

ADVOCACY EDUCATION AS AN EFFORT TO REALISE RIGHTS AND EMPOWER STUDENTS: A LITERATURE ANALYSIS OF PRINCIPLES, STRATEGIES, AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

Advocacy education is an approach that emphasises students' active involvement in fighting for their rights and empowering them as agents of change in the school environment. This study aims to analyse the principles, strategies and social implications of advocacy education based on a literature review. The results of the analysis show that the application of principles such as inclusivity, collaboration, and empowerment can increase student participation, build critical character, and foster a sense of social responsibility. Advocacy education strategies integrated in the curriculum, school policies and educational culture provide space for students to develop critical thinking, communication and leadership skills. In addition, advocacy education has a broad social impact, from creating an inclusive school environment to strengthening students' capacity to face challenges in society. However, the implementation of advocacy education also faces challenges such as cultural resistance and limited resources, so a joint commitment from all stakeholders is needed to optimise its benefits in realising a just and democratic education system.

Keywords: advocacy education, student rights, empowerment, learning strategies, social implications

Introduction

Education is a fundamental right of every child that is very important to support the growth, development and character building of the nation's next generation. However, in practice, there are still many children who have not fully received the right to proper education, especially those who come from vulnerable groups or have special needs. An ideal education should be able to provide space for participation, protection and empowerment for all students without discrimination (Judijanto & Aslan, 2025) ; (Fiteriadi et al., 2025) .

One approach that is increasingly relevant in addressing these challenges is advocacy education. Advocacy education emphasises the importance of students to understand, fight for and protect their own and others' rights in the school and community environment. Through advocacy education, students are not only recipients

of knowledge, but also play an active role as agents of social change who are critical and concerned about issues of justice and inclusiveness (Abdelmaaboud et al., 2025) .

The concept of advocacy education is closely related to inclusive education, where every individual, including children with special needs, is given equal opportunities to access education without discrimination. Indonesia's inclusive education policy, as stipulated in Permendikbudristek Number 48 of 2023, emphasises the importance of providing education that is friendly and fair for all children (OECD, 2025) . Advocacy in education is an important strategy to ensure that the policy implementation is effective in the field. In addition, advocacy education also plays a role in training students to think critically, argue logically and respect different opinions. Advocacy learning models, such as debates or discussions on controversial issues, can improve students' communication, research and analysis skills. This is very important in shaping students' democratic and broad-minded characters, as well as fostering confidence to voice their opinions in public spaces (Sarah Lee, 2025) .

On the other hand, the role of child advocacy organisations, both school-based and community-based, is very important in assisting and protecting children who face legal problems or violence. These institutions not only provide legal assistance, but also conduct education and counselling on children's rights and how to report cases of rights violations in the education environment. These efforts are crucial to creating a safe, comfortable and violence-free school environment (Scott McLean & Laura Montes de Oca Barrera, 2024) .

Programmes such as Child Friendly Schools and the End Violence campaign supported by UNICEF are clear examples of education advocacy aimed at protecting children's rights in schools. These programmes emphasise the importance of children's participation in decision-making, protection from violence and strengthening the role of teachers as protectors and facilitators of children's development. However, there are still considerable challenges in the field, including cultural resistance, limited resources, and a lack of understanding of advocacy among educators (Effendi, 2025) .

Advocacy students also play a strategic role in shaping public policies that favour the interests of children and the wider community. They are actively involved in discussion forums, deliberations, and concrete actions to fight for issues such as quality education, gender equality, and environmental protection. Student advocacy participation ensures that young people's voices are heard in the policy-making process that impacts their future (Bungatang ., 2023)

Advocacy education is not only beneficial for individual students, but also has a broad social impact. With increased awareness and advocacy skills among students, a more inclusive, equitable and child-friendly school environment is expected. In addition, advocacy education can be a driving force for greater social change, encouraging the creation of a society that is caring, tolerant, and respectful of human rights (Kelley Massengale et al., 2014) . However, the implementation of advocacy education in

schools still faces various obstacles. Among them are teachers' limited understanding of the concept of advocacy, lack of specialised training, and lack of support from the school and local government. Therefore, collaborative efforts between the government, schools, advocacy organisations, and communities are needed to strengthen advocacy capacity in the education environment (Meghan M. Burke et al., 2025).

It is also important to emphasise that advocacy education should be an integral part of the curriculum and school culture. The integration of advocacy values in the learning process will help students internalise the principles of justice, empathy and social responsibility early on. Thus, advocacy education does not only become a discourse, but is actually realised in daily practice in schools (Purike & Aslan, 2025); (Fitriani et al., 2024).

Finally, research on advocacy education as an effort to realise rights and empower students is very relevant and urgent. The analysis of literature on the principles, strategies and social implications of advocacy education is expected to make a real contribution to the development of educational policies and practices that are more in favour of students' rights and empowerment.

Thus, advocacy education is one of the main keys in creating a young generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has social awareness, the courage to fight for rights, and the ability to build a more just and inclusive society in the future.

Research Methods

The research method used in this study is library research, which involves collecting, reviewing and analysing various literature sources such as books, scientific journals, policy documents and articles relevant to advocacy education. Data were collected through searching primary and secondary sources, then analysed qualitatively using content analysis techniques, which include the process of data reduction, thematic categorisation, and synthesis of findings to gain an in-depth understanding of the principles, strategies, and social implications of advocacy education in the context of student empowerment (Elijah & Aslan, 2025); (Okoli & Schabram, 2010).

Results and Discussion

Principles of Advocacy Education Applied in the School Context

Advocacy education in schools is based on the principle of active involvement of students in the learning process, where students are not only objects, but also subjects who play a direct role in research, discussion and presentation of arguments. This involvement encourages students to be more emotionally and intellectually engaged, so that they feel responsible for the learning process. Through direct experience, students can develop a deeper understanding of the issues raised in learning (Abdelmaaboud et al., 2025).

The advocacy process in schools naturally increases students' interest and motivation to learn. The interactive and competitive nature of debate or discussion methods makes students more enthusiastic in participating in lessons, while encouraging them to prepare well before participating. Thus, learning becomes more lively and meaningful for students (Hapinas et al., 2025); (Komari & Aslan, 2025) .

The principle of advocacy education also emphasises the importance of focusing on issues that are relevant to students' lives, both personal and social. Students are invited to discuss topics that are close to their reality, so that learning does not feel abstract, but contextualised and applicable. This helps students understand the connection between the subject matter and everyday life. Meaningful learning experiences are one of the main outcomes of implementing advocacy education (Sarah Lee, 2025) . Students who are directly involved in debate or advocacy will more easily understand and remember the material taught. This experience strengthens knowledge retention and builds critical thinking skills that are much needed in the modern era. Through the advocacy process, students learn to defend arguments, identify the basic components of an issue, and understand the principles of effective argumentation. These abilities are not only beneficial in academic contexts, but also in social life, where students are expected to be able to express opinions logically and constructively (Scott McLean & Laura Montes de Oca Barrera, 2024) .

The application of advocacy principles is flexible and can be adapted at various levels of education, both in primary and secondary schools. This learning model can be adapted to the developmental level and needs of students, so that each student can gain optimal benefits from the advocacy process.

Advocacy education also plays an important role in developing critical thinking, problem solving, and oral and written communication skills. Students are trained to analyse issues, construct arguments, and express opinions effectively, both individually and in groups. These skills are essential to equip students to face future challenges (Effendi, 2025) . In addition to cognitive aspects, advocacy education strengthens affective aspects such as self-confidence, independence, and interpersonal communication skills. Students are encouraged to express their opinions, respect differences, and build healthy relationships with peers and teachers. An inclusive and supportive learning environment is key to the success of advocacy education (Bungatang., 2023)

The principles of inclusivity and social justice are important cornerstones of advocacy education. Every student, regardless of background, is given equal opportunity to participate and access equitable education. This is in line with the spirit of inclusive education which emphasises the importance of educational services for all children, including those with special needs. Collaboration and teamwork are also an integral part of advocacy education. Students learn to work together in groups, support each other and build consensus in solving common problems. This collaboration not

only strengthens solidarity among students but also builds a culture of dialogue and deliberation in the school environment (Kelley Massengale et al., 2014) .

Empowering students as agents of change is the main goal of advocacy education. Students are encouraged to become pioneers in constructively fighting for their rights and those of others, both in the school and community environments. Thus, students are not only the beneficiaries of education, but also the main actors in the process of social change (Meghan M. Burke et al., 2025) .

The implementation of advocacy strategies in schools is carried out systematically, starting from issue identification, problem analysis, strategy development, mobilisation of support, to evaluation of advocacy results. Each step involves active participation of students, so that they can learn firsthand about effective and responsible advocacy processes (Anto Titus & Peter Varkey Muttungal ., 2023)

Evaluation and reflection are an important part of advocacy education. Students and teachers together reflect on the advocacy process and outcomes for continuous improvement, ensuring advocacy goals are optimally achieved. This reflection process also helps students develop a critical attitude and be open to feedback.

Finally, advocacy principles should be integrated in the curriculum and become part of the school culture. This integration ensures that the values of justice, participation and empowerment are truly internalised in daily life at school. Thus, advocacy education not only improves the quality of learning, but also shapes students' characters who are critical, caring, and ready to become responsible citizens.

Advocacy Education Strategy

The advocacy education strategy in schools is designed to ensure that every student has an equitable right to education, empower them as agents of change and create an inclusive learning environment. This strategy starts with identifying the main issues faced by students, whether related to access to education, discriminatory treatment or special needs. Teachers and school authorities need to conduct participatory problem mapping with students so that the advocacy strategies designed are truly relevant to the real needs in the field (Dwi Retnani Srinarwati ., 2023)

The next step is to build awareness and understanding of the importance of education advocacy among all school members. Socialisation is done through discussions, seminars or training involving students, teachers, parents and the community. This activity aims to instil the values of justice, inclusiveness and active participation in the education process, so that all parties feel they have a shared responsibility in realising a child-friendly learning environment (Chang-Bacon, 2023) .

The advocacy strategy also emphasises the importance of cross-sector collaboration. Schools need to establish partnerships with advocacy agencies, local governments, and civil society organisations to strengthen support for students, especially those from vulnerable groups or with special needs. This collaboration can

take the form of mentoring, provision of counselling services, and policy advocacy at the local level (Supriyati ., 2023)

The application of advocacy-based learning methods is one of the main strategies. Teachers can use debate models, group discussions, real case simulations, and social projects to train students to think critically, construct arguments, and voice their opinions. This method not only improves academic skills, but also builds students' confidence and social awareness (Firmansyah & Aslan, 2025a) ; (Firmansyah & Aslan, 2025b) .

Advocacy strategies in schools also involve strengthening literacy and numeracy through contextualised and fun approaches. The use of quality reading books, multimodal texts and reading modelling can increase students' interest in learning and literacy skills. These literacy activities are integrated with advocacy issues such as children's rights, gender equality and anti-discrimination so that students understand the importance of fighting for their rights (Hakim, 2023) .

Empowering students as agents of change is the main focus of the advocacy strategy. Students are encouraged to be active in intra-school organisations, discussion forums and social activities aimed at championing education issues. Through leadership and advocacy training, students learn to identify problems, design solutions and mobilise support from various parties (Aslan & Sidabutar ., 2025)

Advocacy strategies also include the formulation of school policies that favour the rights and needs of students. Schools need to formulate rules that support inclusivity, protection from violence, and respect for diversity. This policy is socialised openly and involves student participation in the formulation process, so that they feel valued and involved in decision making (Caroline & Aslan, 2025) ; (Rokhmawati et al., 2025) .

Monitoring and evaluation is an important part of the education advocacy strategy. Schools and students periodically reflect on the implementation of the advocacy programme, identify barriers and formulate improvements. This evaluation is conducted in a participatory manner so that students can provide input and feel ownership of the programme (Abdelmaaboud et al., 2025) .

Advocacy strategies also emphasise the importance of mobilising support from the wider community. Schools can organise campaigns, petitions or social actions to garner support for educational issues faced by students. Community involvement strengthens the advocacy position and accelerates the realisation of the desired change.

Providing specialised training to teachers and education personnel is an important strategy to improve advocacy capacity in schools. Teachers are trained to be facilitators, companions and protectors of students in facing various educational challenges. This training includes an understanding of children's rights, advocacy

techniques, and handling cases of violence or discrimination in the school environment (OECD, 2025).

Advocacy strategies also prioritise the use of data and evidence in designing programmes. Schools are encouraged to systematically collect data related to student needs, barriers, and achievements. This data becomes the basis for formulating policies, measuring programme impact, and advocating to external parties such as the government or donors (Sarah Lee, 2025).

Finally, advocacy education strategies should be integrated into the curriculum and school culture. Advocacy values, such as justice, participation and empowerment, need to be instilled early on through learning and extracurricular activities. Thus, advocacy is not just an additional programme, but an integral part of the education process that shapes students' characters as critical, caring and responsible citizens.

Social Implications of Advocacy Education

Advocacy education has far-reaching social implications in shaping the character, culture and structure of society. Firstly, advocacy education promotes an inclusive and equitable school environment. Through advocacy services, students who experience discrimination, violence or unfair treatment can obtain protection and support, so that their rights are maintained and respected (Scott McLean & Laura Montes de Oca Barrera, 2024).

Secondly, advocacy education plays an important role in raising social awareness among students. By engaging in advocacy, students learn to understand relevant social issues, such as gender equality, children's rights and anti-discrimination. This fosters empathy, caring and a high sense of social responsibility among learners. Third, advocacy education strengthens students' participation in school decision-making. Students are encouraged to actively voice their opinions, engage in discussion forums and contribute to the formulation of school policies. This participation establishes a democratic culture and increases the sense of ownership of the school environment (Effendi, 2025).

Fourth, advocacy education helps build a culture of dialogue and deliberation in society. Students who are accustomed to healthy discussion and debate at school will bring these values to the wider social environment, thus creating a society that is open, tolerant and respectful of differences. Fifth, advocacy education contributes to the alleviation of social inequality, especially in access to education. Advocacy programmes that target vulnerable groups, such as women and children with special needs, can increase their participation in education and reduce social disparities. Sixth, advocacy education promotes changes in social norms and behaviours. Through campaigns, socialisation and training, education advocacy can change the views of people who still hold old unfair stereotypes or norms, such as patriarchy or gender-based discrimination (Bungatang ., 2023)

Seventh, advocacy education strengthens collaboration between schools, families and communities. This collaboration is important to create an educational ecosystem that supports optimal child development and accelerates the realisation of desired social change. Eighth, advocacy education plays a role in preventing and handling cases of student rights violations, such as bullying, sexual violence and harassment. Advocacy services provide a safe space for victims to report and get assistance, as well as encourage schools to implement strict anti-violence policies. Ninth, advocacy education increases students' capacity as agents of social change. Students trained in advocacy will be more confident to fight for their rights and the rights of others, both in the school environment and the wider community (Kelley Massengale et al., 2014) .

Tenth, advocacy education contributes to the formation of social identity and individual character. Through the advocacy process, students learn to recognise the values of justice, solidarity and responsibility, which are important foundations in building a civilised and just society. Eleventh, advocacy education can be a driving force for public policy reform. Students who are active in advocacy are often involved in campaigns, petitions or social actions that encourage changes in education policies at the local and national levels, so that the voices of the younger generation are better heard by decision makers (Meghan M. Burke et al., 2025) . Twelfth, despite its many positive impacts, advocacy education also faces social challenges, such as cultural resistance, limited support, and slow norm change. Therefore, continuous and collaborative efforts from all parties are needed to ensure advocacy education truly provides optimal social benefits for all levels of society (Anto Titus & Peter Varkey Muttungal ., 2023)

Based on the literature analysis, it can be concluded that advocacy education plays an important role in realising rights and empowering students in the school environment. The application of advocacy education principles, such as active involvement, inclusiveness, collaboration, and empowerment, is proven to be able to increase student participation, build critical character, and foster a sense of social responsibility. Advocacy education strategies that are integrated into the learning process, school policies and educational culture, provide space for students to act as agents of change who are able to fight for their rights and the rights of others constructively.

In addition, advocacy education has broad social implications, ranging from creating a fair and inclusive school environment, increasing social awareness and participation, to strengthening students' capacity to face challenges in society. However, the implementation of advocacy education also faces a number of challenges, such as cultural resistance, limited resources and the need for cross-sectoral support. Therefore, it takes a joint commitment from all stakeholders - government, schools, teachers, parents and communities - to continue to develop and strengthen advocacy

education for a more equitable, democratic and empowering education system as a whole.

Conclusion

Advocacy education is proven to be an effective approach in realising rights and empowering students in the school environment. Through the application of principles such as active engagement, inclusiveness, and collaboration, advocacy education is able to increase student participation in the learning process as well as build critical and responsible character. Students are not only recipients of knowledge, but also agents of change who are able to constructively fight for their rights and the rights of others.

Advocacy education strategies integrated in the curriculum, school policies and educational culture provide space for students to develop critical thinking, communication and leadership skills. Collaboration between schools, families and communities strengthens support for students, especially those from vulnerable groups or with special needs. In addition, advocacy services in schools play an important role in protecting students from discrimination, violence and rights violations and promoting a safe and fair learning environment.

Socially, advocacy education has a wide range of positive impacts, from creating an inclusive school environment, increasing social awareness and participation, to strengthening students' capacity to face challenges in society. However, the implementation of advocacy education also faces challenges such as cultural resistance, limited resources and the need for cross-sectoral support. Therefore, a joint commitment from all stakeholders is needed so that advocacy education can truly provide optimal benefits for student empowerment and the realisation of a more equitable and democratic education system.

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