

Exploring citizenship competencies in Pancasila subjects through local wisdom in the Merdeka curriculum

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Abstract

Teachers are at the forefront of building students' competencies for junior high school education, especially local wisdom-based civic competence, but during the implementation of the independent curriculum, the competencies mastered by students are still not optimal. This study aims to ascertain the level of local wisdom-based civic competence that students possess, the challenges that Pancasila subjects present to students in developing local wisdom-based civic competence, and potential solutions for fostering local wisdom-based civic competence in the era of independent curricula. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Pacitan, and the research subjects were students. This research uses a qualitative approach and a descriptive research method because it tries to describe the competencies mastered by students, the obstacles to building them, and solutions to these obstacles, especially those related to local wisdom-based civic competence in the era of an independent curriculum. Data collection techniques are interviews, observation, and documentation, and the data analysis used is interactive data analysis. Students have not been able to master civic competence optimally because they have not been able to implement civic disposition optimally and master civic disposition and civic skills more. This can happen because there are several obstacles, namely less than optimal teacher competence, unsupportive facilities and infrastructure, teachers being often late in starting lessons, poor student ethics towards teachers, and still teachers who cannot utilize digital-based learning media. The solution that needs to be done is for the government to make a policy to provide education and training to



teachers related to understanding and implementing the Merdeka curriculum. This needs to be done so that each teacher can improve his competence so that his role in the learning process can increase civic competence based on local wisdom in students.

Keywords: Citizenship Competence; Kurikulum Merdeka; Learners; Local Wisdom; Pancasila Subject

Introduction

The quality of education is the primary key to building the welfare of the Indonesian people, so it is undeniable that the funds spent by the state for education are significant, amounting to at least 20% budget yearly (Nuryadi & Widiatmaka, 2023). The government must be able to make an effective and efficient policy, especially the education curriculum.

The curriculum, according to Law No. 20 of 2003, is a set and arrangement related to the objectives, content, and learning materials, as well as the method used as a guideline for the implementation of activities to achieve specific educational goals (Lukita et al., 2020). The education curriculum in Indonesia constantly changes over time so that the implementation of education can face the challenges of the times. These changes occurred several times, namely in 1947, 1964, 1968, 1973, 1975, 1984, 1994, 1997 (improvement of the 1994 curriculum), 2004 (KBK), 2006 (KTSP), 2013 (K1 3) and 2018.

In 2022, the government, through the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology issued a policy related to the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Merdeka Curriculum) considered more flexible and straightforward (Nurhayati et al., 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum focuses on freedom and creative thinking; one of the programs launched is the driving school. This program is designed to support each school in building students into Pancasila students (Rahayu et al., 2022).

Pancasila subjects in the *Merdeka Belajar* are compulsory subjects at the primary and secondary education levels (Sari et al., 2023). This is stated in Government Regulation Number 4 of 2022 concerning Amendments to Government Regulation Number 57 of 2021 concerning National Education Standards and reaffirmed through the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 56/M/2022 concerning Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in the Framework of Learning Recovery. One of the objectives of Pancasila is to build civic competence in students, consisting of civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic disposition, so the role of teachers in this matter is crucial and central (Widiatmaka, 2016).

The quality of education is the primary key to building the welfare of the Indonesian people. In this case, the government must make effective and efficient policies, especially regarding the education curriculum (Jayadiputra et al., 2023). The curriculum, according to Law No. 20 of 2003, is a set and arrangement related to the objectives, content, and learning materials, as well as the method used as a guideline for the implementation of activities to achieve specific educational goals (Lukita et al., 2020). The education curriculum in Indonesia constantly changes over time so that the implementation of education can face the challenges of the times. The *Kurikulum Merdeka* focuses on freedom and creative thinking, and one of the programs launched is the driving school. This program is designed to support each school in building students into Pancasila Students Profile (Rahayu et al., 2022)

The development of civic competence based on local wisdom in students is an essential goal in the independent curriculum, considering that Indonesia is a country that has cultural diversity. Regional autonomy is an opportunity for each region to develop and maintain the values of local wisdom. Indonesian society essentially has a diversity of ethnicities, cultures, traditions, and backgrounds, so the values of local wisdom must be instilled in students from an early age (Ade & Affandi, 2016). Civic competence based on local wisdom is a competency of knowledge, skills, and attitudes based on values that develop in the community (Castillo, 2023; Galston, 2007; Miller-Lane et al., 2007). So far, before the *Kurikulum Merdeka* policy issuance, the role of Pancasila Education has not been able to build civic competence.

Through the *Merdeka Belajar*, it is hoped that it can solve all obstacles or problems faced by the previous curriculum to realize national education goals (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). However, the problem is that every school in Indonesia has not been able to implement the *Merdeka Belajar* because it has several obstacles, one of which is the lack of teacher understanding regarding the substance of *Merdeka Belajar* (Pratikno et al., 2022). Data from the Palembang City Education Office shows that only 195 out of 778 elementary and junior high school education units implement the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum (Santoso, 2022). In addition, in Sragen Regency, many schools still have not been able to implement the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum, one of which is at the junior high school level. As many as 68 out of 92 junior high schools in Sragen Regency (Bram, 2022).

On the other hand, the development of civic competence in students through Pancasila subjects in the era of the independent learning curriculum has not shown maximum results. 100 students in Ponorogo Regency are pregnant out of wedlock. The Ponorogo Regency government noted that in 2022, 191 children applied for marriage dispensation to the religious court, and 176 requests were granted by the religious court (Tamami, 2023). This phenomenon is very worrying, and it turns out that many students still have not mastered civic competence based on local wisdom to the maximum, especially civic disposition.

Some of these data show that many schools in various regions of Indonesia still have not been able to implement the independent curriculum. Pancasila subjects in the era of the independent learning curriculum have not been able to build civic competence based on local wisdom to the maximum. Based on preliminary observations at Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan on January 6, 2023. Class X at Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan has implemented an independent learning curriculum. Still, teachers of Pancasila subjects have obstacles in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, especially in the learning process, so the development of civic competence based on local wisdom in students has experienced obstacles.

Sasmita & Darmansyah (2022) analyzing the factors causing teacher constraints in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* shows that teacher literacy is still relatively weak. Besides that, teachers' use of technology and soft skills is still relatively weak, so the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* is still much less than optimal. Further research has also been conducted by Aryzona et al. (2023) about teacher competency analysis and learning design to implement the independent curriculum for the 2022-2023 school year at Primary school 1 Jatuk. The results showed that professional competence was still relatively low because the existing teacher competency criteria were not under the requirements needed by the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, so the implementation of the independent curriculum did not run optimally. However, the design of the lesson plan follows the format of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

This research has differences with research conducted by Sasmita & Darmansyah (2022) which emphasizes aspects of teacher constraints in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* while this study highlights the development of civic competence based on local wisdom in students in the era of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This study also has differences with research conducted by Aryzona et al. (2023), which emphasizes teacher competency analysis in implementing the independent curriculum, while this study highlights the development of civic competence based on local wisdom in students in the era of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

Civic competence based on local wisdom must be instilled in students through Pancasila subjects, considering that the era of the *Kurikulum merdeka* emphasizes the formation of Pancasila Students. In addition, teachers in the learning process experience many obstacles, so civic competence based on local wisdom is not built optimally.

This research has several benefits, (1) as a development of science related to the development of civic competence based on local wisdom in students in the era of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, (2) as a consideration for future researchers who want to conduct research related to the development of civic competence, learning Pancasila subjects and the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, and (3) as a consideration for the government in determining policies, primarily

related to learning during the *Kurikulum Merdeka* and development of teacher competence and student competence.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive research methods because it seeks to describe the results of analysis related to civic competence based on local wisdom mastered by students, teacher constraints in building civic competence based on local wisdom, and solutions to build civic competence based on local wisdom in students in the era of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This research was carried out from January 2023 to April 2023 with the object of study by class X teachers and students at Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan, because the class has begun implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This study seeks to analyze the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in building civic competence based on local wisdom through Pancasila subjects at Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan. Civic competence based on local wisdom consists of three competencies: civic disposition, civic skills, and civic disposition.

This research focuses on civic competence based on local wisdom that has been mastered and implemented by students. Teacher obstacles in building civic competence based on local wisdom in students in the era of an independent curriculum, especially in the Pancasila learning process, both external and internal obstacles and finding solutions to the challenges experienced by teachers in building civic competence based on local wisdom through the learning process of Pancasila in the era of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

The data collection technique used in-depth interviews (three teachers who taught Pancasila subjects and four grade X students at Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan), observations (student behavior at school and the learning process of Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan), and documentation (Lesson Plan used by Pancasila subject teachers). The data analysis technique used is interactive data analysis with procedures 1) data collection, where researchers collect data through interviews, observations, and documentation at Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan; 2) data condensation, where researchers sort data obtained from the field to focus on the research studied; namely civic competence development based on local wisdom through Pancasila subjects in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, 3) presentation of data, researchers strive to describe the results of research in the form of systematic article manuscripts, and 4) drawing conclusions, conclusions based on the results of data analysis obtained from the field (Miles et al., 2014). The conclusions in this study are used as a basis for determining recommendations to be given to the government, teachers, and students.

Results and Discussion

Civic Competence Based on Local Wisdom Mastered by Students in the Independent Curriculum

Pancasila subjects are basically focused on aspects of knowledge and developing attitudes and skills (Mulyoto & Samsuri, 2017). Civic competence refers to the knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills needed to participate in the life of the nation and state and become a good, intelligent, and active citizen (Print & Lange, 2013). Civic competence is divided into three: civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic disposition. Civic competence based on local wisdom is the ability to master the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of citizens towards local culture or local wisdom that develops in certain areas (Castillo, 2023; Widiatmaka & Kurniawan, 2023), so this is very important to be controlled by every Indonesian citizen, especially students. Students are the next generation of the nation or leadership relay holders in the future, so students must be able to master civic competence, especially those based on local wisdom (Widiatmaka & Kurniawan, 2023).

In the *Kurikulum merdeka*, Pancasila subjects become compulsory and spearhead building civic competence in learners. Freedom of learning departs from the desire that educational output can produce quality students who understand theoretically and analyze a phenomenon, think critically, reason, and develop themselves (Rini, 2022). Freedom of learning, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture, is defined as the implementation

of the curriculum in the learning process that can create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom, the development of critical and innovative thinking in students so that effective and efficient learning can be felt by students when the learning process takes place (Supriati et al., 2022). Freedom of learning emphasizes students' knowledge and skills and explores their potential, and then a teacher is required to develop this potential (Simamora & Pasaribu, 2023).

Based on field observations at Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan show that there are still many students who do not maintain good manners towards their teachers, for example, in speaking and behaving, so this shows the role of Pancasila Education in building civic competence based on local wisdom is still not optimal, primarily civic disposition.

Still, in theory or civic knowledge related to learning Pancasila Education, many students have mastered related theories and the values of Pancasila. This can be proven by interviews with Alfian and Heru (students Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan), which shows that students already understand the values contained in Pancasila (divinity, humanity, unity, democracy, and justice). Courtesy towards everyone, especially teachers, is essential because it is a local wisdom that develops in various regions in Indonesia (Ardian et al., 2021). Based on the study of documents in the form of lesson plan for Pancasila subjects, the learning objectives are to build civic competence, namely civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic disposition based on Pancasila values.

Students who can master civic competence based on local wisdom know local wisdom that develops in their area and then can apply it in everyday life (Knowles & Castro, 2019; Sumardjoko, 2018). Local wisdom that develops in various regions in Indonesia is fundamental in the life of the nation and state, considering that it is the nation's national identity (Setyawan & Dopo, 2020). Through the learning process in the independent learning curriculum, it is hoped that every student can master knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to local wisdom (Hidayati et al., 2020).

Interviews with teachers at Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan show that the independent curriculum, especially in Pancasila subjects, can build students' knowledge and skills so that, in theory and practice, students can master local wisdom invited through Pancasila subjects. This can be proven if a learning evaluation in a written exam in class X students gets good results (the average score is 85). Meanwhile, from the aspect of skills, students actively participate in scouting, extracurricular, and social activities (social service, village clean mutual assistance, and so on). Besides that, students are always seen working together to carry out school activities. However, Ardiansyah further explained that students at Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan still experience problems in the attitude of students because it is still found that students' attitudes look impolite when talking to their teachers, for example, when meeting or passing their teachers on the street. The way of communicating with the teacher is also relatively impolite (using Javanese *ngoko*, not Javanese kromo *inggil*).

Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan students have mastered civic competence based on local wisdom, but the mastery is still relatively less than optimal. Civic competence students learn at Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan are civic knowledge and skills. Still, it has not been able to master civic disposition optimally, so it must be immediately anticipated by teachers so as not to become a time bomb or problem in the future, considering that students are the nation's next generation.

Teacher Constraints in Building Civic Competence Based on Local Wisdom

Teachers should guide and educate students so that the role of teachers becomes very central, especially in improving the quality of education in Indonesia (Rusilowati & Wahyudi, 2020). In the independent curriculum, a teacher must be able to develop learning tools so that learning objectives can be achieved optimally, to build students who have civic competence which is based on local wisdom, and the goal is to become a student of Pancasila (Sa'diyah et al., 2022). Pancasila students can implement the values contained in Pancasila in everyday life (Srirahmawati & Hunaifi, 2022).

In an interview with State Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan explained that curriculum change is one of the main obstacles in building civic competence among students, considering that with every change of Minister, especially the Minister of Education and Culture, the curriculum constantly changes so that teachers in implementing curriculum substitutions are not optimal. For example, the 2013 curriculum began to be implemented in every school in Indonesia. It began to run well slowly, but then a policy emerged from the government that replaced the 2013 curriculum. Teachers' understanding regarding implementing the independent curriculum is also minimal, and facilities and infrastructure, especially the internet network, are also obstacles to implementing the independent curriculum (Miladiah et al., 2023). This has implications for developing civic competence based on local wisdom in students, and it does not work well and is not optimal.

Based on observations in the field it shows that several facilities and infrastructures hinder the development of civic competence in students, namely, teachers have not been able to operate technology, such as in utilizing digital-based learning media in the learning process. Even though what teachers face in the learning process are students who are millennials who cannot be separated from the internet, teachers should be able to master and operate digital technology in building civic competence based on local wisdom (civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic disposition) (Martini, 2022). In addition, there are still teachers who also lack discipline, especially when starting the learning process (entering class late).

Based on interviews with students, it is explained that sometimes teachers enter the class or start the learning process late for unclear personal reasons, motivating students' learning. Even though the independent curriculum itself contains three components: commitment to goals, independence, and reflection (Susilowati, 2022)). In addition, learning motivation dramatically affects the development of students' civic competence (Mulyono, 2017). The lack of commitment of teachers in teaching and educating students is one of the obstacles to building civic competence based on local wisdom, so this is an obstacle that must be anticipated immediately. The main key to anticipating this immediately is a teacher's awareness that the shortcomings are related to discipline.

Based on observations in the field, there are obstacles in building civic competence based on local wisdom in students, such as there are still many students who lack respect for teachers. This can be seen when meeting with teachers outside the classroom, not saying hello, and then when meeting with teachers, the way students talk to teachers is not polite. Disrespect for teachers shows that one of the competencies contained in civic competence based on local wisdom, namely civic disposition, has not been built, so implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* at Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan is still relatively less than optimal. Manners are characters based on affection and respect for others, oneself, and the environment that are actuated in attitudes and behaviors (Abun & Racoma, 2017; Sugiarti et al., 2022)

The obstacles of Pancasila subjects in building civic competence based on local wisdom are that teachers do not understand how to implement their curriculum, teacher competence is still lacking, especially in the use of digital-based learning media, student ethics towards teachers, and lack of teacher commitment in educating students, so that citizenship competence based on local wisdom controlled by students is not optimal or Can only master civic knowledge and civic skills.

Solutions to Build Civic Competence Based on Local Wisdom in Students in the Era of the Independent Learning Curriculum

Civic competence, consisting of citizenship knowledge, citizenship skills, and civic attitudes, is essential for students to learn, considering that students are the next generation of the Indonesian nation (Nuryadi et al., 2020). If there are obstacles in building these competencies, they must be anticipated immediately so that they do not become a problem for the future of the Indonesian nation. Teachers are agents of change and spearhead building civic competence in students based on local wisdom, especially teachers who teach Pancasila subjects.

The role of teachers in building less than optimal civic competence must be anticipated immediately, considering that the independent curriculum has been running so as not to become a time bomb in the future. Providing education and training for teachers regarding knowledge and skills in implementing the curriculum is the main key, so the government must immediately make a policy to improve teacher knowledge and skills so that their roles can be carried out optimally so that they can build civic competence based on local wisdom of students (Nor, 2022).

Based on an interview with Imbang (Teacher of Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan) explained that to improve teachers' knowledge and skills regarding the independent curriculum, the government must immediately make a policy to accelerate education and training for every teacher in Indonesia regarding the concept and implementation of the independent curriculum. This is necessary because those who experience obstacles in developing civic competence based on local wisdom and the lack of maximum implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* are not only in Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan, but many schools in Indonesia also experience these obstacles.

The school must also prepare and plan human resources, facilities, infrastructure, learning tools, and so on. Suppose Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan can implement the curriculum well and optimally. In that case, developing students' civic competence based on local wisdom can run well to achieve learning objectives because the independent curriculum emphasizes always maintaining and caring for local knowledge in each region. Then, every teacher is expected to have awareness and always try to improve competence as an educator, which has been adopted by Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, namely pedagogic, professional, personality, and social. In addition, it must also be able to master or operate digital technology to utilize digital-based learning media in the learning process (Nuryadi & Widiatmaka, 2023). The role of teachers is significant to build civic competence based on local wisdom for students so that a teacher who has the competence to construct civic competence based on local wisdom through learning Pancasila subjects in the independent curriculum is a teacher who can not only teach but also who can educate and also inspire students.

Conclusion

The independent curriculum has been implemented at the junior high school level. However, so far, many schools in various regions of Indonesia have not implemented the curriculum. Pancasila subjects in the independent curriculum are compulsory subjects that must be given to students, and these subjects always try to build civic competence based on local wisdom (civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic disposition). However, students at Public Junior High School 1 Pacitan have not been able to master civic competence optimally because they have not mastered and implemented civic disposition optimally, and only civic knowledge and skills are learned. This can happen because it has several obstacles, namely teacher competence that is not optimal, facilities and infrastructure that are not supportive, teachers are often late in starting lessons, student ethics are not good for teachers, and there are still teachers who cannot use digital-based learning media. The solution that must be done to anticipate these obstacles is to improve teacher competence and understanding and implementation of the independent curriculum through training, bimtek, and workshops so that teachers can build civic competence based on local wisdom through Pancasila subjects in the independent curriculum.

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