



Reconstructing Civic Education in the Context of National Identity and Cultural Pluralism: A Conceptual Study

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Abstract

This article discusses efforts to reconstruct civic education within the multicultural, democratic, and dynamic context of Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach with a literature study method, this study traces the development of citizenship concepts from a legal-formal dimension toward a paradigm of active, critical, and transformative citizenship. The research analyzes various theories of citizenship, character education, and multiculturalism relevant to the reform needs of civic education in the global era. The findings indicate that civic education in Indonesia needs to be reconstructed from an indoctrination model to a reflective and contextual learning model. This process includes strengthening Pancasila values, fostering critical awareness, developing global citizenship competencies, and managing cultural pluralism inclusively. Thus, civic education can serve as a strategic vehicle in shaping intelligent, democratic, tolerant citizens who care about national and humanitarian life.

Keywords: Civic Education, Curriculum Reconstruction, Transformative Citizenship, Multiculturalism, Pancasila, Democracy

INTRODUCTION

Citizenship can no longer be narrowly understood as a legal status attached to an individual within a nation-state. In the development of contemporary social sciences and education, citizenship is viewed as a multidimensional construct encompassing legal, social, cultural, and political dimensions (Bakan, 2023). As stated by Chadwick (2012), citizenship also involves the relationship between the individual and the state, as well as the active role of citizens in public life as agents of social change. This implies that civic education is not only about teaching norms and laws but also about shaping critical awareness and national identity among students.

Civic education holds a strategic position in shaping national character, especially amid globalization, the unstoppable flow of information, and increasing socio-cultural complexity. In Indonesia, the challenges of ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity demand a more transformative civic education that can foster a sense of nationalism, tolerance, and democratic attitudes (Winarno, 2021; Leenders et al., 2012).

Character education based on Pancasila values serves as an essential pillar in strengthening national identity. The government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has developed the Character Education Strengthening Program (PPK) to address the challenges of moral degradation and weakened social cohesion among younger generations (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). However, not all approaches in civic education are capable of addressing the complexity of current social realities faced by students.

Therefore, this article aims to conceptually analyze the importance of reconstructing civic education within the framework of national identity and cultural diversity and to evaluate the relevance of current approaches in civic education in





order to propose a new paradigm that is more inclusive and adaptive to the demands of the times.

METHOD

This study is qualitative research employing a conceptual literature review approach. The data sources include academic books, reputable scholarly journal articles, government policy documents, and previous research reports relevant to citizenship and civic education.

The analysis was carried out interpretatively by identifying main themes such as dimensions of citizenship, national identity, cultural pluralism, and character education. Data analysis techniques employed thematic content analysis, allowing the researcher to organize theoretical ideas and identify the relevance of concepts across different social and educational contexts. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and cross-checking among literature sources to avoid interpretive bias.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Dimensions of Citizenship: From Legal Status to Social Identity

Banks (2016) classified citizenship into four categories: failed citizenship, recognized citizenship, participatory citizenship, and transformative citizenship. This categorization illustrates that citizenship status is not only determined by law but also by the extent to which individuals can participate and positively influence public life. In this context, civic education plays a strategic role in shaping active and responsible citizens.

2. Civic Education as a Medium of Social Integration

Civic education is expected to serve as an integrative instrument that can strengthen social cohesion amid cultural diversity. Leenders et al. (2012) emphasized the importance of reinforcing social inclusion in the civic curriculum so that students from minority groups do not experience exclusion. A multicultural approach in civic education becomes relevant to address this challenge, as highlighted by Sandu (2015), who criticized homogenizing educational approaches that tend to negate identity diversity.

3. Strengthening Values and Character through Pancasila

Pancasila, as the Indonesian national ideology, contains values that are universal yet contextual to the nation's culture. Character education based on Pancasila provides an ethical and moral framework for building citizens' integrity. The Ministry of Education and Culture has implemented this strategy through the integration of values in intra-curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). Character education not only instills individual morality but also strengthens social sensitivity and collective responsibility.

4. Transforming the Civic Education Curriculum in Indonesia

Civic education in Indonesia has undergone a long historical transformation, from the Pancasila Moral Education (PMP) of the New Order era, Civics Education, to the current PPKn in the 2013 Curriculum. Although the format has changed, the substance remains predominantly indoctrination and offers little space for critical



thinking (Directorate of Belmawa, 2007). Gallagher and Duffy (2016) stressed the importance of pedagogical orientations that develop students' reflective and participatory capacities.

5. Citizenship and Sustainable Career Development

Civic education also contributes to sustainable career development, particularly in fostering self-efficacy, professional ethics, and social responsibility (Heslin et al., 2020). In this context, civic education needs to be integrated with social entrepreneurship education and ethical leadership to form a generation that is not only academically competent but also morally and socially resilient.

Discussion

The findings of this conceptual study highlight the urgent need to reconstruct civic education in Indonesia by shifting from an indoctrinative model to a more reflective, critical, and contextualized learning approach. This transformation is essential in fostering an inclusive understanding of citizenship that aligns with the complex sociocultural realities of a pluralistic nation like Indonesia.

First, the shift from a legal-formal understanding of citizenship to one that is participatory and transformative reflects the evolving role of citizens in democratic societies. As Banks (2016) outlines in his typology of citizenship, transformative citizenship not only involves legal rights and duties but also emphasizes critical awareness and active engagement in public life. In this regard, civic education must go beyond memorization of state ideology and law to cultivate the capacity for social critique and civic responsibility.

Second, civic education must serve as a medium for social integration in multicultural societies. This includes adopting a multicultural approach that recognizes and affirms diverse cultural identities rather than promoting a homogenized national narrative. As Sandu (2015) critiques, educational systems that ignore cultural diversity risk alienating minority students and undermining social cohesion. Therefore, incorporating themes of cultural pluralism and inclusive citizenship in the curriculum is crucial for building social solidarity.

Third, character education grounded in the values of Pancasila provides a culturally relevant framework for ethical and moral development. The implementation of the Character Education Strengthening Program (PPK) by the Ministry of Education demonstrates a strategic response to moral degradation and declining social cohesion among youth. However, to maximize its impact, this program must be integrated with civic education that promotes critical thinking, empathy, and social accountability.

Fourth, curriculum transformation is necessary to modernize civic education. Historical transitions from Pendidikan Moral Pancasila (PMP) to Civic Education (PKn), and more recently to PPKn under the 2013 Curriculum, have not fully addressed the need for critical pedagogy. As Gallagher and Duffy (2016) argue, student-centered learning that encourages reflection and civic participation should replace outdated, indoctrinative approaches. This requires professional development for educators and curriculum designers to implement transformative pedagogical methods effectively.

Lastly, civic education contributes to sustainable career development by nurturing social efficacy, ethical professionalism, and a sense of civic duty. Heslin et





al. (2020) emphasize that education should prepare individuals not only for employment but also for responsible citizenship. Integrating civic education with social entrepreneurship and ethical leadership training can produce graduates who are morally grounded and socially resilient in a globalized economy.

In summary, reconstructing civic education in Indonesia is not merely a pedagogical concern but a strategic imperative to strengthen national identity and democratic values in a diverse society. A transformative civic education curriculum that embraces pluralism, promotes character development, and cultivates critical civic engagement can empower students to become intelligent, tolerant, and socially responsible citizens. Such an approach is essential to meet the challenges of the 21st century and to nurture a generation capable of sustaining national unity and contributing meaningfully to global society.

CONCLUSION

Citizenship is a multidimensional and evolving concept that includes legal, social, cultural, and political aspects. Within the educational framework, citizenship should be understood as a process of forming collective identity and critical awareness among citizens regarding societal dynamics. Transformative, inclusive civic education grounded in Pancasila values is a strategic necessity in strengthening national identity and social integration amid Indonesia's cultural diversity.

Reconstructing civic education must involve curriculum renewal, reflective pedagogical approaches, and integration of contextual character values. In this way, civic education can respond to contemporary challenges and prepare the next generation to be intelligent, moral, and globally competitive citizens.

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