



## THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIC EDUCATION FOR BUILDING STUDENT CHARACTER IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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### Abstract

This paper aims to find out and explain the role of civic education in forming character in elementary school students. The research method uses literature review or literature review sourced from books, relevant journals that have existed before, and scientific articles. This study explains the role of civic education (PKN) subjects in elementary schools in character formation efforts. The results of the study indicate that civic education has an important role in character formation for the nation and state to become better individuals. Civic education in its teaching has a major impact on the development of the character of elementary school students. In civic education, students can learn to become humans with good character and be responsible as citizens. This civic education must continue to exist in order to create and foster young generations with character in the life of the nation and state for the progress of the nation and the next generation.

**Keywords :** Civic Education, Student Character, Elementary School

### Introduction

Character education is important to be instilled in children from an early age, because the characters that are instilled from childhood will be carried into adulthood. Character values are also important because they are a reflection of the nation itself. Therefore, civic education is at every level of education. Civic education lessons are subjects that exist at all levels of education, from Elementary School to College (Yati, Sofyan, & Syalendra, 2021). Civics is an important part of the elementary school curriculum. Good civics skills serve as a foundation for students to build critical thinking, communication, and learning skills in various academic fields (Rudiawan & Asmaroini, 2022). Therefore, assessment of learning in civics subjects is very important to ensure that students understand the necessary civics skills (Linda Novi Ardana, 2023). Elementary school is the initial stage in the formal education process, where students begin to build the foundations of their character. Therefore, the integrity of character education in civic education learning in elementary schools is very important. Civic education aims to shape civic awareness and identity and develop democratic attitudes, social concern, and responsibility towards the state and society. In this context, the integrity of character education in civic education learning provides an opportunity for students to learn the moral and ethical values that underlie good values. Through civic learning that involves character education, students can learn concepts such as tolerance, mutual respect, justice, diversity, freedom, and social responsibility. The integrity of character education in civic education learning also provides an opportunity for students to understand and internalize moral values in the context of everyday life. In this way, students can relate learning to their personal experiences, so that they are better able to apply these values in real actions and develop strong characters. (Dela Safitri, Zen, Marsiyah, & Gunawan Santoso, 2022). Good character can be seen from the first is moral knowledge consisting of: moral awareness, knowledge of moral values, determining perspectives, moral thinking, decision making, and personal knowledge. The second is moral feelings, namely: conscience, self-esteem, empathy, loving good things, self-control and humility. The third is moral action, namely: competence, desire and habit. (Lickhona, 2012).

## Research Methodology

The method used in writing this article is a literature review. Literature review is an activity that focuses on a specific topic of interest to be analyzed critically against the contents of the manuscript being studied where the author gets sources from relevant journal books that have existed previously, and scientific articles. The journals reviewed are journals that meet the criteria in the form of Indonesian-language research journal articles with the theme "the importance of citizenship education to build student character in elementary schools". This literature review is synthesized using a narrative method by grouping similar extracted data according to the results measured to answer the objectives. Research journals that match the theme are then collected and a journal summary is made including the name of the journal's year of publication, research title, research method, school level and summary of results.

## Result & Discussion

Based on the research results, it was found that citizenship education has several significant contributions in forming students' character, including:

1. **Formation of Responsibility:**  
Citizenship Education teaches students to understand their rights and obligations as members of society, which can foster a sense of responsibility both in the school environment and in society.
2. **Developing an Attitude of Tolerance:**  
Civic education encourages students to appreciate differences, such as religion, ethnicity, and culture, thereby forming an attitude of tolerance that is important in the diversity of Indonesian society.
3. **Increased Sense of Discipline and Compliance with Rules:**  
Through civic education materials, students learn to understand the importance of rules, both at school and outside of school, which have a positive impact on their discipline in everyday life.
4. **Strengthening Integrity and Honesty:**  
Civic education instills the value of honesty through examples in social life, which in turn encourages students to develop an attitude of integrity in all their actions.

Civic education is a subject that is the main sector in building the character of students, civic education is an educational process to build the will and ability to develop creativity that reflects the identity of the nation with socio-cultural values of the nation. In the context of building national character, civic education, building national character, civic education has a very important position, function, and role. The function and purpose of civic education is to open up the widest possible opportunities for citizens, to declare commitment and carry out their active roles, to learn to mature themselves regarding legal, moral, and functional relations between one citizen and another (Budimansyah, & Suryadi, 2008). In Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system, it is stated that civic education aims to shape students into human beings who have a sense of pride and love for their country. Education is a conscious and planned effort in the process of changing behavior, increasing knowledge, and life experience so that students become more mature in their thinking and attitudes. Education is expected to make students into citizens who are committed and consistent in maintaining the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. In Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article 1 paragraph 1, it is stated that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have spiritual religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state. Education as the main media to re-develop the character of the Indonesian nation which has been known as a friendly, cooperative, tough, and polite nation (Nurul Zuriah, 2011).

Character education is an education that is integrated with all subjects. Character education believes that every student has the potential to be strengthened and developed. Character education through civic education is found in the National Education Regulation No. 22. 2006, namely civic education is one of the subjects that focuses on efforts to form the character of citizens so that they are able to carry out their rights and obligations in order to become good, intelligent, creative, responsible, trustworthy citizens (Indrawati, 2015) and have a character in accordance with the state philosophy, namely Pancasila and the opening of the 1945 Constitution (Kurniawan, 2013). Civic education has a role in providing students with noble character and basic skills regarding national life as well as preliminary education so that they become citizens and individuals with good personalities and have tolerance for each other. Because in its teachings, civic education teaches tolerance for each other, in this case students will learn how important it is to have a tolerant character such as respecting friends who are different. (Alvira Oktavia Safitri, 2021). Thus, it is concluded that there are several roles of civic education in efforts to form character-based individuals in elementary school children. As stated in the contents of Law No. 20 of 2003

concerning the National Education System which has regulated Civic Education as a formal education starting from Elementary School, namely (Kasminah, 2019):

1. Civic education easily shapes students' character so that they think critically in responding to civic issues.
2. Able to actively participate & act firmly and intelligently in community activities and avoid acts of corruption in the future.
3. Can develop positively in the surrounding environment and foster a democratic spirit to make oneself in accordance with the character of Indonesian society itself.
4. Able to interact well with other humans
5. Able to think logically, critically, and responsibly.
6. Cultivate character and uphold humanity in accordance with civic education learning materials.
7. Able to interact well with other nations by utilizing communication technology, becoming a smart citizen and always prioritizing honesty.
8. Become a useful human being in social life.

The implementation of civic education is always seen in its learning from the beginning to the end of its learning. Based on this statement, it can be said that civic education has a large and deliberate role and influence to help us understand every human character and care about ethical/moral values. In its learning, civics is said to be successful if students complete all assignments and all assessments from the teacher, this is a result of good character that has been successfully developed by the teacher (Ibrohim et al, 2020).

## Conclusion

Civic education (PKN) in elementary schools plays an important role in building students' character, especially in instilling national, moral, and social values. Through civic education, students are taught about the rights and obligations of citizens, the importance of respecting differences, and values such as tolerance, responsibility, and justice. Pancasila education not only provides an understanding of norms and rules, but also encourages students to apply them in their daily lives, thus forming good and ethical characters. With effective civic education, students are expected to grow into individuals who contribute positively to society and the country. The role of civic education is very important at every level of school, however, it is very influential if instilled since childhood, so that when the child grows up the character has been formed. In line with what is taught in civic education which teaches moral values in community life that will encourage elementary school students in the form of behavior, in accordance with environmental factors. Therefore, a person with character is very important because it is needed in the future as capital to build the nation and state in a better direction.

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