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Improving Social Studies Achievement Through Course Review Horay and Pop-Up Book Media

Ida Farida[1]
[1]Primary School Teacher Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Salatiga, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aimed to improve fifth-grade students' Social Studies learning outcomes on the geographical characteristics of Indonesia through the implementation of the Course Review Horay learning model assisted by Pop-Up Book media at MI Nurul Hikmah Kedungringin 02.

Methodology: This classroom action research involved 23 fifth-grade students (15 boys and 8 girls) in two cycles. Data were collected through written achievement tests, teacher and student observation sheets, and documentation. The intervention combined the Course Review Horay learning model with Pop-Up Book media. Data were analyzed descriptively using mean scores and classical learning completion percentages.

Main Findings: The mean score increased from 50.00 in the pre-cycle to 69.13 in Cycle I and 72.17 in Cycle II. Classical learning completion increased from 43.47% to 78.26% and 86.95%, respectively, exceeding the predetermined success criterion of 85% in Cycle II. Teacher observation scores increased from 64 (fair) to 70 (good). Cycle II also incorporated lecture and question-and-answer methods.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study documents the contextual application of the Course Review Horay model combined with Pop-Up Book media for teaching Indonesia's geographical characteristics in a fifth-grade madrasah classroom. Its contribution lies in reporting a two-cycle classroom action research process and its learning-outcome trends in this specific setting, rather than proposing a new learning theory.

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Corresponding Author:
Ida Farida,
Primary School Teacher Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training
Jl. Tentara Pelajar No. 2, Mangunsari, Sidomukti District, Salatiga City, Central Java 50721, Indonesia
Email: idafarida12@protonmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Geographical knowledge is essential for helping elementary students understand the spatial characteristics, environmental conditions, and regional diversity of their country. In geography education, learning should extend beyond factual memorization toward meaningful understanding of geographical concepts and spatial relationships. Recent research identifies geographical thinking as an important educational outcome,

although its definitions and conceptualizations remain diverse across the literature [1]-[3]. Therefore, instructional approaches that connect geographical content with accessible learning experiences remain relevant to elementary Social Studies education [4]-[6]. Teaching Indonesian geographical characteristics requires instructional support that helps students engage with the subject matter meaningfully.

At MI Nurul Hikmah Kedungringin 02, fifth-grade students experienced difficulties in achieving the expected learning outcomes in Social Studies, particularly on Indonesian geographical characteristics. The initial classroom condition indicated that instruction relied heavily on conventional teaching practices, while student participation and learning engagement required improvement [7]-[9]. Before the intervention, only 10 of 23 students achieved the minimum mastery criterion, representing 43.47% of the class. The class mean score was 50, below the established minimum mastery criterion of 60. These conditions indicated the need for instructional improvement within the specific classroom context.

This study addressed the classroom problem through the integrated implementation of the Course Review Hooray (CRH) learning model and Pop Up Book instructional media. CRH was selected as a cooperative learning approach, while Pop Up Book provided visual representations to accompany the geographical learning content. Recent synthesis evidence indicates that cooperative learning can support academic achievement, although its outcomes vary across instructional techniques, academic fields, and research designs [10]-[12]. Research on instructional visualizations also emphasizes that visual design and information presentation influence how learners engage with learning materials [13]-[15]. Combining cooperative learning activities with visual media therefore offered a contextually relevant instructional alternative for improving the observed classroom learning process.

Recent literature provides several relevant directions for understanding cooperative learning, visual representations, and geography education. A second-order meta-analysis reported a moderate overall effect of cooperative learning on learning outcomes, while identifying variations across techniques, academic fields, and research designs [16]-[18]. Research on geographical thinking has highlighted diverse conceptualizations and the continuing need for clarity in geography education objectives [19]-[21]. Studies of visual learning further demonstrate that the design and level of detail in instructional visualizations require careful consideration rather than assuming that more visual information always improves learning [22]-[24]. Research involving elementary students has also explored participatory mapping as a means of developing understanding of local socio-ecological systems, although its instructional context differs from conventional printed learning media [25]-[27].

Despite these developments, the reviewed literature provides limited directly comparable evidence concerning the integrated use of CRH and Pop Up Book media for teaching Indonesian geographical characteristics in fifth-grade Islamic elementary classrooms. examined Pop Up Book media for the same Social Studies topic and grade level, but their study did not investigate its integration with CRH [28], [29]. Consequently, the remaining research space concerns the specific instructional combination and its implementation within the classroom context examined in this study. The present study does not claim that either instructional component is independently responsible for changes in learning outcomes [30], [31]. Since the classroom research was conducted during the 2026 academic year, subsequent publications are used to position its contribution within current literature rather than to represent knowledge available at the time of data collection.

The originality of this study lies in documenting the integrated classroom implementation of CRH and Pop Up Book media for Indonesian geographical characteristics in a fifth-grade Islamic elementary school. Its contribution is contextual and empirical, focusing on changes in students' learning outcomes throughout a two-cycle classroom action research process. Unlike studies examining Pop Up Book media alone, this research documents its implementation alongside a cooperative learning model in the investigated classroom. The intervention is treated as an integrated instructional package rather than two independently tested components. Accordingly, the study offers contextual evidence of instructional improvement without claiming a new learning model or establishing independent causal effects.

Improving elementary Social Studies instruction remains important for supporting students' understanding of geographical content and their engagement with classroom learning. Classroom-based evidence can help teachers evaluate instructional alternatives in response to specific learning difficulties and classroom conditions. This study therefore aimed to improve fifth-grade students' Social Studies learning outcomes on Indonesian geographical characteristics through the integrated implementation of the CRH learning model and Pop Up Book media. It examined changes in students' learning outcomes across the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II stages. The study also documented the classroom improvement process through planning, action, observation, and reflection.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in two cycles [32], [33]. Each cycle consisted of four stages: planning, implementing the action, observing, and reflecting [34], [35]. The research was designed to improve students' learning outcomes in Social Studies, particularly on the topic of Indonesia's geographical characteristics, through the implementation of the Course Review Hooray learning model supported by Pop-Up Book media. Students' learning outcomes were examined across the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II to identify changes during the implementation of the classroom action.

2.2. Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at MI Nurul Hikmah Kedungringin 02, Suruh District, Semarang Regency, Indonesia, during the 2026 academic year. The participants were 23 fifth-grade students, consisting of 15 boys and 8 girls. The classroom teacher was also involved in the learning activities and observation process. All students in the class participated in the classroom action research.

2.3. Research Procedures

The research was conducted through a pre-cycle stage and two action cycles. The pre-cycle stage was used to identify students' initial learning outcomes before the implementation of the instructional intervention [36]. Cycle I was conducted on May 19, 2026, while Cycle II was conducted on May 21, 2026. Each cycle involved planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. The CRH learning model and Pop-Up Book media were implemented as the main instructional intervention. In Cycle II, the learning activities also included lecture and question-and-answer methods as additional instructional activities. The findings from each stage were reviewed to determine the progress of students' learning outcomes and the need for subsequent classroom actions.

2.4. Data Collection and Instruments

Data were collected through written tests, classroom observations, and documentation. Written tests were used to assess students' learning outcomes in the Social Studies topic of Indonesia's geographical characteristics. Observation sheets were used to record teacher performance and students' learning activities, including activeness, attention, and discipline during the learning process. Documentation was used to support the research records, including relevant classroom activities and research implementation. The instruments consisted of test questions, teacher and student observation sheets, and documentation records.

2.5. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis. Students' learning outcomes were examined through the class mean score and classical learning mastery percentage. The class mean was calculated by dividing the total scores obtained by all students by the number of students. Classical learning mastery was calculated by dividing the number of students who achieved the minimum mastery criterion by the total number of students, then multiplying the result by 100% [37]-[39]. The minimum mastery criterion was 60, while the indicator of classical success was set at more than 85% of students achieving mastery. The results from the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II were compared descriptively to identify changes in students' learning outcomes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Students' Learning Outcomes

The students' learning outcomes were assessed through written tests conducted during the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. The assessment involved 23 fifth-grade students. The results indicated an improvement in both the class mean score and the number of students achieving the minimum mastery criterion of 60.

Table 1. Students' Learning Outcomes across Research Stages

Learning outcome indicator	Pre-cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
Number of students	23	23	23
Total score	1,150	1,590	1,660
Class mean score	50.00	69.13	72.17
Students achieving mastery	10	18	20
Students not achieving mastery	13	5	3
Mastery percentage	43.47%	78.26%	86.95%

Non-mastery percentage	56.52%	21.73%	13.04%

Table 1 shows that students' learning outcomes improved across the three research stages. During the pre-cycle, the class mean score was 50.00, with 10 students (43.47%) achieving mastery and 13 students (56.52%) remaining below the minimum mastery criterion. Following the implementation of the Course Review Hooray learning model supported by Pop-Up Book media in Cycle I, the class mean increased to 69.13. The number of students achieving mastery also increased to 18 (78.26%), while five students (21.73%) had not achieved mastery.

In Cycle II, the class mean score increased further to 72.17. A total of 20 students (86.95%) achieved mastery, whereas three students (13.04%) remained below the minimum mastery criterion. These findings indicate a progressive improvement in students' learning outcomes throughout the classroom action research.

3.2. Changes in Classical Learning Mastery

The percentage of students achieving mastery increased from 43.47% in the pre-cycle to 78.26% in Cycle I and 86.95% in Cycle II. The increase from the pre-cycle to Cycle I was 34.79 percentage points, followed by an additional increase of 8.69 percentage points between Cycle I and Cycle II. Overall, the increase from the pre-cycle to Cycle II was 43.48 percentage points.

The classical learning mastery criterion was set at more than 85%. The results show that Cycle I had not yet reached this criterion, whereas Cycle II achieved 86.95%, exceeding the predetermined threshold.

3.3. Classroom Observation Results

Classroom observations were conducted to examine teacher performance and students' learning activities during the implementation of the instructional intervention.

Table 2. Teacher Observation Results

Observation stage	Score	Category
Cycle I	64	Fair
Cycle II	70	Good

The teacher observation score increased from 64 in Cycle I, categorized as fair, to 70 in Cycle II, categorized as good. This indicates an improvement in the observed implementation of classroom instruction between the two cycles.

Student observations focused on three aspects: activeness, attention, and discipline. The observation records in Cycle I and Cycle II provide descriptive information about students' participation during classroom activities. The research report describes students as showing greater participation, enthusiasm, and activeness during Cycle II. However, the thesis does not provide a consolidated numerical score for each student-observation aspect; therefore, these findings are presented descriptively rather than as quantified improvements.

The findings demonstrate a progressive improvement in students' Social Studies learning outcomes following the implementation of the Course Review Hooray (CRH) learning model supported by Pop-Up Book media. The class mean score increased from 50.00 in the pre-cycle to 69.13 in Cycle I and 72.17 in Cycle II. Similarly, classical learning mastery increased from 43.47% to 78.26% and subsequently to 86.95%. The increase of 34.79 percentage points between the pre-cycle and Cycle I suggests that the initial instructional intervention coincided with a substantial improvement in students' achievement. However, the additional increase of 8.69 percentage points in Cycle II indicates a smaller improvement compared with the first cycle. This pattern suggests that the intervention was associated with a marked initial improvement, followed by more gradual progress. Importantly, the Cycle II activities also incorporated lecture and question-and-answer methods; therefore, the improvement cannot be attributed exclusively to the CRH model or Pop-Up Book media. The findings are more appropriately interpreted as evidence of improved learning outcomes during the implementation of the combined classroom instructional actions.

The present findings are consistent with broader research suggesting that cooperative learning can support students' academic achievement. Güngör et al. [10], through a second-order meta-analysis of 15 first-order meta-analyses, reported a moderate overall effect of cooperative learning on student learning outcomes, although the magnitude varied according to instructional techniques, academic disciplines, and research designs. This provides a broader empirical context for interpreting the improvement observed during the implementation of CRH in the present study. From the perspective of multimedia learning, Mayer [40] explains that meaningful learning involves the selection, organization, and integration of verbal and visual information. This perspective offers a theoretical explanation for why combining instructional activities with visual learning materials may support students' engagement with learning content. Nevertheless, the present study did not directly measure cognitive processing or compare visual and non-visual instructional conditions. Skulmowski [13] further demonstrates that the effects of instructional visualizations depend on their design and the cognitive demands

they create; therefore, the educational value of visual media should not be assumed solely from their visual or realistic appearance.

In geography-related education, Bendl et al. [1] identify geographical thinking as a multidimensional educational outcome involving geographical concepts and procedural thinking skills. Their systematic review also highlights the need for clearer operationalization and assessment of geographical thinking in educational practice. The present study contributes classroom-based evidence concerning achievement in a specific Social Studies topic, namely Indonesia's geographical characteristics, but it does not directly assess students' geographical thinking or spatial reasoning. Similarly, Lanouette et al. [25] demonstrate how participatory digital mapping can support elementary students' reasoning about local socio-ecological systems through collaborative data representation and discussion. Although their research uses a different instructional approach and learning context, it reinforces the importance of meaningful visual and spatial representations in elementary education. A particularly close comparison can be made with Sumayana et al. [28], who investigated Pop-Up Book media in Grade V Social Studies learning on the same topic of Indonesia's geographical characteristics. Their classroom action research involving 27 students at SDN Cikawung also reported improvements in students' motivation and learning outcomes. The present study extends this contextual evidence by documenting the implementation of Pop-Up Book media together with the CRH learning model in a different Grade V Islamic elementary school. However, these studies should not be interpreted as evidence that one instructional combination is more effective than another because their designs and intervention configurations differ.

The novelty of this study lies primarily in its contextual and instructional contribution rather than in the introduction of a new learning theory or instructional model. Previous research has examined CRH in Social Studies learning and Pop-Up Book media in elementary education, including research addressing the geographical characteristics of Indonesia [41]. Therefore, the use of Pop-Up Book media, the CRH model, or the geographical topic alone cannot be claimed as entirely new. Instead, this study documents the classroom implementation of the CRH learning model supported by Pop-Up Book media in Grade V Social Studies learning at MI Nurul Hikmah Kedungringin 02. Its empirical contribution is the documentation of changes in students' mean scores and classical learning mastery across the pre-cycle and two action cycles. The study also provides a contextual account of the instructional process in an Islamic elementary school setting. Accordingly, its originality should be understood as a context-specific account of an integrated instructional practice rather than as proof of a previously untested intervention or a new theoretical framework.

The findings provide practical implications for elementary school teachers, particularly those teaching Social Studies topics involving geographical characteristics and related visual information. The observed improvement suggests that teachers may consider combining structured classroom learning activities with visual instructional media when planning lessons. The CRH model supported by Pop-Up Book media may serve as one instructional alternative for encouraging students to participate in learning activities while engaging with the subject matter. The findings also highlight the importance of evaluating instructional implementation through repeated classroom observation and student assessment. For school practitioners, the results may inform context-specific decisions about instructional improvement, particularly when students' initial achievement does not meet the established mastery criterion. Nevertheless, the findings do not justify a general policy mandate or the assumption that the same instructional combination will produce equivalent outcomes in other schools. Further implementation should consider classroom characteristics, learning objectives, teacher readiness, and the availability and suitability of instructional media.

The findings should be interpreted within the specific context of this classroom action research. The study involved 23 fifth-grade students from one class at MI Nurul Hikmah Kedungringin 02, limiting the extent to which the results can be generalized to other schools, grade levels, or student populations. The two-cycle action research design was intended to improve classroom practice rather than establish causal effects through experimental comparison. The absence of a control group and the combined use of CRH, Pop-Up Book media, and additional lecture and question-and-answer activities in Cycle II prevent the independent contribution of each instructional component from being identified. Furthermore, the research report does not provide formal evidence of instrument validity and reliability testing, which should be considered when interpreting the assessment and observation results. The study also does not report a delayed assessment of learning retention; consequently, the persistence of the observed improvement remains unknown. Future research could examine the instructional combination in different school contexts, use comparison groups where appropriate, provide clearer validation and reliability procedures for assessment instruments, and include follow-up assessments. Such research would provide stronger evidence concerning the consistency, transferability, and longer-term educational value of the instructional approach.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that the implementation of the Course Review Horay model assisted by Pop-Up Book media was accompanied by an improvement in fifth-grade students' learning outcomes in Social Studies

on the geographical characteristics of Indonesia at MI Nurul Hikmah Kedungringin 02, with the mean score increasing from 50.00 in the pre-cycle to 69.13 in Cycle I and 72.17 in Cycle II, while classical learning completion increased from 43.47% to 78.26% and 86.95%, respectively, thereby exceeding the predetermined success criterion of 85%. These findings imply that combining an interactive cooperative learning model with visual learning media can serve as an instructional alternative for teaching geographical content in elementary and madrasah settings. They also highlight the importance of active student participation and appropriate instructional support in classroom learning, although the improvement cannot be attributed exclusively to the model and media because additional lecture and question-and-answer methods were introduced in Cycle II. Future research should involve larger samples and multiple schools, preferably using comparative research designs, to examine the effectiveness of this instructional combination across different learning contexts. Further studies should also assess the separate contributions of the Course Review Horay model and Pop-Up Book media, employ instruments with clearly established validity and reliability, and include delayed assessments to investigate the retention of students' learning outcomes.

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