

Implementation and Achievement of Civic Education Policy as Curriculum Compulsory Course in Student Character Building

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Abstract

Each country has a vision, which is actualized through educational policies, to realize the citizenship character demanded by the country. In the context of Indonesia, one of the implemented policies for building citizenship character is Civic Education. It is a Curriculum Compulsory Course for Higher Education. However, the implementation of Civic Education policies is articulated differently by higher education, depending on the type. The objective of this research is to find out how the implementation and achievement of Civic Education policies as Curriculum Compulsory Courses in character building. Further, the approach used in this research was qualitative with a case study method. The subjects of this research were 6 (six) universities in Indonesia with the following categories, such as teacher training of 3 (three) universities, engineering of 1 (one) university, and religion of 2 (two) universities. The data collection techniques were conducted by observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique was conducted by (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) conclusions. The results of the research illustrate that the implementation process of Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course had been conducted by governmental regulations, although the management was dependent on the university's policy. Some constraints in implementing the policy were the lack of institutional policy support, procedures for arrangements, the marginalization of lecturers, shortage of coordination, and the limited sources of lecturers. Further, the achievement was to prepare junior citizens to have a solid character to survive in society and provide actual benefits in society.

Keywords: policy, civic education, curriculum compulsory course, character, students

Introduction

In Indonesia, universities must implement Curriculum Compulsory Courses, a "red plate" course, such as Pancasila, Civic Education, Religion, and Bahasa Indonesia. Civic Education, being one of the Curriculum Compulsory Courses, has a mission to "to be a good citizenship", which seeks to introduce the content and basic skills to students with citizenship values, multicultural attitudes, and plural-lingual competencies as their future provisions, which ultimately leads to their increasing national consciousness (Nurdin, 2016; Maloyed, 2015; Méndez-García *et al.*, 2021). However, Civic Education is still considered a "stepchild" in the curriculum of Higher Education. Additionally, citizenship norms have rapidly changed and research concerning Civic Education has been scarce in the context of public policy, particularly general education (Hooghe & Oser, 2015; Campbell, 2019). Also, the demands of parents and students, who view alumni salaries as the main focus of their bachelor's degree (Senter & Spalter-Roth, 2020: 10), have oriented on lecturing grades, not soft skills.

In the policy context, Civic Education in Indonesia aims to form its citizens, who have nationalism and patriotism (Explanation of Article 37 of the Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the Indonesian Education System). Professors of the Indonesian Political Education discipline, such as Idrus Affandi and Cecep Darmawan, have supported this statement. Both professors explained that Civic Education is the education of nationalism and patriotism that aims to form smart and good citizens (Affandi & Darmawan, 2021: 472). However, challenges to implementing Civic Education come from various directions, such as the morality of the hustle environment, separation of curricular narratives with civic education, rejection of nationalism and patriotism values, weak tolerance, increasingly liberal development of human rights, and the spread of deviant sexual behavior (Dahliyana

et al., 2021: 368). Meanwhile, in the context of the policy implementation, the dimension of the implementation of public policy as seen from the “communication” and the “resource” variables are qualitatively low. The content of the “attitude or disposition” and “bureaucratic structure” variables are considered to be quite broad and deep. The content distribution of the dimension of the implementation of public policy in the Civic Education course in Higher Education does not support the readiness of students to have awareness and skills participation in the implementation of public policy, which is based on the values of nationalism and patriotism (Nurdin, 2016: 11).

Moreover, based on nationalism and patriotism values, the extent of the implementation of the Civic Education policy has a low effect. It is due to some critical factors, such as (1) the development of Civic Education materials is delegated to the respective university and (2) the policy is not effectively implemented in the dimensions of (a) communication-because it is not ideally communicated-and (b) resources-because lecturers have varying competencies without a consistent academic background, (c) disposition-organizers are less committed due to the limited number of educators than the number of students, and (d) bureaucratic structure-because this is different in every university, which fails unity of command and fragmentation of the bureaucracy (Nurdin, 2017: 69).

However, various studies continue to reinforce the importance of the implementation of Civic Education. It can be seen from the research of Neundorft *et al.*, stating that Civic Education does not only seem to have an important socialization effect on youth but also contributes to the goals of democracy to make equal participation of citizens (Neundorf *et al.*, 2016: 947). Moreover, according to Manning and Edwards, Civic Education can improve the effectiveness of political expression, such as signing petitions (Manning & Edwards, 2014: 22). In addition, if Civic Education is implemented in higher education, it can produce graduates, who are educated and knowledgeable, critical and creative thinkers, and responsible professionals (Yob *et al.*, 2016; Smith & Graham, 2014). Further, at the global level, in the last two decades, the proposal to place Civic Education as a top priority in national education policy and research agendas has become increasingly prominent (Joris & Agirdag, 2019: 287). Considering the above arguments, the question is how is the implementation and achievement of Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course in student character building in Indonesia currently, viewed from various types of universities?

Method of Discussion

Research Design

In this research, the approach was qualitative. The research focused on the description or articulation of the implementation and achievement of Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course in student character building. The method of this research was a case study in the implementation of Civic Education as a Curriculum Compulsory Course in 6 (six) universities in Indonesia. The higher education category was divided into 3 (three), such as teacher training in 3 (three) universities, engineering in 1 (one) university, and religion in 2 (two) universities.

Research Participants

Research participants, who provided data, such as information, on the implementation of Civic Education as a Curriculum curriculum-compulsory course, included character education experts, administrators of the curriculum-compulsory course, and lecturers of Civic Education course.

Data Collection

Research tools in the process of collecting qualitative data depended on the researchers themselves (*human instruments*). Therefore, the role of the researcher was a core instrument that was a means for gathering information and validating various findings regarding the issues in this study. In addition, in the data collection process, the researcher also developed various other supporting instruments to help researchers collect data, both observation and interview guidelines by selecting data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observations, and documentation studies.

Data analysis

After successfully collecting various information at the data collection stage, the next stage was data analysis. The data analysis was conducted to select, sort, and verify various findings that were used as a basis for solving the studied issues. The analysis technique used in this study comprised (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) conclusions or data verification.

Results and Discussion

Implementation Process of the Policy

The extent of the management or conformity between the implementation of the Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course as a means of student character building in university can be seen in the following data.

1. At the educational universities, the policy implementation was according to the provisions. At the first university, although policy organizers were given the freedom to make adjustments, they still referred to the provisions previously planned by the policymakers. Thus, the course of activities was to the expected objectives. Meanwhile, at the second university, the implementation of the curriculum compulsory course policy had been conducted according to the previously planned program. The lecturing process was directed according to the expected results, such as stipulating compulsory courses as a means of student character building. However, the management changed from the Department to an academic management unit under the Vice-Dean. At the third university, the implementation of lecturing was conducted by the policy of Curriculum Compulsory Courses set by the institution. The lecturing process was aimed at making compulsory courses as a means to cultivate values that were by the nation's personality and the formation of character so that students had better awareness of social, religious, national, and state life.
2. At the technical university, the policy implementation was conducted. However, the formulating process of the policy of Civic Education as a Curriculum Compulsory Course was impeded by institutional issues and the lack of accommodation for the interests of the involved parties, but policy organizers continued to strive professionally to perform lecturing by the provisions that had been adopted by the policy stakeholders.
3. At the first religion university, the implementation of the policy of Civic Education as a Curriculum Compulsory Course was designed according to the work plan and learning objectives that had been set by the institution. It was the formulation result of the policy stakeholders. Meanwhile, at the second university, the policy implementation was conducted according to the work plan and the division of labor among the involved parties. Cooperation had been established between policy organizers by their respective roles and positions.

Regarding the data on the implementation of Civic Education as a compulsory course in curriculum, Campbell explained that the revival of Civic Education requires large-scale and multi-method interdisciplinary efforts (Campbell, 2019: 1). Therefore, Civic Education in the context of a compulsory course in the curriculum must continuously emphasize on (1) soft skills of citizens regularly, (2) equalizing the existing biases in students, (3) the influence of students on their parents, society, and environment, (4) learning with various variations and approaches, (5) preparing active citizenship in community life (Campbell, 2019; Schild, 2016). Thus, it illustrates that Civic Education is part of the policy (McCabe *et al.*, 2017: 92-93).

However, the results of the study conducted by Encep Syarief Nurdin explained that according to the perspective of the variables of public policy implementation from GC Edward III (1980), which includes the variables of communication, resources, attitudes or dispositions, and bureaucratic structure, the course of Civic Education at Higher Education can be categorized as not ideal. The variable of "communication" in the policy implementation of Civic Education (PKn) course is zero because it is not explicitly contained in one or part of the 8 (eight) Civic Education courses as specified in the Decree of the Director General of Higher Education (Directorate General of Higher Education) Number 43/Dikti/2006. Meanwhile, the content of the "resources" variable had not been specific. It was still abstract so it required further derivation. Regarding the variable of "attitude or disposition", it was categorized as good enough. Further, the variable of "bureaucratic structure" was not supported by the readiness of students to have awareness and skills participation in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies. They were based on nationalism and patriotism values to create a good and smart citizen, who had a global outlook and continued to act by the cultural identity of the nation, both locally and nationally (Nurdin, 2016). Therefore, the state as a policyholder had to firmly determine the direction

of the objectives of Civic Education as a Curriculum Compulsory Course. Thus, the objectives did not overlap with other courses or disciplines. In doing so, the meaning of patriotism in Indonesia was “looking for a home” through the national identity of the country (Nurdin & Dahliyana, 2018: 430). The urgent issue was to provide opportunities for managing organizations of Curriculum Compulsory Courses. It aimed to be study programs or departments that seriously managed Curriculum Compulsory Courses, which were part of “red plate” courses to realize the ideal citizens desired by the state by applicable regulations.

Constraints of Policy Implementation

The implementing process of Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course as a means of student character building in university still encountered some constraints. This was in line with Eaton’s statement, arguing that efforts to apply an institutional approach to the involved science are not without challenges (Eaton, 2015: 11). The following paragraph contains the findings that have been identified by the researcher related to the constraints in implementing Civic Education policy as Curriculum Compulsory Course in respective university.

1. Lack of policy support, institutional issues, and campus bureaucracy. This affected the role of policy organizers and the success of the implementing process of Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course according to the objectives of changes that were planned to be achieved. Universities could not be separated from the communities that they had served (Eaton, 2015; Fuertes-Camacho *et al.*, 2019). Universities often acknowledged their role in contributing to the common good through their mission. However, institutionally, the management of Civic Education as a Curriculum Compulsory Course had never received support from both curriculum and bureaucracy. Thus, the implementation of the Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course could not be performed completely (Yob *et al.*, 2016: 203).
2. Arrangement of courses, time allocation, and student activities. This was a constraint dealt with by policy organizers in performing the established programs. The impact of the impartiality of higher education bureaucrats on the implementation of Civic Education as a Curriculum Compulsory Course was the elimination of the course in the curriculum, which influenced the setting of implementing hours, time allocation, and extracurricular student activities. However, according to Reichert & Torney-Purta, the implementation of Civic Education must be supported by a good institutional climate and solid teacher readiness (Reichert & Torney-Purta, 2019: 123-124).
3. Lack of conformity between rights and obligations received by lecturers, especially honorarium awarding. This issue influenced the continuity and success of the program that was being implemented, and it affected the performance of lecturers as policy organizers. This happened because of high administrative demands and pressure from the ministry so that the flexibility to develop good learning practices was not prioritized, (Senter & Spalter-Roth, 2020: 10), which eventually was more oriented towards income. This statement was supported by the results of hypothesis testing with citizenship tests by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 2006 and 2010, which found modest support for the incentive hypothesis and strong support for the compensation hypothesis (Campbell & Niemi, 2016: 495).
4. Limited coordination between policy organizers. This ultimately became one of the constraints that affected the success of the program to be achieved. As a result, Civic Education as a Curriculum Compulsory Course did not only deal with material and method constraints but also assessment (Dahliyana *et al.*, 2021: 368). Moreover, the Civic Education course affected patriotism and nationalism with different scopes for each material. This implicated students' motivation to participate in the learning process and understand the relationship between Civic Education and their expertise (Nurdin & Dahliyana, 2018: 427).
5. A limited number of lecturers for general courses. This affected the various competencies possessed by lecturers with academic backgrounds that were unparalleled in Civic Education because the number was inadequate than the number of study programs and students in universities (Nurdin, 2017: 80). If this matter was simply handed over to lecturers, who were incompetent with the course, it could affect the ideology of certain civic education related to preferences for certain instructional strategies (Knowles, 2018: 66).

Achievement of Curriculum Compulsory Course in Student Character Building Development in Higher Education

One of the indicators in the achievement of policy implementation according to Grindle was the impact and acceptance in society. Civic Education Policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course in student character building in higher education was depicted in the quality of graduates or the output of the resulting educational process. The following paragraphs are the findings according to perspectives of experts regarding the achievement of Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course in student character building in higher education.

1. Society impacts both individually and collectively

The implementation of the Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course in student character building in higher education expectedly had an impact on society, individually, in preparing students to become junior citizens and graduates, who had personality. Universities were expected to play their role as educational institutions to produce qualified, characterized junior citizens and graduates, who were ready to contribute to society. This was the view of the first character education expert, stating that, *“A better implementation of Civic Education as Curriculum Compulsory Course, experienced by the community and having long-term impact, such as Educator Institutions and Education Personnel (LPTK), can produce graduates, who are ready and have character in society.”* Therefore, the implementation of the Civic Education policy as Curriculum Compulsory Course had to be embodied in a curriculum that could accommodate all student needs by providing opportunities to learn about national, regional, and global issues. Hence, it could provide a holistic learning experience for the future (Méndez García *et al.*, 2021: 15). Then, students, already having holistic competence, could identify and solve global issues to ensure the survival of the nation (Affandi & Somantri, 2020; McCabe *et al.*, 2017).

However, the formulation of a national standardized curriculum for Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course was still required, especially for the contents related to nationalism and patriotism values. This standardization would not sacrifice university autonomy because Civic Education was an exception in the authority/policy given to the central government as mandated by the Regulation of Director General of Higher Education of 2012 (Nurdin, 2017: 80)

Additionally, preparing students to have character education provision, the implementation of the Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course was also expected to have an impact on students to prepare them to learn as part of society. Thus, the Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course could be used as a means to instill important values that had to be possessed by junior citizens in societal life. Eventually, they could live harmoniously by the prevailing values and norms. Further, the second character education expert explained, *“The end of this character education is that students can live in harmony.”*

Meanwhile, the implementation of the Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course was expected to have an impact on society as a group, where the character education process carried out by universities could collaborate with groups or communities in society. The Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course could be used as an educational means to increase community understanding collectively about civic values. According to the first character education expert, efforts to provide an impact on society as a group could be done by involving communities that had the same interests to shape the character of its members or *“communities that had an interest in Civic Education as Curriculum Compulsory Course.”*

This was in line with the opinion of the second character education expert, stating that a university, being an educational institution, must have an impact on society as a group. The impact of the implementation of the Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course was not only aimed personally but also institutionally, where the public could feel the presence of students and institutions in answering the occurring issues. One of the activities to implement Civic Education as a Curriculum Compulsory Course that had a real impact on society was integrating the process of student character education into community service activities. Service activities were an educational process that could be carried out to develop student character and were expected to have an impact on society as a group.

Therefore, effective Civic Education in the context of General Compulsory Courses had to be a priority and urgent issue. It was because some youth were skeptical of the state. Students had to be informed directly by policymakers in just pursuing reading, mathematics, and science. Those lessons were also important as an informed citizen, but it was equally important to understand the success of learning Civic

Education (Campbell, 2019; Blevins *et al.*, 2016:).Civic Education also had an important influence on students’ interests and political orientation to create and maintain civic equality (Neundorf *et al.*, 2016: 921). Therefore, the practice of Civic Education had to be directed toward action where students were the center of civic education learning by providing opportunities to learn about civic action and political challenges (Blevins *et al.*, 2016: 344)

2. Change and acceptance

The implementation process of Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course was expected to provide a change in society. It was to prepare students as junior citizens, who had character education provisions, and educate the public about the importance of civic education values, ideological development of Pancasila, religious moderation, and other character education by national identity. The major change to be achieved in the implementation of Civic Education policy as Curriculum Compulsory Course was essentially aimed at realizing good citizens in the society, nation, and state life. This could happen if the implementation of the Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course in student character building in higher education was properly implemented by the goals of changes and the benefits to be achieved as a means of character building.

However, the constraint was that the community did not fully understand the purpose and direction of the change process expected from the implementation of Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course. It was due to a lack of education of the public about the importance of Civic Education and the values of nationalism. Then, this condition influenced the acceptance process that occurred in society. The changes expected by institutions in the implementation of Civic Education policy as Curriculum Compulsory Courses to shape student character did not provide support from the community. Nevertheless, the issue of community acceptance could be overcome if policymakers in higher education communicated the program that would be implemented and involved community leaders in the surrounding environment. They were stakeholders, who were invited to collaborate in realizing the implementation process of this program properly.

One program that was developed in Europe was participatory citizenship in building citizens who had democratic values, social cohesion, and solidarity (Méndez García *et al.*, 2021: 14-15). This was because students had to be provided facilities through civic engagement learning in dealing with crucial issues in their country (Arias & Parameswaran, 2021: 245). However, the learning process in Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course was often limited to voluntary or civic literacy with problem-based projects or the provided research. This issue did not continue, though “the data obtained was actionable” by combining elements of community-based research, action research, and community service learning where the follow-up of the project was designed to effect meaningful policy change (Maloyed, 2015: 115).

Table 1. Achievement of the Implementation of Curriculum Compulsory Course Policy in Student Character Development in Higher Education

Individual Impact	Group Impact	Changes	Acceptance
Preparing junior citizens Creating characterized graduates	Providing education to social groups/communities in society	Realization of a good citizen	The community did not fully understand due to a lack of education.
Providing character strengthening to survive in society.	Providing actual benefits to society.	MKWK as a means of character education	The community did not fully understand, due to a lack of communication and community engagement in policy formulation.

Based on Table 1 above, the productive cooperation with community organizations, groups, and individuals as well as official government agencies and universities had to reconstruct the complex relationship between

teaching, research, and community engagement. It had to be conducted in a suitable method with their immediate context, and it was not performed according to national agenda to better understand the important role of Civic Education as a Curriculum Compulsory Course for the future of Indonesia (Eaton, 2015: 5). Therefore, if Civic Education were properly designed, both formally and informally, it would have a significant impact on students and offset the scarcity of citizenship resources domestically and in society (Campbell, 2019: 1). In doing so, the learning model that could be an incubator of nationalism and patriotism was required in Civic Education course in higher education (Sundawa & Dahliyana, 2022: 764).

Civic Education as a Curriculum Compulsory Course could orient students toward the acquisition of character. Thus, the character of the nation was a united, religious, and humanist country. With the function of Civic Education as a development facilitator and national character cultivation, Indonesians, hopefully, could reflect citizens who could practice the nation's cultural values, such as Pancasila. The constraints in the implementation of Civic Education as a Curriculum Compulsory Course in national character building relied on the commitment and quality of its organizers and learning methods. This phenomenon indicated further studies focusing on the implementation and evaluation of civic education policy. The implementation of Civic Education was expected to be more effective so that it could build a strong national character (Nuridin, 2015).

Considering various data and views and looking at the typology of citizenship that had been developed by James A. Banks (2017), it can be explained that the implementation and achievement of Civic Education policy as Curriculum Compulsory Course in student character building were not in the failed typology of citizenship. It was due to the internalization of patriotism and nationalism values. The implemented Civic Education was in the acknowledged citizenship where every student was given the same rights, though the level of participation was different. In Indonesia, Civic Education provided rights to students to take action in influencing policies as part of participatory citizenship. In the larger category, the implementation of Civic Education as Curriculum Compulsory Course (MKWK) was included at the level of transformative citizenship, where students were taught to capably implement and promote policies, actions, and changes that were consistent with their national identity (Banks, 2017: 367).

Conclusions and Recommendation

The continuity of Civic Education as a Curriculum Compulsory Course relies on the will of the policy givers and policy implementing agencies. This is related to the importance of student character building. Although, in the context of education, it is the task of every course, the focus of the "red plate" courses, such as Civic Education, is student character. Thus, the course will not be marginalized in that the course not only pursues numeracy, literacy, and science but also is performed in a balanced way. This research still requires improvement due to time constraints in data collection. Hence, the following research can be conducted on educational institutions with a focus on health. In addition, to prove the implementation of the Civic Education policy as a Curriculum Compulsory Course in student character building, it can be deeply conducted by studying materials, and resources, such as lecturers, learning processes, and evaluations that have been performed in Indonesia or countries that organize formal Civic Education in educational institutions.

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