

CIVIC EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS AS A MEANS OF SHAPING SOCIAL ATTITUDES AND ACTIVE ROLES IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Civic education in primary schools is an important instrument in shaping the character of the nation's children to have a national perspective, positive social behaviour, and be ready to contribute to the development of the country. This study uses a literature review to examine the role of civic education in shaping social attitudes and fostering active participation among students from an early age. The results of the literature review show that PKn is effective in instilling the values of tolerance, mutual cooperation, solidarity, responsibility, and legal awareness, which are the foundations of social life. In addition, PKn is able to encourage student involvement in various social activities and simple democratic activities, which then become initial training in actively participating in the development of the nation and state. With a participatory learning approach, teacher role models, and integration with the environment and family, PKn can make a real contribution to creating a young generation with social character, who are caring and have an active role in sustainable national development.

Keywords: Civic Education, Primary School, Social Attitude, Active Role, National Development.

Introduction

Education is a key pillar in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also emotionally, socially, and morally mature. In the context of national development, education cannot be viewed solely as a process of transferring knowledge, but rather as a systematic effort to instil values, norms, and behaviours that reflect the national identity (Judijanto & Aslan, 2025); (Purike & Aslan, 2025); (Komari & Aslan, 2025). Primary school, as the first level of formal education, plays an essential role in instilling national values and social attitudes from an early age, particularly through the subject of Civic Education (PKn) (Darmadi, 2013).

Civic Education is designed to produce good citizens, namely individuals who have civic knowledge, are critical, and behave in accordance with applicable norms and laws. From primary school age, children are introduced to basic concepts of rights and obligations, the value of cooperation, tolerance of differences, and the importance of maintaining unity and integrity. These values, when instilled continuously, will give rise to

positive social attitudes and support the active role of students as the nation's future generation (Müller, 2023).

In the era of globalisation, shifts in cultural values and the influence of individualism pose serious challenges to the formation of national character. The rapid flow of information and the penetration of foreign cultures often erode the love for the homeland, togetherness, and mutual cooperation that are characteristic of Indonesian society (Firmansyah & Aslan, 2025a); (Firmansyah & Aslan, 2025b). This is where PKn has a stronger urgency to teach students not only to understand the concept of nationality in theory, but also to practise it in their daily lives. This is the basis for a literature study on the implementation of PKn in shaping students' social attitudes and active roles (Müller, 2023).

Social attitudes are one of the main objectives to be achieved through PKn. The social attitudes referred to include empathy, solidarity, a desire to help, and social skills in both small and large communities. Through PKn learning, children are encouraged to understand the importance of living together peacefully, respecting differences, and upholding the value of togetherness. The application of social attitudes from an early age determines the quality of social relationships in the future, which directly impacts national development (Ahmad, 2024b). In addition to shaping social attitudes, Civic Education is also aimed at instilling an active role for students in the development of the nation and state. The concept of development does not only refer to physical or economic development but also includes the development of the nation's character, culture, and morals. Children who are trained from an early age to participate actively, for example in mutual cooperation activities at school, maintaining environmental cleanliness, or carrying out tasks responsibly, will develop into individuals who are ready to contribute to development in the future (Ferguson, 2023).

Various literature emphasises that primary school is *the golden period* for shaping values and character. At this stage, children tend to be more receptive to input, imitate behaviour that is considered good, and internalise prevailing social norms. Civics teachers play a key role as facilitators who not only teach textually but also exemplify civic behaviour through role modelling. Therefore, the effectiveness of civics in shaping students' social attitudes and sense of responsibility in national development is largely determined by learning strategies, curriculum, and teacher competence (Petrova, 2024). Problems that arise in the world of education today are often related to a weak emphasis on character and moral aspects. Learning tends to prioritise cognitive outcomes that can be measured numerically rather than ethical and social values, which are actually more fundamental. As a result, there is an imbalance between intellectual intelligence and social intelligence in students. This literature review was conducted to provide an in-depth analysis of how PKn can be an effective instrument in overcoming these weaknesses while restoring the function of basic education as a vehicle for shaping the nation's character.

The context of Indonesia as a multicultural country increasingly demands the presence of PKn in primary schools that is oriented towards strengthening social attitudes

and national awareness. Tolerance, mutual cooperation, solidarity among fellow citizens, and an attitude of respecting differences are prerequisites for a harmonious national life. Civics education has the task of instilling these values so that positive habits are formed from childhood and continue into adulthood (Puni, 2023). Through a literature review, this study attempts to summarise various theoretical approaches and empirical practices that can strengthen the effectiveness of civics education. One way to foster an active role for students in national development is through project-based civic education learning. Examples include activities such as maintaining the school environment, developing habits of helping others, or carrying out simple social programmes. From a literature perspective, many studies mention that participatory learning that emphasises direct experience is more effective in instilling social attitudes and national awareness than one-way lecture methods.

In addition, national development requires not only intellectual intelligence, but also moral commitment and a sense of shared responsibility. Civic education emphasises the importance of individual responsibility towards collective interests. Children who are accustomed to being given responsibilities through CSE will grow into a generation with integrity, honesty, discipline, and care. This is in line with Indonesia's development goals, which pursue not only material progress but also moral excellence and social harmony.

Research Method

This research uses a literature study approach. Through this method, researchers can examine and compare previous research results, national education policies, moral education theories, and character approaches related to PKn. A systematic analysis of existing scientific works is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of PKn in primary schools in producing a generation with good social attitudes and an active role in the development of the nation (Eliyah & Aslan, 2025); (Page et al., 2021).

Results and Discussion

Civic Education as a Means of Shaping Social Attitudes

Civic Education (PKn) was designed from the outset as a strategic subject to instil values, norms, and ethics directly related to social, national, and state life. One important aspect of PKn is to shape students' social attitudes. Social attitudes include perspectives, ways of interacting, and the willingness to live peacefully alongside others in diversity. At the primary school level, PKn is not merely about teaching definitions or concepts of citizenship, but more about building positive social habits (Puni, 2023).

Social attitudes are essentially related to a person's ability to adapt, cooperate, respect others, and prioritise common interests over personal interests. In the context of primary school children, social attitudes are often seen through everyday behaviours such as sharing, helping friends, and respecting differences of opinion. Through PKn, children

are guided to understand that social attitudes are part of being a good citizen, so that what they do at school will have an impact on wider public life (Smith, 2024) .

The urgency of developing social attitudes is increasingly important due to the reality of Indonesia's diverse society in terms of ethnicity, religion, culture, and language. Without strong social attitudes , conflict, intolerance, and individualistic attitudes can easily develop. This is where the role of PKn becomes vital as a medium to introduce children to the importance of tolerance, mutual cooperation, and solidarity. Through learning practices, students not only understand Indonesia's diversity but are also able to build mutual respect from an early age (Budimansyah & Suryadi, 2008) .

Character education theory states that the formation of social attitudes is not only determined by cognitive aspects, but also through habit formation, role models, and real experiences (Aslan, 2024) ; (Liliana et al., 2021) . Civic education can accommodate this because it emphasises the connection between theory and social practice. For example, by teaching traffic rules, students learn not only at the conceptual level, but also discipline and awareness to obey rules for the common good. Thus, social attitudes grow through a combination of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour (Budimansyah & Suryadi, 2008) .

Civics has a content structure that includes basic social values, such as democracy, justice, responsibility, and legal awareness. These values are an important foundation in building a civilised society. In shaping social attitudes, teachers have a responsibility to present these values not only in the cognitive realm of students, but more deeply in the affective and psychomotor realms. A student who is taught the importance of responsibility through PKn must be able to demonstrate this through real behaviour, such as collecting assignments on time or maintaining classroom cleanliness (Komalasari, 2011).

The social attitudes developed through PKn are also reinforced by collaborative learning methods. When students are involved in group work, class discussions, or simple social projects, they learn to practise cooperation, communication, and peaceful conflict resolution. This emphasises that PKn is not a subject to be memorised, but rather a means of social learning that shapes collective personality. In this way, empathy, mutual respect, and the ability to work together will be more deeply rooted in children (Jung, 2025) .

A literature review shows that primary school students who receive values-based PKn learning tend to have better social skills than those taught using conventional methods. Values-based learning is often implemented through a *value clarification* approach, where students are encouraged to identify, compare, and ultimately choose the values they believe to be right. This process makes students more aware that social attitudes are not merely external demands, but part of their identity that they accept with full awareness (Yan, 2024) .

Civic education also emphasises the importance of tolerance as an integral part of social attitudes. Tolerance begins with the habit of respecting peers who have different opinions, religions, or cultural backgrounds. Students who are taught the value of tolerance from an early age will be better prepared to face diversity in society later on. Without tolerance, every difference can easily trigger conflict (Rasmussen, 2023) . With

tolerance as a form of social attitude, diversity can actually be seen as an asset to the nation. In addition to tolerance, mutual cooperation is an important aspect that is instilled through PKn. Mutual cooperation is a characteristic of Indonesian culture and is a concrete realisation of the spirit of collectivity. In the classroom, mutual cooperation can be manifested in simple activities such as cleaning the classroom together or helping friends who are having difficulty learning. These activities may seem trivial, but through repeated practice, students are expected to grow into individuals who are ready to preserve the social traditions of this nation (Li, 2024) .

The development of social attitudes also requires the significant role of teacher exemplification. Civic education teachers hold a strategic position because their attitudes and behaviours are easily imitated by students. Teachers who demonstrate discipline, respect for students, and fair treatment of all students indirectly instil strong social values. In other words, the success of PKn is not only in the content of the material, but also in how teachers practise social values in their daily interactions (Kim & Park, 2025) .

The integration of PKn learning with the surrounding environment also strengthens the formation of social attitudes. For example, schools can collaborate with the surrounding community to carry out simple social programmes, such as community service, fundraising, or environmental clean-up campaigns. These activities provide opportunities for students to learn first-hand about the meaning of solidarity, cooperation, and social awareness. Through practical application, civic education values do not merely remain as knowledge but are transformed into real behaviour (Gordon, 2023) .

The concept of *learning to live together* is one of the pillars of 21st-century education, which is in line with the objectives of PKn. This concept emphasises that the formation of social attitudes must be directed towards enabling students to live peacefully with others. PKn at the primary school level is an appropriate medium for internalising this concept. When children understand the meaning of peaceful living and socialising well, they not only develop themselves personally, but also contribute to the development of a harmonious society (Alscher, 2022) . The social attitudes developed through PKn cannot be separated from democratic values. Democracy teaches that everyone has the same rights and opportunities to be heard, respected, and participate. In Civic Education lessons, students are encouraged to express their opinions, listen to others, and make decisions together. This fosters social attitudes such as a sense of fairness, respect for the rights of others, and negotiation skills in problem solving (Oliveira, 2024) .

However, the challenges in civic education learning are quite complex. Several studies have found that civic education learning practices are often rote learning, lack social activities, and are not connected to real life. As a result, the formation of social attitudes is less than optimal. Therefore, there is a need for more participatory civic education learning innovations, based on real experiences, and emphasising social skills as part of learning outcomes (Sigauke, 2013) .

Thus, it is clear that PKn in primary schools plays an important role as a means of shaping positive social attitudes, including tolerance, mutual cooperation, empathy,

solidarity, and responsibility. Through the integration of values, experiences, participatory learning methods, and teacher role models, PKn can lay a strong social foundation for students. The social attitudes formed during primary school will later become the foundation for the formation of caring, responsible citizens who are ready to contribute to the life of the nation.

Civic Education as a Means of Fostering an Active Role in National Development

National development is not only understood in terms of physical development, such as infrastructure and the economy, but also the social, moral, and political character development of citizens. Education is a strategic instrument for producing a generation that is committed to comprehensive national development (Caroline & Aslan, 2025) ; (Aslan & Sidabutar, 2025) ; (Rokhmawati et al., 2025) . In this context, Civic Education (PKn) serves as the primary medium for instilling awareness and fostering active participation among students from an early age in national and civic life.

Active participation in national development encompasses individual involvement in advancing society according to one's abilities and capacities. At the primary school level, this is seen in the form of simple acts of caring, such as maintaining environmental cleanliness, being active in class activities, and obeying school rules. PKn plays a significant role in teaching students that their every small action is part of their contribution to the collective progress of the nation (Sigauke, 2013) .

The philosophical foundation of PKn in Indonesia is in line with the national objectives stated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, namely to educate the nation and achieve general welfare. Therefore, CSE learning in schools is not just a subject, but a form of character education that guides students to love their nation and be ready to play an active role in development. In other words, CSE functions as a small laboratory for the future development of the nation (Ahmad, 2024a) .

Student participation in development through PKn can be realised by internalising a sense of responsibility towards oneself, family, environment, and society. Civics education teaches that citizens have a role in maintaining order, carrying out their obligations, and respecting the rights of others. Through this habit, children are shaped into individuals who are aware that they are part of an interconnected national development system (Olayinka, 2024) .

Civic education in primary schools serves to instil awareness of the importance of national unity and integrity. Children are introduced to Pancasila, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, and the spirit of nationalism. This awareness of nationalism fosters an active role in development, because students not only love their country symbolically, but also want to do something tangible for mutual progress. For example, by taking care of the school environment and appreciating group work, children learn to actualise the meaning of love for their country in practical ways (Hansen, 2024) .

Civic education learning strategies that emphasise a participatory approach can encourage students to be more active in social life. For example, teachers can use

community-based social project methods. Students can be invited to plant trees, campaign for cleanliness, or create simple works about caring for the environment. Activities such as these educate students to take on roles, think critically, and be responsible in every step, so that they grow into individuals who are ready to contribute to the development of the nation in the future (Darmadi, 2013) .

Active participation is a form of *civic intelligence*. Civic education in primary schools provides the initial foundation for the formation of students' *civic intelligence*. For example, children are trained to understand classroom rules and apply them in their daily lives. This is in line with the principle of PKn that national development requires citizens who obey the law, are disciplined, and have a high level of social awareness (Tan & Wati, 2023) . In addition, PKn equips students with critical thinking skills in dealing with social issues. National development often faces challenges, both in the form of social conflicts and environmental problems. Through PKn, students are taught to identify problems, analyse their causes, and seek solutions together. It is this critical thinking ability that fosters students' confidence to participate in national development, even if only in a simple way (Müller, 2023) .

An active role in national development is also closely related to an awareness of the importance of rights and obligations. Civics instils an understanding that every student has rights that must be respected, as well as obligations that must be fulfilled. By instilling the principle of a balance between rights and obligations, Civics prevents the growth of selfish and individualistic attitudes that can hinder development. Children learn that fulfilling their obligations, such as studying diligently, is part of their contribution to the progress of the nation (Ahmad, 2024b) .

Civics also serves as a means to introduce students to the principles of sustainable development. In simple ways, students are taught to love the environment, conserve energy, and preserve natural resources. This ecological literacy is a form of active participation in development, because national development cannot be sustainable without environmental awareness among its citizens. Thus, PKn not only shapes socially active individuals, but also those who care about the future of the nation (Ferguson, 2023).

In the context of democracy, PKn plays a role in fostering students' courage to participate in the decision-making process. In primary schools, this is realised through the election of class presidents or student organisation administrators. Such activities provide an early experience of direct democracy, where students learn the importance of voting, involvement, and responsibility in maintaining joint decisions. This is a practical example of how PKn prepares students to play an active role in the nation's democracy in the future (Petrova, 2024) . The exemplary behaviour of teachers is a key factor in shaping the active role of students. Teachers who demonstrate social awareness, discipline, and responsibility will become strong role models for students. Through daily interactions, teachers can instil the value that every person has a meaningful contribution to make to the community. Thus, character education integrated into PKn becomes the main path for shaping Indonesians who are active in development (Polat & Bayram, 2023) .

Families also play an important role in supporting PKn learning. The civic values taught at school need to be reinforced at home so that students become accustomed to carrying out their roles in daily life. For example, parents can train their children to care for household chores, help their siblings, or respect their neighbours. Synergy between families and schools will strengthen students' active attitudes in social aspects and broaden the meaning of their roles in the context of national development (Puni, 2023). However, challenges remain, especially when the world of education places more emphasis on academic cognitive achievements alone. The inability to provide space for students to participate and practise in social life can cause students to become passive. Therefore, innovation in civic education learning is urgently needed, emphasising *student-centred learning* that opens up space for participation. Through this method, students are no longer just passive recipients of lessons, but subjects who play an active role in building values and real actions (Smith, 2024).

Thus, Civic Education not only plays a role in broadening students' national awareness but also serves as an effective means of fostering active participation in national development. Students who, from primary school onwards, are accustomed to being involved in social activities, understand democracy, respect the law, and care for the environment will grow into citizens who participate fully in society. This active role, cultivated from an early age, is a significant investment in ensuring the continuity of Indonesia's national development in the future.

Conclusion

Civic Education (PKn) in primary schools plays a strategic role in shaping the social attitudes of students, particularly in instilling the values of tolerance, mutual cooperation, solidarity, and concern for others. Through participatory learning, based on real experiences and supported by the exemplary behaviour of teachers, students not only understand the concept of citizenship in theory but also get used to applying social values in their daily lives. Thus, PKn becomes an effective means of internalising harmonious social character from an early age. In addition to shaping social attitudes, PKn also serves to foster the active role of students in the development of the nation and state. From primary school, students are introduced to national values, awareness of rights and obligations, responsibility, and the importance of protecting the environment and unity. Through simple exercises such as group work, social activities, and democratic practices at school, students are trained to participate actively on a small scale as preparation for their future involvement in national development.

Thus, the role of PKn is not limited to the cognitive realm but is also oriented towards comprehensive character building that supports the achievement of the national education goal of " " (the ideal Indonesian character). Optimising PKn in primary schools through contextual curricula, innovative learning methods, and synergy with families and communities is key to fostering a young generation with strong character, positive social attitudes, and active roles in achieving sustainable national and state development.

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