

Classroom Ice Breaking: an Analysis of the Impact of Ice Breaking on the Social Studies Learning Process at SMPN 1 Sutera

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Abstract

This research was motivated by low student enthusiasm and concentration in Social Studies (IPS) learning at SMP Negeri 1 Sutera, Pesisir Selatan Regency. This condition is evident in the high number of students exhibiting symptoms of boredom, such as wandering in and out of class, feeling sleepy, and being inactive during the learning process. This study aims to analyze the impact of implementing icebreakers on the Social Studies learning process, specifically in improving attention, concentration, and creating a pleasant learning atmosphere in grade VIII.6. This research used a qualitative approach with a field study method. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies with 11 informants consisting of curriculum representatives, Social Studies teachers, Civics teachers, and students in grades VIII.6 and VIII.5. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that the implementation of icebreakers had a positive impact on the Social Studies learning process. Students became more focused, active, and enthusiastic in participating in the learning process. The classroom atmosphere became more dynamic and enjoyable, thereby reducing boredom and increasing interaction between teachers and students. Thus, ice breaking has proven to be effective as a strategy to create interactive and meaningful learning.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is crucial for human life, and it is always accompanied by education, leading to more advanced education and a more modern and progressive mindset. There is no era without development, nor is there a life that remains stagnant. Everything stems from education, as it is the driving force behind world civilization (Khoerunisa et al., 2020). Education is a continuous process of humanism, known as humanizing humans. Therefore, as good human beings, we must respect human rights.

Likewise, students are not human beings, not machines that can be controlled at will, but they are the golden generation of the nation that will bring change, therefore we must help and care about every change that is formed and every change towards maturity in order to form people who think critically and have good morals and behavior that reflects the golden generation because they are educated, they can be active in eating, drinking, dressing and have a house to stay alive, this is what is called humanizing humans (Rika Widanita 2023)

In relation to educational components, the curriculum is a written plan containing ideas, concepts, and concepts formulated into teaching modules. These modules comprise several interrelated and interdependent systems, including objectives that guide education, learning experiences, strategies, goal achievement, and evaluation. Furthermore, these components create a teaching system, and this system serves as a guideline for teachers in managing the teaching and learning process in the classroom. (Sukmawati 2021)

The Independent Curriculum is a diverse internal learning curriculum whose content is optimized to provide sufficient time for students to learn concepts and build competencies. To tailor learning to students' needs and interests, teachers can choose from a variety of teaching tools (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia: Philosophy & John, 2022).

Education is the primary foundation in shaping the character and intelligence of students. Throughout the process, teaching and learning activities must be able to create an interactive, enjoyable atmosphere and encourage active student participation. However, in reality, many learning processes, especially in Social Studies (IPS) subjects, are still monotonous and uninteresting, thus reducing student enthusiasm and focus. Phenomena such as boredom, students falling asleep, or even not paying attention to the teacher during learning are challenges that teachers often face in the classroom. This condition is also clearly observed at SMP Negeri 1 Sutera, Pesisir Selatan Regency, especially in class VIII.6, which indicates a high level of student disengagement in the learning process.

As modern educational approaches have evolved, various innovative strategies have been developed to increase student engagement. One of these is the application of interactive learning techniques of *ice breaking*, namely refreshing activities such as games, songs, or light movements that aim to lighten the atmosphere and raise students' enthusiasm for learning. Sunarno (in Hendawati, 2020) explains that *ice breaking* is effective in overcoming psychological barriers and forming more open interactions between teachers and students. Another study by Muharrir (2022) shows that the implementation of *ice breaking* is able to increase students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education subjects. Hendawati (2020) also found that *ice breaking* made students more active, confident, and makes learning more enjoyable. However, most previous research has focused more on the motivational aspect of learning, rather than on the overall impact on the social studies learning process directly.

The importance of *ice breaking* learning as one way to foster the spirit of the brain in thinking and bring out students' creativity when students feel bored to listen and write the material delivered by the learning teacher, this is the right tool to facilitate the learning process in accordance with the learning objectives to be achieved. Activities such as games or others that can create a learning atmosphere that is not boring so that the material delivered by the teacher can be accepted by students. The best learning is when students are in a happy condition and mind making students feel a happy and relaxed condition during the learning process.

According to (Trisnawati and Diena San Fauziya 2024) there are several signs of learning boredom that can occur in students, namely: Monotonous learning materials, nothing new in the learning process, less conducive learning environment, lack of rest. So boredom is a condition that arises when someone does activities continuously that are not interesting so that the feeling of boredom arises itself, that is why learning teachers can apply *ice breaking*. In every lesson, especially social studies lessons, the aim is to increase students' enthusiasm, make them feel relaxed and happy, *ice breaking* can make students capable and not become a burden in every learning process, therefore the author is interested in implementing *ice breaking* to make PMB more fun.

The scientific novelty in this article lies in the focus of the study on the impact of implementing *ice breaking* on the overall social studies learning process, especially on the aspects of concentration, activity, and student learning atmosphere in the classroom. This research not only examines the influences of *breaking* from the motivational side, but also to see how this technique can change the dynamics of learning interactions, as well as overcome student boredom and fatigue during long social studies lessons.

The main problems studied in this article are: *What is the impact of the application of ice breaking techniques on the social studies learning process at SMP Negeri 1 Sutera, Pesisir Selatan Regency?* this question is answered through a qualitative approach that allows for in-depth exploration of the experiences of teachers and students in the implementation process of *ice breaking* in the classroom.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to analyze and describe the impact of implementing *ice breaking* towards the social studies learning process, especially in increasing concentration, enthusiasm for learning, and creating a pleasant classroom atmosphere at SMP Negeri 1 Sutera

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with field research. This research design aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of implementing *ice breaking* on the Social Studies (IPS) learning process at SMP Negeri 1 Sutera, Pesisir Selatan Regency. A qualitative approach was used to describe the phenomenon comprehensively from the perspective of the actors (emic perspective), especially teachers and students who are directly involved in the learning activities.

The research design follows the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three main components: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. The data analysis process took place simultaneously with the field data collection process, allowing for flexibility and adjustments to emerging findings.

Data collection techniques were conducted through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The informants in this study numbered 11 people, consisting of curriculum representatives, social studies teachers, civics teachers, and students in grade VIII.6 as the class implementing the curriculum. *ice breaking*, and class VIII.5 students as a comparison.

Data analysis was conducted interactively following the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data validity was tested through triangulation of sources and techniques to ensure the validity of the findings.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research result

This research was conducted in class VIII.6 of SMP Negeri 1 Sutera, Pesisir Selatan Regency, with a focus on the application of *ice breaking* in the Social Sciences (IPS) learning process. Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, it was found that the application of *ice breaking* has a positive impact on changes in student learning behavior and overall class dynamics. Before implementing the *ice breaking*, the learning process in this class was monotonous, with a passive atmosphere. Many students appeared sleepy, entered and exited the classroom without permission, ignored the teacher, and were reluctant to actively participate in discussions and question-and-answer sessions. The classroom atmosphere tended to be rigid and boring, resulting in low student enthusiasm for the lengthy social studies lesson.

After implementing *ice breaking* structured and consistent by the teacher, significant changes began to be seen. Students showed increased concentration and activeness in class. The activities used varied, ranging from light games, brain exercises, enthusiastic applause, to motivational songs related to the subject matter. These activities were carried out at the beginning, middle, and end of the lesson, with a duration of approximately 3 to 5 minutes. Observations showed that the number of students falling asleep in class decreased drastically from eight to one. Students who were previously passive now began to actively answer the teacher's questions, even enthusiastically offering opinions and asking questions. Active participation in group discussions also increased significantly. The classroom atmosphere became more lively, dynamic, and enjoyable, which ultimately made the subject matter easier for students to absorb.

From the interview results, the teacher said that *ice breaking* made it easier for them to manage their classes. Teachers feel that students are more responsive, understand the material more quickly, and are more enthusiastic about participating in learning. Interviews with students confirm this. They said they enjoy learning more when it begins or is interspersed with activities of *ice breaking*. One student said that learning social studies felt easier and less boring after there were fun activities in between the material. On the other hand, a student from class VIII.5, who did not actively apply *ice breaking*, showed a learning attitude that still tends to be passive and easily bored.

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation conducted by researchers during the research process in class VIII of SMP Negeri 1 Sutera, various impacts were found that arose from the application of the method of *ice breaking* in social studies learning. These impacts are divided into two: positive impacts that contribute to increased student enthusiasm and participation, and negative impacts that require attention for more effective implementation. The details of these impacts can be seen in the table below:

Table 1 Positive and negative impacts

No	Positive impact	Negative impact
1.	Encourage interaction between students and teachers	When doing activities <i>ice breaking</i> Excessive noise and movement can disrupt the teaching and learning process in other classes.
2.	Raising students' enthusiasm	<i>Ice breaking</i> is considered quite burdensome on the teacher's side, especially in selecting and creating <i>ice breaking</i> which is suitable to be implemented in the classroom.
3.	Students are more enthusiastic, focused, active and participate in class.	Feeling worried that the implementation of <i>ice breaking</i> can reduce the effective time in delivering material
4.	The class atmosphere became relaxed and enjoyable.	Challenge in controlling the class during activities of <i>ice breaking</i> done.
5.	Students feel more enthusiastic, comfortable, and less tense during the learning process.	
6.	Students experience enjoyable learning and gain experience and new learning styles.	

From the table above it can be concluded that the application of the method of *ice breaking* in social studies learning has more positive impacts than negative impacts of

Ice breaking can create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere, increase student enthusiasm and participation, and help students focus more on learning materials. However, there are also several obstacles that need to be considered, such as the potential for disruption to the learning process in other classes, time constraints, and challenges in classroom management. Therefore, the implementation of *ice breaking* needs to be planned and adapted to class conditions so that the benefits can be felt optimally without disrupting the ongoing learning process.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the implementation of *ice breaking* make a positive contribution in creating a conducive and enjoyable learning atmosphere of *Ice breaking* not only does it serve as a mood freshener, but it's also an effective strategy for increasing student engagement, strengthening teacher-student interactions, and supporting the optimal achievement of learning objectives. This technique has been proven effective in overcoming boredom, increasing focus, and rekindling students' enthusiasm for active learning in social studies.

3.2.Discussion

The results of the study show that the implementation of *ice breaking* in social studies learning has a significant impact on changing the atmosphere and quality of the teaching and learning process. This finding aligns with the humanistic theory that underpins this research, where effective learning positions students as active subjects who need to feel safe, valued, and emotionally motivated to be fully engaged in the learning process. A rigid, boring, and minimally interactive classroom atmosphere has been shown to be a barrier to achieving learning objectives. Conversely, a fluid and enjoyable atmosphere, such as that created through *ice breaking* encourages students to be more active, focused, and fully involved in learning activities.

The implementation of *ice breaking* not only serves as a momentary diversion from boredom, but also acts as an important bridge to build emotional connections between students and teachers and among their peers. In the context of social studies learning, which demands an understanding of abstract and sometimes complex social concepts, students need a pleasant learning environment to more easily absorb information. This research shows that after *ice breaking* was done, students not only become more enthusiastic, but also more confident in expressing their opinions and actively participating in discussions. This shows that *ice breaking* also contributes to the development of students' social competencies, such as cooperation, communication, and courage to express opinions.

From the teacher's side, *ice breaking* became a strategic tool in classroom management. Teachers stated that the classroom atmosphere became easier to control, and transitions between learning activities were smoother after it was implemented *ice breaking*. Teachers also find it easier to build emotional connections with students, because *ice breaking* opens up a more egalitarian and warmer communication space. This finding reinforces the findings of previous studies by Hendawati (2020) and Muharrir (2022), which also revealed an increase in student learning motivation as a result of the implementation of *ice breaking*. However, this study extends these findings by emphasizing that *ice breaking* not only impacts motivation, but also comprehensively influences concentration, classroom atmosphere, and learning achievement in general.

Thus, learning that applies *ice breaking* has advantages in overcoming the challenges of conventional learning, which tends to be monotonous and less interactive. This technique is highly relevant in the context of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes flexibility, enjoyable learning, and a differentiated, student-centered

approach. Therefore, *ice breaking* should be positioned not merely as entertainment, but as an integral part of a planned learning strategy and adapted to class dynamics and student needs.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the implementation of *ice breaking* in social studies learning process at SMP Negeri 1 Sutera has had a significant positive impact on student learning dynamics. This technique has been proven to improve concentration, reduce boredom, and create a more enjoyable, active, and conducive classroom atmosphere. Students become more enthusiastic, confident in expressing their opinions, and demonstrate increased participation in discussions and completing assignments.

From a teacher's perspective, *ice breaking* also helps with classroom management, building better emotional connections with students, and streamlining the learning process of *ice breaking* not only serves as a diversion, but as an integral part of an effective learning strategy, especially in the context of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes flexible, fun, and student-centered learning.

This research reinforces the view that students' emotional state greatly influences the success of the learning process, and that a humanistic and participatory approach such as *ice breaking* can be a practical solution in improving the quality of social studies learning at the junior high school level.

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