



## CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (FOUNDATIONS FOR PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE CITIZENS)

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### Abstract

This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of citizenship education (PKN) in elementary schools in instilling basic civic values, developing social skills and empathy in students. This research was conducted through a literature study method, where data and information were collected systematically from various written sources. scientific which includes academic journals, textbooks, conference articles, and relevant government documents. This research reveals that the use of interactive teaching methods by teachers has succeeded in increasing students' understanding of their rights and obligations as citizens, as well as increasing their social skills and empathy. However, the research results also show that there are several significant challenges, such as limited resources and inconsistencies in the understanding and application of PKN material by teachers. This variability results in differences in the quality of citizenship education received by students in different schools. This study recommends the development of more comprehensive teacher training strategies and the provision of adequate resources to support effective PKN teaching. It is hoped that greater investment in Civics education will strengthen the consistency and quality of the program, ensuring that all students gain similar and in-depth civics skills and knowledge.

**Keywords :** Citizenship Education, Interactive Teaching Methods, Social Skills, Empathy, Elementary School, PKN Curriculum, Teacher Training

### Introduction

Citizenship Education (PKN) in elementary schools has an important role in forming personality and civic values in students from an early age. The aim of this education is to prepare citizens who are responsible, understand their rights and obligations, and have the ability to participate actively in the life of society and the state. Through this education, students are taught to respect plurality, democracy, and nationalist values which are the basis of national identity and integrity (Dewi, Hidayat, et al., 2021). Plurality in the context of elementary school education is an important aspect that helps students appreciate Indonesia's rich diversity. This country is inhabited by various tribes, religions and cultures, so understanding plurality from an early age can encourage mutual respect and understanding between people. Through Citizenship Education lessons, students are taught to recognize and celebrate differences as part of everyday life, not something to be feared or avoided (Erisa et al., 2021). Education about plurality not only emphasizes recognition of differences but also teaches the values of cooperation. In every social interaction at school, students are invited to work together with friends who may come from different backgrounds. This creates real situations where students can practice their social skills, such as communication and negotiation, which are very important for harmonious social life (Raharjo, 2020). Promoting tolerance through plurality education also plays a crucial role in developing students' emotional sensitivity. By appreciating differences, students learn to empathize with others, understanding that each person has a unique story and background. This teaches them to be less quick to judge and more open to accepting diverse perspectives. On the other hand, integrating plurality in the elementary school curriculum also helps students build their identity as

part of a wider society. They learn that Indonesia's national identity is a mosaic made up of many different elements, and that each part is essential to the integrity and integrity of the nation. This fosters a healthy sense of pride and citizenship, which is important for the formation of students' character (Pratiwi, 2021). Citizenship education in elementary schools does not only focus on recognizing plurality, but also on the importance of internalizing democratic principles. One of the key aspects of democracy is active participation in decision making. In a school environment, this can be taught through activities such as class leader elections, group discussions, and collaborative projects, where students are given the opportunity to voice opinions and vote based on mutual agreement. Through this activity, students learn that every voice is important and must be heard, a basic principle in democratic practice (Magdalena et al., 2020). Respecting other people's opinions is also a crucial democratic principle. This education helps students understand that differences of opinion are normal in a pluralistic society. Teachers can facilitate this by promoting open discussions in class, where students are invited to listen and consider different views before coming to conclusions. This not only helps in building communication skills, but also develops tolerance and reduces conflict (Ruth Yessika Siahaan et al., 2023). Apart from that, nationalist values are also instilled through Citizenship Education. Nationalism taught in elementary schools aims to build a sense of pride in the country. This includes an introduction to national symbols, the history of the country, and important figures who have contributed to nation-building. Through stories and activities that celebrate Indonesia's cultural and historical heritage, students learn to appreciate their country and understand the importance of maintaining the integrity and sovereignty of the nation (Dewi, Hamid, et al., 2021).

### Research Methodology

This research was carried out using the literature study method, where data and information were collected systematically from various scientific writing sources including academic journals, textbooks, conference articles and relevant government documents. The literature selection process was carried out based on the criteria of thematic relevance and novelty of information, with a focus on developing the concepts of plurality, democracy and nationalism in the context of citizenship education in elementary schools. The analysis was carried out critically to assess and synthesize various views and findings related to the effectiveness of citizenship education, the integration of national values in the curriculum, and its influence on the formation of students' national character and identity. Through this method, the research aims to produce a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and impact of citizenship education, as well as provide recommendations for future educational practices and policies.

### Result & Discussion

Citizenship Education (PKN) in elementary schools has succeeded in instilling essential basic civic values. Through the use of interactive teaching methods, teachers not only successfully convey important knowledge about citizenship, but also significantly develop social skills and empathy among students. This shows that an interactive approach in teaching PKN can help students understand and appreciate diversity and learn about the importance of active participation in a democratic society (Widiatmaka, 2023). However, this research also reveals the challenges faced in implementing an effective PKN program, especially related to limited resources. Many schools experience difficulties in providing sufficient learning materials and access to technology that can support interactive teaching methods (Anatasya & Dewi, 2021). These limitations limit the ability of schools to provide rich and engaging learning experiences, which are so necessary to support effective and inclusive learning processes. Apart from that, variations in teachers' understanding and competence regarding PKN material are one of the main obstacles. There are significant inconsistencies in the way material is taught from one teacher to another, which can affect the quality of education received by students (Hakim, 2020). Consistency in teaching is key to ensuring that all students receive a comprehensive and uniform civics education, which equips them with similar knowledge and skills (Putri et al., 2021). To overcome this challenge, more structured strategies are needed in teacher training and curriculum development. Continuous training should be provided for teachers, with a focus on innovative teaching methods and the use of technology in the classroom (Fitriani & Dewi, 2021). This will not only increase teacher competency but also ensure that they are equipped with the ability to teach the material effectively and consistently across the school. It is important for education policies to support schools with adequate resources and access to the latest learning materials. Increased investment in PKN education in primary schools will enable the development of stronger programs that focus not only on knowledge, but also on the formation of character and social skills, which are crucial for forming responsible and active citizens in a democratic society (Zalmi & Montessori, 2022). The results of research conducted by Magdalena et al. (2020) at SDN Bojong 3 Pinang emphasized the important role of PKN in shaping students' character and understanding their rights and obligations as good citizens. This research

underlines the importance of innovative learning to increase students' interest in PKN, which is in line with the aim of developing students' character as the foundation for future citizens. In the context of integrating national values and character development through PKN, a study from Nurjannah (2018) highlights the need for innovation in teaching methods to more effectively implement character education. Teachers are expected to be good role models and integrate character education into PKN teaching, building a strong foundation for students to apply these values in real life.

The results of research conducted by Cahyaningrum et al. (2021) shows that character education through PKN in elementary schools is crucial, but still faces the challenge of how character values can truly be internalized by students. They suggested more practical and participatory activities in learning to support the internalization of democratic and civic values. Several studies note that PKN not only helps in forming knowledge about citizenship but is also vital in honing students' social skills, such as tolerance, empathy and cooperation. Effective learning in PKN can be one of the most effective tools for equipping students with the social skills they need to interact in a pluralistic and democratic society. Research by Cahyaningrum et al. (2021) underscored the importance of character education through Citizenship Education (PKN) in elementary schools and identified challenges in internalizing these values in students. This is significant in the context of modern education which not only targets mastery of academic content, but also the development of social skills and democratic values which are the foundation for active and responsible citizenship. Internalizing democratic and civic values requires more than traditional teaching approaches; requires active and participatory learning experiences. Activities such as community-based projects, political simulations, and classroom debates can provide students with opportunities to experience and practice these values in real settings. Such activities encourage students to engage in discussions, take different perspectives, and make decisions based on democratic values, such as justice, equality, and human rights. The importance of social skills such as tolerance, empathy and cooperation in PKN cannot be underestimated. In a pluralistic and democratic society, students must learn how to respect and accept differences. It is not just about theoretical knowledge of rights and obligations, but more about how these values are translated into everyday actions. Effective PKN programs utilize group activities, where students can work in heterogeneous teams, learning to negotiate and compromise, all of which are important components of healthy democratic functioning. In addition, technology and digital media can be integrated into PKN teaching to make the material more interesting and relevant for today's generation. Online platforms and digital tools can be used to simulate digital citizenship environments, where students can participate in virtual voting, campaigns, and forum discussions, giving them practical insight into democratic processes. Effective education in the field of PKN also requires teachers who are well trained and have a strong commitment to democratic values. Continuous professional development for PKN teachers is important to ensure that they are equipped with the latest teaching methods and interactive techniques that can assist in the internalization of desired values and skills.

The research results of Magdalena et al. (2020) shows that the effectiveness of PKN in building the character and identity of responsible citizens is very dependent on the quality and creativity of teaching as well as the active involvement of students in the learning process. This reinforces the idea that PKN in elementary schools is the key in forming the foundation of the personality and identity of future citizens, which is harmonious with the values of democracy and plurality. Therefore, it is very important for educators to use approaches that can attract students' interest and allow them to be actively involved in the learning process. Activities such as democracy simulations, debates, and group projects that promote a deep understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship should be integrated into the curriculum. This not only helps students understand theoretical concepts but also encourages them to apply these concepts in real life, ultimately strengthening their character and identity as citizens. In addition, creativity in teaching PKN must include the use of technology and digital resources that can reach and engage students who have grown up in the digital era. Social media, interactive learning platforms, and other digital tools can be important resources in teaching civic values, providing more relevant and engaging lessons for young students. From the data obtained, it appears that the success of PKN teaching cannot be separated from the teacher's competence and commitment in implementing the curriculum. The discussion also identified that the integration of civic values with other subjects strengthens the understanding and practice of these values in students' daily lives. However, there is a need for improvements in teacher training and the provision of more diverse learning materials to address inconsistencies in teaching.

## Conclusion

Citizenship education in elementary schools is a crucial foundation for the development of students' personality and citizenship. Despite several obstacles, this program has succeeded in instilling important values

needed to form good citizens. Joint efforts are needed between the government, educational institutions and society to ensure that citizenship education continues to develop and is able to adapt to future needs.

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