

Analysis of the Implementation of Citizenship Competence in the Civics Education Curriculum at the Junior High School Level in Bima Regency

Ruskialan¹⁾, Jamilah Binti Ahmad²⁾, Suardi³⁾, Musdalifah Syahrir⁴⁾

^{1, 3, 4)} University of Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia

²⁾ Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia

Corresponding Author: Ruskialan, Email: ruskialanruskialan@gmail.com

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Abstract. Citizenship education in Indonesia, particularly at the junior high school level, continues to face fundamental challenges, especially in terms of the comprehensive implementation of citizenship competencies within school curricula. These competencies encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are essential for shaping responsible and active citizens who contribute meaningfully to national and civic life. This study aims to analyze the implementation of citizenship competencies within the educational unit curriculum through the subject of Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) at the junior high school level in Bima Regency. The research adopts a concurrent embedded mixed methods approach, integrating the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data. Data were collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and the distribution of questionnaires to 210 students and several selected informants from two public junior high schools in Bima Regency. The study reveals that students' knowledge and attitudinal aspects of citizenship are generally strong, particularly in their understanding of Pancasila values, citizens' rights and obligations, and their appreciation of diversity. However, the skills dimension of citizenship such as critical thinking regarding human rights issues, understanding governmental systems, and applying civic values in both local and global contexts—still requires significant reinforcement. The study concludes that there is a pressing need for more contextual, practical, and project-based learning approaches to enhance students' civic skills. The findings suggest that innovative and participatory teaching strategies in the implementation of the PPKn curriculum are crucial for cultivating active, tolerant, and responsible young citizens.

Keywords: *Citizenship Competence; Civic Knowledge; Civic Skills; Civic Disposition; School-Based Curriculum*

INTRODUCTION

Citizenship education plays a central role in shaping citizens' identity, character, and participatory capacity in the context of modern democracy (Andersson Hult & Persson, 2025; Wahlström et al., 2020). Within the school-based curriculum, the subject of *Pancasila and Civic Education* (PPKn) is expected not only to cultivate knowledge about political and legal systems but also to develop students' critical thinking skills and democratic dispositions (Sandahl & Björklund, 2023; Daas et al., 2025). This aligns with the global paradigm of citizenship education, which emphasizes the importance of mastering civic competence—a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, affective, and conative domains (Banderas Navarro, 2020; Dijkstra et al., 2025; Munniksmas et al., 2024).

Indonesia's *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Independent Curriculum) presents opportunities to embed these values through transformative and contextual approaches (Wulandari & Muchtarom, 2020; Zakiah et al., 2023). However, in practice, many educators and institutions continue to

struggle with balancing normative objectives, local needs, and effective pedagogical approaches (Larsson et al., 2025; Persson, 2023). Similar challenges have been observed internationally, where a disconnect often exists between curricular policies and classroom implementation (Jansson & Löfgren, 2024; Obiagu, 2025).

Effective citizenship education demands the active role of teachers in translating basic competencies into meaningful and contextualized learning experiences (Golledge, 2024; López-Meseguer & Aparicio-Herguedas, 2024). In this regard, strategies such as project-based learning, political simulations, and intercultural dialogue have proven effective in enhancing students' analytical abilities, participatory engagement, and critical attitudes (Montessori et al., 2024; Navarro et al., 2025; Waldi et al., 2025).

Literature also highlights the necessity of strengthening citizenship competence from the early stages of education through the integration of multicultural values and the use of digital media (Ajideh et al., 2024; Cleofas & Labayo, 2024; Zakiah et al., 2025). Moreover, multicultural education approaches have been shown to foster social awareness and tolerance among students in diverse school environments (De Schaepmeester et al., 2022a, 2022b; Habte et al., 2021; Riveiro-Rodríguez et al., 2020). Parallel challenges are present in digital education, where the demand for cultivating digital citizenship skills is increasing (Tomé et al., 2024; Villar-Onrubia et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2023).

Beyond content-related aspects, the validity of assessment tools and the measurement of civic competence are also of critical concern (Hoek et al., 2023; Jansson, 2023; S. Wang, 2024; X. Wang & Wu, 2024). Recent studies underscore the importance of rubric-based, open-ended evaluations that allow students to demonstrate contextual understanding of social and political issues (Banderas Navarro, 2020; Daas et al., 2025). In an increasingly globalized world, students must develop the capacity to integrate national values with global citizenship awareness (Beichi et al., 2024; Bombardelli, 2024; Nob et al., 2025).

Innovative pedagogical approaches such as flipped classrooms, game-based learning, and virtual reality simulations have also been applied to boost student motivation and enhance critical competencies in PPKn (Arjun & Srivastava, 2020; Chen et al., 2025; Ren & Tek, 2022; Salam et al., 2022). The integration of technology in citizenship education has been shown to facilitate cross-contextual understanding and broaden the teaching of democratic values (Wu, 2024; Zhang, 2024).

Nevertheless, implementation challenges are not only technical but also structural and ideological. Many teachers continue to grapple with the gap between normative curriculum expectations and the socio-political realities of their classrooms (Chibambo & Divala, 2023;

Ekström, 2024; Sigauke, 2020). Therefore, local studies on how citizenship competencies are implemented within school curricula are essential for designing pedagogical interventions that are both relevant and contextually grounded.

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze the implementation of citizenship competencies in the school-based curriculum at the junior high school level in Bima Regency. The primary focus is directed toward three key domains of citizenship competence—civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic disposition and how these are integrated into PPKn instructional practices.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a mixed methods approach with a concurrent embedded design, wherein the quantitative approach served as the primary method, supported by qualitative techniques to gain a deeper understanding of the social and pedagogical context. This design enables the collection of both broad and in-depth data regarding the implementation of citizenship competencies in school curricula, a method also adopted in various studies on civic education (Daas et al., 2025; Gollodge, 2024; Obiagu, 2025).

Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted in two junior high schools in Bima Regency: SMP Negeri 1 Tambora and SMP Negeri 5 Woha. These schools were selected based on their diverse geographic and social characteristics to ensure contextual diversity and representativeness. The study involved 210 students as quantitative respondents selected through random sampling, and school principals, PPKn teachers, and selected students as qualitative informants chosen via purposive sampling. This sampling strategy aligns with context-based approaches considered effective in similar educational studies (Banderas Navarro, 2020; Chibambo & Divala, 2023; Zakiah et al., 2023).

Instruments and Data Collection Techniques

The primary instrument for the quantitative component was a closed-ended questionnaire using a Likert scale. For the qualitative component, semi-structured interview guides, participatory observations, and document analysis were employed. The use of multiple instruments facilitated data triangulation, thus enhancing the validity of the findings (Flensner, 2020; Kamani-Renedo & Garcia, 2025; Nufus & Syafangatun, 2023).

The questionnaire was developed based on the three dimensions of citizenship competence: civic knowledge, participatory skills, and democratic attitudes (Daas et al., 2025; Joris et al., 2022; Munniksmas et al., 2024). The validity and reliability of the instrument were pre-tested in a non-sample school and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient (Hoek et al., 2023; S. Wang, 2024; X. Wang & Wu, 2024).

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, while qualitative data were processed through thematic analysis. The qualitative analysis involved data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, in line with interpretive qualitative research methodologies (Habte et al., 2021; López-Meseguer & Aparicio-Herguedas, 2024; Persson, 2023). Triangulation was applied to integrate findings from different data sources, providing a comprehensive understanding of PPKn instruction and students' manifestation of citizenship competencies (Montessori et al., 2024; Zakiah et al., 2025).

Theoretical Framework and Methodological Justification

The use of a mixed methods design addresses methodological challenges in social education research and responds to contemporary demands for combining numerical and narrative approaches to educational phenomena (Burns, 2024; Sandahl & Björklund, 2023; Wahlström et al., 2020). This design is particularly relevant in the complex domain of civics education, where assessments of cognition must be balanced with analysis of values, motivations, and social practices (Chen et al., 2025; Toll, 2022; Tsai et al., 2020).

RESULT

This study yielded findings that reflect students' levels of citizenship competence across eight key indicators. Below is a detailed description and interpretation of the results, supported by scientific literature.

Understanding Pancasila as the Foundation of the State and National Ideology

A majority of students at SMP Negeri 1 Tambora and SMP Negeri 5 Woha demonstrated a good understanding of Pancasila values, with 72.5% (Tambora) and 64.7% (Woha) of respondents frequently expressing comprehension. However, approximately 13–20% of students reported low to moderate levels of understanding. This suggests that while basic conceptual mastery is generally strong, critical and applied understanding remains an area needing improvement. Prior research emphasizes that internalization of ideological values must be supported by contextual and interactive learning approaches (Sandahl & Björklund, 2023).

Awareness of Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities

Most students reported frequent understanding of citizens' rights and responsibilities. However, a notable gap was observed between schools, particularly at SMP N 5 Woha, where a high percentage (42.2%) fell into the "sometimes" category. This underscores the need for concrete and context-based instructional methods to ensure that students can not only understand these concepts theoretically but also apply them practically (Wahlström et al., 2020).

Understanding Indonesia's Government System

Student comprehension of Indonesia's governmental system was generally low, with more than 50% categorized as "sometimes" or below in their understanding. This finding aligns with studies indicating that students often struggle with grasping governmental structures and mechanisms due to a lack of applied learning strategies (Obiagu, 2025; Ren & Tek, 2022). Simulation-based learning and interactive media should be incorporated into civics instruction.

Respect for Diversity

Most students expressed positive attitudes toward diversity, with 50–60% stating they often or very often displayed tolerant behavior. However, about 20% of students were in the lower tolerance category. Multicultural education has proven effective in cultivating respect for social and cultural diversity (Riveiro-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Zakiah et al., 2023).

Honest and Responsible Behavior

While the majority of students demonstrated honest and responsible behavior, approximately 25–30% showed inconsistency. The development of these character traits requires habitual reinforcement and role modeling within the school environment. A value-based approach and teacher exemplification are crucial to strengthen students' character formation.

Analyzing Citizenship Issues

Students' abilities to analyze issues such as human rights and social justice remain low. More than 60% did not routinely engage in activities related to issue analysis. Multicultural education and case study-based learning have been shown to enhance students' critical awareness and analytical skills regarding socio-political issues.

Practicing Tolerance in Daily Life

Although nearly half of the students consistently exhibited tolerance, more than 40% still require additional guidance. Developing this disposition calls for intercultural dialogue, role-playing, and experiential learning.

Applying Civic Knowledge Locally and Globally

Fewer than 50% of students could apply civic concepts in real-life contexts. This difficulty points to a weak connection between theory and both local and global citizenship practice. To address this, schools need to integrate social projects, global issue discussions, and community-based activities into PPKn (Chen et al., 2025).

Interviews with PPKn teachers reinforced the quantitative data, revealing that teaching methods remain largely conventional and insufficiently contextualized. This supports literature suggesting that teachers often face pedagogical dilemmas when attempting to translate civic values into meaningful classroom practice (Ekström, 2024; López-Meseguer & Aparicio-Herguedas, 2024).

While students generally understand the fundamental values of citizenship, there are significant challenges in developing civic skills and dispositions. This study highlights the need for more interactive, contextual, and project-based learning approaches to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and the practical application of citizenship in everyday life (Dijkstra et al., 2025; Munniksmä et al., 2024; Navarro et al., 2025).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that most students demonstrate a solid understanding of fundamental citizenship values, such as *Pancasila*, citizens' rights and responsibilities, and tolerance. However, students' civic skills and abilities to analyze public issues remain underdeveloped. These results align with previous studies suggesting that current citizenship education tends to be normative and has yet to fully foster participatory democratic practices (Banderas Navarro, 2020; Sandahl & Björklund, 2023; Wahlström et al., 2020).

Students' limited understanding of governmental systems and public issues reflects a persistent gap between curriculum content and classroom implementation. International studies have similarly found that civics education often fails to build students' political literacy and critical thinking skills (Chibambo & Divala, 2023; Kamani-Renedo & Garcia, 2025; Obiagu, 2025). For example, students' unfamiliarity with national institutions suggests that teaching strategies do not adequately encourage critical exploration (Ren & Tek, 2022; Tsai et al., 2020).

In this context, project-based learning, controversial issue discussions, and government simulations are seen as effective strategies to cultivate students' civic competencies (Arjun & Srivastava, 2020; Chen et al., 2025; Montessori et al., 2024; Navarro et al., 2025). As noted by (Flensner, 2020) and (Lindström, 2024), structured teaching of controversial issues can enhance students' critical and reflective thinking toward social realities.

While attitudes such as tolerance and responsibility are evident among many students, inconsistencies in practice suggest that these values though theoretically understood, are not fully internalized in daily life. Character education through modeling, habituation, and the integration of digital media has been shown to be effective in reinforcing civic attitudes (Siregar et al., 2024; Zakiah et al., 2023). Furthermore, the findings reinforce the idea that classroom diversity and local cultural influences shape students' perceptions of pluralism. Hence, multicultural approaches are essential for instilling tolerance and appreciation for diversity (Riveiro-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Zakiah et al., 2023).

Notably, students' capacity to connect civic knowledge with local and global contexts remains weak. In an era of digitalization and globalization, global citizenship literacy is crucial and can be fostered through intercultural dialogue, community projects, and the strategic use of technology (Beichi et al., 2024; Cleofas & Labayo, 2024; Tomé et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2023). These difficulties are often rooted in overloaded curricula and instructional models that lack participatory elements (Ekström, 2024; Golledge, 2024; López-Meseguer & Aparicio-Herguedas, 2024). Teachers must be empowered through reflective and experiential pedagogical training that aligns instructional strategies with students' social contexts (Habte et al., 2021; Larsson et al., 2025; Persson, 2023).

Other studies emphasize that teachers frequently face dilemmas between curricular values and administrative constraints, which hinder the implementation of ideal civic education (Jansson & Löfgren, 2024; Print, 2023). To bridge this gap, education policy should support pedagogical innovation as well as increased autonomy for teachers (Dijkstra et al., 2025; J. Wang, 2024). In conclusion, to improve students' comprehensive citizenship competence, PPKn education must be re-envisioned not merely as a vehicle for normative knowledge transfer, but as a means of social transformation and the cultivation of democratic skills. Both curriculum and instructional methods must be reformulated to reflect local needs, global opportunities, and digital-age challenges (Bombardelli, 2024; Navarro et al., 2025; Nob et al., 2025; Wahlström et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that junior high school students in Bima Regency demonstrate a generally adequate level of citizenship competence in terms of knowledge and attitudes—particularly in understanding *Pancasila* values, citizens' rights and obligations, and appreciation for diversity. However, the civic skills dimension, including critical thinking, analysis of socio-political issues, and active participation, remains underdeveloped. The primary challenge lies in the predominantly conventional teaching approaches, which are often insufficiently applied and lack meaningful engagement with both local and global contexts. These limitations hinder

students' ability to translate theoretical knowledge into practical civic behavior. Therefore, to enhance students' overall citizenship competence, it is essential to reformulate both the curriculum and instructional strategies toward more contextual, reflective, and experiential learning. PPKn education must evolve beyond the mere transmission of normative knowledge to serve as a transformative platform for social development and democratic empowerment.

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