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THE INFLUENCE OF EDUCATORS ON ENHANCING CIVIC KNOWLEDGE AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN PPKn COURSES AT CREDO KOLONGAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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Abstract

This study seeks to elucidate the role of Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) teachers in enhancing students' civic knowledge, delineate the pedagogical strategies employed, and identify factors influencing the advancement of students' understanding of civic knowledge at Kredo Kolongan Christian Junior High School. The research is concentrated on PPKn instructional practices within the classroom setting and the dynamics of teacher-student interactions. A qualitative descriptive methodology with a naturalistic approach was employed. Data were collected from PPKn teachers and students through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data analysis was conducted systematically through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings indicate that PPKn teachers play a pivotal role in enhancing students' civic knowledge, particularly through their roles as facilitators and moderators in the learning process. Teachers not only prepare and manage learning activities but also guide interactions and discussions to be effective and structured. The pedagogical strategies implemented include discussions, project-based learning, case studies, and role-playing, which foster active student participation and reinforce conceptual understanding. Furthermore, the enhancement of civic knowledge is influenced by several supporting factors, namely teacher competence, student learning motivation, and the availability of adequate learning facilities and infrastructure. These findings demonstrate that the success of PPKn instruction is significantly determined by the synergy between the role of teachers, pedagogical strategies, and other supporting factors.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals who are not only academically proficient but also possess social awareness, moral values, and the capacity to actively engage in democratic life. This is because education serves as a process for developing human potential holistically to address increasingly complex social challenges (Biesta, 2020). Moreover, education functions as a vehicle for cultivating 21st-century competencies, which emphasize the mastery of knowledge, critical thinking skills, collaboration, and civic literacy as essential tools for students to navigate the dynamics of social and civic life (OECD, 2020). In alignment with this perspective, education serves a transformative role by empowering students to comprehend social realities, cultivate critical awareness, and contribute to the establishment of equitable and sustainable social change (UNESCO, 2021). Within the framework of contemporary civic education, the significance of education is increasingly underscored in its efforts to foster civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions in a cohesive manner. This approach ensures that students not only grasp the concept of citizenship but are also equipped to apply it in their daily lives as responsible citizens (Kerr, 2021).

Education plays a crucial role in shaping students' character while enhancing their national awareness. One of the subjects dedicated to fostering civic awareness and active citizen participation is Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn). This subject equips students with civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. However, the implementation of PPKn in educational institutions, including Credo Kolongan Christian Junior High School, encounters several challenges.

The primary issue frequently encountered is the insufficient level of civic knowledge among students. Many students lack a comprehensive understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, the fundamental principles of democracy, and the national values embodied in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. This deficiency can be attributed, in part, to the monotonous nature of current pedagogical methods, which fail to effectively engage students in the learning process. Furthermore, the limited comprehension among students is also linked to the inadequate application of experiential learning techniques. A number of educators continue to depend on

traditional, unidirectional teaching methods, resulting in students memorizing content without genuinely grasping its significance and relevance to everyday life. This situation hinders students' ability to relate the concept of citizenship to the social realities within their environment.

Numerous studies indicate that a significant challenge in the instruction of Civic Education is the persistent predominance of traditional pedagogical methods, which emphasize lectures and rote memorization. This approach limits students' opportunities to engage in critical thinking, dialogue, and contextual reflection on civic values (Suyatno & Wantini, 2020). Furthermore, the lack of diverse instructional methods and the insufficient integration of learning media relevant to students' life experiences contribute to low student motivation in PPKn subjects (Rahman & Suryadi, 2021). Additionally, there are issues concerning teachers' pedagogical competence, particularly in designing participatory PPKn learning experiences based on contemporary issues, which hinders the optimal achievement of the objective to enhance civic knowledge (Pratiwi, 2022).

Conversely, PPKn teaching materials are perceived as insufficiently integrated with the local social and cultural contexts of students, resulting in less meaningful learning experiences and challenges in fostering applicable civic awareness (Widodo & Kurniawan, 2021). Furthermore, the increasing complexity of challenges arising from digital technology development highlights the issue of students' low digital citizenship literacy. This deficiency has the potential to lead to misunderstandings of public information and democratic values if not counterbalanced by the enhancement of PPKn learning that is adaptive to the digital era (Sari & Nugroho, 2023).

In the context of civic education, social interaction and critical discourse are essential components for enhancing civic knowledge. Nevertheless, the implementation of group discussions and collaborative activities within PPKn subjects at Credo Kolongan Christian Junior High School remains notably limited. Consequently, students' opportunities to cultivate critical thinking skills and comprehend diverse perspectives in social and civic life are diminished. Moreover, civic knowledge encompasses not only an understanding of law and governance but also an awareness of democracy, social justice, and human rights. Branson (2018) emphasized that robust civic knowledge fosters

responsible citizens capable of actively participating in the democratic system. Therefore, educational institutions bear the responsibility to ensure that every student attains a comprehensive understanding of citizenship concepts.

The beneficial effects of robust civic knowledge are evident in students who possess a heightened awareness of their rights and responsibilities, exhibit significant social concerns, and actively engage in community activities. Such students are also more likely to critically evaluate social, political, and governmental issues, thereby contributing to the development of a democratic and equitable society. Conversely, insufficient civic knowledge may result in diminished student participation in social activities and a lack of awareness regarding the importance of preserving national unity.

The role of teachers is pivotal in enhancing students' civic knowledge. Teachers serve not only as transmitters of information but also as facilitators who cultivate an interactive and conducive learning environment. By employing effective pedagogical strategies, students' comprehension of civic education can be enhanced, while simultaneously encouraging them to apply this knowledge in their daily lives. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to investigate the role of teachers in augmenting students' civic knowledge at Credo Kolongan Christian Junior High School, as well as the pertinent instructional strategies to achieve these objectives.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research methodology employed in this study is a Qualitative Descriptive approach, aimed at comprehensively understanding and elucidating phenomena within the natural context of the research subject, without the application of experimental interventions. As articulated by Sugiyono (2008:1), qualitative research is a method utilized to investigate the state of natural objects, with the researcher serving as the principal instrument. Consequently, data collection is conducted in a triangulated manner, integrating various sources and techniques. The data analysis is inductive, and the research findings prioritize meaning over generalization.

In accordance with this methodology, the data and data sources utilized in this study comprise both primary and secondary data pertinent to the research focus. Primary

data is acquired directly from original sources, whereas secondary data is derived from various supplementary information that is already available to fulfill research requirements. The data analyzed is qualitative and descriptive, consisting of words, statements, and actions pertinent to the research focus, with the principal data sources being PPKn teachers and students of Kredo Kolongan Christian Junior High School, who are deemed capable of providing the necessary information. Furthermore, this research incorporates various school documents, including writings, photographs, biographies, policies, and other relevant data, to enrich and deepen the research information.

The data collection and recording procedure is conducted using several instruments as outlined by Mardalis (2005:63–67). This includes direct observation to obtain an accurate depiction of the conditions and situation at Kredo Kolongan Christian Junior High School, as well as interviews, which serve as an oral data collection technique through face-to-face interaction with informants to acquire in-depth information and supplement the observational data. The data analysis technique employed in this study utilizes a qualitative approach. According to Miles and Huberman (as cited in Sugiyono, 2008:91–99), data analysis is conducted interactively and continuously until data saturation is achieved. This process encompasses data reduction through filtering, summarizing, and focusing on relevant information to identify significant themes and patterns. The data is systematically presented in narrative descriptions, tables, charts, or other visual formats to enhance comprehensibility. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn and verified as part of an effort to uncover new findings, which may take the form of descriptions, causal or interactive relationships, hypotheses, or theories that elucidate the phenomenon under investigation in a clearer and more structured manner. This research was conducted at Kredo Kolongan Christian Junior High School, Minahasa Regency, over a period of two months.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. The Role and Strategies of Educators in Enhancing Students' Civic Knowledge at Kredo Kolongan Christian Junior High School.

The role of educators at Kredo Kolongan Christian Junior High School is pivotal in enhancing students' civic knowledge. Teachers serve not only as conveyors of information but also as mentors who cultivate students' awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. During the educational process, teachers endeavor to establish an interactive and conducive environment, encouraging students to inquire, engage in discussions, and participate actively. The findings of the study indicate that teachers assume the roles of facilitators and moderators in discussions on current issues that captivate students' interest. Educators facilitate group discussions and design learning experiences innovatively, thereby fostering active student engagement. By presenting materials related to real-world issues, such as the concept of citizenship, citizens' rights and responsibilities, and democratic values, students develop heightened sensitivity to the social challenges surrounding them. This pedagogical approach enables students to connect the subject matter to their daily lives, rendering the comprehension of civic knowledge more meaningful and pertinent.

This finding aligns with the perspective of Djamarah (2019), who asserts that teachers assume multiple roles beyond mere instruction, including those of facilitators, motivators, and supervisors within the educational process. In the context of PPKn, it is imperative for educators to cultivate a learning environment that is interactive, innovative, and pertinent to students' experiences. As facilitators, teachers are tasked with encouraging students to engage independently and actively in the learning process.

Banks (2022) concurs with this perspective, asserting that teachers, in their role as facilitators, must present materials that are pertinent to students' lives and employ pedagogical methods that encourage active engagement. Educators who possess a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter can deliver information in an engaging manner, thereby facilitating students' comprehension of the concepts being

taught. This approach also fosters students' critical thinking skills in addressing real-world societal issues.

At Kredo Kolongan Christian Junior High School, educators assume a pivotal role in cultivating students' understanding of citizenship. The capacity of teachers to select appropriate pedagogical strategies, establish a conducive learning environment, and effectively integrate technology significantly influences students' comprehension of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. This pedagogical approach not only encourages students to engage in critical thinking regarding social and political issues but also fosters a desire to participate in meaningful activities. This is further supported by students' intrinsic motivation to learn, as well as the reinforcement provided by a positive school environment and peer support.

Educators at Kredo Kolongan Christian Junior High School employ a variety of pedagogical strategies to enhance students' civic knowledge. The research findings indicate that the methods utilized encompass group discussions, simulations, and project-based learning. Regular discussions facilitate opportunities for students to exchange perspectives and learn from the experiences of their peers. Through this activity, students are trained to listen, construct arguments, and respect differing opinions skills that are essential in the context of national and civic life.

Simulations, such as role-playing within the framework of citizenship education, have demonstrated significant efficacy. These activities enable students to experience their roles as citizens directly, thereby enhancing their comprehension of their rights and responsibilities. Concurrently, project-based learning engages students in researching social issues and preparing presentations, which not only augments their knowledge but also enhances their communication and collaboration skills. The findings of this study align with Hess (2009), who posited that discussion and debate can stimulate students to exchange ideas and refine their critical thinking and argumentation skills. Educators can facilitate discussions on topics such as human rights, democracy, social justice, and current societal issues. Furthermore, the case study strategies employed by teachers correspond with Parker (2010), who asserts that real-life cases can assist students in understanding the application of citizenship principles across diverse situations. Case

studies provide students with the opportunity to analyze political decisions, social conflicts, or ethical dilemmas in a more contextual and practical manner.

4.2. Determinants Influencing the Enhancement of Students' Civic Knowledge at Kredo Kolongan Christian Junior High School

The enhancement of civic knowledge among students plays a crucial role as it serves as the foundation for active and responsible engagement in a democratic society. Several factors influence this process, including teacher competence and the availability of facilities and infrastructure, particularly at Kredo Kolongan Christian Junior High School. These factors are interconnected and significantly impact students' comprehension of citizenship. By effectively managing and developing these elements, schools and educators can foster a learning environment conducive to cultivating intelligent, critical, and responsible citizens.

The findings of the study indicate that the enhancement of students' comprehension of citizenship through PPKn subjects is influenced by several key factors. Teacher competence, encompassing the ability to lead the class and select appropriate teaching methods, is a significant factor. Additionally, student motivation for learning plays a crucial role, as motivated students are capable of fostering a conducive learning environment. The availability of resources, particularly technology, also facilitates students' understanding of the learning material. Moreover, engaging teaching models and methods employed by teachers significantly affect students' interest in civics education. The social environment of students, including their peers, also exerts a substantial impact; an environment that supports an understanding of citizenship will enhance students' interest in learning, whereas an environment lacking in support may diminish their interest.

The present findings align with the assertions of Keiper and Rezaei (2018), who posited that the integration of technology in educational settings exerts a positive influence. The incorporation of digital media, videos, simulations, and online platforms enhances the engagement and interactivity of the learning process. Educators can utilize online resources to investigate civic issues, including those with global implications, and to establish connections with diverse communities. This technological application

facilitates active student participation in learning and improves their access to educational materials.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that PPKn teachers at Kredo Kolongan Christian Junior High School play a pivotal role in enhancing students' civic knowledge, particularly through their functions as facilitators and moderators in the learning process. This role is evidenced by the teachers' ability to systematically prepare and manage learning needs and to effectively guide the dynamics of discussions, ensuring they are directed and meaningful for students. Furthermore, the implementation of diverse learning strategies, such as discussions, project-based learning, case studies, and simulations or role-playing, has been shown to foster active student engagement and reinforce their understanding of civic content. The improvement in students' civic knowledge is also influenced by several interrelated supporting factors, including teachers' competence in managing learning, students' intrinsic motivation to participate optimally, and the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure. The synergy between the role of teachers, learning strategies, and supporting factors collectively contributes to the effectiveness of the PPKn learning process and the achievement of more optimal student learning outcomes.

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