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**Civics Learning Strategies in Elementary Madrasahs: Theory,
Implementation, and Relevance in Building Student Character**

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ABSTRACT

Civic Education learning strategies at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah/Elementary School level play a crucial role in shaping the character, moral values, and civic awareness of students from an early age. The reality in the field shows that civic education is still often delivered in a conventional, teacher-centered manner, which is less able to foster active engagement and value internalization among students. This paper aims to examine in depth various PKn learning strategies that are appropriate for MI/SD, including inquiry-based, cooperative, problem-based learning, character habituation, and technology-based strategies. The method used is library research with a descriptive qualitative approach. The results of the study show that the application of varied, contextual, and student-centered learning strategies has proven effective in improving students' understanding, attitudes, and civic skills. Supporting factors for the success of these strategies include teachers' pedagogical competence, school infrastructure readiness, as well as family and social environment involvement. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include the limited digital competency of teachers, a lack of innovative teaching material references, and low active student participation due to monotonous teaching methods. The implications of this paper emphasize the importance of continuous professional development for PKn teachers at MI/SD so that they can apply innovative, adaptive, and relevant learning strategies in line with current developments.

ABSTRAK

Strategi pembelajaran Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan (PKn) di tingkat Madrasah Ibtidaiyah/Sekolah Dasar (MI/SD) memegang peranan krusial dalam membentuk karakter, nilai moral, dan kesadaran kewarganegaraan peserta didik sejak usia dini. Kenyataan di lapangan menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran PKn masih sering disampaikan secara konvensional dan berpusat pada guru, sehingga kurang mampu menumbuhkan keterlibatan aktif dan internalisasi nilai pada siswa. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara mendalam berbagai strategi pembelajaran PKn yang tepat diterapkan di MI/SD, meliputi strategi berbasis inkuiri, kooperatif, berbasis masalah (problem-based learning), pembiasaan karakter, dan berbasis teknologi. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan strategi pembelajaran yang bervariasi, kontekstual, dan berpusat pada siswa terbukti efektif meningkatkan pemahaman, sikap, dan keterampilan kewarganegaraan peserta didik. Faktor pendukung keberhasilan strategi ini meliputi kompetensi pedagogis guru, kesiapan sarana dan prasarana sekolah, serta keterlibatan keluarga dan lingkungan sosial. Sementara itu, faktor penghambatnya antara lain keterbatasan kompetensi digital guru, minimnya referensi bahan ajar inovatif, dan rendahnya partisipasi aktif siswa akibat metode pengajaran yang monoton. Implikasi dari tulisan ini menekankan pentingnya pengembangan profesionalisme guru PKn MI/SD secara berkelanjutan agar mampu menerapkan strategi pembelajaran yang inovatif, adaptif, dan relevan dengan perkembangan zaman.

INTRODUCTION

Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PKn) is a compulsory subject taught at all levels of education in Indonesia, including at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah/Elementary School (MI/SD) level. This subject plays a strategic role in shaping students' personality, moral values, character, and

civic awareness. Through PKn learning, students are expected to not only cognitively understand the basic concepts of citizenship but also internalize the nation's noble values, such as Pancasila, democracy, human rights, and unity, in their daily lives.

Considering that students at the elementary school (MI/SD) level are between 6 and 12 years old, which is the golden age for character and personality development, Civics learning strategies applied at this level need to be designed very carefully and precisely (Assingkily, 2021). Selecting an appropriate learning strategy will significantly determine the success of transferring knowledge, shaping attitudes, and developing citizenship skills in students. A good learning strategy not only conveys material informatively but also touches students' affective and psychomotor dimensions so that civic values are truly realized in students' actual behavior.

However, the reality on the ground shows conditions that differ from the ideal. Civics instruction in many elementary schools still tends to be conducted using conventional methods, such as one-way lectures, text memorization, and mechanical assignments. As a result, students only understand Civics as a subject to be studied and tested, without truly internalizing and practicing its values. Furthermore, this situation also impacts students' low motivation to learn Civics, which is often perceived as boring and irrelevant to their lives.

This problem has become increasingly complex with the challenges of the era of globalization and the industrial revolution 4.0, which have brought with them rapid social and cultural changes. Amidst the rapid flow of information, the influence of foreign cultures, the rise of individualism, and the low tolerance often seen on social media, the role of Civics as a unifying force for national values has become increasingly important. Therefore, Civics teachers at the MI/SD level are required to continuously innovate in implementing learning strategies that are not only academically effective but also capable of shaping students' strong, adaptive, and nationalistic characters.

Various scientific studies and research have discussed learning strategies in the context of character and citizenship education. Winataputra (2012) emphasized that meaningful Civics learning requires a multidimensional approach that integrates students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Meanwhile, Sapriya (2015) emphasized the importance of using active and participatory learning strategies in Civics so that students become not only objects of learning but also active subjects in the process of internalizing values. Furthermore, research conducted by Susanto (2021) showed that the application of problem-based learning strategies in Civics has been proven to improve critical thinking skills and civic attitudes in elementary school students.

However, most of these studies have not comprehensively discussed various Civics learning strategies in an integrated and comprehensive manner tailored to the MI/SD context. Previous studies generally focused on only one or two specific strategies without providing a systematic overview of the diversity of strategies that can be implemented, along with their strengths, weaknesses, and relevance to Civics learning objectives. This creates a research gap that needs to be addressed through more comprehensive and integrative studies.

The novelty of this paper lies in its systematic integration of various Civics learning strategies, ranging from inquiry-based, cooperative, problem-based learning, character building, to technology-based strategies, into a comprehensive and contextual study for elementary school (MI/SD) levels. This paper not only discusses the strategies theoretically but also analyzes the supporting and inhibiting factors for their implementation, as well as their relevance to student character building in the modern era. Thus, it is hoped that this paper can make a real contribution to the development of more innovative, effective, and meaningful Civics learning practices at the MI/SD level.

Based on the background description, this paper aims to examine in depth various Civics learning strategies that are appropriate to be applied in MI/SD, the factors that influence their implementation, and their relevance in the formation of character and civic awareness of students.

METHOD

This study employed a library research method with a qualitative descriptive approach. The library research method is a research approach conducted by collecting, studying, recording, and analyzing various scientific literature sources relevant to the topic being studied. The qualitative descriptive approach was chosen because this study aims to describe and explain in depth the phenomena and concepts related to Civics learning strategies in MI/SD, without using numbers or statistical measurements, but rather by emphasizing a deep understanding of learning theories, concepts, and practices.

This research focuses on examining various civics learning strategies relevant for implementation at the elementary school (MI/SD) level, including inquiry-based, cooperative, problem-based learning, character building, and technology-based strategies. The study also includes an analysis of the supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing these strategies, as well as their relevance to character development and student civic awareness.

The data sources used in this study consist of two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from primary reference books in the field of Civics education, learning strategies, and character education, including the book *Civics Learning in Elementary School* by Sapriya (2015), *Civics Education: Theoretical and Practical Foundations* by Winataputra (2012), and the book *Innovative Learning Strategies* by Rusman (2018). Secondary data were obtained from scientific journals, research articles, undergraduate theses, and seminar proceedings relevant to the research topic, selected based on the suitability of the theme, the recency of the data (published between 2015 and 2024), and the quality of indexed and accredited sources.

Data collection techniques are carried out through systematic stages, namely: (1) identification and search for library sources through various scientific databases such as Google Scholar, SINTA, and DOAJ; (2) selection and evaluation of sources based on their relevance and scientific quality; (3) reading, recording, and classifying important information from each source; and (4) grouping data based on the focus of discussion, including the concept of civics learning strategies, types of strategies, supporting and inhibiting factors, and implications for the formation of student character.

The data analysis technique used descriptive qualitative content analysis. The analysis process was carried out by reading and understanding each source in depth, identifying relevant key themes, comparing and contrasting findings from various sources, then interpreting and concluding the study results in a systematic and structured manner. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, namely by comparing information from various different references to ensure the consistency and validity of the information presented.

Through this research method, the author attempts to produce a comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth study of civics learning strategies in MI/SD along with all dimensions of its implementation in the context of basic education in Indonesia.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Basic Concepts of Civics Learning Strategies in MI/SD

Learning strategies are essentially a series of plans, steps, and methods designed by teachers to create optimal learning conditions so that learning objectives can be achieved effectively and efficiently. In the context of Civics learning in MI/SD, learning strategies are very important because this subject not only aims to transfer knowledge, but also to shape attitudes, values, and civic skills that will become provisions for students in social life. According to Winataputra (2012), effective Civics learning must be able to integrate three main dimensions, namely civic knowledge, civic disposition, and civic skills, so that the learning process does not stop at the cognitive aspect alone.

Sapriya (2015) explains that civics learning strategies in elementary schools (SD/MI) must be adapted to the cognitive developmental characteristics of elementary school-aged

children, who are at the concrete operational stage. At this stage, children more easily understand abstract concepts such as democracy, justice, and unity when presented with concrete examples, real-life situations, or direct experiences relevant to their daily lives. Therefore, civics learning strategies in MI/SD need to be designed in such a way as to provide meaningful, contextual, and enjoyable learning experiences for students.

Furthermore, the determination of Civics learning strategies must also consider the desired learning objectives. The Standard Competencies and Basic Competencies for Civics in elementary schools (SD/MI) encompass various aspects, ranging from understanding Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, awareness of the rights and obligations of citizens, respect for cultural diversity, to the development of democratic and responsible attitudes. With such a broad and diverse range of material, Civics teachers are required to possess the skills to select and combine various learning strategies that best suit the characteristics of the material, the conditions of the students, and the desired learning objectives.

Types of Effective Civics Learning Strategies in MI/SD

Based on the results of various literature reviews and previous research, several types of civics learning strategies have been proven effective at the elementary school (MI/SD) level. Below, we describe each strategy, along with explanations, examples of its application, and its relevance to civics learning.

a. Inquiry Learning Strategy

The inquiry strategy is a learning approach that encourages students to actively seek, discover, and construct their own knowledge through a process of investigation, questioning, and problem-solving. In Civics learning, this strategy is highly relevant for developing students' critical and democratic thinking skills. An example of the application of the inquiry strategy in Civics in elementary schools is by asking students open-ended questions about the social conditions around them, such as "Why are there still people littering in our environment? What can we do?" Then, students are invited to seek information, discuss, and formulate solutions together. Through this process, students not only learn about the theoretical responsibilities of citizens but also experience active participation in solving real problems in their environment.

Research conducted by Arifin (2020) shows that the use of inquiry strategies in civics learning in fifth-grade elementary school significantly improves students' critical thinking skills compared to conventional lecture methods. Students who learn using inquiry strategies are better able to analyze social problems, express opinions, and provide logical and well-founded arguments.

b. Cooperative Learning Strategy

Cooperative learning strategies place students in small groups to work together, help each other, and teach each other to achieve shared learning goals. In the context of Civics, this strategy is highly relevant because it directly practices civic values such as cooperation, tolerance, mutual respect, and deliberation and consensus. Some cooperative learning techniques that can be applied in Civics at MI/SD include Jigsaw, Think-Pair-Share (TPS), Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD), and Group Investigation. Through these techniques, students learn to value the contributions of each group member, resolve conflicts democratically, and develop a sense of responsibility for shared success.

Rusman (2018) explains that cooperative learning not only impacts students' academic achievement but also significantly contributes to the development of their social skills and character. In the context of civics, this is particularly relevant, given that the primary goal of this subject is to develop citizens who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess strong social skills, a democratic spirit, and a concern for others.

c. Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Strategy

The Problem-Based Learning (PBL) strategy places real-life problems as the starting point for learning. Students are confronted with authentic and relevant problems relevant to their lives, then challenged to analyze, discuss, and find solutions to these problems. In civics learning in elementary schools (MI/SD), PBL can be implemented, for example, through case studies of children's rights violations, conflicts between friends caused by differences of opinion, or environmental issues surrounding the school. Through the problem-solving process, students not only develop cognitive abilities but also hone critical thinking skills, empathy, and a sense of social responsibility.

Susanto (2021) found in his research that the implementation of PBL in Civics in elementary schools significantly improved students' civic attitudes, including increased empathy, social awareness, and the ability to participate in collective decision-making. This demonstrates that PBL is not only effective in improving academic achievement but also highly relevant in developing the civic character needed by students.

d. Character Habituation Strategy

The character building strategy is a civics learning approach that emphasizes the formation of positive habits through consistent repetition of behavior in the school environment. This strategy is based on the understanding that strong character is not formed instantly through classroom learning alone, but through a continuous and consistent process of habituation in various daily life situations. In the MI/SD environment, the character building strategy can be realized through various routine school programs and activities, such as the 5S habituation (Smile, Greet, Say Hello, Be Polite, Courteous), the culture of queuing, meaningful flag ceremonies, mutual cooperation activities to clean the school environment, and literacy programs on Pancasila values.

Lickona (2013), in his theory of character education, asserts that habituation is one of the most important components in character formation, alongside moral knowing and moral feeling. Without consistent habituation, knowledge of civic values will never truly become part of a student's character. Therefore, character habituation strategies must be an integral component of civics learning in elementary and elementary schools.

e. Technology-Based Learning Strategies

In the rapidly evolving digital era, technology-based civics learning strategies are increasingly relevant and essential for implementation in elementary and elementary schools (MI/SD). The use of technology in civics learning can include the use of interactive learning videos, multimedia presentations, digital democratic simulations, online quizzes, and game-based learning platforms (edu-games) themed around civic values. By utilizing technology appropriately, teachers can create more engaging, interactive, and relevant learning experiences in the digital world that is familiar to today's generation of students.

However, the use of technology in civics learning must be done wisely and purposefully. Technology is merely a tool, and its effectiveness depends largely on how teachers design its use within a meaningful learning context. Teachers need to ensure that the use of technology in civics learning is not merely entertainment or a time-filler, but truly serves as a medium that encourages thinking, reflection, and the internalization of civic values in students.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Civics Learning Strategies

The successful implementation of civics learning strategies in MI/SD is influenced by various factors, both supportive and inhibiting. A comprehensive understanding of these factors is crucial for teachers and educational stakeholders in efforts to continuously improve the quality of civics learning.

The supporting factors for the implementation of Civics learning strategies in MI/SD include several important aspects. First, teacher pedagogical competence is the most determining factor in the successful implementation of learning strategies. Teachers who have a deep understanding of various learning strategies, are able to select appropriate strategies according to the characteristics of the material and students, and are skilled in managing the learning process will be able to create meaningful and effective Civics learning experiences. Second, the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure, including a well-stocked school library, information technology facilities, conducive classrooms, and a variety of learning media, will greatly support the variety of learning strategies that teachers can apply. Third, a positive school culture, including supportive principal leadership, a democratic school climate, and a tradition of collaboration between teachers, will create an ecosystem conducive to Civics learning innovation. Fourth, the active involvement of parents and the community in supporting the character education process in schools is also a very important supporting factor, because the habituation of civic values requires consistency between the school environment and the family environment.

On the other hand, several factors hinder the implementation of civics learning strategies in MI/SD. First, the limited professional and pedagogical competence of civics teachers is a major obstacle. Not all civics teachers in MI/SD have the appropriate educational background or have received adequate training in innovative learning strategies. This leaves many teachers stuck in ineffective, conventional teaching routines. Second, the lack of time and high teacher workloads are also real obstacles. Preparing innovative learning strategies requires considerable time and energy, while teachers often have a significant administrative and non-academic burden. Third, the lack of references and innovative teaching materials that are appropriate to the local context and current developments presents a challenge for civics teachers in developing relevant and engaging learning. Fourth, low awareness among some parents of the importance of character and citizenship education can also be a barrier, especially if there is a contradiction between the values taught in school and the customs within the family environment.

The Relevance of Civics Learning Strategies to the Formation of Character in MI/SD Students

The relevance of civics learning strategies and character development in elementary school (MI/SD) students is inseparable, as the two are essentially a complementary whole. A good civics learning strategy serves not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as an instrument for systematic and sustainable character development. When teachers implement cooperative learning strategies, for example, students not only learn the theoretical concept of cooperation but also experience and directly experience the values of cooperation, tolerance, and mutual respect in real-life interactions with their peers.

Muslich (2011) emphasized that effective character education must be integrated into the entire learning process, not simply as a separate supplementary or extracurricular program. In the context of Civics, this integration is very natural because character values such as honesty, responsibility, caring, tolerance, and nationalism are at the core of Civics learning materials. Therefore, every Civics learning strategy chosen by teachers essentially has great potential to shape students' character, provided it is designed and implemented with clear and reflective goals.

Furthermore, the relevance of civics learning strategies to character formation is also evident in their long-term impact. Students who are accustomed to learning through active, critical, and participatory learning strategies in civics from an early age will develop a stronger foundation for civic character. They will grow into individuals capable of critical thinking about social issues, actively participating in democratic life, appreciating diversity, and possessing a strong sense of social responsibility. These are the characteristics the Indonesian nation needs to face the challenges of the future.

This aligns with the research findings of Junaidi and Assya'bani (2022), which showed that students who receive Civics instruction using varied, student-centered strategies tend to exhibit more positive social attitudes, greater empathy, and a tendency to behave in accordance with Pancasila values in their daily lives. These findings further strengthen the argument that investing in developing quality Civics learning strategies impacts not only students' academic achievement but also the character and citizenship qualities of Indonesia's young generation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that Civics learning strategies in MI/SD play a crucial role in shaping the character, moral values, and civic awareness of students. Various Civics learning strategies can be implemented in MI/SD, including inquiry-based, cooperative, problem-based learning, character-building, and technology-based strategies. Each strategy has its own characteristics, advantages, and relevance in achieving comprehensive Civics learning objectives. The implementation of varied, contextual, and student-centered strategies has been proven effective in improving students' cognitive understanding, affective attitudes, and psychomotor skills in civics.

The successful implementation of civics learning strategies in MI/SD is influenced by various supporting factors, including teacher pedagogical competence, adequate facilities and infrastructure, a positive school culture, and active family involvement. Conversely, limited teacher competence, a lack of innovative teaching materials, high teacher workloads, and a lack of family support are inhibiting factors that need to be addressed immediately.

Civics learning strategies are closely linked to student character development. Each learning strategy chosen by teachers has the potential to shape students' character values, ranging from honesty, responsibility, tolerance, cooperation, and even nationalism. The long-term impact is the emergence of a generation of young Indonesians who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess strong character and civic awareness, key assets in social, national, and state life.

Therefore, continuous and systematic efforts are needed from all education stakeholders, especially teachers, schools, government, and families, to continue to develop and improve the quality of Civics learning strategies in MI/SD in order to realize Indonesia's national education goals.

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