanding are able not only to memorize but also to grasp its meaning and apply it critically and creatively to different situations. This provides the foundation for students to develop logical thinking, problem-solving, and sound decision-making skills (A. & Mariana, 2020). Without a strong conceptual understanding, students will struggle when facing more complex material at the next level of education.

One of the essential topics in the elementary school curriculum is legal norms in society. This material aims to help students understand the meaning of rules, rights, obligations, and the consequences of violating norms in social life (Presnky, 2021). This learning plays a crucial role in developing students' legal awareness and social responsibility from an early age. According to, learning legal norms in Civics (PPKn) subjects not only fosters compliance with rules but also fosters discipline and moral awareness (Abdillah et al., 2024). Therefore, learning about legal norms must be presented in an interesting, contextual, and enjoyable way so that students can understand the function of rules in maintaining social order and creating harmony in community life.

However, the reality on the ground shows that the implementation of character education and legal norms learning has not been fully optimal. Based on observations at the UPTD of State Elementary School 5 Makmur, it was found that some fifth-grade students still exhibit behaviors that reflect weak character and

awareness of norms. For example, students frequently arrive late, are undisciplined in their dress code, litter, and show little respect for teachers (Nurlita et al., 2024). Furthermore, many students are unable to connect the legal norms they learn to their real lives. When asked about the function of rules or the impact of violating the law, most students struggle to answer logically. This situation indicates that learning remains theoretical and does not deeply address students' affective aspects.

This problem is exacerbated by conventional learning methods. Teachers tend to rely on lectures and textbooks without connecting the material to the students' life contexts. As a result, learning becomes monotonous and unengaging, making it difficult for students to grasp the meaning of the values being taught. The lack of innovation in the use of contextual learning media leads to students losing motivation and interest in learning. However, good learning should balance cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Apriyantini et al., 2024). To address these issues, innovative learning is needed to develop both character and conceptual understanding. A promising approach is using contextual-based educational games, where students learn through play while practicing values like responsibility, discipline, and honesty. These games enhance engagement, encourage active participation, and make learning more relevant to real life. Through this medium, students can better understand legal norms while internalizing the moral values they represent (Darajati, 2020).

Previous research supports the effectiveness of this approach. Aprilianto and Mariana (2020) showed that the implementation of contextual-based educational games had a positive impact on strengthening students' character and understanding of learning concepts. Another study by (Faijah et al., 2022) also demonstrated that the use of educational games assisted by QuizWhizzer significantly improved students' understanding of mathematical concepts compared to conventional methods. Based on these findings, the use of educational games can be a strategic solution to improve the effectiveness of learning in elementary schools, particularly in legal norms.

Thus, the research aim to Develop Students' Character and Conceptual Understanding of Legal Norms in Grade V of the UPTD of SD Negeri 5 Makmur and was conducted as an effort to address the challenges of 21st-century learning. Through this innovative approach, it is hoped that students will not only understand the material academically, but also be able to cultivate moral awareness, social responsibility, and compliance with legal norms as a concrete manifestation of the practice of Pancasila values in everyday life.

2. Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods to gain a deep understanding of the implementation of educational games in developing students' character and conceptual understanding (Sugiyono, 2019). The study was conducted at the UPTD of State Elementary School 5 Makmur, Makmur District, in the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The research subjects

consisted of four purposively selected key informants: the fifth-grade teacher who implemented the educational game, another fifth-grade teacher colleague, a teacher familiar with game-based learning technology, and the principal. Furthermore, of the 33 fifth-grade students, five students were selected representatively based on their initial character and level of conceptual understanding for more in-depth observation.

The research data were obtained from two sources: primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through direct observation of learning activities, interviews with teachers and the principal, and documentation of student activities during the implementation of the contextual-based educational game on legal norms in society (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This aligns with the view of that primary data is obtained directly from research subjects through observation and interviews (Arikunto, 2013). Secondary data, meanwhile, came from supporting documents such as the curriculum, teaching modules, learning outcomes, student character development records, and school policies related to strengthening character education.

The data collection techniques in this study included four main methods: in-depth interviews with teachers and the principal using semi-structured guidelines; passive participant observation to observe the implementation of educational games and student character development and conceptual understanding; documentation studies of teaching modules, student worksheets (LKPD), evaluation results, and school archives; and analysis of student reflective notes to explore their conceptual understanding. The educational game implemented was digitally based using web platforms such as Wordwall, Educaplay, and Genially, with the theme "Me and Norms." This game integrates the local Acehese context related to criminal law, customs, and village social life and is designed to simulate various real-life situations related to the application of legal norms in the home, school, and community.

The validity of the data in this study was maintained through source triangulation, which involves comparing data from various informants; and technical triangulation, which involves verifying the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which includes three stages: data reduction through initial coding, focused coding, and axial coding using NVivo 15 software; data presentation in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, and visualizations; and drawing and verifying conclusions through member checking and triangulation to ensure the accuracy of the research results.

3. Results and Discussion

Grade V of UPTD Public Elementary School 5 Makmur consists of 33 students, including 18 boys and 15 girls. This composition reflects a fairly balanced gender distribution, although variations in participation levels and learning styles are observed during the learning process. Most students are active and demonstrate a

strong curiosity toward the material presented, while some still require additional guidance to grasp abstract concepts, particularly those related to social norms and rules. The classroom environment is quite conducive, with an arrangement that allows direct interaction among students, the teacher, and peers. Each student possesses basic learning tools such as textbooks and writing materials, although access to digital learning facilities remains limited. So far, instruction has primarily relied on lectures, question-and-answer sessions, and written exercises emphasizing memorization of concepts. The use of interactive learning media, such as videos or educational games, is still rare, so students have had limited exposure to technology-based learning models. Nevertheless, students show strong enthusiasm for learning, especially when lessons are connected to their daily life experiences.

The Grade V teacher plays a crucial role in maintaining classroom dynamics. Based on preliminary observations, the teacher's approach tends to be conventional, focusing on meeting curriculum targets and completing exercises as a form of evaluation. This sometimes results in a monotonous classroom atmosphere, offering less challenge for students who understand the material more quickly. However, the teacher shows openness to innovation, particularly in the use of digital learning media. On several occasions, the teacher has attempted to integrate visual elements and contextual storytelling to capture students' attention, although the systematic use of technology-based media such as educational games has not yet been implemented. Limited technological resources at the school and the teacher's developing skills in operating digital tools are among the main challenges. Therefore, the implementation of contextual-based educational games in this study serves as an effort to enrich existing teaching methods while testing their effectiveness in improving student participation and understanding of legal norms in Grade V at UPTD Public Elementary School 5 Makmur.

The learning activities during the study were conducted in three sessions in July 2025, with the theme "Living Harmoniously in Diversity", covering the topic of legal norms in society. The lessons were carried out in Grade V at UPTD Public Elementary School 5 Makmur, involving all students. The teacher implemented contextual-based educational games using platforms such as Wordwall, Genially, and Educaplay. Each session began with an apperception and motivation phase, followed by students playing the game "Me and Norms", which contained real-life scenarios related to law compliance, and concluded with discussion and value reflection. The researcher collected data through observations of teacher and student activities, interviews with the teacher and school principal, and documentation including photos, observation sheets, and students' reflective notes. A source triangulation approach was applied to ensure data validity, involving the main informant (the implementing teacher), comparison teachers, peers, and the school principal. Before presenting the implementation results, the following are image of the learning media used during the study in Class V at UPTD SD Negeri 5 Makmur.

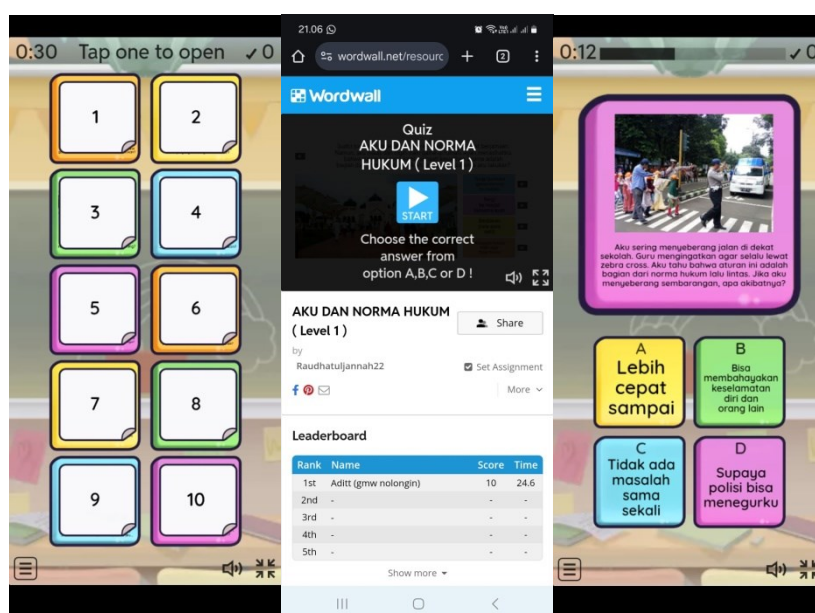


Figure 1. Examples of Learning Media Used in Class V

Implementation of Contextual-Based Educational Games

The research results showed that the implementation of the contextual-based educational game went very well, achieving a success rate of 91.5%. The process was carried out in three systematic stages that reflected the main principles of contextual learning, such as connecting theory with real-life experiences, encouraging active student participation, and promoting collaborative learning. To provide a clearer understanding of how the implementation took place and its outcomes, a summary of the observation results is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Implementation Observation Results

Variable	Number of Items	Obtained Score	Maximum Score	Percentage	Category
Game Implementation	13	48	52	92.3%	Very Good
Character Development	8	29	32	90.6%	Very Good
Conceptual Understanding	9	32	36	88.8%	Good
Student Response	8	31	32	96.8%	Very Good
Total	38	140	152	91.5%	Very Good

During the planning stage (92.3%), teachers successfully designed the "Aku dan Norma" game, which was relevant to students' lives, by integrating local contexts such as criminal law, Acehese customs, and village rules. Teachers also optimally utilized digital platforms (Wordwall, Educaplay, Genially) and organized heterogeneous groups to encourage balanced collaboration. Interview results indicated that the teacher's case-based learning approach created relevance and urgency in learning:

"I prefer to use examples from real-life events that have occurred in our village, such as criminal law and etiquette. I incorporate such situations into the game so children can learn from experiences they or their families have had."
(Teacher II)

This finding aligns with (Johnson, 2002) contextual learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of connecting material to students' personal, social, and cultural experiences. The illustration in Figure 1, Implementation of Contextual-Based Educational Game, depicts how local context can be integrated into learning activities to enhance relevance and engagement. Using local context not only makes learning more meaningful but also aligns with (Ausubel, 1968) principle of meaningful learning, which states that new knowledge is more easily understood when connected to existing cognitive structures.



Figure 1. Implementation of Contextual-Based Educational Games

The implementation phase demonstrated an effective integration of technology and traditional pedagogy. The lesson began with storytelling to establish an emotional context, followed by an initial discussion to explore student understanding, and then implemented the game in a circle, concluding with explicit reflection. As shown in Figure 2, Teacher Guides Students in Completing LKPD, observations revealed that teachers were able to systematically explain the rules (score 4), integrate real-life contexts (scores 3–4), facilitate the game without dominating (score 4), and create a fun atmosphere (score 4). Technical challenges, such as limited technology skills among some teachers and loading issues, were addressed through a buddy system and collaboration between teachers. These strategies not only solved technical problems but also promoted collaborative learning and strengthened a positive teamwork culture within the school. Teachers adapted the lesson by extending time or simplifying the rules without diminishing its educational essence.



Figure 2. Teacher guides students in completing LKPD

The evaluation and reflection phase shows that teachers assess students' progress primarily through observation of participation and understanding, although the assessment records remain general and have not yet been supported by a systematic rubric. During this stage, teachers are able to identify various challenges such as limited time, student difficulties, and technical issues, and develop practical solutions to address them. Reflection activities are also carried out together with students by inviting them to share their feelings and learning experiences, which reflects the application of student-centered learning principles in the teaching process.

Character Development of Discipline and Responsibility

The research results showed significant character development, with an overall achievement rate of 90.6%. This indicates that the applied learning approach effectively fostered positive attitudes and consistent behavioral improvements among students. As presented in Table 2, Results of Representative Student Character Observations, the analysis of five representative students revealed differences in development influenced by initial abilities and environmental support. Students with higher motivation and conducive surroundings showed stronger progress, while others demonstrated gradual improvement. These results emphasize the importance of supportive learning environments in promoting students' character growth.

Table 2. Results of Representative Student Character Observations

No	Student Initials	Discipline Score (Max. 24)	Responsibility Score (Max. 24)	Total Score (Max. 48)	Category
1	MH	23	22	45	Very Good
2	KA	22	21	43	Very Good
3	CMU	22	16	38	Good
4	CS	21	15	36	Good
5	SN	17	14	31	Fair

In terms of discipline, most students experienced significant progress, reflected in their independent adherence to game rules, punctuality in attendance and completion of assignments, and consistent positive attitudes. High-ability students, such as M. Hafiz and Khairul Azzam, demonstrated exceptional consistency and served as role models. Interviews revealed the internalization of honesty and discipline:

"Yes, especially in terms of honesty. They've become more willing to admit when they make mistakes. Yesterday, a student admitted to scribbling on the desk, even though no one knew. He said, 'Ma'am, if I lied, it would be the same as breaking the rules.'" (Teacher II)

This phenomenon demonstrates a shift from external discipline (forced compliance) to internal discipline (self-regulation), consistent with Piaget's theory of moral development, which emphasizes the importance of transitioning from heteronomous morality to autonomous morality. Educational games successfully create a safe space for students to practice making moral decisions and understanding the consequences of their choices. The responsibility aspect displays gradual development based on initial abilities. High-ability students demonstrate mature responsibility through seriousness in completing assignments, taking the initiative to help friends, having the courage to admit mistakes, and active participation without dominating. Medium-ability students still require intensive guidance, especially in group work situations. Observations indicate the development of civic responsibility and peer accountability:

"They're starting to care about classroom cleanliness without being asked. Some are taking the initiative to schedule extra duties. What I'm most pleased about is that they're starting to have the courage to reprimand their peers for breaking the rules, but in a kind manner." (Teacher II)

The phrase "we already agreed" uttered by students reflects more than simple verbal acknowledgment; it signifies their internalization of the social contract concept and awareness of collective responsibility. This expression demonstrates that students not only understand the value of agreement but also recognize the importance of maintaining harmony and fairness within a group. Such behavior indicates that moral reasoning and social awareness are being developed naturally through the learning process. This finding aligns with the research of (Solissa et al., 2024), which revealed that contextual educational games can strengthen students' sense of responsibility by providing opportunities for direct experience, cooperation, and reflection on real-life situations. Through this process, students are encouraged to link their actions with ethical considerations, thus fostering a deeper understanding of how mutual agreements shape social interactions and community values.

Developing Conceptual Understanding of Legal Norms

Students' conceptual understanding progressed to 88.8%, indicating a good, approaching excellent, category. This development was evident in three main areas: identifying legal norms, explaining the consequences of violations, and making

decisions in legal dilemmas. In identifying legal norms, students experienced a transformation from conceptual confusion to conceptual clarity. They were able to articulate the characteristics of legal norms (firm, written, universally applicable sanctions), differentiate them from social norms, and provide concrete examples from everyday life. Interview results indicated an improvement in analytical thinking skills:

"Oh my God, they've become much more sensitive to the rules around them. Previously, when I asked them, 'What's the difference between law and custom,' they were confused. Now they can explain that law applies to everyone and has the same sanctions, while custom can vary from region to region." (Teacher II)

However, their understanding remains limited to simple examples and they face difficulties in complex cases, particularly distinguishing legal norms from religious norms. These findings indicate the need for more intensive scaffolding and modeling to build a deeper understanding of concepts, in line with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development (Faijah et al., 2022). In explaining the consequences of violations, students developed systems thinking by seeing the connection between individual actions and broader societal impacts. They understood simple cause-and-effect relationships and could explain the immediate impact of violations, although they did not yet understand the long-term consequences:

"They can see the domino effect now. If someone doesn't pay their taxes, they know the impact on roads, schools, and public facilities." (Teacher II)

In making decisions about legal dilemmas, students showed gradual development. They began to understand cause-and-effect relationships and could connect simple cases with their sanctions. However, this ability was still limited to simple situations. Students were not yet able to consider all aspects of complex dilemmas and tended to choose solutions that benefited themselves rather than considering collective justice.

"They became more careful in making decisions. They often asked for time to think first or discussed with their group." (Teacher II)

This development in conceptual understanding shows the success of educational games in supporting learning that involves not only cognitive but also affective and psychomotor aspects in moral decision-making. Through interactive activities, students can think, feel, and act according to the values presented in learning. This finding aligns with research showing that educational games enhance conceptual understanding through interactive experiences and direct feedback that encourage reflection and responsible behavior. Such learning experiences help students connect moral reasoning with real-life situations, making values education more meaningful and lasting (Wawo et al., 2025).

Student and Teacher Responses

Responses to the implementation of educational games showed a very positive pattern, with the highest score (96.8%). Students' enthusiasm was deep and meaningful, as they felt trusted to discuss important issues in their lives. As illustrated in Figure 3, the atmosphere during the activity was lively and engaging, with students actively participating, smiling, and collaborating with their peers. This visual representation reinforces the observation results, showing that all students maintained high enthusiasm from the beginning to the end of the lesson, without signs of boredom. Their active involvement demonstrates that the learning process successfully created a joyful and inclusive environment that encouraged every student to contribute. One teacher reflected this excitement by saying:

"Wow, the kids are so enthusiastic! They're always asking when they'll be able to play games again. Even those who usually don't study are now enthusiastic about participating in the lesson." (Teacher I2)



Figure 3. Students playing the educational game ‘‘ Me and Norma ‘‘

Student engagement demonstrated high levels of quality, not only physically but also cognitively and emotionally. Communication within groups was effective, many creative ideas emerged, and students demonstrated initiative in solving challenges. Interestingly, discussions about legal norms continued into the family environment, indicating the impact of learning beyond the classroom and the effective transfer of learning. Analysis using NVivo 15 identified 13 main themes from student and teacher responses, with "enthusiasm and involvement" emerging most dominantly (193 references), followed by "conceptual understanding" (140 references), and "character development" (88 references). The hierarchy chart demonstrated a strong integration between learning implementation, character development, and conceptual understanding, reflecting the success of the holistic approach.

Teacher responses demonstrated a complex perspective that included both an appreciation for innovation and an awareness of implementation challenges. Teachers appreciated the game's ability to integrate local values with legal norms

learning and create a fun learning environment without sacrificing the content of the material. However, limited technological proficiency was a major obstacle that was successfully overcome through collaboration and the buddy system:

"Actually, I was a bit hesitant at first because I'm not used to playing games for teaching. However, I was able to use technology, and after trying it, it turned out it wasn't as difficult as I imagined." (Teacher II)

Recommendations for development from teachers and colleagues included: (1) adding case examples from other areas in Aceh for broader contextualization; (2) creating different levels according to student abilities for differentiation; (3) providing guidance for parents to continue discussions at home for family involvement; (4) technology training for teachers; and (5) providing backup devices. These recommendations demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of holistic learning needs and program sustainability.

4. Conclusion

This study concluded that the implementation of contextual-based educational games in the learning of legal norms in fifth-grade students at the UPTD of State Elementary School 5 Makmur was highly effective (91.5%), simultaneously developing students' character and conceptual understanding. Successful implementation was achieved through the integration of the local Acehnese context into the learning process, the use of a case-based learning approach, and effective collaboration between teachers in overcoming technical challenges. Students' discipline and sense of responsibility developed significantly (90.6%), marked by a transition from external to internal discipline and an emerging awareness of civic responsibility. Understanding of legal norms improved significantly (88.8%), particularly in the ability to identify and differentiate types of norms and understand the consequences of violations, although reinforcement is still needed in complex cases. The overwhelmingly positive response from students (96.8%) and teachers indicates widespread acceptance of this learning innovation.

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How to cite this article:

Annisa, D., Khairani, C., & Muharramsyah, R. (2025). Implementation of Contextual-Based Educational Games To Develop Students' Character and Conceptual Understanding on Legal Norms Material in Grade V of UPTD SD Negeri 5 Makmur. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 9(6), 5370-5383.
