

# Moral Dilemma-Based Citizenship Education Learning As An Effort To Strengthen Cultural And Citizen Literacy

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**Abstract.** Various facts show that conflicts between ethnicities, religions and community groups are caused by weak social solidarity and solidarity. This does not affect Indonesia's national (national) values. This research aims to find out how civic education learning is based on moral dilemmas as an effort to strengthen cultural and civic literacy. The research method used is a qualitative method with a literature study approach. Data collection techniques use journals, books and other sources. The research results show that moral dilemma-based citizenship education learning can provide a deeper understanding of the importance of social solidarity and solidarity in maintaining the integrity of the nation. This approach allows students to resolve conflict situations through multiple moral perspectives, so they can develop critical thinking skills and empathy. Thus, cultural and civic literacy can be improved through a better understanding of the values of friendship and how to apply them in everyday life.

**Keywords:** Citizenship Education, Moral Dilemmas, Cultural Literacy, Citizenship.

## 1 Introduction

Education plays a fundamental role in the advancement of the Indonesian nation and state. Through the educational process, individuals can experience behavioral and action changes that mature them, making them more competent in various fields [1]. As a basic need for self-development and individual actualization, education is also a vital means for character building in the nation. This is reflected in one of Indonesia's national education goals, which is to enlighten the life of the nation [2]–[4].

The subject of Civic Education (PPKn) focuses on developing citizens who understand and can exercise their rights and responsibilities to become intelligent, skilled, and character-driven Indonesian citizens in accordance with the values embodied in Pancasila and the 1945

Constitution. One of the primary objectives of this subject is for students to think critically, rationally, and creatively in addressing citizenship issues [5]. Furthermore, Civic Education is a subject aimed at preparing students to become intelligent, responsible, and civilized citizens. Based on the 2013 curriculum, this subject is known as Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan (PPKn) and is taught to students from elementary school to higher education [6]

The teaching of Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan (PPKn) often faces classic challenges, such as teachers' reliance on lecture-based methods, expository approaches, and indoctrinative strategies. This occurs because these methods are considered easy to implement, given that PPKn teaching materials generally emphasize memorization and citizenship knowledge. As a result, PPKn is often perceived by some students as boring, unengaging, and monotonous, further exacerbated by the lack of variety in instructional media, making it difficult for students to understand [5], [7], [8].

The 2013 curriculum emphasizes the importance of using models, methods, strategies, and approaches that can foster active student engagement in learning, known as Active Learning. Students are encouraged not only to listen and absorb material but also to seek, analyze, and discover new concepts. This challenges teachers to develop innovative and creative teaching methods. Instructional methods such as lectures, discussions, demonstrations, simulations, field trips, and debates are used to implement the planned lessons, and the accuracy in selecting these methods will determine the effectiveness of the learning process [5]. Teachers, who hold a strategic role in shaping national character and developing students' potential, must ensure that learning is student-centered [9], where students actively construct their own understanding while teachers act as facilitators. Thus, student learning achievements are expected to reach optimal outcomes, in line with the essence of PPKn education [5].

The moral dilemma discussion method is an appropriate and effective instructional approach for PPKn subjects, as it helps achieve learning objectives focused on values and morals. This method is designed to develop students' moral reasoning competencies (moral judgment), with the aim of creating engaging, innovative, creative, and enjoyable learning experiences. However, despite its great potential, the application of the moral dilemma discussion method in PPKn learning remains limited and underutilized, leading to students often experiencing misconceptions about the substance and objectives of PPKn education, which should ideally teach moral values [5], [10], [11]

So far, Civic Education (PKn) learning has tended to focus solely on knowledge aspects, using a one-way approach where teachers primarily deliver information while students remain passive. Such an approach is often ineffective in developing students' ability to navigate moral dilemmas and make wise decisions based on national and humanitarian values. As a result, there is a gap between what is learned in the classroom and the social realities that students encounter in their daily lives.

The strengthening of cultural values and civic literacy is highly relevant in this context. Culture, as a heritage of values and norms that live within society, requires citizens who not only understand but are also able to apply and uphold these values in their lives. Civic literacy, which includes the ability to read, understand, and critically analyze information related to societal and national life, is also essential in shaping intelligent and competitive citizens.

Cultural and civic literacy reflects the culture and noble character of the Indonesian nation, rooted in the values of cultural heritage. To address the rapid changes brought about by the development of information technology and cultural shifts that may threaten the character of the younger generation, it is crucial for the youth to recognize, understand, apply, and preserve the culture and civic values of their own regions. Cultural and civic literacy involves the ability of individuals and communities to understand, interpret, and practice cultural, political, social values, and love for the homeland, while also understanding their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Thus, this literacy is essential in shaping attitudes toward social environmental changes and strengthening the nation's cultural identity [3], [12]–[14].

Therefore, a learning approach that can integrate moral and cultural dimensions into civic education is needed. Moral dilemma-based learning offers a method that encourages students to actively participate in discussions, reflection, and complex moral decision-making. By exposing students to situations involving value conflicts, this learning aims to sharpen students' ability to assess and respond to dilemmas they face, as well as internalize strong civic values.

Based on the above explanation, this research aims to describe how moral dilemma-based Civic Education can be used as an effort to strengthen cultural and civic literacy.

## **2 Method**

The research method used in this study is a qualitative method, which is still relatively new in the research world, as it has not been widely known for long. This method is termed postpositivistic because it is based on the philosophy of post-positivism. Additionally, it is referred to as an artistic method due to the research process being somewhat of an art, and as an interpretative method because the data generated is more related to the interpretation of data found in the field [15].

The research approach employed in this study is the literature review approach [16]. This approach involves a series of activities related to collecting library data, including reading, recording, and managing relevant research materials [17]. The literature review is a very important method in research as it provides a strong theoretical foundation and enriches the researcher's insight into the topic under study [18]. The data collected comes from various sources such as scientific journals, books, websites, popular articles, and other sources considered credible and relevant. After the data is collected, data analysis is conducted using the Miles and Huberman analysis technique, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and data verification. Data reduction is the process of simplifying, grouping, and selecting the data considered important; data display involves presenting the data in an easily understandable form, such as matrices or charts; and data verification is the process of rechecking the findings to ensure consistency and validity of the research results [15].

## **3 Results and Discussion**

### **3.1 Civic Education as a Form of Value and Moral Education**

Civic Education is a form of education aimed at instilling values, norms, state knowledge, legal awareness, respect and equality, as well as the spirit of national defense within the context of national resilience. The foundation of this education is rooted in Indonesia's national principles, namely Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution embody noble values that serve as a guide for citizens in living their lives as part of the nation and state. Generally, the goal of Civic Education is to instill and nurture a love for the homeland, build a sense of unity and cohesion, and raise awareness in individuals to become good citizens within the framework of a nation. This education also aims to teach the willingness to sacrifice for the country and nation, and to encourage the practice of Pancasila values as the nation's ideology and way of life [19].

Value education is composed of the basic words "education" and "value." Education is understood as a process of instilling and developing knowledge about life in students. Meanwhile, value refers to anything that holds worth or significance. Generally, values can be differentiated into ideal values, which represent the aspirations of each individual, and actual values, which are reflected in daily behavior. In the context of Civic Education, value education implies that this education encompasses aspects of moral or value education. Value education is the effort to instill and develop values within an individual. In other words, Civic Education plays a role in delivering moral education, which involves instilling values within students [19].

Civic Education, as a form of value education, has the primary function of instilling Pancasila values in the life of the nation and state. Through this education, it is hoped that individuals will develop a good personality, character, or moral character in line with the noble values of Pancasila. The personality that is formed is expected to be realized in societal and national life. By applying the values of Pancasila, the ultimate goal of Civic Education is to create a harmonious, safe, and peaceful society. Through understanding and practicing these values, it is anticipated that society can live in unity, foster harmony, and achieve peace in national and state life.

Moral values, which are centered on conscience, must be developed through moral education, character education, values education, or virtue education. This indicates that value education can be interpreted as moral education, and Civic Education as a form of value education encompasses moral education. One of the goals of Civic Education is for citizens to have an understanding and behavior that aligns with legal values. These legal values arise from the moral consciousness of society, so in essence, legal values are moral values. This is because legal provisions are considered good if they align with the legal values deemed positive by society, which are evaluated based on moral considerations [20].

### **3.2 Civic Education Based on Moral Dilemmas as a Strengthening of Cultural and Civic Literacy**

Civic Education (PKn) is one of the key pillars in Indonesia's education system, aiming to shape the character and national consciousness of its citizens. An increasingly recognized innovative approach in civic education is the use of moral dilemma-based learning. This approach not only serves as a pedagogical tool to teach civic concepts but also as a means to deepen students' understanding of the importance of solidarity and social cohesion in maintaining the nation's integrity.

In the context of national life, social solidarity is crucial for preserving the unity and cohesion of the nation. Indonesia, as a country rich in ethnic, religious, racial, and cultural diversity, requires a deep understanding of solidarity values to maintain unity and togetherness. Through moral dilemma-based PKn learning, students are encouraged to comprehend and internalize these values of solidarity, not merely as abstract concepts but as real and relevant principles in everyday life.

The moral dilemma approach in PKn learning places students in situations of conflict that involve various moral perspectives. In these situations, students are not only asked to understand different viewpoints but also to make appropriate decisions based on prevailing moral values. This process enables students to develop critical thinking and empathy—two essential skills in social life.

Critical thinking involves the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information from various sources and perspectives. Through moral dilemmas, students are faced with multiple choices, each with ethical consequences. They must consider not only the legality but also the social and moral impact of the decisions they make. This practice trains them to think beyond personal interests and to consider the collective good and its effects on society as a whole.

Empathy, on the other hand, is the ability to understand and feel what others are experiencing. When students are confronted with moral dilemmas, they must consider the feelings and perspectives of others involved in the situation. This helps them develop a sense of care and social responsibility, which in turn strengthens social solidarity among them.

Moreover, moral dilemma-based learning plays a crucial role in enhancing cultural and civic literacy. Cultural literacy involves a deep understanding of the values, norms, and traditions that exist within a society. By exploring various moral dilemmas that may arise in different cultural contexts, students can develop the ability to appreciate diversity and apply values of friendship in their interactions with others.

Cultural and civic literacy reflects the rich culture and high morality of Indonesian society, rooted in the values inherent in its identity. Therefore, it is essential for the younger generation, particularly high school students, to recognize, understand, apply, and preserve the culture and civic values of their own regions. This aims to strengthen cultural values within the national identity. Consequently, concrete efforts to prepare and equip future generations with cultural and civic literacy are vital, especially given the rapid changes in the world due to advancements in information technology and cultural shifts that impact the character of the younger generation [12].

According to the Republic of Indonesia Law No. 3 of 2017 on the Book System (UU Sisbuk), literacy is the ability to critically interpret information so that individuals can access knowledge and technology as an effort to improve their quality of life. Literacy can be interpreted as an individual's ability to read, write, comprehend, utilize, think critically, and evaluate various forms of communication, including spoken language, printed texts, broadcast media, and digital media [12].

Cultural literacy can be defined as the skill of understanding and responding to Indonesian culture as an aspect of national identity [21]. Cultural literacy involves an individual's inclination to think literarily through reading and writing activities concerning the history, contributions, and perspectives on other cultures. The outcomes of cultural literacy include

attitudes of care, critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, creativity, and knowledge development. Thus, cultural literacy encompasses a deep understanding of cultural conditions and differences between cultures, aimed at creating harmony and preserving cultural heritage [12].

On the other hand, civic literacy refers to the ability to understand rights and responsibilities as a citizen. Therefore, cultural and civic literacy is the capability of individuals and society to interact with and respond to their social environment as an integral part of a particular culture and nation [21]. This definition is somewhat limited regarding civic literacy, as it is interpreted merely as the skills of citizens to understand their rights and obligations. However, in a broader context, civic literacy can be understood as the knowledge and abilities of citizens to address social, political, and national issues. Moreover, Suryadi states that in the field of citizenship studies, civic literacy is positioned as a foundational element of the political virtue of citizenship, with citizens mastering forms of political knowledge that are then manifested through civic activities [22].

Civic literacy, on the other hand, involves a deep understanding of rights and responsibilities as citizens, as well as the ability to actively participate in national life. Through the moral dilemma approach, students are not only taught about their rights and obligations but also how to apply civic values in their daily lives. They learn that being a good citizen means not only obeying the law but also contributing to the well-being of society through actions that reflect solidarity and empathy.

Thus, moral dilemma-based citizenship education offers a comprehensive approach to developing students' character. This approach not only equips students with knowledge about citizenship but also with critical thinking skills, empathy, and a deep understanding of the values of solidarity and friendship. Through this learning, students' cultural and civic literacy can be enhanced, ultimately contributing to the formation of better, more caring, and more responsible citizens. As a result, the integrity and unity of the nation can be maintained, alongside the growth of a younger generation that is strongly committed to national and humanitarian values.

## **4 Conclusion**

Moral dilemma-based citizenship education is an effective strategy for strengthening cultural literacy and civic engagement among students. As a form of values and moral education, this approach not only instills the values of Pancasila and a sense of national awareness but also develops critical thinking and empathy skills that are essential for community life. By understanding and internalizing the values of solidarity and friendship, students are encouraged to comprehend and respond to various moral dilemmas within different cultural contexts, which in turn enriches their cultural literacy.

Furthermore, civic literacy is enhanced through a deep understanding of rights and responsibilities as citizens, along with the ability to actively participate in national life. Thus, this approach not only creates individuals who are aware of their roles and responsibilities as citizens but also shapes a younger generation committed to national and humanitarian values.

Ultimately, this results in a more harmonious and united society capable of maintaining the integrity of the nation amidst its diversity.

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