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THE ROLE OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN INCREASING LOVE FOR THE HOMELAND AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Civic Education (PKN) has a strategic role in shaping character and instilling the value of love for the homeland in elementary school students. In the midst of globalization and the influence of foreign cultures, PKN lessons are an important means of strengthening national identity from an early age. This study aims to examine how PKN can increase love for the homeland through a contextual and enjoyable learning approach. The method used is descriptive qualitative with a literature study approach. The results of the study show that PKN lessons can foster a sense of pride in the nation, an attitude of tolerance, and social concern if supported by active learning methods, the role of inspiring teachers, and the involvement of the school and family environment. Thus, PKN at the elementary school level not only functions as a transfer of knowledge, but also as a medium for forming a strong national character.

Keywords : Civic Education, love for the homeland, elementary school, character, nationalism

Introduction

Education is crucial in shaping one's personality and character. Through education, one can become a better person, gain broader insights, and contribute to the nation's progress. Education isn't just about learning, reading, writing, and arithmetic; it also teaches us attitudes, life values, and how to behave in society. One subject that plays a significant role in shaping children's character from an early age is civics, also known as PKN. In elementary school, PKN not only teaches children about national symbols or the first president of Indonesia, but also introduces them to national values such as mutual cooperation, tolerance, responsibility, and, most importantly, patriotism. Today, the challenges in education are increasingly challenging. Many children, at an early age, are more focused on memorizing trending songs, and many are more focused on foreign cultures than on their own. They also know more about foreign artists than about our national heroes or the meaning of our national symbols. This isn't their fault, but rather the influence of technology, social media, and the lack of reinforcement of national values from an early age. Therefore, it is crucial for us as educators, parents, and the community to re-emphasize the importance of instilling a love of country and one of the most effective ways is through civics lessons (PKN) in elementary schools. At this age, children are still easily shaped and encouraged to understand the fundamentals of their nation and country. Civics lessons can be a way to foster a sense of pride in being Indonesian. For example, through stories about national heroes, Indonesian patriotic songs, and traditional ceremonies and games that reflect the spirit of togetherness. If these lessons are presented in an engaging way and related to children's everyday lives, they will be more likely to understand and engage with them. This is where it is important for us to study Civics not just as an ordinary lesson, but as a medium to shape a young generation that loves its homeland, respects differences and is ready to create a stronger and more dignified future for the nation.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research. The author did not conduct direct observations or field data collection, but instead analyzed various relevant literature sources to examine the role of Civics Education (PKN) in fostering a sense of patriotism among elementary school students. The data sources used include textbooks, scientific journals, national education regulations, and previous research results that discuss the themes of nationalism, character education, and PKN learning strategies. The analysis was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach, interpreting theoretical data and connecting it to objective conditions occurring in elementary education settings. This approach was used to formulate important concepts and strategies that can be applied in civics learning to instill values of patriotism from an early age.

Result & Discussion

The concept of love for the homeland

Love of one's homeland is a feeling of pride and loyalty toward one's homeland and nation, demonstrated through concrete attitudes and actions. In the context of primary education, love of one's homeland encompasses respect for national symbols, appreciation for cultural diversity, and a passion for maintaining national unity. Good education not only transfers knowledge but also shapes character. According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, education is an effort to guide all of a child's natural strengths so that they achieve the highest level of safety and happiness as human beings and members of society. This means that education must involve fostering a sense of belonging and responsibility to the nation.

The goals and functions of education

Civics in elementary schools aims to shape students into intelligent, character-based, and responsible citizens. Its primary function is to instill the core values of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity), and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Civics (PKN) material, such as introducing national symbols, national heroes, the rights and obligations of citizens, and the importance of maintaining unity, is highly relevant in fostering a sense of patriotism. This is where the teacher's role is crucial, delivering the material contextually and engaging students' affective aspects.

The role of civics and learning strategies in elementary schools

1. The role of civics in elementary school

Civics isn't just about theory. If taught in an engaging way, this subject can be very effective in instilling national values. Some things that can be taught through Civics:

- a) Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution as the basis of the state,
- b) Rights and obligations as citizens,
- c) The importance of unity and oneness,
- d) How to respect differences and live in harmony.

Teachers play a crucial role here. They can teach in creative and engaging ways to keep students engaged. For example, through discussions, drama, national anthems, group projects, or traditional games.

2. Learning strategies in elementary schools

Effective civics learning focuses not only on memorization but also on real-world, contextual experiences. Strategies such as role-playing, group discussions, creative projects on national themes, and educational visits to historical sites can increase student interest and active engagement.

The role of teachers and the community environment

As learning facilitators, teachers play a crucial role in instilling national values. Modeling attitudes and engaging delivery of material will facilitate students' understanding and internalization of these values. Furthermore, support from the family and school environment contributes to the development of nationalist character in children. Furthermore, society must also be a supportive ecosystem for character education. A social environment that prioritizes tolerance, mutual cooperation, and concern for others will foster nationalist attitudes in students.

Challenges in increasing love for the homeland

In the era of globalization and digitalization, elementary school students are easily exposed to foreign cultures through social media and the internet. This can weaken national identity if not balanced with strong character education. Another challenge is the perception among some members of the public and parents that Civics lessons are rote and uninteresting. In fact, Civics is the foundation of national character and morality. Furthermore, the lack of teacher training in implementing innovative methods also hinders the effective instilling of national values.

Conclusion

Civics Education plays a role in fostering a sense of patriotism in elementary school students. Through contextual, enjoyable learning that actively engages students, national values can be effectively instilled. Therefore, synergy between teachers, schools, families, and the surrounding community is necessary to ensure that Civics lessons truly shape a young generation that is patriotic, tolerant, and ready to safeguard the nation's integrity.

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