

The Importance of Civic Education in Building National Character for the Young Generation as Agents of Change

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Abstract

Civic education is incorporated into every level of basic education as part of the curriculum and continuous teaching to fulfill national education goals. It aims to shape citizens who can actively contribute to sustainable development in a competitive country. The goal of civic education is to produce good citizens, capable of engaging in nation-building. One key aspect of this is character building, which is inseparable from the moral development needed in a civil society. As agents of change, the younger generation must be equipped with critical thinking skills to address both domestic and global issues that impact Indonesia. This study seeks to explore the role of civic education in helping future generations develop these skills and become responsible citizens capable of addressing concerns within and outside the country. The method used in this research is a literature review, which gathers data from books, documents, articles, and other publications related to evaluation issues in civic education. This approach is recommended for Indonesian students' education as it provides a deeper understanding of civic education's role in developing critical thinking. The findings of this study highlight that civic education not only shapes students into active and responsible citizens but also equips them with the tools to engage with national and global issues. It underscores the importance of integrating character and moral development into civic education to help create individuals who are prepared to lead and drive positive societal change.

Keywords: Civic Education, National Character, Moral Development, Young Generation, Critical Thinking

1. Introduction

A successful national education system includes civic education as part of the formal curriculum at various levels of education, from elementary school to higher education. Civic education is designed as a functional education that aims to form citizens who are aware of their rights and obligations and have a deep understanding of state life. In this context, civic education not only equips individuals with knowledge of law and politics, but also forms a democratic, critical and responsible character towards social and political life (Rahayu, 2007).

One of the main objectives of civic education is to make its citizens good citizens, who not only have political awareness but also contribute to sustainable development in an increasingly competitive country. Civic education plays an important role in shaping individual character based on moral and ethical values, so as to build a strong civil society. In addition, the younger generation as agents of change need civic education that can help them develop critical thinking skills in dealing with domestic and global issues affecting Indonesia.

Several previous studies have discussed the role of civic education in building political awareness and increasing public participation in democratic life. However, amidst increasingly complex and rapidly evolving political dynamics, there are still challenges in ensuring that civic education remains



relevant and able to equip individuals with a deep understanding of the political system and public policy (Rahmatiani, 2020; Zulfikar & Dewi, 2021).

This research aims to analyze how civic education can contribute to building political awareness and shaping the character of active and responsible citizens. In addition, this research also explores how civic education can be updated to be more adaptive to social and political changes. The evaluation technique used in this research adopts the literature study method, by collecting data from various books, documents, records and other relevant sources. Thus, this research contributes to the development of a more effective civic education curriculum that is in line with the challenges of the times.

2. Methods

This research employs a "literature study" technique, which involves gathering data by examining existing books, papers, articles, and other relevant publications related to the research problem. The primary objective of this method is to provide a solid theoretical foundation that supports scientific research or exam preparation (Syaibani, 2012). In the context of academic research, literature study is a specific approach that facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the problem by synthesizing existing knowledge and findings.

Additionally, literary research encompasses both the writing and reading of literary works that are pertinent to the craft of writing. This technique aids researchers in refining their understanding and simplifying complex concepts, thereby enhancing the overall research process.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Definition of Civic Education

Civic Education or Citizenship Education is a higher education program with an interdisciplinary framework based on the multidimensional theory of the social sciences, based on the interdisciplinary structural theory of political science. According to the National Council for Social Research (NCSS), citizenship is a process that emphasizes all positive outcomes and aims to raise public awareness about the causes of veterans in their communities. As part of an educational program, the main goal of Citizenship is to train the warring communities in this country more effectively in accordance with the norms of conditions, standards and dimensions (as stated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution). Almost simultaneously, Nu'man Soemantri said that Civics is an educational program that focuses on democratic politics, grows alongside other related fields of study, and is particularly useful for general and adult school education. Everything here is tweaked to look positive.

3.1.1. Foundational Paradigm of Systemic Configuration or Civics

As a starting point, the warring nations teaching curriculum is designed with the aim of developing students' personal potential and transforming them into noble, intelligent, participatory, and steadfast warring nations. Second, citizenship is conceived from a theoretical perspective as a subject that emphasizes cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor skills and that is based on the laws, principles, and morality of Pancasila, as well as a democratic nation-state, or as a threatening and unjust persuasion. Third, citizenship is practically conceived as learning, that is, content that contains values and learning experiences in the form of various behaviors that are necessary in everyday life, namely the theme of learners.

Therefore, the ideology of Civics is very important for citizens, if expressed in the context of academic inquiry (Hutabarat et al., 2022). However, it is important to understand that the existence of

a warring state depends on its environment, hence the focus of this study is on the way of life of the environment and what constitutes a warring state. Situation Intended Behavior is the behavior that an individual exhibits in that situation or condition, for example because the individual is a member of a family, the way he or she plays, thinks, works, and the person works as Start by explaining how each person can function in the community as a member of a democratic or conservative society.

3.2. Purpose of Civic Education

The overarching goal of civic education in all countries is to instill the values and ethics of Pancasila citizens, the principles and norms of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, and a commitment to Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity). Therefore, it is highly recommended that teachers encourage their students to understand the true meaning of democracy by studying it, exploring its dynamics, and applying it in their daily lives (Budiutomo, 2013). This aligns with the mission of the City Education Curriculum to equip students with the following skills:

- a. Developing critical, rational, and creative thinking when addressing civic issues.
- b. Fostering qualities of excellence, commitment, reliability, and national pride in their social responsibilities.
- c. Aligning themselves democratically and positively with the characteristics of Indonesian society while promoting peaceful coexistence with other nations.
- d. Utilizing information and communication technology to maintain continuous and effective communication with countries worldwide.

The primary purpose of civic education is to ensure that life is guided by decisions in line with national development, enhance citizenship through education and political exchanges, and cultivate informed and active citizens. Schools serve as laboratories for democracy, facilitating practical processes, providing leadership education, democratizing legislative and executive branches, and promoting global understanding and collaborative relationships (Irawan, 2017).

3.3. Foundations of Civic Education

The 1945 Constitution, established as the founding legal document during the Fourth Session, serves as the theoretical foundation for the nation's goals. Its preamble holds profound meaning for the nation's identity. The educational community in Indonesia recognizes the importance of education for every child in the country. In daily life, the Constitution guides citizens to remain vigilant, disciplined, and resilient in facing both national and international crises while also fostering a culture of informed decision-making. Law No. 20 of 2003 emphasizes the role of the national education system as a guide and source of information for efforts related to civic education. Article 2 and Article 3 highlight that the role of national education is to shape the character and civilization of the nation with dignity and to nurture intelligent, independent, democratic, and morally upright individuals who also possess faith and devotion to God Almighty.

The National Education Act underscores the necessity of teaching civic education as a mandatory subject in primary education, given its strategic position in achieving the nation's educational goals. Development efforts must focus on nurturing Indonesian citizens who embody nationalism and patriotism. Civic education thus aims to foster national unity and align with societal values and responsibilities. In Indonesia, the development of civil law aims to unite citizens by adhering to shared values and obligations. For over six decades since its establishment in 1957, civic education has played a significant role in shaping societal programs and the legal framework.

The curriculum has evolved over time, reflecting changes in global and national contexts. It is no longer static but is continuously updated and evaluated to align with contemporary needs. Civic

education integrates learning experiences derived from history, geography, economics, and politics, as well as presidential speeches and declarations of rights. This multidisciplinary approach prepares students to be strong and reliable citizens who can represent the Republic of Indonesia on both national and global stages. The commitment to upholding the principles of nationalism, as enshrined in Pancasila and the Constitution, remains crucial for fostering a deep understanding of the Indonesian state. Historically, Indonesia has faced numerous challenges to its stability, necessitating the promotion of national values among its citizens, particularly the younger generation, as future leaders of the nation.

Civic education aims to create a democratic society where citizens embrace and practice democratic principles in daily life. Both government and non-governmental organizations must work collaboratively to promote democratic values, identify societal challenges, and implement solutions. Democratic citizens not only enjoy personal freedoms but also share the responsibility of shaping a brighter future for society. Civic education thus fosters a commitment to Pancasila and its principles, which were advocated by the nation's founding leaders. Character development is considered a primary aspect of national development. According to the 2005–2025 National Long-Term Development Plan, character education is positioned as a key initiative to achieve national development goals. This includes fostering a strong, competitive, and morally upright nation based on the values of Pancasila. Educational efforts must integrate character-building activities into teaching and learning processes, emphasizing values such as faith, tolerance, cooperation, and unity.

However, challenges remain in civic education. Current practices often focus on intellectual objectives, neglecting the emotional aspects of character development. To address this, educators must plan, implement, and evaluate strategies to create supportive learning environments that nurture students' attitudes, skills, and problem-solving abilities. Teacher education programs must prioritize character education, equipping future educators with the skills to evaluate and develop students' character. Emotional intelligence, which relates to an individual's attitudes and roles, should be emphasized in teaching strategies. Character education, as defined by scholars such as David Elkind and Freddy Sweet, is a conscious effort to help individuals understand, respect, and internalize core moral values.

The Civic Education Curriculum is uniquely positioned to achieve specific character-building goals. Its essence lies in education, not mere instruction, and it remains integral to the broader educational framework. The Ministry of Education and Culture's curriculum development guidelines aim to enhance learning and support students in developing desired character traits. These efforts include modifying educational programs and assessment methods to meet the requirements of character education and measure its impact effectively.

3.4. The Importance of Character Education

Character education is an educational process that prepares students for critical thinking, risk-taking, gentleness with others, and teamwork within a group, community, or country. Students will have emotional stability thanks to consistent character education. (Nita, 2022) Education for elementary school students is a very important way of teaching children to learn to think and behave. Character education itself has several objectives, namely: (1) Developing the potential of students to become citizens with personality. (2) To promote students' good behavior and habits in accordance with national and international laws. (3) Recognizing the soul as an early stage leader and transforming students into personalities who consistently demonstrate humility as the nation's chief generation. (4) Strengthen the skills of employees to be more independent, conscious of their behavior, and compliant

with applicable laws. (5) Instill an obedient, well-mannered, and fiery character with a strong sense of patriotism.

In connection with this, education that aims at character building is one of them is Civics Education. Civics has become an inherent part of the instrumentation of national education to educate the life of the Indonesian nation through the corridor of "value-based education". Civics aims to prepare students to become good and capable citizens of character, noble, intelligent, participatory, and responsible. Civics creates a generation with character and a high sense of nationalism. Civic education empowers citizens to make wise and conscious choices from the various alternatives offered, providing experiences and understanding that can foster the development of true commitment to the values and principles that empower a free society to survive. If the field of Civics examines the focus of study, then the direction of the actual focus of study of the essential Civics ideology is the behavior of citizens. Civics also has a function as a vehicle to form smart, skilled, and characterized citizens who are loyal to the Indonesian Nation and State. Civics becomes the leading sector of character building. Therefore, the purpose of character building is determined in Civics learning. One of the most appropriate vehicles to revive character building is through Civics learning, in the sense that the values in character education are implemented in Civics through an integration process. Integration of character education values is a system of instilling character values to school members which includes components of knowledge, awareness, willingness, and action patterns to implement these values. Civics becomes a subject that is considered so important because Civics is the leading sector of character education.

Private education is very important to develop a person's social, moral, emotional, and religious values. Character education is a means for students, namely those in elementary school, to develop their character so that they become human beings with strong character in their emotions, thoughts, feelings, and actions (Inanna, 2018). Everyone's character is a reflection of their deepest thoughts and feelings, as well as their mental makeup. Character also includes cultural and contextual characteristics. The personal education process used in schools is described as a teaching method intended to improve student achievement. Civic Education here focuses on fostering moral and competent individuals, who have a strong sense of humanity and have courage in life, even doing good things and really facing challenges (Nasozaro, 2019).

Citizenship Education is one of the subjects that aims to shape the personality of citizens to line their rights and obligations based on the basis of the state, including Pancasila with the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, Sports. Citizenship Education The mission of Citizenship Education is to equip students with noble morals and basic skills related to Jewish life, as well as basic education to become self and individual anarndiogs. In this regard, as the school's civics curriculum teaches tolerance towards others, students learn the importance of tolerance towards their teachers.

Formal education, particularly in primary schools, plays a crucial role in fostering Civic Education (Magdalena et al., 2020). Through this education, students develop various dispositions and skills essential for their roles as responsible citizens, as outlined below:

- a. Civic Education shapes the diverse dispositions of students, enabling them to engage critically and openly with civic issues.
- b. It encourages active, attentive, and rational behavior in social activities, including vigilance against corruption.
- c. Students are empowered to positively influence their surroundings and contribute to democratic practices, reflecting the character of the Indonesian nation.
- d. It fosters the potential for positive interaction and collaboration with others.
- e. Civic Education emphasizes critical thinking, logical reasoning, and a strong sense of commitment.

- f. It aligns character and behavior with the approved content of Civics.
- g. Students are guided to become intelligent citizens who prioritize honesty and use communication technology effectively to interact with other nations.
- h. Ultimately, Civic Education aims to cultivate individuals who are valuable contributors to social life.

Some of these are items from the Civics plan to create a personal character that can be used by elementary school children. A person's character can be developed through education through this Citizenship. Because of Pancasila's status as the unifying container of the Indonesian nation, its role as the nation's leader and its significance for understanding the nation's culture, there is much resentment among the learning community about its relationship with Pancasila. Similar to what is obvious

Every outfit of Pancasila contains very positive aspects in its life. This is possible because the Pancasila worldview is based on what is the culture and way of life of the Indonesian people. Thus the Indonesian nation can unite with Pancasila and the objects contained in it (Safitri et al., 2021). Pancasila is the only quote related to character-based education that needs to be recognized and emphasized in children's primary school curriculum. The Indonesian state adheres to the Pancasila state foundation, and the national symbols of Pancasila are what elevate the Indonesian nation (Safitri et al., 2021).

Character education derived from practicing the values contained in one of the precepts of Pancasila, being a democratic citizen, and applying Pancasila in everyday life to prepare learners to become war Citizenship education is together with democracy education because it aims to shape and prepare citizens to have critical and democratic thinking (Nasozaro, 2019).

This character should be taught to female students who are taught that living in a community and upholding national rights were the main principles of deliberative democracy in the past. If students are informed that this is a critical and democratic school system, then this will produce critical and democratic people in everyday life. Because everyone has a personality if they have experienced the usual way for everyone to be aware and vigilant, although variations may occur depending on a number of factors, such as the school environment and the group in which they are found. If a student receives critical evaluation, their character will bend to the same extent. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct character development exercises in civics classes for high school students to form a strong Indonesian national character based on the philosophy of the nation and state. learning from the beginning to the end of the study following the implementation of civics education (Didik & Ujung, 2021). It can be concluded from the above statements that civic education has the necessary means and effects to help us understand the moral and ethical dimensions of all human character. Throughout our academic training, we are taught to analyze everyone's personality and observe whether the staff member is really upset with the environment or maybe even apathetic. In the world of education, it is said that a student has succeeded if he or she is able to complete all the tasks and instructions of the teacher. This is the result of the teacher's success in developing good character (Alvira et al., 2021).

In any organization or business, change agents are often essential in driving progress and innovation. Organizations must continually assess their ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions. Organizational renewal requires people to manage the change process effectively to achieve desired outcomes. A "change agent" is an individual or a group of people recognized as leaders within one or more social organizations, tasked with initiating and facilitating changes. Change agents serve as catalysts, community mobilizers, problem solvers, and process facilitators, providing the necessary resources and solutions to address contemporary issues. There are two types of change agents (Pahlevi, 2017).

To achieve meaningful change, it is essential to have faith in people's ability to change. It requires intentional efforts to transform the conditions of clients or stakeholders, strengthen communication, and foster collaboration. Addressing and solving public health issues, raising critical topics, and evaluating stability in areas such as professionalism, competence, and commitment are vital. Change agents play a role in connecting elements of innovation and organizational development to achieve the desired transformation.

Young generation as agents of change, are the nation's driving force, shaping its future and influencing its aspirations. They inherit the legacy of previous generations and bear the responsibility of continuing the progress. Indonesia's future rests on the shoulders of its youth, making each generation an integral factor in realizing the nation's ideals. The role of youth as agents of change is critical to national progress. A nation's success or decline can often be measured by the quality of its younger generation, as they are the inheritors and stewards of a nation's wealth and resources. Change agents are essential in implementing relevant social changes and innovations (Jannah & Sulianti, 2021).

In the current era of globalization and political instability, the role of youth as agents of change is more crucial than ever. They drive societal transformations by encouraging communities to revise rigid social systems and adopt new approaches, often referred to as social engineering or planning. To remain competitive globally, the younger generation must uphold national integrity while maintaining moral values, competitiveness, and a broad worldview. They must also be adaptive to technological advancements (Alvira et al., 2021).

The famous statement by Indonesia's first president, Soekarno, "Give me ten young people, and I will shake the world," reflects the undeniable power of youth to bring about significant change. Technological advancements in this millennium offer young people opportunities to strengthen Indonesia's economy and contribute to its global standing. Each generation plays a pivotal role, whether as developers building diverse systems or as innovators seeking progress. Indonesian citizens must remain motivated to pursue and preserve their national identity.

The essence of citizenship lies in civic virtues. Developing these virtues requires fostering elements such as civic knowledge, civic disposition, civic skills, civic commitment, civic confidence, and civic competence. Comprehensive development of these elements is crucial for intelligent and responsible civic participation.

In this regard, Civic Education (PKn) plays a vital role in preparing citizens to uphold a strong and consistent commitment to maintaining the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. PKn contributes to education that focuses on shaping individuals in terms of religion, socio-cultural identity, ethnicity, and language, to produce intelligent, skilled, and morally grounded citizens based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. In the context of nation and character building, PKn holds a fundamental role as a character education framework that is systematically and integratively developed within the broader framework of national policies.

3.5. The Importance of Civic Education for the Younger Generation

To ensure that the next generation is capable of being strong, moral, and good custodians of the nation, civic education is emphasized. For the next generation of the nation, civic education is the only kind of education. Every child needs to learn about civic education, from elementary school to high school. This education is very important to educate the next generation to become citizens who are more critical of national and international issues and have broad tolerance, so that the democratic goals of Pancasila can be achieved. The next generation will be transformed into a participatory generation in daily international, national, and local politics. Therefore, it is possible to use the next generation as agents of change capable of bringing about organized social and economic change. National education,

an effort to restore a solid and strong image in accordance with Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, strives hard for education experts (Inanna, 2018).

The scope of Civic Education that can support the formation of resilient young people consists of aspects: (1) National principles and values include living in harmony, acting as an Indonesian citizen, protecting the environment, participating in national affairs, and preventing and justice. (2) Rules and regulations include: rules in the family environment, rules in the academic environment, rules in the community, local regulations, rules in the life of the nation (3) Human rights include: rights and obligations of children, rights and obligations of community members, and national and international human rights instruments. (4) The needs of society in the country include: mutual cooperation, freedom of organization, freedom of opinion, and respect for collective decisions about the conditions of society in a country that is in a permanent state. (5) National constitutions, consisting of the proclamation of independence and the first constitution, the constitutions used in Indonesia, and the relationship between the two. (6) Power and politics, containing: democracy and the political system, village and sub-district government, regional and autonomous government, central government (7) Pancasila, including: Practicing the values of Pancasila in daily life, the position of Pancasila as the basis of state ideology. (8) Globalization includes: Environmental globalization, Indonesian foreign policy in the era of globalization, globalization of international business and organizations, and economic globalization. Generating change through education is very important because it will make people understand their responsibilities and rights as Indonesian citizens. That way, the younger generation can become pioneers in realizing a just, democratic and democratic life. The new generation will become agents of change, or change agents capable of bringing about rapid change in education, society, religion, and the economy. Develop into a tolerant person through understanding Indonesian culture, history, and language (Sutrisno et al., 2020).

With a strong tolerance for plurality and pluralism, ethnicity, culture, and cultural diversity, the general public can transform into the next generation of leaders. It is hoped that the new generation will become the successors of a peace-loving and democratic nation by becoming peace-loving and democracy-minded individuals.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, civic education transforms citizens into a strong and capable group of people who are able to cope with the growing world in modern times. It is the single most important foundation for developing character and fostering morality. One solution that can help solve the problem of civics is the inclusion of character-based learning in higher education as a discipline that excels in developing the character of learners. Civics is the name of the school, and the school's curriculum will likely include some character-specific materials that will help students integrate the concept of character-based learning. The personal development of learners is developed not only in civics subjects, but also indirectly in various levels of learning. In addition, students' personalities can be reduced by using media, resources, and teaching methods.

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