



## Strengthening Citizenship Attitudes Through Civil Society in Elementary School Students in Mandailing Natal

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### Abstract

The decline in citizenship attitudes among elementary school students is a significant concern requiring urgent attention. Citizenship attitudes, encompassing consciousness, responsibility, participation, and loyalty as Indonesian citizens, are crucial in molding individuals who contribute positively to national life. Recent incidents of bullying, violence, and intolerance in elementary schools across Indonesia highlight a disturbing trend, emphasizing the urgent need for action. Bullying incidents, particularly in Mandailing Natal District, persist due to factors like seniority culture and lack of empathy, exacerbating students' vulnerability. To address this decline, civil society's role is essential, yet its full potential remains untapped due to various constraints. Understanding this background is crucial for effective intervention design. Civil society can reinforce citizenship attitudes, advocate social righteousness, and enhance national integration, emphasizing values like legal awareness, social responsibility, and tolerance. Child-friendly school environments and active participation in civil society programs can empower students and foster inclusive communities. Strengthening citizenship attitudes requires curriculum integration, extracurricular activities, and teacher training to enhance students' awareness and critical thinking. Collaborative efforts involving schools, teachers, students, and the local community are vital, along with investment in resources and partnerships. By reinforcing citizenship attitudes, we can cultivate individuals committed to democracy, tolerance, and social responsibility, fostering a harmonious and inclusive society.

Keywords: Citizenship Attitudes, Civil Society, Elementary School

## **Introduction**

Citizenship attitudes represent behaviors that understand, appreciate, and perform rights and obligations, and possess a sense of responsibility as citizens. This attitude is fundamental in national life because this awareness aligns with the nation's personality and identity. The attitude that demonstrates awareness, participation, and loyalty in life embodies the values of the spirit of *Bineka Tunggal Ika*. Elementary school students, as good citizens, must reflect the values of *Pancasila* in all aspects of life, both at school and in the community. With such an attitude, elementary school students are able to accept and respect all diversity, uphold human rights, democracy, and law, and maintain the unity and integrity of the nation. The introduction should outline the aims of your paper and describe why the topic is important and what it contributes to the body of knowledge. You should also provide background to the research project, highlight the structure of the paper, and explain what made you decide to research this topic/write the article.

The sense of citizenship among the younger generation, including elementary school students, is experiencing a decline. This can be observed in the lack of awareness of rights and obligations, low participation in environmental sensitivity, and strained peer relationships. For instance, in Jombang, East Java, an elementary school student sustained head injuries after being struck by a piece of wood thrown by a classmate (CNN Indonesia, 2023). Sexual violence involving five students occurred in Yogyakarta (detikNews, 2023). Additionally, there was a bullying incident at an elementary school in Sukabumi, West Java, involving a student (Kompas, 2024). It is suspected that 15 elementary school students in Yogyakarta and 35 individuals in West Sumatra have fallen victim to sexual violence within the school environment (Kompas, 2023). Intolerance and violence in elementary schools, encompassing various sensitive issues, have wounded the national identity.

The decline in citizenship attitudes among elementary school students is also occurring in Mandailing Natal District. Bullying behavior still frequently occurs among students, such as teasing, insulting by mentioning parents' names, and engaging in mild physical violence (Namiroh, 2024). The causes of bullying include seniority culture, revenge, lack of empathy, poor parenting, and weak school-level control. Bullying of students in schools is influenced by students' individual characteristics, parents' socioeconomic conditions, and interactions between teachers and students. The impact of bullying can result in stress and the emergence of symptoms that disrupt mental health. The phenomenon of bullying towards students is influenced by the ambiguous attitudes of teachers and school principals, leading to vulnerability to repeated bullying against students (ABDUL GHOFUR, Intansari Nurjannah, 2020). Cases of bullying in schools still frequently occur, negatively impacting children's development.

Research has been conducted to discover the reinforcement of citizenship attitudes among elementary school students in Mandailing Natal District through civil society. The role of civil society in strengthening citizenship attitudes among elementary school students is crucial. However, in many cases, their role has not been fully utilized, either due to lack of access or awareness of the importance of participation in civil society activities. In building citizenship awareness through strengthening civil society attitudes among elementary school students, it is important to thoroughly understand the background of this issue in order to design effective programs or interventions. Civil society plays a vital role in reinforcing citizenship attitudes, promoting social righteousness, and strengthening national integration.

## **Citizenship Attitude**

Citizenship attitude represents consciousness, responsibility, participation, and loyalty as Indonesian citizens in national life (Deli Bunga Saravistha, 2022). Good citizenship attitude reflects the practice of *Pancasila* values as the foundation of the state and the nation's ideology. In this context, Good Citizenship Attitude is crucial for shaping citizens with character, competitiveness, and positive contributions to the nation's progress. Civic education aims to build civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic society among students, thus molding good citizens and instilling a sense of patriotism (Sulianti, 2018). Good citizenship attitude reflects the practice of *Pancasila* values as the foundation of the state and the nation's ideology.

Crucial aspects of citizenship attitude encompass confidence and self-belief as citizens to participate in social, national, and state affairs. Subsequently, active commitment and responsibility in strengthening and advancing national life are essential. A sense of citizenship responsibility entails active involvement and concern in social, national, and state affairs, prioritizing the common good (Situmeang, Sintania, Lase, & Yunita, 2023). Citizenship attitude entails active participation in social, national, and state life (Widiastuti, 2022). Nationalism and embracing all differences among individuals are fundamental aspects in citizenship resilience (Abdulatif & Dewi, 2021).

Citizenship attitude encompasses several interconnected elements. Legal awareness and regulations emphasize the importance of understanding and complying with the law, as well as respecting rights and responsibilities as citizens. Participation in political life encourages active involvement in the electoral process and political or community activities. Social responsibility urges citizens to participate in social activities and assist others for the welfare of society. Patriotism and nationalism demand love and respect for the homeland and support for national sovereignty. Tolerance and diversity emphasize acceptance and appreciation of differences within society (Abdulatif & Dewi, 2021). Environmental concern drives actions to protect and preserve nature. Being critical and responsible in media usage teaches wise use of social media and verification of information before dissemination. Finally, honesty and integrity require citizens to uphold honesty and reject all forms of corruption and fraud.

### **Civil Society**

Civil society is a concept in the form of a community that observes manners in building, interpreting, and living its life (Harney, Olivia, & International Labour Office., 2003). Civil society in elementary schools is extremely crucial in constructing a strong and inclusive community. Civil society signifies independence in improving specific aspects within certain boundaries in society. In the context of schools, including elementary schools, civil society development can be carried out through programs such as child-friendly school environments, supported by civil society organizations such as L-PAMAS (Baharuddin, 2014). Civil society values applied in primary education, such as democratic attitudes, tolerance, mutual understanding, high morals, and a global perspective, are not only aimed at creating an inclusive school environment but also play a role in the development of individuals who can make positive contributions to society (Baharuddin, 2014).

Important aspects of civil society attitudes encompass various crucial elements in shaping an empowered and just society. Active participation serves as the primary foundation, where civil society's political and social involvement is highly necessary. Social awareness and concern also constitute equally significant aspects within civil society (Syamsir, 2020). This includes empathy and solidarity, understanding, and caring for the needs and rights of others. Tolerance and pluralism are other important elements in civil society. Appreciating diversity, by respecting ethnic, religious, cultural, and political differences, as well as opposing all forms of discrimination and intolerance, are values that must be upheld (Harney et al., 2003).

Commitment to human rights and social justice must also be prioritized. This involves advocating for human rights, supporting and fighting for the basic rights of every individual, as well as pursuing social and economic justice for all layers of society. Ethics and integrity should serve as the foundation in every action, upholding principles of honesty, morality, and social responsibility towards the broader community (Wuryandani & Herwin, 2021). Therefore, these aspects form a strong foundation for the creation of a resilient and dignified civil society.

## Methods

The type of research method employed by the researchers is descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research is one of the research methods aimed at gaining understanding of reality through an inductive thinking process. In this research, researchers are involved in the situation and setting of the phenomenon being studied. Researchers are expected to always focus on the reality or occurrences within the context being studied. (Miza Nina Adlini, Anisya Hanifa Dinda, Sarah Yulinda, Octavia Chotimah, 2022)

The data sources obtained by the researchers are from primary and secondary data sources. Primary data in this study consist of teachers and students, while secondary data include school principals and educational staff. (Galang Surya Gumilang, 2016) The data collection techniques employed by the researchers include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation serves as a technique conducted by researchers by immersing themselves directly into the research world, in addition to comparing with previously used methods. The interview technique is conducted by researchers through direct and indirect interviews. Meanwhile, documentation can consist of photographs or written developments from various studies. (Hasyim Hasanah, 2016)

The data analysis technique used in this research involves analyzing the collected data using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis steps include: Interviews will be transcribed verbatim. Data will be coded to identify the main themes that emerge. Similar themes will be grouped to observe patterns and relationships between themes. The results of theme grouping will be interpreted to answer research questions and achieve research objectives.

Data analysis in qualitative research involves the processes of data reduction and data display. In this study, various considerations will be made during the qualitative research. The data conclusion process involves the participation system conducted by the participants. Data analysis development is carried out for data collection.

## Result

### *1.1 Citizenship attitudes of elementary school students*

Citizenship attitudes are important for students, considering that our nation consists of various ethnicities, religions, and customs, often referred to as "Bhineka Tunggal Ika". Hence, when they interact, whether with peers or teachers, they can mutually respect differences in opinions or diversity within the classroom. (Ida Ayu Km Mirah Wartini, I Wayan Lasmawan, 2014) A civil society mandates civic engagement, which entails citizens' involvement in social associations. This civic engagement fosters openness, trust, and tolerance among individuals, which are crucial for the development of democratic political structures. (Ahmad Muhibbin, 2016)

Citizenship attitudes enforce discipline among students through the development of learning accompanied by methods, strategies, and materials conducive to learning activities. This support for citizenship attitudes through civil society utilizes Pancasila values and the application of "Bhineka Tunggal Ika" towards students. (Irma Irayanti, Zakky Fahrizi, Dea Ayu Puspita, Indah Rahayu, 2022).

The objective of citizenship attitudes through civil society is to enhance students to become individuals who are faithful, devout to the Almighty, possess noble character, health, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and democratic and responsible citizens. Thus, education plays a crucial role in shaping citizenship attitudes or civic disposition, enabling individuals to become democratic and responsible citizens. In Indonesia, youth have played a significant role since the early days of Indonesia's independence movement, contributing to initiating movements. (Irma Irayanti, Zakky Fahrizi, Dea Ayu Puspita, Indah Rahayu, 2022)

The implementation of citizenship attitudes serves as evidence of character reinforcement utilized through community resources, manifested in everyday life activities. The surrounding environment also serves as a center for developing citizenship attitudes. Civil society, developed through cultural systems within the community, strengthens citizenship attitudes. (Syifa Alkautsar, 2021)



Educators' openness in developing citizenship attitudes aligns with the global community development space. Strengthening citizenship attitudes is marked by students participating in civil society role-playing. This is aimed at developing students' effective values within civil society, representing one form of strengthening and role-playing done by teachers in civil society development efforts. (Arya Pangestu Ramadani, 2022)

Historical notes on Indonesia's struggle development indicate that Indonesia was formed through civil society as a force in liberating Indonesia. This serves as an example for students to always practice citizenship attitudes. Citizenship attitudes fostered through civil society include responsibility, independence, cooperation, and discipline. Additionally, the attitudes developed by students also include effective communication conducted through deliberation. (Leonard Kristen Laksono, 2019)

### *1.1. The implications of civil society for citizenship attitudes*

The implications of civil society on the citizenship attitudes of elementary school students can influence their development as good citizens. Civil society plays a role in enhancing students' awareness and participation in the importance of active involvement in society, such as school and community activities. Through civil society, students can also learn about democratic values such as justice, equality, freedom, and responsibility, which help shape positive attitudes towards diversity and human rights. Additionally, civil society has implications for critical and analytical thinking abilities, where students learn to evaluate information, understand various perspectives, and make evidence-based and ethically grounded decisions. Civil society helps students develop social and emotional skills such as empathy, cooperation, and effective communication. Civil society also enables students to better understand their rights and obligations as citizens and appreciate the diversity among their peers.

Strengthening civil society in students' development can be achieved through various means. Curriculum integration through project-based learning involving the local community to solve real-world problems can enhance students' awareness of their role in society and develop critical thinking skills. Extracurricular activities such as debate clubs can be formed to encourage students to debate and discuss global issues, enriching their analytical abilities and understanding of various perspectives. Teacher training through regular professional development to integrate civil society concepts into teaching is essential. Workshops and seminars focusing on developing students' critical thinking, analytical skills, and social-emotional skills are also important. With these strategies, elementary school students can effectively implement civil society concepts in education, helping them become conscientious, critical, and active citizens in society.

Curriculum integration through project-based learning offers opportunities and challenges. Contextual learning experiences can enhance student motivation, as well as the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Extracurricular activities such as debate clubs can enrich students' analytical skills and understanding of global issues, as well as develop communication and critical thinking skills. Teacher training through regular professional development enhances teachers' ability to integrate civil society concepts into teaching. Workshops and seminars focusing on students' critical thinking and social-emotional skills have a positive impact. These strategies can shape students into conscientious, critical, and active individuals in society, with success depending on the commitment of schools, teachers, students, and the local community. Investment in teacher training and resources, as well as strong partnerships with the local community, are key to success

## **Conclusion**

Citizenship attitudes serve as a character-building lesson for students in line with the development of the 18 character values in the 2013 curriculum. The content of citizenship attitudes impacts student behavior. The main focus of this research, using civil society, is to make students more independent and capable of developing their academic potential. Therefore, this study serves as an introduction for students to develop attitudes that align with the cultural system from the era of independence to the present.



Citizenship attitudes serve as evidence that students can apply in their daily lives. Citizenship attitudes can be encouraged through teacher motivation linked to teaching strategies or methods. Educators are much more active in classroom and extracurricular learning activities.

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