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Elementary School Civics Materials and Curriculum

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Abstract

The implementation of Civics Education (PPKn) in elementary schools plays a strategic role in developing students' character, citizenship competence, and understanding of national values. The introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum has encouraged teachers to adapt learning materials to learning outcomes while promoting student-centered learning. However, various challenges remain in ensuring the alignment between instructional materials and curriculum objectives. This study aims to analyze the implementation of Civics learning materials, examine their alignment with learning outcomes, and identify challenges encountered by teachers in elementary schools. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach involving interviews, observations, and document analysis conducted in three elementary schools in Lampung Province, Indonesia. The findings indicate that teachers generally align Civics learning materials with curriculum learning outcomes through the development of teaching modules and lesson plans. The implementation also supports the development of Pancasila values, nationalism, democratic attitudes, and social responsibility. Nevertheless, challenges such as differences in students' learning abilities, limited instructional time, and inadequate learning media continue to affect learning effectiveness. The study concludes that successful implementation of Civics learning materials depends on teachers' pedagogical competence, continuous professional development, and adequate educational resources. The findings contribute to understanding how the Merdeka Curriculum can strengthen civic education in elementary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Civics Education (PKN) plays a crucial role in shaping the character of the younger generation from an early age. Through this subject, elementary school students are not only introduced to constitutional concepts or formal regulations, but also instilled with fundamental values such as integrity, discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect. The ultimate goal is to foster a love for the homeland and foster strong social adaptability in

children. Therefore, implementing PKn at the elementary level requires careful planning and consistency with applicable curriculum provisions.

In-depth interviews with several elementary school teachers revealed that the Civics material presented has been aligned with the national curriculum. Teachers actively integrate their learning strategies with the targeted learning outcomes (CP). This ensures that learning remains focused and aligned with academic requirements. Teaching readiness is also reflected in the preparation of learning materials, such as teaching modules and Lesson Implementation Plans (RPP), prior to classroom activities. These documents serve as concrete evidence that the curriculum serves as the primary guideline for learning practices.

However, conditions in the field often differ from the theoretical picture. Teachers face various real-world obstacles during the learning process. One major issue is the differences in student abilities. Within a class, students' understanding levels vary; some students grasp the material quickly, while others require repetition. This situation forces teachers to be more agile in managing learning methods to ensure no student is left behind. Difficulties are exacerbated by increasingly limited learning time and a relatively dense material load. Furthermore, the limited availability of interactive learning media often leads to student boredom.

These limitations require ongoing creativity and innovation from educators. Teachers must devise strategies to enliven the classroom atmosphere, for example by implementing active, student-centered learning models. This challenge has become even more challenging since the implementation of the independent curriculum, which demands independence in designing learning spaces that consider the characteristics of each student. The desired goal is to encourage students to actively express their opinions and develop critical thinking skills, rather than simply acting as passive listeners.

Based on this phenomenon, this paper was written to analyze the extent to which Civics material in elementary schools is consistent with the curriculum and learning outcomes established by the government. This study aims to identify obstacles faced by teachers and evaluate problem-solving strategies implemented in the field. Through this

discussion, readers are expected to gain a comprehensive understanding of effective, adaptive Civics learning practices that are oriented toward optimally fulfilling students' learning rights.

METHOD

This approach uses a qualitative approach because the researcher wants to understand the conditions that occur in the field in more depth. This approach was chosen so that the data obtained is not only in the form of numbers, but also experiences, opinions, and the results of direct observations during the research process. Thus, the researcher can describe the learning process naturally according to the actual situation. The focus of this research is to understand how the implementation of the Civics Education (PKn) curriculum at the elementary school level takes place, starting from the way teachers teach, the strategies used, and the various obstacles faced in the classroom. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative. This study aims to describe a phenomenon systematically and according to the facts found in the field. In this study, the researcher describes the implementation of Civics learning in elementary schools/Islamic elementary schools, starting from the planning stage, the learning process, to the evaluation conducted by teachers. The data that has been obtained is then analyzed and arranged coherently for easy understanding. Through this research, it is hoped that a clear picture of the implementation of Civics learning can be obtained and can be input for improving the quality of Civics learning in elementary schools.

A. Research Location

This study selected locations based on the need to examine various forms of curriculum implementation across several regions. Data collection was conducted at three elementary schools in different locations to provide a more diverse picture of curriculum implementation in the field

B. Research Time

Data collection was conducted in stages throughout March 2026. To ensure the information obtained was more accurate and consistent with school conditions, researchers conducted direct interviews with teachers teaching the relevant subjects at each school. The data collection process was carried out as follows:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Identifying the Scope of Elementary School Civics Material

In elementary school, Civics (PKn) material is actually very broad and multifaceted. This material consists of three main components: knowledge, attitudes, and skills. These three work together to teach students how to be good citizens, not stand alone. This means that learning PKn activities is not just memorizing stale ideas. Learning must be able to transform students into useful fields and produce results that can be seen in everyday life. One of the teachers at SD Negeri 1 Tanjung Besar confirmed that the material currently taught is correct and in accordance with the actual curriculum in teaching activities and instructions. The teacher consistently follows curriculum regulations, especially in the learning achievement stages (PP) that have been set by the government as an outline. This disciplinary measure is taken to ensure that classroom material remains focused, important, and does not deviate from students' abilities.

With this method, students are not only taught basic concepts of state administration; they also learn about national principles. The spirit of nationalism, love of the homeland, and the meaning of Pancasila are properly instilled. The process is quick, requiring small, consistent steps within the school environment. Students increasingly recognize the importance of maintaining a unified attitude within their community. They are taught that respect and tolerance for others are essential parts of life. Their understanding of the rights and obligations of citizens begins to develop from an early age. We hope these children will truly understand their social roles and responsibilities at home, at school, and in national organizations.

At this level, concepts about government structure and law are also introduced through simple analogies. Students are gradually taught how a country is governed, the rules that govern it, and why law is important for maintaining order. This material must be presented and packaged in a lighthearted manner to align with the cognitive development of elementary-aged children. Teachers at SD Negeri 2 Raja Basa Lama emphasize that the material on state administration and law is based on the applicable curriculum. The school's and teachers' adherence to official government guidelines

ensures this alignment. Character building is a result of civics learning. Integrity, discipline, responsibility, justice, and equality toward differences are decisions that must be made and integrated into every learning process. These values are applied in daily life and activities, in addition to being studied for exams. For example, group work can create a small laboratory where students can learn to collaborate and respect others' ideas. Classroom rules serve as a means to teach discipline and individual responsibility.

Civics is designed to improve social skills in addition to character development. When addressing issues around them, students are asked to think critically through discussions, Q&A sessions, and deliberation simulations. They are taught to communicate, collaborate, and make wise decisions. This method serves as an effective way to instill democratic principles from an early age. Similarly, a teacher at SD Negeri 1 Bandar Surabaya, Central Lampung, emphasized that the curriculum is always the primary resource when teaching. She ensured that appropriate academic space remains for the education and development of students' social skills. Currently, Civics material is being implemented at the elementary/Islamic elementary school level in stages, in line with the national curriculum. Teachers' professional awareness is very high to comply with government regulations, according to informants. Teachers now act as guides and facilitators rather than simply instructors who transfer textbooks. One goal is to ensure that teaching and learning is conducted in a more measured, precise, gradual, and effective manner while remaining aligned with the existing curriculum.

Four main elements support the Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) curriculum: Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity). This national consensus underpins the development of all curriculum materials. The goal is simple: to instill a deep sense of pride and love for the nation in every student. With these materials, PKn serves as a laboratory for Pancasila-inspired values, morals, and character within schools.

The goal of this learning process is to develop responsible individuals who are aware of their role as citizens. Civics material is designed to prioritize cognitive aspects over affective and psychomotor aspects. To ensure that students' social thinking and

behavior in society truly reflect broad humanitarian values, this balance is crucial. The Civics curriculum is well-designed to enhance the profile of Pancasila-based students. We are not simply teaching; we are preparing a future generation of Indonesia that is intelligent, morally responsible, democratic, active, and participates in society. With a thorough mastery of the material, this young generation is expected to grow into a society with high morals, noble character, and abiding by the laws of the state.

In Civics subjects in elementary schools (SD/MI), the implementation of a holistic approach essentially has one main goal, not simply the transfer of knowledge; it is an effort to develop students who are moral , democratic, and nationalistic. This, of course, is built through active and meaningful learning experiences for children. In practice, students' focus is no longer on rigid memorization of material. They should be directly involved. Students are encouraged to observe events around them, be brave enough to ask questions, and learn independently. Ideas are processed and communicated. During this educational process, the values of Pancasila become easier to understand and apply in everyday life.

The focus of learning must be comprehensive. The development of attitudes, skills, and knowledge goes hand in hand. To achieve this, teachers can use a variety of approaches, including conversations, role-playing simulations, and group work, as well as utilize developmentally appropriate teaching media. Ultimately, the goal is clear. Character education is more than just discussion; students are empowered to apply their knowledge in real life.

Analyzing the Suitability of Materials with CP

In fact, elementary school teachers in the field have been working together to align their material with the learning outcomes outlined in the curriculum. Before entering class, they first analyze the competencies that students must achieve. This initial step is crucial to maintaining focus and ensuring learning doesn't deviate from the intended path. This approach is consistently implemented at SDN 1 Tanjung Besar. Teachers are accustomed to targeting learning objectives before developing classroom administration tools. They don't simply memorize the curriculum framework, but translate it into

concrete action plans, such as lesson plans or teaching modules. These planning documents are designed flexibly. Teachers also pay attention to the real-world situation and the specific needs of students in the classroom. As a result, the material presented not only complies with government regulations but is also easier for children to understand.

A similar approach is also used at SDN 2 Raja Basa Lama. The teachers at the school use Learning Outcomes as the primary foundation. They then develop teaching modules and select materials that align with the students' thinking skills. To improve the quality of learning, the teachers actively engage in discussions with their colleagues. Through these activities, they can share experiences and gain knowledge about curriculum implementation in the classroom. The teachers also participate in various training and self-development programs. The goal is to maintain an up-to-date understanding of the applicable curriculum. This demonstrates the teachers' commitment to continuous learning and adhering to educational developments.

A similar trend is evident at SD Negeri 1 Bandar Surabaya, Central Lampung. Teachers there consistently refer to the learning outcomes outlined in the curriculum before creating modules or lesson plans. They also actively discuss with colleagues and participate in training to maintain their understanding. Before starting a lesson, teachers first determine what they want students to achieve. This serves as a foundation for ensuring learning doesn't go off track. Teachers don't just pursue learning, but carefully plan. After understanding the learning outcomes, they create clearer lesson plans. In creating these, teachers don't simply follow the curriculum but also consider the students' specific needs, such as their abilities and learning needs. As a result, learning becomes more relevant and easier for students to understand.Research shows that curricula continue to evolve with the times. Therefore, teachers need to create flexible and adaptable lesson plans. The Independent Curriculum (Kurdikullum Merdeka) gives teachers greater freedom to create lessons tailored to students' needs. Teaching methods have changed; classrooms no longer focus on the teacher but instead focus on the students. Teachers now act as guides, helping students understand the material, hone their potential, and cultivate independent thinking. This freedom allows teachers to be

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Numerous studies have shown that the flexibility of the new curriculum provides an opportunity for teachers to develop new and creative ideas. Consequently, students become more active participants in the learning process. In terms of professional development, teachers also do not remain idle. They continuously improve their skills through collaboration with colleagues. Discussion forums between teachers are a highly effective place to share ideas, teaching experiences, and solve problems encountered in the classroom. These collaborative activities have been proven to strengthen teachers' understanding of curriculum implementation in the field. Furthermore, participating in various local workshops is also an important investment to ensure teachers stay abreast of developments in the world of education.

The success of this implementation is inseparable from the appropriate learning model. One model considered suitable is Inquiry-Based Learning. The main characteristic of this model is that students actively seek knowledge on their own, starting with asking questions, investigating problems, collecting data, and drawing their own conclusions. With this approach, students no longer simply sit quietly and listen. They are encouraged to hone their critical, logical, and systematic thinking skills. This is the core of the Merdeka curriculum, which creates meaningful learning and focuses on developing students' comprehensive abilities.

For the implementation of Pancasila Education in elementary schools within the Independent Curriculum, there are two main focuses. First, designing learning materials that align with the Competency Achievement Indicators (IPK). Second, strengthening the profile of Pancasila students. Based on a review of various literature, the materials currently used generally meet the specified core competencies. Classroom activities also appear to support children's character development, such as independence, cooperation, and the instillation of moral values through activity-based learning strategies. However, all still need room to develop. To achieve the desired target optimally, the utilization of learning resources still needs to be expanded. This can be done by increasing the availability and variety of local culture. Teachers also need to utilize writing assignments by analyzing cases of social phenomena that actually occur around them.

This method is crucial for developing students' critical thinking skills in addressing moral and social issues in everyday life. With the right combination of CP targets and experiential methods, Pancasila education can become a lively and engaging subject. It's not just about memorizing boring theories. More importantly, students are able to understand these values and apply them in real life, whether at home, at school, or in the community.

Drawing Conclusions from Document Analysis Results

Field research shows that civics learning in elementary schools continues to be challenging due to complex challenges. One of the main obstacles is the imbalance in students' ability to absorb lessons within the same class. These children's comprehension is like a gap between heaven and earth; some can grasp the concept immediately after a single explanation, while others require gradual guidance through repeated explanations. This difficult situation is frankly acknowledged by teachers at Tanjung Besar Elementary School.

They often struggle to manage their attention to ensure a fair distribution of instruction, and how to guide slower students without having to restrain those with faster thinking. This gap in comprehension is further exacerbated by the limited classroom time. As a subject steeped in national values, norms, and social ethics, Civics and Citizenship

Education (PPKn) actually encompasses a vast amount of material. Unfortunately, the mountain of material is not commensurate with the time allotted. Complaints about the lack of time have become a shared voice among teachers, from SDN 1 Tanjung Besar, SDN 2 Rajabasa Lama, to SDN 1 Bandar Surabaya, Central Lampung. This complex limitation forces teachers to be realistic by cutting back on material. The negative impact is clear: the material becomes shallow and only touches on the surface, which ultimately disadvantages slow learners.

To further exacerbate the situation, the lack of infrastructure and the lack of interactive learning media are also serious obstacles. In this day and age, teaching abstract concepts like law or constitutional law without engaging visual aids is clearly a mistake. Classes lacking visual aids can feel monotonous and boring, quickly leading to boredom for children. Yet, a wealth of scientific literature confirms that a variety of learning media is a key driver for boosting learning motivation and fostering critical thinking in children as they process complex theories.

All of these complex issues are closely related to the transition from the 2013 curriculum to the Merdeka curriculum. This new mindset demands a significant leap in teacher independence. In reality, many teachers in the field still struggle with rigidity and confusion when independently compiling administrative documents, such as teaching modules. Critical components, including Learning Outcomes (CP), Learning Objectives (TP), and Learning Objective Flow (ATP), are often not fully understood. If even the basic design is half-baked, classroom learning practices are certain to be suboptimal.

The Merdeka Curriculum itself mandates teachers not simply stand and lecture, but rather create an active classroom atmosphere based on real-life experiences (experiential learning). This student-centered activity design automatically takes significantly longer. Herein lies the irony: while the demands for creativity are set high, teacher competency readiness and school facilities are far from evenly distributed.

To break this cycle of problems, continuous improvement of teachers' professional capacity is essential. Teachers can no longer function in isolation. This competency building is encouraged through active involvement in Teacher Working Group (KKG)

forums, workshops, and independent use of digital platforms. This strategic step is expected to shift teachers' perspectives and hone their methodological skills. This way, they can design learning strategies that not only eliminate administrative obligations but are also sensitive to the real needs of children in the classroom.

The Independent Curriculum offers a fresh new perspective. It gives teachers complete freedom to design the most appropriate lesson plans for their students. The learning paradigm has shifted, with the teacher no longer dominating the classroom, but rather students becoming the center of learning (student-centered learning). In this context, teachers no longer act as the sole source of information, but rather as facilitators who bridge students' understanding, explore their potential, and train them to become independent thinkers. This flexibility significantly assists teachers in developing more in-depth teaching materials and methods, even tailoring them to the unique characteristics of each student. Numerous studies have shown that teachers' freedom in implementing the Independent Curriculum provides a positive platform for experimenting with innovative ideas. Ultimately, students become more active and enthusiastic in participating in the learning process. In terms of self-management, teachers are also challenged to continuously improve their own quality through collective activities. For example, through discussions within the teacher community, they can share experiences, exchange tips, or find solutions to problems they face in their respective classes.

The ability to share discussion spaces like this is very effective in aligning perceptions in the field. Furthermore, they are also diligently participating in various training and scientific meetings as a form of investment to stay current amidst the rapid pace of development in the world of education. Of course, there must be an appropriate teaching method to keep pace with these changes. And inquiry-based learning is one of the best options. Essentially, students are facilitated to truly "dive in" in the discovery process, from asking questions, dissecting problems, collecting data, to drawing their own conclusions. Through this approach, students don't just sit back and listen. They are encouraged to think more critically, logically, and systematically. Because, in essence, that is the essence of the Merdeka curriculum: creating a meaningful learning space to bring to life various competencies within students.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the development of Civics (PKn) teaching at the elementary school level has been aligned with the national curriculum guidelines. Teachers consistently position learning outcomes (CP) as the primary anchor. Thus, learning materials remain focused on achieving educational goals. As a result, the three main foundations of knowledge, attitudes, and skills are well-connected. This is evident in the instillation of Pancasila values, a spirit of nationalism, character building, and validation of students' social conversations. This reality emphasizes that Civics classrooms are not simply a forum for memorizing national theories. Instead, they touch on children's real attitudes and behaviors in everyday life.

The success of this material adaptation is also inseparable from the teachers' maturity in compiling planning documents, such as teaching modules and lesson plans. Before entering the classroom, all teachers first understand the competency achievements, then compile materials to be flexible to the characteristics of each student. Furthermore, the teachers' commitment to improving the quality of teaching is also seen in their active participation in peer discussion meetings and participation in various professional training. All of these efforts demonstrate the active role of teachers in building an effective, flexible, and student-centered learning space.

However, this desired model is not without its challenges. In the field, teachers still have to contend with a number of long-standing and often interconnected obstacles. These include gaps in student comprehension, limited lesson time, and the limited availability of interactive learning media. These obstacles automatically force teachers to step out of their comfort zones. They are required to be more creative and innovative in selecting teaching strategies to ensure no student is left behind. Therefore, continuously improving educator competency and providing a variety of teaching aids are top priorities. This involvement is crucial for optimal implementation of Civics in elementary schools and leading to the achievement of maximum learning targets.

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