

Innovation in civic education learning model to improve national defense skills in college students

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Abstract

This research delves into the topic of national defense among college students and aims to uncover new and effective ways to integrate Civic Education to enhance students' national defense capabilities in the digital age. The study employs a mixed-method approach with a concurrent triangulation design. Through interviews with Civic educators, it became apparent that students lacked engagement with and enthusiasm for the subject matter. Quantitative data analysis revealed that while students exhibited a strong awareness of and patriotism for their country, they faced challenges in illustrating how their skills and competencies could be utilized to advance the nation. To address these issues, suggestions for innovative learning techniques included integrating a service-learning approach and incorporating online learning methods.

Keywords: National Defence; Learning Model; Civic Education

Introduction

A country is obligated to prioritise its national defence. National defence encompasses all endeavours to safeguard the nation's liberation, territorial integrity, and overall security from any threats or disruptions to its unity and stability. In the pursuit of national defence, every citizen holds both the right and duty to contribute to the country's protection, reflecting the principles enshrined in the Indonesian Constitution (UUD NRI 1945), article 27 paragraph (3), which asserts that every citizen possesses the right and obligation to participate in national defence efforts. Furthermore, this is underscored in Article 30, paragraph (1), elucidating the rights and obligations of citizens in contributing to state defence. The defence of our country is more than just an abstract concept; it is an urgent necessity. It requires the unwavering dedication of our citizens, who uphold love and loyalty to the Unitary State of the Republic of



Indonesia, guided by Pancasila and the UUD NRI 1945, to ensure our nation's survival and its principles. The strength of our national defence hinges on our unity in defending and upholding the rights of our citizens. Indonesia's standing on the world stage is closely linked to the collective effort of the Indonesian nation's national defence elements. However, with the increasing development and increasingly widespread flow of world globalisation, some Indonesians need to be more mindful of their awareness of protecting and defending their country from all forms of threats that occur (Hartanti & Ardhana, 2022). The impact of globalisation is confirmed through various symptoms that threaten the love of the country (Jerabek, 2021).

National defence is a concept that describes the responsibility of every citizen toward national defence and security (del Amo Castro et al., 2024). Awareness of defending the country is not innate, so it needs to be developed through developing awareness of national defence. The implementation of national defence awareness development is carried out from an early age to adulthood to build the character of the Indonesian people who love their homeland, are willing to sacrifice for the state, believe in Pancasila as the state ideology, have national and state awareness and have the initial ability to defend the country, both physically and non-physically. Citizen participation in efforts to protect the country, according to Law No. 3 of 2002 concerning Defence and Security, is organised through (a) Civic Education, (b) mandatory basic military training, (c) service as a soldier in the Indonesian National Army voluntarily or compulsorily; and (d) service by profession.

Defending the country is only sometimes about physical combat or taking up arms. It can also involve non-physical methods such as civic education and professional service. Wang et al. (2023) argue that national defence encompasses the obligation to support and protect the country's sovereignty, as well as active participation in defence and security efforts.

The present era of globalisation, IT advancements, and the strategic landscape can positively and negatively impact a country's potential threats. If not adequately addressed, these factors could shift from military threats to non-military threats due to missed opportunities. National Defence faces both military and non-military threats of various forms and complexities, including challenges posed by the fourth industrial revolution, society, the unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic, the risk of economic recession, and other factors. National Defence is a shared responsibility of both older and younger generations, including Generation Z (GenZ).

It is essential to consider the various characteristics of today's young generation when addressing the issue of defending the country. Traits such as a lack of concern for others, insufficient empathy, and a focus on individualism, often referred to as 'selfism,' can lead to self-centred behaviours and decreased societal sensitivity. Understanding and addressing these potential issues is essential to raising awareness and promoting attitudes and behaviours that support defending the country.

There are potential problems that GenZ can face in increasing their awareness of attitudes and behaviour as an implementation of the concept of defending the country. GenZ needs to be given a campaign with role models who consistently invite the public to demonstrate attitudes and behaviour to protect the country. Many members of Generation Z still experience economic restrictions, especially those from lower-middle economic backgrounds (Hong Shan et al., 2023). Even though Generation Z grew up in an era of advanced technology, they also face unique challenges related to technology use (Elkhwesky et al., 2023). According to Beresford Research, the Generation Z grouping is the generation born 1997-2012 and aged between 11-26 years in 2023. Abramson states this generation includes Ambitious, digital-native, and self-confident characteristics (Rizal & Nugroho, 2021). This generation is a young generation of school age from middle school to college. This generation lives close to technology and the Internet of Things. Civic education in universities has a vital role as initial education for defending the country, as explicitly stated in Law Number 3 of 2002. Apart from that, it has also been included in the education curriculum, one of which is of concern is the Civic education

curriculum, which experienced a strengthening of material on national defence in 2016 with the publication of a textbook created by the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education for Higher Education.

However, civic learning needs to pay more attention to changes in goals, functions, and societal roles. The position, role, and functional relationship with other subjects are neglected, and the nuances of the theoretical approach are powerful in civic learning, which is shown by the emphasis on discussing what is in the textbook without being linked to what exists and is relevant for the Indonesian nation today. Civic lectures only have a minimal contribution to the development of individuals and society, especially in instilling and accelerating the growth of democratic values in Indonesian culture, which is plural and respects cultural differences in society through the spirit of multiculturalism (Zuriah, 2011).

This research aims to enhance innovative learning models in citizenship education, focusing on improving national defence skills among university students. The novelty of this research lies in integrating the concept of defending the country into the Citizenship Education curriculum more comprehensively and practically. The proposed innovative learning model may involve simulations, role-playing, and collaboration with higher education, government, or military institutions to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. In addition to theoretical contributions to Citizenship Education, this research has a practical impact by increasing awareness and national defence skills in the younger generation, thereby strengthening national defence.

Method

The research utilises a mixed methodology approach to investigate research problems and generate comprehensive findings thoroughly. This method allows researchers to employ various data collection tools based on specific data requirements. The research design used in this study is concurrent triangulation, which involves gathering quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, followed by their interpretation together (Creswell, 2014).

A qualitative approach was employed in the initial phase of the research, focusing on the informants' experiences conveyed through narratives. Subsequently, the narrative was designed and interpreted to elucidate its significance. This research illuminates the challenges of teaching Civic Education (General Subjects).

In this research, the qualitative approach involved four civic lecturers. Data triangulation was utilised by cross-referencing information from four informants from the same profession. The interview questions were designed to address the research problems, focusing on Civic learning challenges and proposed learning models to tackle these issues. The validity of the interview questions has been thoroughly tested.

In the second part of the research, a quantitative approach was employed to gather and analyse data obtained from distributing questionnaires to students at UNY. This approach was used to assess students' national defence skills. The research design used was quantitative descriptive research, and the study population consisted of randomly selected new students from various study programs. Data was collected using a Likert scale questionnaire administered to research respondents, and the analysis technique utilised was descriptive statistics with percentage calculation using the formula ($P = S/N \times 100\%$).

Table 1.
Category of Percentage

Percentage Score	Category
82%-100%	Good
63%-81%	Enough
44%-62%	Not enough
0%-3%	Not good

Apart from that, student assignment documents were also analysed to support the research results.

Result and Discussion

Problems and Challenges in Learning Civic Education as Initial National Defence Education

Data collected from informant interviews was carefully identified and analysed according to the predetermined outline. Below is a summary of responses from four informants regarding existing challenges in civic learning. The interviews revealed that the primary obstacle in civic education is the difficulty in cultivating students' interest in the subject.

"...because every student has a diverse scientific background, so not all have an interest or awareness of the importance of Civic" (informant 1).

This is also due to the assumption that

"... learning is optional if it is outside the study program, especially considering the characteristics of students with a kinesthetic learning style. Apart from that, the lack of civic literacy also causes disinterest in discussions related to civics (informant 2).

"Students' views on Civic learning have no role in their future, especially students outside the social faculty (informant 3).

"... because civic education is not a central subject for students, students consider Civic less critical than other subjects. However, students may not be able to perform optimally as expected because there are too many assignments from different courses (informant 4).

The second challenge and problem is civic learning, which focuses on the cognitive aspect and is limited to theory.

"The challenge in learning Civic is how students, after studying Civic, not only master the theoretical aspects of Civic learning but also internalise it within themselves and implement it in everyday life, because up to now Civic has been packaged too theoretically and tends to be textual" (informant 1).

"... assignments that mostly focus on cognitive aspects. During discussions, things are discussed not because of interest, but because of value-oriented formality" (informant 2).

"... there are still many students who are less responsive to surrounding phenomena" (informant 3).

"... students consider learning Civic education boring, just presentations and memorisation" (informant 4).

The third challenge relates to learning civics as an initial education for defending the country. Civic education as initial education to defend the country instils attitudes and behaviour in students as citizens who must participate in efforts to protect the country. Civic is nationalist education, which is hoped that students' sense of nationhood or nationalism can be developed and enhanced so that they love and feel the nation more and are willing to make sacrifices for their nation and country (Dewantara, 2023).

There are several obstacles to its implementation. According to the results of interviews, several informants expressed problems in state defence education, namely:

"How can students be interested in studying civic education not just as a science but as a provision and necessity for national and state life, not only in theory but also internalised within themselves and applied in life" (Informant 1).

"Students' perception of national defence is a need to understand the forms of national defence, especially in the millennial generation. From a formal perspective, the lack of love for the homeland is due to the various problems in Indonesia, making people lack trust and care less about the state and government (informant 2).

"The problem in defending the country is how to direct students to capture various small examples around them as a form of implementing state defence, which is not easy when teaching theory but also accurately informing them of examples that they know and is aware of around them" (informant 3).

"However, if we break it down further, students will be less able to contextualise the implementation of national defence at the professional level in which students are involved. "Students are also relatively less interested in this material because this material is often taught at previous levels of education" (Informant 4).

It can be concluded that the obstacle to implementing civic education as an initial education for defending the country is that students need to be more interested in studying civic education. This causes a lack of understanding of the forms of defending the country, a lack of love for the country, a lack of concern for the country, and a lack of actualisation of defending the country.

Besides that, the challenge for lecturers as teachers of general courses is that they must have the skills and intuition to create a learning process to produce student learning creativity. Moreover, the Civic Education course is one of the courses that establishes, shapes, guides, and develops the character of the younger generation as the future strength of the country. The Service-Learning approach can eliminate the monotonous "image" and become one of the courses students like because it is a place for self-expression and actualisation as a social reality of society in the new average era. As an approach to the learning process, lecturers have the task of constantly developing the methods used in Service Learning by technological developments that impact student "trends" (Walukow & Prijanto, 2021).

The problem of defending the country for college students can also be seen from the perspective or level of students' national defence. The results of the questionnaire analysis to determine the level of student national defence are shown in the table.

Table 2.
Result of Percentage

Indicator	Percentage	Percentage Criteria
Love the country	77%	Enough
Be aware of your nation and state	84%	Good
Believes in Pancasila as the state ideology	82%	Good
Willing to sacrifice for the nation and state	86%	Good
Has the initial ability to defend the country	87%	Good

The data in the table indicates that the indicator for defending the country and love for the homeland among students stands at 77%, placing it in the "enough" category. Regarding awareness of the nation and state, belief in Pancasila as the state ideology, willingness to sacrifice for the nation, and the initial ability to defend the country, the percentages are 84%, 82%, 86%, and 87% respectively, placing them in the "good" category. However, based on the results of 70 student assignments, it is apparent that 78.6% of students have yet to demonstrate the genuine contribution they can make to advance Indonesia in line with their competencies, abilities, and future professions.

The data results reinforce the concerns of multiple sources regarding challenges in state defence initiatives, particularly the millennial generation's need for more comprehension of state defence concepts. The formal disregard for the nation stems from many issues in Indonesia, leading to decreased trust and diminished regard for the government. Students need more contextual understanding to apply state defence principles professionally.

The younger generation must embrace a strong sense of national and state awareness by understanding and cherishing their country's history, preserving its cultural heritage, and upholding the good name of Indonesia. This sense of awareness can be nurtured by fostering knowledge of democratic civic values and the ability to apply them in their daily lives and by

embodying a vital and critical mindset. Additionally, the younger generation needs to integrate the values of Pancasila – the ideology of the Indonesian state – into their daily lives, as these values safeguard the nation from military and non-military threats. The younger generation, particularly students, can develop a profound love and dedication to Indonesia by internalising these principles. Instilling these foundational values of defending the country will cultivate a generation with a deep sense of nationalism and love for their country, Indonesia.

Efforts to Solve Problems in Civic Learning

Civics educators can adopt an engaging and interactive learning approach, encouraging students to actively participate in the learning process (Yemini et al., 2023). By selecting relevant and compelling learning materials, civics teachers can facilitate students' comprehension of citizenship and nationalism concepts (Haste et al., 2021). Teachers must demonstrate creativity in choosing and developing effective learning methods to instil a sense of nationalism in the younger generation amidst the backdrop of globalisation (Murdiono & Wuryandani, 2021). Some of the strategies employed in civic education by various sources are:

" To make learning more interesting, I carry out learning in several models, starting from projects, debates, and everything is always correlated with actual cases" (informant 1)

" Inviting students to discuss current issues through problem-based learning and inviting students to be directly involved in society through project-based learning " (informant 2).

"... the learning method is problem-based learning, project-based learning and efforts to reflect at each meeting will be comfortable" (informant 3).

" I updated the learning materials to make them more contextual to students' learning needs. Apart from that, learning is encouraged to be scientifically based to encourage students to develop the information they obtain. The learning method used covers learning by encouraging students to work in groups. Students are asked to explore various concepts and learning materials that must be mastered from their various literature and learning resources. Then, students were asked to make presentations and ask questions. At the end of the lecture, students are asked to brainstorm about the national defence material they have received, and the lecturer strengthens the content of the lecture material presented " (Informant 4).

In addition, the four informants have also agreed to propose an educational model to enhance civic education for national defence. This involves developing a learning model that actively engages students in society. The idea is to integrate classrooms into a broader social context, turning them into hubs of problem-solving and intelligence for addressing societal issues (Abdullah et al., 2019). A promising innovative learning model for enhancing national defence skills is the community-connected learning model, such as the service-learning model.

Service learning, also known as social action learning, is a model that involves students engaging with society to address real-world problems (Leek, 2016). This approach integrates community service with classroom learning experiences (Shea et al., 2023). In service learning, students acquire academic knowledge in the classroom and put it into practice by serving the community or non-profit organisations (Chan et al., 2021). This method enables students to understand social issues more deeply, develop critical thinking skills, and embrace social responsibility while making meaningful social contributions (Faulconer et al., 2023).

There is an inherent connection between classroom learning and community engagement. This approach to education integrates academic learning with meaningful community actions, enriching students' knowledge and understanding of the study material. Furthermore, it fosters students' awareness and capacity to assist others. Service learning not only enhances academic, social, and personal skills but also encourages students to contribute to the betterment of society, aligning with the objectives of the Civic Education curriculum. Apart from that, students, also as global citizens, must have a social responsibility, namely dependence and concern for other people, society, and the environment; second is global

competence, and third is involvement in Civic, namely actions and tendencies to recognise problems around them (Murdiono, 2014).

Civic plays a crucial role in service learning. This service-learning model has been implemented in Civic courses at universities, not only as a pedagogical approach but also as a method for students to engage in social service activities that directly contribute to solving community issues (Walukow et al., 2021). With the increasing prevalence of online and asynchronous learning, it is imperative to comprehend instructional strategies and course design for service learning in online education (Faulconer, 2021)."

Conclusion

Addressing the current challenges in teaching Civic Education as part of initial state defence education is essential. One issue is the need for more students to be interested in this subject. This leads to a poor understanding of state defence, low patriotism, insufficient concern for the country, and a lack of engagement in state defence activities. Survey results indicate that the level of patriotism falls within the satisfactory range. To tackle these challenges, exploring innovative learning models that promote national defence is crucial. This could involve integrating traditional classroom teaching with real-world experiences and enhancing student participation in community activities. One effective model is service learning, and it is also vital to understand how instructional strategies and course design can be adapted for service learning in online education.

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