

Constructivist Approach in Forming Pancasila Leadership Character Through Civic Education Courses

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Abstract

Background - Civic Education is essential for shaping students into future leaders with integrity, responsibility, and strong social awareness. This study examines the application of a constructivism approach in Civic Education to cultivate leadership qualities based on Pancasila values.

Research Urgency Amid globalization and digital change, Civic Education in Indonesia must address declining moral awareness and civic responsibility among students. A constructivist approach is urgently needed to replace rote learning with active, reflective, and value-based education that strengthens leadership and internalization of Pancasila principles.

Research Objectives - This study aims to analyze and develop a constructivism approach as an effective strategy for character-building within Civic Education.

Research Method - A qualitative approach was used, employing literature review, observations, and interviews with students and educators. Data were analyzed descriptively to assess the effectiveness of the learning model.

Research Findings - The implementation of experiential learning, interactive discussions, case studies, and collaborative projects significantly deepened students' understanding of Pancasila principles. Additionally, adapting the curriculum to social realities and integrating technology were found to be key factors for creating a more relevant and contextual educational process.

Research Conclusion - The constructivist approach in Civic Education not only enhances academic knowledge but also actively shapes a leadership character that is profoundly oriented toward national values. This model is effective in producing future leaders who can contribute to national development with an inclusive, democratic, and socially just mindset.

Research Novelty - Specific focus on developing a practical, applied constructivist framework for Civic Education that explicitly integrates Pancasila values with modern pedagogical techniques, addressing the urgent need for leaders who embody Indonesia's core national principles.

Keywords: Civic Education, Constructivism, Pancasila Leadership.

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INTRODUCTION

The existence of a nation is closely linked to the quality and character of its human resources. In this context, character education plays a crucial role, particularly within the Indonesian education system (Multazam & Setiasih, 2023). Character education aims to instill and internalize the noble values embodied in Pancasila, the philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state. These values are not merely acquired knowledge but are expected to become an integral part of society's attitudes, behaviors, and ways of thinking (Komariah et al, 2020; Noor et al, 2024). The goal is to produce not only academically proficient individuals but also future leaders with moral integrity and a strong sense of national identity.

Character education aims to improve the quality of educational delivery and outcomes in schools (Atika et al., 2022), leading to the achievement of character formation and noble morals of students in a complete, integrated, and balanced manner (Rohaeni et al, 2021). This study centers on two interconnected concepts: Civic education and the constructivism approach. Civic education serves as a crucial vehicle for transmitting national values and fostering a sense of civic responsibility among students. Its purpose is to go beyond mere theoretical knowledge, aiming to build a practical understanding of Pancasila values that can be applied to real-world social challenges (Juariah, 2023). The second core concept, the constructivism approach, is a learning theory that posits that individuals actively construct their own knowledge and meaning based on their experiences (Masgumelar & Mustafa, 2021; Nerita et al, 2023). Unlike traditional passive learning models, constructivism encourages students to engage in critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving, thereby transforming them from passive recipients of information into active participants in their own learning. By applying this approach to civic education, students can build a deeper, more personal connection to Pancasila values.

Character education operates on the premise that ethical behavior and leadership are learned skills that can be developed through deliberate practice (Fauzi, 2019). This research analyzes the development of leadership character as a key variable. Leadership grounded in Pancasila values is the fundamental basis for confronting national challenges such as corruption, social conflict, and disintegration (Shofwan & Munib, 2023; Djami et al, 2025). By integrating constructivist methods, this study investigates how to effectively cultivate qualities of mutual cooperation, social justice, and popular sovereignty in future leaders. The Jakarta Correctional Sciences Polytechnic, as a specialized educational institution, serves as a significant case study for examining the practical application of this pedagogical model. The institution is expected to be a role model in implementing these values, as leadership based on Pancasila is the primary foundation for facing national challenges (Malik, 2020; Fernando et al, 2022). Therefore, Piaget's cognitive view of constructivism and the object of learning model within the theory emphasize characteristics that essentially support a boundaryless learning context (Sallie et al, 2020).

Despite the established importance of Pancasila and character education, there is a significant disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Reality shows that the values of Pancasila are often only understood conceptually without real implementation in daily life (Ismi et al, 2025; Amanda et al, 2025; Fajriati et al, 2025; Purbiyanto et al, 2025). Students tend to view Pancasila education and civic education as formal courses without direct relevance to their character development. This is evidenced by a survey from the Center for the Study of Social and Cultural Change and the Institute for General Sciences (LBIPU) at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (UMS), which showed that Pancasila learning was boring, lacked contextualization, and was insufficiently inclusive of affective-behavioral aspects. Furthermore, a 2018 study by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) showed that only around 6.2% of students correctly answered questions about national insight. This problem highlights a critical gap: while the curriculum exists to instill these values, the pedagogical approaches used often fail to create a meaningful and lasting impact on students' character and behavior. The values of Pancasila, as the foundation of the state, must be introduced and implemented from an early age through Civics courses (Kabatiah, 2021). Instilling Pancasila leadership character values in Indonesia is an integral part of efforts to produce a generation of leaders who are not only technically competent but also possess moral integrity and national values.

Specific focus on developing a practical, applied constructivist framework for Civic Education that explicitly integrates Pancasila values with modern pedagogical techniques. This study moves beyond a conceptual discussion of constructivism and provides a concrete model for implementation (Li & Xue, 2024), addressing the urgent need for leaders who not only understand but also embody Indonesia's core national principles. The objective of this study is to analyze and develop a constructivism approach in Civic Education as a strategy for shaping leadership character based on Pancasila values. This research is urgent because it

directly addresses the critical need to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge of national values and their practical application in cultivating ethical, responsible, and nationally-oriented leaders. This study contributes to the fields of education and leadership development by providing a concrete, effective pedagogical model that can be replicated to strengthen character education in Indonesia's educational system.

METHODS

Research design and Research participants

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. This approach was chosen to provide an in-depth, comprehensive understanding of the implementation of a constructivist approach in Civic Education at the Correctional Sciences Polytechnic. A qualitative design allows for a rich exploration of the phenomena as they occur naturally (Lim, 2025), capturing the nuances of how the learning model influences student character and leadership development. The research was conducted at the Correctional Sciences Polytechnic campus. The participants included both students and educators who were directly involved in the Civic Education course. Participants were selected purposely to ensure the data collected was relevant to the study's focus on the constructivist learning model and its role in shaping Pancasila-based leadership character.

Data Collection Techniques and Data Validity Data Analysis

To ensure a robust and well-rounded data set, three primary techniques were used. Participant observation allowed the researcher to directly witness how students engaged in active learning activities, such as discussions, case analyses, and reflections. This was complemented by in-depth, semi-structured interviews with both students and educators, which provided valuable insights into their experiences and perceptions (Brown & Danaher, 2019; Ruslin et al, 2022). Finally, a documentation study was conducted to analyze academic references and course materials. The validity of the data was strengthened through triangulation. This involved cross-referencing information from different sources and techniques (Meydan & Akkas, 2024). For example, the findings from student interviews were verified against classroom observations and compared with the perspectives of the educators. This process was crucial for ensuring the consistency, accuracy, and overall reliability of the data obtained. The collected data were analyzed using the content analysis method (Moleong, 2010), following a systematic and structured process. All data were first compiled and organized. Next, they were coded and categorized to identify recurring themes and patterns. The findings were then simplified, and conclusions were drawn based on the synthesized information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Constructivist Approach in Civic Education Courses

Constructivism is an effort to build a life apparatus with modern culture in the context of educational philosophy (Suparlan, 2019). According to Piaget, constructivism is an educational theory that emphasizes that individuals construct their knowledge through direct experience with their environment. Jean Piaget is known as a psychology icon who pioneered constructivism as a learning theory or teaching and learning approach (Erawati & Adnyana, 2024). The constructivist approach used in this study is a learning strategy that emphasizes active student participation in constructing knowledge through social interaction and critical reflection. The main goal is for students to not only passively receive information from lecturers but also actively engage in the knowledge construction process, which in turn enables them to internalize Pancasila values and develop leadership character based on those values (Harefa & Harefa, 2025).

The constructivist approach emphasizes that knowledge is not transmitted directly from teacher to student in the context of character education, but rather is the result of an interaction between students and their environment and between students themselves (Hafizi, 2023). This is particularly relevant in Civic Education, where national values and moral principles must be deeply internalized. By emphasizing discussions, case studies, and collaborative projects, this approach encourages students to connect theory with real-life practice so they can apply these values in concrete situations.

Constructivism learning strategies have several strategies in the learning process, such as top down processing in constructivist learning. Students learn by starting with complex problems to solve (Arini & Umami, 2019). In the classroom, the application of constructivism is realized through several active methods. First, open discussion where students are encouraged to ask questions, express opinions, and discuss critical issues related to Pancasila values. These discussions not only enhance conceptual understanding but also

develop strong communication and argumentation skills. Second, there is a case study where students examine real-life situations related to the application of Pancasila values. This approach helps them connect theory with practice and understand the relevance of these values in social and political contexts. The last active method is collaborative projects that allow students to work in groups to complete tasks that require the application of national values. These activities enhance cooperation, leadership, and creativity, while also fostering character development through shared experiences.

Many learning experts have recommended the use of a constructivist learning paradigm to improve the quality of learning processes and outcomes (Barlian & Solekah, 2022). Based on the author's research, the constructivist approach is implemented through various strategies, such as class discussions, case studies, and collaborative projects. Through open discussions, students are encouraged to express their opinions and ask critical questions about the values of Pancasila, creating an interactive and cooperative learning environment (Arega & Hunde, 2025). Case studies are used to connect theory with practice, where students analyze real-life situations related to the application of national values and social justice. Collaborative projects, as an active method, allow students to work together in groups to develop solutions and action plans that reflect Pancasila values, thus making learning more contextual and meaningful. Pancasila values serve as a reference for concepts, implementation, and goals to be achieved in national life (Risdiyani & Dewi, 2021).

Learning can impact attitudes, including a person's ability to choose a course of action. Learning outcomes can include a tendency to act in the face of an event, intellectual skills in interacting with the environment using symbols, and overall behavioral changes resulting from the learning process (Soelton, 2023). The constructivist learning model enables students to actively construct knowledge during learning activities (Suparno, 1997; Fitri, 2022). The learning process is an active one, with students constructing the meaning of texts, dialogues, physical experiences, and other contexts to generate meaningful knowledge that can be stored in long-term memory. The constructivist approach emphasizes that students must participate effectively in all learning processes from beginning to end, and that real-life activities are the best method (Al Abri et al, 2024). In general, the application of the constructivist approach in the Civics course at the Correctional Sciences Polytechnic has proven effective in enhancing the internalization of Pancasila values. Through intense interaction, students not only understand the theory but also apply it in real-life situations, significantly strengthening leadership character based on Pancasila values.

Formation of Pancasila Leadership Character through Civic Education Courses

Civics education (PKn) in higher education serves as a source of value learning and a vehicle for students to strengthen their personalities and become whole human beings (Qari et al, 2024). This goal is grounded in reality, as students are the nation's next generation, who must possess religious, intellectual, and humanistic character, as well as a love for their nation and country. Therefore, PKn in higher education plays a vital role in shaping student character. Character education in the context of general education (PKn), viewed from a critical theory perspective, should not be tied to established values but rather should align with what students should acquire to face their future (Dahliyana et al, 2020). Etymologically, the word "character" comes from the Greek, meaning "to mark" (Delgado Gómez, 2023). Character, disposition, morals are the wholeness of the human soul or the unification of the movement of thought, feelings, and will or desire which then gives rise to energy (Herawati et al, 2022). The existence of Civics Education in higher education is a vehicle for students to shape their character, to have a commitment and consistency in realizing national life based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, to foster a sense of nationalism and sensitivity to social realities, so that they can consciously and optimally optimize their academic capital in developing science, technology, and even art to solve social problems with full responsibility and morality. Character formation in the educational environment is developed through habituation in student/student relationships and through the learning process in the classroom. One subject that has a significant influence in shaping student character is Pancasila and Civics Education (PPKn) or Citizenship Education (Noe et al, 2021; Paul et al, 2022).

Civic Education learning in higher education needs to be based on modernization and make reality, problems and social phenomena as learning studies, so that students have awareness and attitudes towards social dynamics, of course this practice emphasizes that democracy and participation occur in Civic Education learning (Pratiyaksi et al, 2025). The formation of Pancasila leadership through Civic Education Courses at the Correctional Sciences Polytechnic is a strategic effort in shaping the identity and personality of students as the nation's next generation. Civic education not only serves as a source of values and guidelines for the development of study programs, but also as a vehicle to strengthen the personality of students to become whole individuals with religious, civilized, intellectual, humanistic characters, and love for their nation and country

(Chotimah et al, 2021; Casmana et al, 2023; Devra, 2024). As stated by Thelma (2024) Civic Education has an important role in instilling the values of nationality, democracy, and social responsibility in the life of the nation and state.

Civics learning at the Correctional Sciences Polytechnic has adapted to current developments. Learning based on social reality makes various social issues and phenomena the object of study in the context of modernization. This approach encourages students to develop critical awareness and be able to determine their attitudes towards emerging social dynamics (Okolie et al, 2022; Ide & Beddoe, 2024; Waghid, 2024). Furthermore, the application of democracy and participation in learning are also crucial factors in enabling students to directly experience the democratization process in academic life. As emphasized by Cathrin & Wikandaru (2023), democratic learning can increase student involvement in the decision-making process.

The learning process is designed to be more interactive and applicable by utilizing discussion-based methods, case studies, and policy analysis from a pedagogical perspective. Students not only to understand normative concepts but also to apply national values in everyday life (Elbes & Oktaviani, 2022; Akrim et al, 2022; Sakti et al, 2023). Furthermore, the integration of technology into learning is essential to ensure the material presented is more relevant to the needs of the times (Siagian, 2022). In the context of Pancasila leadership character formation, this approach is crucial for instilling values such as mutual cooperation, responsibility, and leadership oriented towards community welfare. Civic Education at the Correctional Sciences Polytechnic not only develops theoretical understanding but also equips students with practical skills in applying Pancasila values in their professional and social lives.

Optimization of Civic Education learning must continue through curriculum innovation and contextual and participatory pedagogical approaches, so that students can deeply internalize the values of Pancasila (Suryadi, 2023). Thus, higher education plays a role not only in the transfer of knowledge but also as a vehicle for comprehensive character development. Making students future leaders who are qualified, possess integrity, and are ready to work together in building the nation's civilization

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and data analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the constructivist approach in Civic Education plays a strategic role in shaping leadership character based on Pancasila values. This research shows that experiential learning, interactive discussions, case studies, and collaborative projects can improve students' understanding of Pancasila principles in a more comprehensive and applicable manner. Furthermore, the adaptation of Civic Education to dynamic social realities and the use of technology in learning are key factors in creating a more contextual, relevant, and effective educational process. This approach not only encourages students to understand the normative concepts in Pancasila but also instills leadership values oriented towards integrity, responsibility, and a high level of social awareness. Thus, through a constructivist and integrative learning approach, students not only gain broad academic insight but are also equipped with leadership competencies based on Pancasila values. This is expected to produce a young generation capable of contributing to building the nation with an inclusive, democratic, and socially just attitude.

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