

BUILDING A NATIONAL IDENTITY: A GUIDE FOR THE YOUNGER GENERATION

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ABSTRACT

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Civic Education (PKn) has a strategic role in shaping national identity in the midst of a multicultural Indonesian society. This study aims to examine the contribution of PKn in building the national identity of the younger generation, identify challenges in its implementation, and explore effective learning strategies. Through a literature study approach, this study reveals that PKn not only instills an understanding of the rights and obligations of citizens, but also strengthens the values of democracy, tolerance, and nationalism that are the foundation of national unity. However, various challenges are still faced, such as the limitations of teacher training, the lack of relevance of the material to contemporary social conditions, and the disparity in implementation between regions. Therefore, participatory learning strategies, technology integration, and collaboration between schools and communities are important to increase

the effectiveness of PKn. These findings confirm that PKn designed in an adaptive and contextual manner can be a powerful means in strengthening national identity in the era of globalization.

Keywords: *civic education, national identity, curriculum, national unity, multiculturalism*

INTRODUCTION

Citizenship Education aims to mature Indonesian citizens so that they can play an active and responsible role in the life of the nation and state. Through Civic Education, it is hoped that Indonesian citizens understand their rights and obligations, and have an awareness of the values of Pancasila as the basis of the state. This educational process aims to form characters in accordance with democratic values, such as respecting differences, participating in decision-making, and exercising social responsibility. As part of a democratic country, Civic Education also teaches the importance of active participation in political systems and government. Mature citizens are expected to be able to criticize public policy, participate in elections, and support efforts that uphold justice and common welfare. Thus, Civic Education not only aims to provide knowledge, but also to form attitudes and behaviors that support the creation of a harmonious, democratic, and just life of the nation and state (Pertiwi et al. 2021).

Civic Education (PKn) has long been considered a key element in the education system in many countries, including Indonesia. PKn is designed to build awareness of rights and obligations as citizens, as well as instill national values that are essential for the creation of national unity and unity. Indonesia, with its highly complex cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity, faces a major challenge in building a strong and cohesive national identity. In this context, PKn plays an important role as a tool to promote national values, tolerance, and unity among the younger generation. Civil society in Indonesia encompasses various aspects of education that not only focus on knowledge of the law and the rights of citizens, but also on the development of attitudes and behaviors that reflect the spirit of nationality. The PKn curriculum is designed to teach national history, constitution, government systems, and contemporary issues relevant to state life. In addition, PKn also emphasizes the importance of active

participation in democratic life and an understanding of the role of the individual in maintaining the integrity and stability of the state (Munthe et al, 2024).

Since ancient times, the Indonesian nation has grown and developed with a very rich diversity of ethnicities, languages, cultures, and religions. This diversity is united by Pancasila and the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which means "Different but still one." Indonesia's pluralistic national identity is reflected in Pancasila as the basis of the state, the 1945 Constitution as the constitution, the state emblem Garuda Pancasila, Indonesian as a unifying language, and the national anthem.

Greater Indonesia as a symbol of national pride. These weapons are the strength and uniqueness of the Indonesian nation, which is able to live in harmony despite having different backgrounds. However, in this era of globalization and rapid technological advancement, the soul and understanding of nationalism began to experience significant challenges. The influence of foreign cultures that enter easily through digital media and the internet, as well as an increasingly individualistic lifestyle, make the sense of nationality and love for national identity begin to fade. Globalization has brought major changes in the perspective and values embraced by society, especially the younger generation (Salsabila et al. 2023).

In the midst of the dynamics of globalization, national identity is often tested by the influence of foreign cultures and rapid social change. Globalization brings with it the flow of information and culture from various parts of the world which can affect the perspective and values of the younger generation (Akhyar et al., 2023). In this situation, PKn has become increasingly relevant as a means to strengthen national identity and instill a sense of pride in one's own culture and values. Effective education can help students understand and appreciate their cultural heritage, as well as develop a sense of responsibility as part of a broader national community. However, the implementation of PKn does not always run smoothly. Challenges in the implementation of civic education include a lack of training and resources for teachers, curriculum materials that may be less relevant or uninteresting to students, and disparities in curriculum implementation in different regions. Teachers, as the spearhead of education, are often faced with the daunting task of explaining abstract concepts and motivating students to be actively involved in the learning process. Therefore, innovative approaches and effective strategies are needed to address these challenges and ensure that the goals of citizenship education are achieved (Octavian, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a literature study method to explore the role of Civic Education (PKn) in building national identity. Literature review is a systematic approach to collecting, reviewing, and analyzing relevant literature in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of research topics (Akhyar et al., 2024). The steps taken in this study include source collection, content analysis, and synthesis of findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theory of Civic Education

Civic Education (PKn) aims to form citizens who understand their rights and obligations, and are able to actively participate in the life of society, nation, and state. Relevant theories of civic education include concepts such as active citizenship, critical citizenship, and democracy education.

- a. **Active Citizenship:** This theory emphasizes the importance of active participation of citizens in various aspects of public life. Active citizens not only understand their rights but also participate in political, social, and economic processes. Civic education aims to develop proactive attitudes and skills needed to engage in society, such as critical thinking skills, communication skills, and collaboration.
- b. **Critical Citizenship:** This concept emphasizes the importance of critical analysis of social and political structures. Critical civics education teaches students not only to passively receive information, but also to question, analyze, and understand the forces that shape society. This includes an understanding of human rights, social justice, and how public policy can affect the lives of individuals and groups.
- c. **Democracy Education:** The main focus of this theory is to teach democratic values and democratic practices in everyday life. Democracy education aims to equip students with knowledge of democratic principles, such as equality, freedom, and participation. In addition, students are also taught to respect

differences of opinion, dialogue well, and participate in collective decision-making.

The implementation of these theories in the PKn curriculum can help create citizens who are not only knowledgeable but also active and critical in facing the challenges of modern society. Through comprehensive education, students are expected to understand and appreciate their role in maintaining and strengthening democracy and national identity (Fitriyah et al., 2024).

National Identity

National identity is a complex concept that includes various elements that form a sense of togetherness and unity in a nation. National identity can be defined as a feeling of identification and attachment to a nation and state, which includes aspects of culture, history, language, national symbols, and shared values.

- a. Culture: Culture plays an important role in shaping national identity. Language, art, customs, and traditions are cultural elements that strengthen the sense of community among the members of the community. Civic education can promote understanding and appreciation of the nation's cultural richness as part of national identity.
- b. History: An understanding of national history helps shape a collective identity. Historical events, national heroes, and the struggle for independence are often used as teaching materials in civic education to instill a sense of pride and appreciation for the nation's heritage.
- c. National Symbols: Flags, national anthems, national emblems, and historical monuments are symbols that strengthen national identity. Civic education often uses these symbols to build a sense of love for the homeland and loyalty to the country.
- d. Common Values: Values such as mutual cooperation, tolerance, justice, and democracy are part of the national identity taught in civic education. These values help strengthen social cohesion and build a harmonious and inclusive society.

In the context of a diverse country like Indonesia, national identity is essential to maintain unity and unity. Civic education plays a vital role in instilling a strong national identity, by teaching the importance of respecting differences and working together for the common good (Yolandha & Dewi, 2021).

PKn Curriculum in Indonesia

The Citizenship Education (PKn) curriculum in Indonesia has undergone various changes and developments in line with social, political, and cultural dynamics. The history of the PKn curriculum reflects the government's efforts to instill national values and strengthen national identity among the younger generation.

- a. History of the PKn Curriculum: In the early days of independence, the PKn curriculum focused more on instilling the spirit of nationalism and patriotism. In 1975, the curriculum was changed to further emphasize the importance of Pancasila as the basis of the state and the nation's outlook on life. The 1994 and 2004 curriculum then introduced the concept of Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn), which included moral and ethical aspects, in addition to knowledge of the political and legal systems.
- b. Curriculum Development: The 2013 (K-13) curriculum introduces a more holistic and integrative approach to civics education. K-13 emphasizes the development of attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to be good citizens. PKn material includes character education, human rights, democracy, and global issues relevant to the life of the nation and state.
- c. Related Education Policies: Education policies in Indonesia, such as the National Education System Law and the Regulation of the Minister of Education, support the importance of civic education. This policy underlines that the goal of national education is to develop the potential of students to become human beings who have faith, piety, noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

The implementation of the PKn curriculum in Indonesian schools faces various challenges, including the availability of resources, teacher training, and the relevance of the material to the local context. However, with the right approach, the PKn curriculum can play an effective role in building a strong national identity and preparing the younger generation to face future challenges (Dewi & Najicha, 2024).

Perception and Impact of PKn

Literature studies show that Civic Education (PKn) has a significant contribution in building students' understanding and appreciation of national identity. Through the PKn curriculum, students are introduced to basic concepts regarding citizenship, rights and obligations, as well as

essential national values.

1. **Understanding of National Identity:** Community service plays an important role in introducing students to the history, culture, and values that make up national identity. Knowledge of national heroes, important historical events, and state symbols such as flags and national anthems helps students develop a sense of pride and love for the homeland. This is strengthened by the teaching of Pancasila as the basis of the state and the ideology of the Indonesian nation.
2. **Respect for Diversity:** Indonesia is a country rich in ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. PKn helps students recognize and appreciate this diversity as a national asset. Through learning that includes discussions about tolerance, harmony, and mutual cooperation, students are invited to respect differences and coexist harmoniously. Education that emphasizes the importance of respecting diversity also contributes to the prevention of social conflict and strengthens social cohesion.
3. **Formation of a Sense of Nationality:** PKn also plays a role in forming a sense of nationality and nationalism among students. By understanding the history of the nation's struggle and the importance of unity, students are expected to develop an attitude of love for the homeland and responsibility as citizens. Effective civic education is able to instill the values of patriotism and commitment to contribute to the progress of the nation (Edi, 2021).

Challenges in Implementation

Although PKn has great potential in building national identity, its implementation in the field faces various challenges. These challenges need to be addressed to ensure that the objectives of citizenship education can be achieved effectively.

1. **Lack of Teacher Training:** One of the main challenges is the lack of training and professional development for PKn teachers. Poorly trained teachers may have difficulty in delivering material in a way that is engaging and relevant to students. Adequate training is essential to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to teach PKn effectively.
2. **Incompatibility of Curriculum Materials with Social Reality:** Curriculum materials that do not correspond to social realities and societal dynamics can reduce the relevance and effectiveness of PKn. Curriculum that is too theoretical and uncontextual is often unattractive to students and difficult to apply in daily life. Therefore, it is necessary to revise the curriculum that is more responsive to contemporary issues and the needs of society.
3. **Regional Disparities in Implementation:** The implementation of civil rights in various regions in Indonesia is often uneven. Disparities in educational resources, including the availability of textbooks, educational facilities, and the quality of teachers, can affect the quality of civic education. Remote and underdeveloped areas may face greater challenges in implementing PKn effectively (Salsabila et al., 2023).

Effective Strategies in PKN Learning

Literature studies reveal a variety of strategies that have worked in the teaching of civic education. These strategies can help address existing challenges and improve the effectiveness of civic education.

1. **Participatory Approach:** The participatory approach in teaching PKn involves students actively in the learning process. Group discussions, simulations, and community projects are examples of methods that can be used to increase student participation. This approach not only makes learning more engaging but also helps students develop critical thinking and collaboration skills.
2. **Technology Integration:** The integration of technology in PKn teaching can improve the accessibility and effectiveness of learning. The use of multimedia, e-learning, and other interactive tools can help convey material in a more engaging and interactive way. Technology also allows access to a wider and more diverse learning resources.
3. **Collaboration between Schools and Communities:** Collaboration between schools and communities can enrich students' learning experiences and strengthen the linkage between civic

education and real life. Programs such as visits to government institutions, participation in community activities, and cooperation with non-governmental organizations can provide practical context for civil society learning.

By adopting these strategies, civic education can be implemented more effectively, thereby being able to build a strong national identity and prepare students to become active, critical, and responsible citizens. The results of this study show that although there are challenges in the implementation of PKn, there are various innovative ways to overcome them and strengthen the role of civic education in building national identity in Indonesia (Octavian, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Civic Education (PKn) has a vital role in building national identity, but its success is highly dependent on the implementation of a curriculum that is adaptive and relevant to dynamic socio-cultural contexts. Literature studies show that continuous efforts are needed to overcome challenges and develop more effective educational strategies.

Key recommendations include the development of an updated curriculum to make it more relevant and responsive to contemporary issues, the improvement of training and professional development programs for PKn teachers to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge, and encouraging active community participation in civic education programs to enrich students' learning experiences and strengthen the linkages between education and real life. Through these measures, civic education can be more effective in forming a strong and cohesive national identity, preparing the younger generation to become active, critical, and responsible citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

Based on the conclusion of this article, I hope that the following recommendations can be proposed:

1. Revise and update the civic education curriculum to ensure it reflects contemporary issues and societal changes. This includes integrating current events, social justice topics, and global citizenship into the curriculum to make learning more relevant to students' lives.
2. Implement comprehensive training programs for PKn teachers, focusing on modern pedagogical strategies, critical thinking skills, and cultural competency. This will equip educators with the necessary tools to engage students meaningfully and effectively.
3. Foster active participation from the community in civic education initiatives. Encouraging partnerships with local organizations and engaging parents and community leaders can enrich the educational experience and connect theoretical knowledge to real-world applications.
4. Establish robust mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of civic education programs. Regular feedback from students, teachers, and community stakeholders can inform ongoing improvements and adaptations to the curriculum.
5. Encourage initiatives that promote active citizenship, such as community service projects, civic engagement activities, and participation in local governance. These experiences can help students develop a sense of responsibility and commitment to their communities.

Based on the recommendations above, it is necessary to develop in order to meet the purpose of making the recommendations, as described below: (1) curriculum development; (2) teacher training and professional development; (3) community engagement; (4) assessment and feedback mechanisms; and (5) promotion of active citizenship.

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