

The Importance of Civic Education to Build The Character of Indonesian Citizens

Aperlita Fahmawati Simanungkalit¹

Article Info

Page : 447-450

ISSN : 3026-5290

Vol 2 No 2 2024

Corresponding Author

Aperlita Fahmawati Simanungkalit,
Prospective Professional Teachers of the
Republic of Indonesia, Universitas
Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara

Email: aperlitasimanungkalit@gmail.com

Abstract

Character education has become a major focus in many countries in an effort to prepare a quality generation, by instilling character values in children from an early age, because values instilled at a young age will be carried over into adulthood. Not only for personal interests, but also for the welfare of the wider community. Civic education has an important role in shaping the character of the nation. This study uses a qualitative approach, with a literature study method where the basis of the discussion comes from previously relevant journal sources, and scientific articles. The context of citizenship, this implies a message for students and the community to have the ability to think, behave, and act intelligently, especially in solving problems and making decisions in the fields of state, nation, and society. With the aim of developing the potential of students to become people who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are knowledgeable, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

Keyword: Citizenship, character, challenges.

1. INTRODUCTION

Character education must be given to children from an early age, because the values instilled at a young age will be carried over into adulthood. Good character is a reflection of a nation's identity. For this reason, civic education is integrated into every level of education. According to (Yati, Sofyan, & Syalendra, 2021) the relationship between civic education and character building is very close. This lesson is available at all levels, from Elementary School to College of Education. Character education is a system that focuses on instilling character values in students. This system consists of components such as knowledge, individual awareness, determination, and the will and action to implement these values, both towards God, oneself, fellow human beings, the environment, and the nation, which ultimately aims to create a perfect human being. To understand more deeply, it is important to know the meaning of character itself. According to the Ministry of National Education, character is defined as "innate in the heart, soul, personality, morals, behavior, personality, nature, temperament, and disposition" (Sudrajat; 2010). Thus, having character means having a good personality, behavior, nature, nature, and disposition. In Indonesia, Civic Education basically has an important role and responsibility in shaping the character of the nation, but often faces various obstacles. One of the main problems that hinders Civic Education in building the character of students is the quality of teachers, so that the process of character education in learning is often disrupted. Surakhmad (2004, p. 1) stated that "the strength and quality of a country's education can be measured from the teacher factor as one of the main indexes."

Therefore, the role of teachers is very important in development. The more serious a government is in building a country, the greater the important role of teachers. The quality of education in Indonesia is influenced by the quality and distribution of teachers in various regions. In addition, Civic Education teachers must also be responsible if there is a decline in the quality of education, because this subject is considered capable of improving the morals of the nation's next generation. Character education has become a major focus in many countries in an effort to prepare a quality generation, not only for personal interests, but also for the welfare of the wider community. Character education is defined as "a conscious effort to utilize all aspects of school life to support optimal character formation." This concept has been known since the early 1900s, with Thomas Lickona as one of its pioneers. Through his books *The Return of Character Education and Educating for Character: How Our School Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*, Lickona succeeded in making Western society aware of the importance of character education. According to Lickona,

character education includes three main elements: knowing goodness (knowing goodness), loving goodness (wanting goodness), and doing goodness (doing goodness). Character education does not just teach children to distinguish between right and wrong, but also instills the habit of doing good, so that students not only understand, but are also able to feel and are motivated to do good things. Thus, character education has goals that are in line with moral education and ethical education.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach, with a library study method through literature from several journals that are related to the discussion in this paper in order to obtain maximum results. Qualitative research is a method that focuses on in-depth observation. This study was conducted to obtain information, data, and sources related to the problems discussed. Therefore, this article will describe the importance of civic education to build the character of the nation, especially the Indonesian nation.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Civic Education is a form of democratic education that aims to prepare citizens to think critically and act democratically. This is done through activities that instill awareness in the younger generation about the importance of democracy as a system of community life that is most capable of guaranteeing individual rights (Saidurrahman, 2018). Aziz Wahab stated that Civic Education (PKn) functions as a teaching tool that consciously, intelligently, and responsibly Indonesianizes students. Thus, the PKn program includes basic concepts of state administration, politics, state law, and other general theories that are relevant to these goals. Furthermore, Civic Education is also seen as a subject consisting of a series of processes aimed at directing students to become responsible individuals, so that they can play an active role in society in accordance with the principles of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Madiung, 2018). Civic Education is a learning that reminds us of the importance of the values of rights and obligations as citizens, so that every action is in line with the goals and ideals of the nation, without deviating from expectations. Because of its crucial values, this education has been applied since an early age at every level of education, from the most basic to college, to produce the next generation of the nation who are competent and ready to play a role in the life of the nation and state. According to Soemantri (2001:154), Citizenship Education is an effort to provide students with basic knowledge and skills about the fundamental relationship between citizens and the state, as well as initial learning about national defense as a form of defense mandated in the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila. Citizenship aims for every young generation to have a sense of nationalism and love for the homeland based on the values and morals of Pancasila, the norms of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the values and commitments of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, and a commitment to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Therefore, students are consciously and plannedly facilitated according to their psychological development and the context of their lives to learn to live democratically in its entirety through learning about democracy, learning in a democratic environment and process, and learning to build democracy. For this reason, Civic Education is designed, implemented, and evaluated with a psychopedagogical/andragogical and sociocultural approach, in order to develop civic intelligence. This development includes mastery of civic knowledge, formation of attitudes, skills, commitment, determination, and civic competence that reflect civic policy and civility. All of these abilities serve as provisions for every citizen to participate consciously in society, as a form of civic responsibility. The 1945 Constitution as a constitutional basis in the fourth paragraph of the Preamble provides guidance on the goals of the state, one of which is reflected in the phrase "to enlighten the life of the nation." This phrase has a deep meaning, emphasizing the importance of education for all children of the nation. In the context of citizenship, this statement implies a message for students and the community to have the ability to think, behave, and act intelligently, especially in solving problems and making decisions in the fields of state, nation, and society. The operational basis for this education is explained in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. In Article 3 paragraph (2) concerning the function and purpose of national education, it is stated that education functions to develop the character and civilization of a dignified nation, in an effort to enlighten the life of the nation. The goal is to develop the potential of students to become people who believe in and are devoted to God Almighty, have noble morals, are healthy, knowledgeable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. Character education is a system that aims to instill character values in students.

This system includes elements such as knowledge, self-awareness, determination, and the will and action in applying these values to God, oneself, others, the environment, and the nation, with the hope of creating a perfect individual (*insan kamil*). To understand the concept of character more deeply, we need to know its definition first. According to the Ministry of National Education, character consists of "innate heart, soul, personality, morals, behavior, personality, nature, temperament, and disposition" (Sudrajat, 2010). Thus, having character means having a certain personality, behavior, and nature. The word "character" comes from Latin which means "carved," which indicates that character is the result of a combination of various beauties and values carved into the stone of a person's life, realizing true values. Hermawan Kertajaya explains that character is a distinctive characteristic that is inherent in an individual, which is embedded in a person and functions as a driver in acting, thinking, and speaking (Hidayatullah, 2010). On the other hand, the Ministry of National Education defines character as nature, disposition, morals, or personality formed from the internalization of various virtues, which are the basis for ways of thinking, acting, and acting. According to Ratna Megawangi, character education is an effort to educate children to be able to make wise decisions and apply them in everyday life, so that they can make a positive contribution to the environment. Meanwhile, Fakhry Gaffar defines character education as the process of transforming life values that are developed in a person's personality, so that they reflect their daily behavior (Kesuma, 2011). Civic Education is currently considered less effective in dealing with the dynamics of competition, because many people's attention is more focused on academic values than on individual moral values. In today's era, there is a demand to be more creative, independent, and intelligent. To achieve the goals of Civic Education, close collaboration is needed between teachers and parents in shaping children's character in line with the values of Pancasila as the foundation of the state (Nasution, 2016).

Civic Education now needs to adapt to several aspects, including: First, being familiar with technology. Rapid technological developments require teachers and parents to continue learning. This change should not be seen as a threat, but as an opportunity to learn and adapt positively. Second, collaboration. Optimal results are difficult to achieve without cooperation. Therefore, it is important for teachers and parents to have a strong commitment to collaborate and learn from each other, both now and in the future (Wadu, et al., 2021). Third, creativity and the courage to take risks. Creativity is an important skill to have, because it can produce new approaches to solving problems. Teachers need to model creativity and find ways to integrate it into everyday activities. In addition, educators should not be afraid to make mistakes, because mistakes are part of the learning process that should not hinder progress. Fourth, have a good sense of humor. Teachers who have a sense of humor are usually more memorable to students and can build positive relationships, as well as help reduce stress. Civic Education has several missions, including: first, as political education that provides knowledge, attitudes, and skills to students to actively participate in political life. Second, as value education that focuses on internalizing values, morals, and norms. Third, nationalism education that aims to foster a sense of love for the homeland and pride in the nation. Fourth, legal education that guides students to understand their rights and obligations as citizens and obey the law. Fifth, multicultural education that increases insight and tolerance in a diverse society. Sixth, conflict resolution education, which trains students to resolve conflicts in a constructive way (Suwito, 2012). Citizenship Education also invites students to be active in the learning process, stimulates critical, analytical, creative, and reflective thinking, and creates a democratic atmosphere in the interaction between students and teachers.

4. CONCLUSION

Education plays an important role in shaping national awareness. At every level of education, from Elementary School to College, there is a very essential Civic Education subject. Civic Education serves as a foundation for shaping the character of students, and the development of this character is not only limited to this subject, but can also be done through various other disciplines. The core values in character education include religious aspects, nationalism, independence, mutual cooperation, and integrity. Pancasila Education consists of three main components: civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic values and attitudes. Thus, education is expected to play a strategic role in fostering and strengthening character values that are in line with the principles of Pancasila, especially in the context of civic education. Furthermore, Civic Education is expected to foster critical and reflective thinking skills, as well as encourage students to be actively involved in various social and political processes. To achieve these goals, character education must be designed with a

strong approach, where learning must contain active, integrated, democratic, effective, efficient, and creative values, and emphasize the importance of collaboration in the learning process.

REFERENCE

- Ani Sulianti, Robiah Mega Safitri, & Yasril Gunawan. (2019). Implementation of Local Wisdom-Based Civic Education in Building the Character of the Young Generation of the Nation. *Integralistik*, vol 30, no 2 .
- Dermeri. (2014). Education to Develop Character (a study of Thomas Lickona's ideas in educating for character). *Indraprasta PGRI University Jakarta*, Vol 14, No 1 .
- Ina Magdalena, AS (2020). Civic Education Learning at Bojong 3 Pinang State Elementary School. *Education and Science*, Vol 2 No 3 .
- Ina Magdalena, Ahmad Syaiful Haq, & Fadiatur Ramadhan. (2020). Citizenship Education Learning at Bojong 3 Pinang State Elementary School. *Education and Science*, Vol 2 No 3 .
- Nasution, AR (2016). The Urgency of Civic Education as Character Education of the Indonesian Nation through Democracy, Human Rights and Civil Society. *Journal of Social Sciences Education*, VOL 8 NO 2 .
- Sugiyono. (2016). Qualitative Research Methods and R&D. *Bandung Alfabeta Printing* .
- Suwito, A. (2020). Integration of Character Education Values into Civic Education Subjects in Schools Through RPP. *CIVIS*, VOL 2 .
- University, AH (2017). Character education is a must. *Value Education and Character Development*, Vol 1, No 1 .
- Widiatmaka, P. (2016). Constraints of Civic Education in Building Students' Character in the Learning Process. *Center for Democracy and National Resilience Studies, LPPM UNS*, Volume 13 Number 2 .