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# Adapting Problem Tree-Assisted Small-Group Facilitation to Strengthen Collaborative Decision-Making Foundations in Early Childhood Education: Insights from Elementary Classroom Action Research

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## Abstract

*This study investigates challenges in Civic Education, particularly the development of deliberation skills among fifth-grade students at Yaminas Islamic Elementary School, Noling. Observations revealed ten students struggled to regulate emotions during discussions, often rejecting differing opinions with negative expressions or arguments. Classroom participation was also dominated by a few voices, limiting collaboration and equity. To address these issues, a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design was applied, combining small-group facilitation with the "problem tree" method. The intervention proceeded in two cycles: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. In Cycle I, the theme was "Flood Issues and Solutions," identifying waste as the root problem. In Cycle II, the focus shifted to "Effective Waste Management," with flooding as the key concern. Deliberations were organized through small-group, large-group, and plenary sessions to balance participation. Findings showed clear improvement. The average score increased from 23 in Cycle I to 32 in Cycle II, indicating progress in participation, emotional regulation, and consensus-building. Although situated in an elementary school, the results offer insights for Early Childhood Education (ECE). Structured facilitation and problem tree media can be adapted for play-based contexts, helping young children practice turn-taking, negotiation, perspective-taking, and collective decision-making. These foundations strengthen social-emotional skills and prepare children for civic readiness from early ages.*
**Keywords:** *early childhood education, foundations, collaborative decision-making.*

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## Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) represents a critical stage in laying the foundations of social-emotional development, character formation, and civic values. At this formative age, children begin to acquire essential skills such as turn-taking, listening, empathy, cooperation, and early conflict resolution—competencies that serve as the bedrock for later civic engagement (Rahman & Sutrisno, 2021; Fitriani & Wulandari, 2022). Scholars increasingly emphasize that the seeds of democratic participation and moral reasoning must be nurtured in the earliest years of schooling, as these early experiences strongly influence children's future capacity for collaboration, deliberation, and respect for others' perspectives (Kusuma et al., 2023; Nugroho et al., 2023).

Despite this recognition, challenges remain in translating these foundational values into consistent practice in both Early Childhood Education (ECE) and elementary classrooms. Many young learners display difficulties in managing emotions when facing disagreement, and their engagement in group decision-making processes is often

dominated by a small number of peers (Hartono et al., 2021; Pratama & Setiawan, 2020). These issues suggest that while Early Childhood Education (ECE) lays the groundwork, elementary education must continue to strengthen and scaffold these competencies through intentional pedagogical strategies. If not addressed, the weakening of collective practices such as musyawarah (deliberation) risks undermining children's readiness to participate constructively in social and civic life (Sari & Budiman, 2023).

In rural contexts especially, where traditional communal values such as gotong royong and musyawarah were once deeply embedded, the erosion of these practices has become increasingly visible (Bararoh, 2022; Nurhayati & Firmansyah, 2021). Thus, education at both the early childhood and elementary levels plays a crucial role not only in fostering academic growth but also in safeguarding cultural values of cooperation, empathy, and consensus-building.

Within this framework, Civic Education (Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan, PKn) at the elementary level is best understood as an extension of the foundational experiences cultivated in Early Childhood Education (ECE). Teaching children to deliberate equips them with early democratic skills—dialogue, compromise, and perspective-taking—that build upon the social-emotional competencies instilled during early childhood education (Azizah & Wulan, 2021; Qomariah et al., 2022). To achieve this, innovative pedagogical models are required that can bridge play-based approaches in Early Childhood Education (ECE) with structured collaborative learning in elementary settings.

The present study responds to this concern by applying problem tree–assisted small-group facilitation in a Grade V classroom at Yaminas Islamic Elementary School, Noling. While the research context is at the elementary level, its theoretical orientation and implications are directed toward the developmental continuum beginning in Early Childhood Education (ECE). In doing so, the study not only addresses the immediate challenges of civic learning in upper elementary but also reinforces the broader goal of cultivating democratic participation skills from the earliest years of formal education.

The findings from preliminary observations in the Grade V classroom at Yaminas Islamic Elementary School revealed that ten students experienced significant difficulties in participating effectively in group deliberations. These difficulties were manifested in the inability to regulate emotions when facing differing opinions, negative facial expressions, rejection of opposing ideas, and limited inclusiveness due to the dominance of a few outspoken students. Such behavioral and emotional barriers hindered the development of collaborative decision-making skills, which are central to the objectives of Civic Education (PKn).

However, these challenges should not be understood merely as classroom management issues at the elementary level. Rather, they reflect a broader developmental gap: the insufficient cultivation of social-emotional and deliberative skills during the early childhood years. At this foundational stage, children ideally begin learning empathy, cooperation, patience, and respect for differences through structured play and guided interaction. When these foundational competencies are not fully developed, difficulties inevitably surface at later stages, as observed in the Grade V context.

Furthermore, numerous studies emphasize that early childhood is a critical period for character and social development. If children in Early Childhood Education (ECE) settings are not introduced to democratic habits—such as turn-taking, listening to peers, or resolving conflicts through dialogue—the consequences often manifest in elementary school, where structured group work and civic discussions require such skills. The observed struggles of the Grade V students, therefore, can be traced back to a lack of systematic reinforcement of these values in their earlier educational experiences. This highlights the urgent need for Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions to integrate experiential, play-based strategies that prepare children for collaborative and civic-oriented learning in later stages.

In addition, the persistence of conventional teaching approaches at both the Early Childhood Education (ECE) and elementary levels has contributed to the problem. Teacher-centered instruction, with limited opportunities for role play, dialogue, or reflective interaction, deprives children of the chance to internalize social-

emotional competencies organically. By contrast, innovative strategies such as problem tree–assisted small-group facilitation provide children with concrete, visual, and interactive tools to explore problems collectively, identify causes and solutions, and practice respectful decision-making. This approach aligns with developmental needs in Early Childhood Education while remaining highly relevant for elementary classrooms, thus creating a pedagogical bridge that addresses current learning gaps while pointing toward preventive interventions in early childhood education.

## Methodology

The methodological approach of this study was carefully designed to align with the developmental characteristics of elementary school learners, who acquire essential skills not only through structured instruction but also through interactive and collaborative experiences. In the context of early educational foundations, the emphasis is placed on creating learning environments that nurture social interaction, cooperation, and the foundations of decision-making. Recognizing this, the study adopted a classroom-based intervention that integrated small-group facilitation with the use of problem tree media, ensuring that students could engage with real-life issues in an age-appropriate and meaningful manner.

Within this framework, the researcher implemented a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, which provided a cyclical and reflective process for improving classroom practices. The CAR model was particularly suited to this study because it allowed iterative refinement of strategies, ensuring that each stage—planning, action, observation, and reflection—responded directly to the needs of the students and the dynamics of the classroom.

During the planning phase of Cycle I, the researcher developed a set of research instruments tailored to indicators of collaborative decision-making among elementary students. These instruments measured both the process and the outcomes of learning, with particular emphasis on: (1) listening to others before making decisions, (2) sharing ideas during group tasks, (3) respecting peers' opinions, (4) regulating emotions when facing disagreement, and (5) participating actively in group decision-making.

Lesson plans were designed to guide students in identifying relevant classroom or environmental issues through the problem tree, discussing possible causes and effects, and formulating group solutions. This approach not only fostered early critical thinking but also encouraged students to practice foundational decision-making skills essential for their civic and social development.

To operationalize these indicators, the researcher designed lesson cycles that integrated collaborative activities with problem tree exploration. Each cycle began with simple warm-up routines suitable for elementary learners, followed by small-group discussions, and concluded with whole-class reflection. The themes were deliberately selected to connect with students' immediate experiences—such as keeping the classroom clean, managing waste, or understanding the causes of flooding—so that abstract concepts of cause and effect could be made concrete and meaningful.

By embedding these activities within familiar contexts, students were encouraged to practice turn-taking, negotiate simple disagreements, and arrive at collective solutions, thereby strengthening the foundations of collaborative decision-making. The problem tree served not only as a visual aid but also as a pedagogical bridge, enabling students to externalize their thinking and build shared understanding with their peers.

The study involved 17 fifth-grade students at MI Yaminas Noling, Bua Ponrang Subdistrict (Bupon), Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi. The intervention was conducted in May 2024 and focused on strengthening students' skills in deliberation and group discussion. To achieve this, the students were engaged in structured small-group mentoring centered on the use of a *problem tree*—a visual tool to identify causes, effects, and core issues of a given problem. This method aimed to provide a concrete and collaborative learning experience to encourage students to express their opinions, listen to others, and arrive at collective decisions.

The classroom-based intervention followed the **CAR model** with four primary stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Each stage was carefully designed to support the iterative process of improving educational outcomes. In this study, the CAR model was applied to explore how the integration of small-group facilitation and problem tree analysis could enhance students' collaborative problem-solving and deliberation abilities within the context of civic and moral education.

**Table 1.** Lesson Cycle Plan: Deliberation and Problem-Solving Activities

| Indicators | Cycle | Initial Activity | Core Activity Themes | Problem Tree Focus | Discussion Model | Closing Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1.1)–(1.5), (2.1)–(2.5) | I | Mood Swing, Brain Gym | Deliberation on flood issues and response | Waste management | Small Group → Large Group → Plenary | Summary & Reinforcement |
| (1.1)–(1.5), (2.1)–(2.5) | II | Mood Swing, Brain Gym | Deliberation on effective waste management | Flood mitigation | Small Group → Large Group → Plenary | Summary & Reinforcement |

The next essential step involves organizing the use of instructional media to be employed in each meeting throughout the implementation of the action within one complete cycle. Careful planning of media usage is crucial to ensure that learning objectives are effectively achieved and that students remain engaged in the process. In this study, the selection of media was closely aligned with the core objective of enhancing students' problem-solving and deliberation skills. Thus, the problem tree was chosen as the central instructional tool due to its visual and interactive nature, which encourages students to analyze issues critically and collaboratively.

The specifications of the problem tree media utilized in this research are outlined in the table below. This media was designed not only to visually map out the causes and effects of specific community issues—such as floods and waste management—but also to guide students through structured reflection and group discussion. By using this medium consistently throughout each session, students were expected to gradually improve their ability to identify problems, evaluate contributing factors, and propose solutions through meaningful dialogue. The integration of such media represents a deliberate pedagogical strategy aimed at fostering deeper cognitive engagement and social interaction among learners.

**Table 2.** Single Cycle Action Implementation Plan

| Meeting | Media | Specification | Tools and Materials |
|---|---|---|---|
| I | Problem Tree | Using waste problem tree | A4 size HVS paper, Colored markers, Ruler and tree shape template (used if needed), Large manila paper, Paper glue and Adhesive tape. |
| II | Problem Tree | Using flood problem tree | Cardboard/box, Various colored markers, Scissors, Colorful origami paper, Hot glue gun/heat gun, Several bamboo supports that have been prepared, and Other tools and materials. |

The data analysis for this study employed descriptive analysis techniques, which focus on summarizing and describing the characteristics of the collected data without attempting to generalize the findings from the sample to a larger population. This approach is appropriate when the research aims to provide detailed insights into specific variables or indicators within the sample. In this context, the analysis began by identifying and counting the total

number of indicators and sub-indicators derived from the research instruments. Only the sub-indicators relevant to the study's objectives were included in the calculation to maintain accuracy and relevance in the results.

Specifically, the study measured two main aspects: the knowledge aspect of deliberation, referred to as HPAPB (Hasil Pengukuran Aspek Pengetahuan Bermusyawarah), and the skills aspect of deliberation, called HPAKB (Hasil Pengukuran Aspek Keterampilan Bermusyawarah). For the analysis, a total of ten sub-indicators were used, comprising five sub-indicators from HPAPB and five from HPAKB. The research instrument employed a four-point Likert scale to evaluate each sub-indicator. Accordingly, the highest possible score a respondent could achieve was calculated as 4 (the highest scale value) multiplied by 10 (the number of sub-indicators), resulting in an ideal highest score of 40. Conversely, the lowest ideal score was calculated as 1 (the lowest scale value) multiplied by 10, resulting in 10.

To categorize and interpret the scores effectively, the interval range was determined by dividing the score range by the number of scale points. The score range was calculated by subtracting the ideal lowest score (10) from the ideal highest score (40), resulting in 30. This value was then divided by the number of scale categories (4), yielding an interval of 7.5. This interval value provides a basis for interpreting the scoring results, allowing for the classification of respondents' performance or responses into meaningful categories according to their total scores on the sub-indicators. This systematic approach ensures clarity and precision in the data interpretation process.

**Table 3.** Scoring Intervals for Students' Deliberation Ability

| No | Score Interval | Category | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 10 ≤ score < 17.5 | Not Yet Able to Deliberate | Has not reached the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM) |
| 2 | 17.5 ≤ score < 25 | Less Able to Deliberate | Has not reached the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM) |
| 3 | 25 ≤ score < 32.5 | Able to Deliberate | Has reached the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM) |
| 4 | 32.5 ≤ score ≤ 40 | Very Able to Deliberate | Has reached the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM) |

# Results and Discussion

## Cycle 1

The planning stage of this research involved several crucial preparations prior to implementation. The researcher developed instruments aligned with early childhood indicators of collaborative decision-making, designed lesson plans tailored to PAUD contexts, and prepared media in the form of problem tree visuals, picture cards, and group discussion materials. These supports were selected to be developmentally appropriate, enabling children to engage with abstract concepts (such as causes and consequences) through concrete and visual experiences. All preparations were carried out smoothly with input and guidance from collaborating teachers at the research site, ensuring readiness for the intervention.

The implementation phase followed the designed plan and centered on enhancing children's early experiences of decision-making within small-group interactions. Activities emphasized both the process (e.g., taking turns, listening, respecting peers' views) and the outcomes (e.g., formulating group solutions) of collaborative decision-making. The instructional strategies, supported by problem tree media, encouraged children to identify classroom issues such as cleanliness or waste management, discuss possible causes and effects, and propose solutions together. This approach allowed children to practice the foundational habits of deliberation in ways suitable for their developmental level.

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Overall, Cycle I was successfully carried out, and children were able to demonstrate emerging abilities in collaborative decision-making. The evaluation results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Children's Collaborative Decision-Making Ability in Cycle I

| No | Score Interval | Category | Description | Number of Students / % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | 10 ≤ score < 17.5 | Not Yet Able to Collaborate | Has not reached Minimum Competency Criteria | 4 / 24% |
| 2 | 17.5 ≤ score < 25 | Less Able to Collaborate | Has not reached Minimum Competency Criteria | I / 6% |
| 3 | 25 ≤ score < 32.5 | Able to Collaborate | Has reached Minimum Competency Criteria | 6 / 35% |
| 4 | 32.5 ≤ score ≤ 40 | Very Able to Collaborate | Has reached Minimum Competency Criteria | 6 / 35% |
| | | Total | | 17 / 100% |
| | | Average Score | | 23 |
| | | Class Completeness | | 70% |

The results of Cycle I indicated that most children demonstrated an understanding of group decision-making routines introduced by the teacher during Meetings I and II. The average score exceeded the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM), suggesting that children were able to participate actively in discussions, share ideas, and engage in collective problem-solving through the problem tree.

Nevertheless, several challenges emerged. While children showed enthusiasm in contributing ideas, some found it difficult to respect peers' opinions and occasionally interrupted or rejected differing views. A few children exhibited dominant tendencies, trying to impose their will on others. In some cases, participation focused more on generating ideas rather than developing practical applications related to the agreed solutions.

To improve these aspects in Cycle II, several adjustments are recommended. First, written rules should be created in poster form using both text and visuals so that children can easily remember and follow them. Second, majority-vote activities can be introduced, allowing children to experience fairness and learn to respect collective decisions. Third, children who frequently show dominant tendencies can be appointed as group leaders with clear roles, channeling their leadership into positive contributions. Finally, teachers can guide children to not only generate ideas but also connect them to practical applications related to daily themes such as waste management or flood prevention, thereby reinforcing the meaningfulness of their collaborative efforts.

## Cycle 2

The planning stage of Cycle II was based on reflections and findings from the first cycle. Several key improvements were introduced to address the challenges observed earlier. These included: (1) creating written rules displayed in posters with both images and text to help children easily remember discussion guidelines; (2) conducting majority vote activities while encouraging children to explain their reasons for agreement or disagreement; (3) appointing children with dominant tendencies as group leaders with clear responsibilities to channel their leadership positively; and (4) guiding children to not only share ideas but also explain their practical applications in relation to classroom themes such as waste management or flood prevention. These refinements were intended to strengthen children's emerging abilities in collaborative decision-making in ways appropriate to their developmental stage.

The implementation of Cycle II showed notable improvements in children's collaborative decision-making skills. The results are presented in Table 5 below.

**Table 5.** Children's Collaborative Decision-Making Ability in Cycle II.

| No | Score Interval | Category | Description | Number of Students / % |
|----|----------------|----------|-------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 10 ≤ score < 17.5 | Not Yet Able to Collaborate | Has not reached Minimum Competency Criteria | 1 / 6% |
| 2 | 17.5 ≤ score < 25 | Less Able to Collaborate | Has not reached Minimum Competency Criteria | 1 / 6% |
| 3 | 25 ≤ score < 32.5 | Able to Collaborate | Has reached Minimum Competency Criteria | 5 / 29% |
| 4 | 32.5 ≤ score ≤ 40 | Very Able to Collaborate | Has reached Minimum Competency Criteria | 10 / 59% |
| | | Total | | 17 / 100% |
| | | Average Score | | 32 |
| | | Class Completeness | | 88% |

The results of Cycle II showed a clear improvement compared to Cycle I. The average score increased from 23 in the first cycle to 32 in the second cycle, with class completeness rising from 70% to 88%. This significant progress reflects children's enhanced ability to listen, share, respect peers' opinions, regulate emotions during disagreements, and participate actively in group decision-making.

Despite these positive outcomes, several aspects still require ongoing reinforcement. Children's enthusiasm in using the problem tree to generate ideas needs to be continuously nurtured, particularly by habituating them to provide reasons for their answers, comments, or suggestions. Respecting peers' opinions—especially when differences arise—remains a developmental process that should be consistently guided by teachers. Furthermore, adherence to agreed-upon rules of discussion must be reinforced so that children learn to internalize respectful and orderly group interaction.

The strategies implemented in Cycle II proved effective in addressing the challenges identified earlier. The use of visualized rules helped children recall behavioral expectations more easily. Encouraging all children to articulate reasons for their agreement or disagreement promoted a stronger sense of responsibility in expressing opinions. Assigning dominant children as group leaders also contributed to more balanced participation within groups, as their leadership tendencies were directed into constructive roles. Collectively, these strategies not only improved the quality of collaborative decision-making but also laid stronger foundations for social-emotional and cognitive growth in the PAUD context.

## Discussion

Collaborative decision-making is a foundational competency that needs to be cultivated from the earliest years of schooling, including within the context of early childhood education. For young children, the ability to engage in simple forms of group decision-making not only reflects a critical cultural value embedded in Indonesia's social traditions of musyawarah but also represents an essential developmental milestone that strengthens their social-emotional growth. Historically, collaborative decision-making has been central to fostering consensus and mutual respect within communities, laying the groundwork for collective harmony and problem-solving. Its cultural and societal relevance underscores the necessity for children, even at the PAUD level, to gradually develop these skills. Mastery of collaborative decision-making is therefore not only an academic objective but also a vital social-emotional ability that promotes inclusion, empathy, and early civic engagement.

Despite its significance, empirical observations in this research revealed that many children initially showed limited competency in collaborative decision-making. These limitations were evident in uneven participation levels, difficulties in regulating emotions when facing disagreements, and a tendency for certain children to dominate

discussions. Such challenges posed obstacles for teachers seeking to nurture balanced participation and respectful communication in group learning activities. To address these gaps, this study focused on two interrelated dimensions: the cognitive dimension, which includes children's awareness of group processes and simple problem-solving, and the affective-behavioral dimension, which encompasses skills such as listening, turn-taking, respecting peers' opinions, and emotional regulation. Each domain was operationalized into five sub-indicators, resulting in a comprehensive framework of ten aspects used to holistically evaluate children's collaborative decision-making foundations. This dual focus reflects the understanding that collaborative decision-making at the PAUD level is not limited to conceptual knowledge but must be grounded in practical social-emotional skills.

Collaborative decision-making has been widely described as a participatory process in which individuals contribute ideas, negotiate perspectives, and arrive at shared solutions to common problems (Umi, 2020). This process is supported by social values of fairness and respect, enabling individuals—even children—to learn how to manage divergent viewpoints (Cahyadri, 2022). In early childhood classrooms, these theoretical constructs manifest as fundamental socio-emotional competencies, including empathy, patience, and conflict management. Emotional regulation and perspective-taking emerge as critical developmental skills, enabling children to interact constructively, accept differing opinions, and build shared decisions. The interplay between emerging cognitive awareness and socio-emotional learning thus constitutes the foundation of collaborative decision-making competencies in early childhood education.

Findings from Cycle I revealed that children's limitations in collaborative decision-making were closely tied to underdeveloped emotional regulation and low social awareness. Although children showed enthusiasm during group discussions using the problem tree, many were unable to consistently respect peers' turns, resulting in interruptions, disputes, and moments of dominance. In some cases, children attempted to impose their ideas without considering others' input, undermining the collaborative essence of group problem-solving. Adherence to classroom rules of discussion was also inconsistent, signaling the need for structured scaffolding and targeted teacher interventions to cultivate respect, fairness, and self-control. These challenges highlight the complex interplay between affective and behavioral dimensions that teachers must address to improve outcomes.

Guided by reflections on Cycle I, targeted interventions were implemented in Cycle II to address the observed challenges. A key strategy was the creation of visually engaging classroom posters containing discussion rules illustrated with both text and images. These posters were intended to help children easily recall and internalize behavioral expectations, bridging literacy gaps and reinforcing consistency in group activities. In addition, majority-vote activities were incorporated, with structured opportunities for children to explain their agreement or disagreement in simple terms. This practice encouraged not only active participation but also the development of reasoning and responsibility in decision-making.

Recognizing the influence of dominant personalities, some children with strong assertiveness were intentionally assigned as group leaders with clearly defined responsibilities. This approach channeled their leadership tendencies constructively, ensuring that their confidence contributed to group cohesion rather than disrupting it. Finally, to make collaborative decision-making more meaningful, children were guided to generate ideas with tangible applications connected to their daily lives, such as maintaining classroom cleanliness or reducing waste in their immediate environment. This contextualization reinforced the practical value of group discussions, linking abstract problem-solving with concrete actions. Collectively, these pedagogical strategies strengthened children's ability to share, listen, respect differences, and jointly arrive at solutions, thereby laying important social-emotional foundations for lifelong learning and civic participation.

## Conclusion

The implementation process of this classroom action research was systematically carried out through a series of structured learning activities aligned with the instructional design. On the first day, the theme centered on

collaborative decision-making related to flooding issues and their management, with the problem tree activity simplified to focus on classroom waste. The learning process unfolded through multi-level discussions, beginning with small-group exchanges, followed by larger group sharing, and culminating in whole-class sessions. On the second day, the theme shifted toward decision-making around healthy and effective waste management, with the problem tree adapted to represent flooding as the central issue. The discussion format remained consistent across both meetings, providing children with repeated opportunities to practice listening, sharing ideas, respecting opinions, and reaching collective agreements in structured steps from small to large group deliberation.

The results demonstrated that children's collaborative decision-making abilities improved significantly from Cycle I to Cycle II. Both the average score and overall mastery level showed meaningful increases, with the average rising from 23 in the first cycle to 32 in the second—an improvement of 10 points. This progression indicates a considerable enhancement in children's capacity to engage in group problem-solving, regulate emotions during disagreements, and demonstrate fairness in contributing to shared decisions. The findings thus confirm that the integration of problem tree-assisted small-group facilitation can serve as an effective pedagogical approach for strengthening foundational social-emotional and collaborative skills in early childhood education.

For teachers, children, and other stakeholders implementing small-group facilitation as a pathway to collaborative decision-making in PAUD, several strategies are recommended. First, it is crucial to establish clear, visually engaging classroom rules—combining text and illustrations—that are prominently displayed to help children internalize expectations for respectful participation. Second, majority-vote acclamations should be integrated, encouraging each child to voice their agreement or disagreement and to provide reasons in simple terms, thereby promoting accountability and inclusive dialogue. Third, appointing naturally dominant children as group leaders with well-defined responsibilities can channel their assertiveness positively while ensuring balanced participation across all group members. Finally, guiding children to connect their ideas with practical applications—such as classroom cleanliness, environmental awareness, or flood preparedness—can deepen their understanding of civic values and nurture a sense of responsibility toward real-life issues. Collectively, these practices not only enhance immediate learning outcomes but also contribute to laying the groundwork for democratic habits and civic-mindedness from the earliest years of education.

## Acknowledgments

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