Integrating civic spirituality and civic disposition to build ethical citizen character

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Abstract
This research aims to explore and combine the concepts of civic spirituality and disposition to build ethical citizens' character. These two concepts complement each other, with civic spirituality focusing on religious values in society and civic disposition on civic attitudes that support active participation and responsibility. This research used the literature method, analysing relevant literature and theories on civic education, spirituality, and ethics. The results showed that the integration of civic spirituality and civic disposition can be a solid foundation for building the character of ethical, moral, and socially responsible citizens. This integration forms ethical citizens through religious values, such as basic morals, citizen activeness, responsibility, and norm-compliant citizenship. This concept strengthens the citizens' spiritual aspects, supports the development of a positive civic attitude, and focuses on the common good. The benefits of this research are that it offers insights for educators, policymakers, and the public in designing more comprehensive and effective civic education programs that aim to shape citizens with strong character, ethics, and morals.

Keywords: Character, Citizen, Civic Disposition, Civic Spirituality, Ethical.

Introduction

Article 31, paragraph 3 of the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia (UUD Tahun 1945) confirms that the government seeks and organises a national education system that increases faith, piety, and noble character to educate the nation's life regulated by law. That faith and noble morals become the basis of human behaviour in the life of the nation and state. Faith can also serve as a driving force, an activator, and a source of ultimate goodness in human life (Wati & Amelia, 2021). Humans unite the physical and spiritual elements to achieve perfection (Shihab & Fauzi, 2013). Mental health is a state of the soul that brings calm, sincerity, and peace when someone carries out noble behaviour (Muzaki & Saputra, 2019).

Spiritual includes transcendence as the peak of individual development. It can be defined as motivation in the search for the meaning of life and the distinctive characteristics of humanity that distinguish individuals from other beings. Moreover, spirituality is the

dimension that indicates one's mental health (Papaleontiou - Louca et al., 2023; Reischer et al., 2021). Spirituality guides the soul towards righteous behaviour by always having God present every step of life. Spirituality, often related to religion, also plays a role in public administration (King, 2007). Spirituality does not always refer to religious teachings; it can be a philosophy, a value, or a meaning in one's life (Kellehear, 2000).

Education that produces quality citizens focuses on building character and nation by instilling ethical and spiritual values in all Indonesian human beings (Suryanto, 2014). Civic education is one of the subjects that shape the morals and personality of the nation (Suardi et al., 2019). Educational institutions are not just places to impart knowledge but also to shape attitudes, behaviours, and character. Civic education focuses on three basic development components: civic knowledge, skills, and disposition(Wahab & Sapriya, 2011). Furthermore, Civic education can be interpreted as developing and preserving noble values. Students manifest it in the form of behaviour as individuals and members of society in the life of the nation and state (Saputri & Marzuki, 2021).

Citizenship is a form of fellowship that requires developing a love of community. Ironically, this fellowship vision is often inspired by religious views that state love replaces hatred and violence with compassion (Isin & Turner, 2002). Civic disposition, as part of character education, refers to civic attitudes and values such as responsibility, tolerance, and active social participation. (Komalasari & Sapriya, 2016; Mazid et al., 2024). Civic spirituality emphasises moral and transcendental values, while civic disposition focuses on attitudes supporting ethical citizenship. Their integration fosters empathy, social concern, and commitment to the common good, strengthening ethics and social order. A study by De Soto et al. (2018) illustrates that most students with a high level of religiosity tend to show good academic achievement and have stronger academic ethics than less religious students. In contrast to previous research, a study conducted by Moulin-Stożek (2020). The study highlights spiritual development as a key educational goal and contributes to the debate on its role within the UK educational tradition. It examines a globally relevant case to assess whether the core objectives of inclusive education have been achieved in theory, policy, and practice.

Many studies and analyses have been conducted on spiritual civic values and the formation of civic disposition (Komalasari & Sapriya 2016; Montessori et al., 2024; Mulyono, 2017; Pasandaran et al., 2018; Wei, 2023). This study integrates civic spirituality and disposition to build ethical citizen character and strengthen society's moral foundation. While previous research has emphasised cognitive and affective aspects of civic disposition, including spiritual values, it remains underexplored. This research innovates by combining civic spirituality, which provides moral and spiritual grounding and civic disposition, fostering active participation and social responsibility.

Integrating these concepts is crucial for addressing global challenges by creating moral, intelligent, and responsible citizens committed to social justice and the common good. The study aims to analyse the role of religious values (civic spirituality) and proactive, responsible attitudes (civic disposition) in shaping public ethics and forming a holistic civic education framework. It offers recommendations for curriculum development that unites spiritual values and citizenship to nurture individuals who contribute to a just and caring society.

This research makes a significant scientific contribution to the study of civic education, especially in building the ethical character of citizens. In an increasingly complex and diverse global context, this research offers an interdisciplinary approach by integrating civic spirituality and disposition as the foundation of character building. This contribution is relevant as it links aspects of spirituality - which includes universal values such as honesty, empathy and integrity - with civic dispositions that include critical attitudes, social responsibility and active engagement in public life. As such, this research provides a conceptual foundation for developing character education that builds citizenship skills and strengthens citizens' moral and ethical dimensions.

The novelty of this research lies in its holistic and integrative approach, which has not been widely explored in civic studies. So far, many studies have focussed on developing cognitive competence or civic attitudes separately, while aspects of spirituality are often neglected. This research presents a new perspective by emphasising that the character-building of ethical citizens requires synergy between spiritual and dispositional dimensions. This approach can be implemented through an educational curriculum that integrates spiritual reflection with civic attitude training in real-life contexts. Therefore, this research offers new theoretical insights and practical implications for citizenship education in the global era.

Method

This study uses a qualitative literature review to analyse the integration of civic spirituality and civic disposition in shaping ethical citizen character, drawing on scientific journals, articles, books, and research reports. This paper describes the approach with conceptual studies that stand on the type of literature study (Creswell, 2014). The literature review combines summary and synthesis, presenting key information and reorganising it to provide new interpretations by connecting various perspectives. It adopts a deductive-interpretive approach. The literature review in this paper is chosen because it has the potential to help understand theoretical perspectives in research by showing various approaches used in conducting a study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The analysis references various studies on civic spirituality and disposition using a deductive-interpretive approach. The research follows nine stages: defining objectives, developing a conceptual framework, identifying keywords, searching for literature, selecting quality sources, organising and synthesising findings, analysing literature, writing the review, and revising the conceptual framework based on findings.

Result and Discussion

The mental revolution started in the education sector because education has a vital role in shaping the mentality of the nation's young generation (Kristiawan, 2016). Mentality is related to character building. Sustainable development in a broad context means growth and development of the nation's character that provides short-, medium-, and long-term benefits (Hidayah et al., 2023). Civic spirituality and disposition are crucial for shaping citizens who understand their rights and obligations while upholding moral and spiritual commitments. Civic spirituality focuses on how spiritual values influence social and political actions. In contrast, civic disposition emphasises integrating values like responsibility, decency, tolerance, discipline, and self-reliance in social and cultural actions.

Civic Education focuses on three main aspects: civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Branson, 1998; Wahab & Sapriya, 2011). One crucial component is civic disposition, which includes attention to rights, welfare, justice, and responsibility for the public interest (Owen, 2015). Civic disposition refers to attitudes and habits of mind that support healthy social functioning and safeguard the public interest in a democratic system (Quigley, 1991). It is developed through experiences at home, school and in the community (Mulyono, 2017). In short, civic disposition becomes a guide and direction in the realm of guidelines for forming citizen character.

Furthermore, public and private characteristics are important to maintain constitutional democracy, such as moral responsibility, self-discipline, respect for human dignity, and active participation in civic affairs (Branson, 1998). There are several crucial things, especially in social and state life actions. The values of civic disposition become reinforcement in behaving as an ethical citizen. The following is a figure of civic disposition values distribution covering the realm of private and public characters.

The research from Komalasari & Sapriya (2016) has relevant quantitative data supporting research on the integration and impact of civic spirituality and disposition. Significant differences in the development of student civic disposition are observed between

classes using teaching materials based on life values (0.406) and classes using conventional teaching materials (0.167). Students taught using living values-based teaching materials show higher development of civic disposition. Therefore, using teaching materials based on life values has a more significant impact on students' civic disposition than conventional teaching materials. Students who learn with life values-based teaching materials show a higher improvement in their civic disposition.

Figure 1.
The Value of Civic Disposition
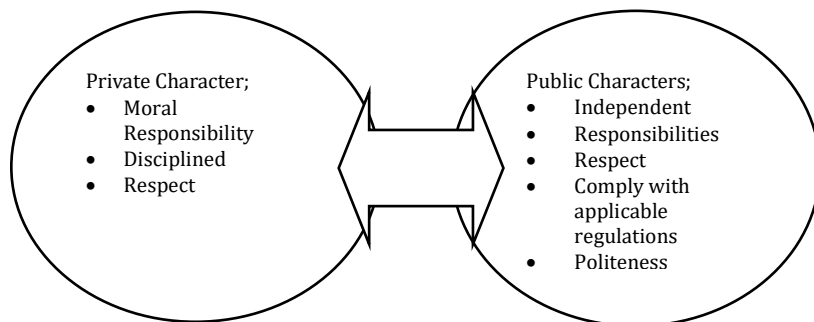
Source: Branson (1998).

The research from Lappo et al. (2022) found that the development of spiritual values in future specialist personalities needs to be focused on three main aspects: 1) understanding of spirituality, morality, and aesthetics; 2) self-recognition and development; 3) participation in meaningful social activities. For this reason, we need to strengthen the axiological component of education, which shapes the life view and world position of the younger generation. Courses such as philosophy, history, culture, and ethics should assist future specialists in spiritual growth because they form a human-centred view of life and a deep understanding of personal existence.

Citizens with character greatly influence a person's ethical actions and views. As a science, ethics is a branch of philosophy that critically considers which actions are good or which actions are bad based on moral teachings (Weruin, 2019). Ethics is an individual's attempt to use one's mind and reason to solve the problem of how one should live better (Böhm et al., 2022). Ethics, as part of character, guide the determination of good and right. Ethics is not just a theory but something that is formed through habits in everyday life. By having a strong ethic, a person can act responsibly, with integrity, and be oriented towards goodness. This makes citizens with character able to contribute positively to social life and statehood.

Ethics in philosophical review can be interpreted as a good pattern of life, being a good person, doing good, and wanting good things in life (Fermadi, 2018). As a branch of philosophy, ethics discusses fundamental systems and thoughts related to moral teachings and views. As a science, ethics studies how and why humans follow certain moral teachings (Theguh & Bisri, 2023). Ethical philosophy, in its application, focuses on rhetoric rather than action. In their actions, citizens need to prioritise ethics as the guidance to reach citizens' moral spirituality. Moral spirituality is rooted in moral culture, which is often absent in the life of the majority. Therefore, spirituality is crucial for creating a life order that upholds values and morals. Figure 2 explains the distribution of spiritual values proposed by Kellehear.

Spiritual development thrives in the curriculum, focusing on personal growth and moral development. This important step integrates spirituality into citizenship. (Watson et al., 2019). Education is the key to improving the quality of individuals and the basis for society to achieve a better spiritual life and shared well-being (Wei, 2023). The individual character will form the character of society, which in turn becomes the nation's character.

Figure 2.
Dimension of Spiritual Needs
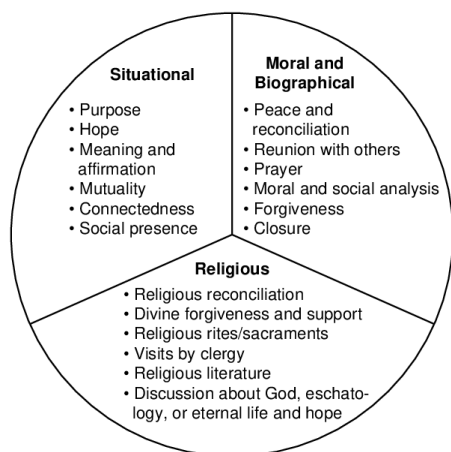
Source: Kellehear (2000).

Religious and spiritual corridors lead to action. The religious foundation provides the basis of values, norms, ethics, and morals that become the soul and foundation for the entire discipline of education, especially in Indonesia (Wahab & Sapriya, 2011). Spirituality goes beyond citizenship but is embodied or actualised in it (Stoddart, 2007). Citizenship and spirituality converge in the idea of social quality. Spiritual intelligence (SQ) can help humans solve problems related to meaning and value. Zohar & Marshall (2004) Mentioned that spiritual intelligence (SQ) plays a key role in helping individuals overcome problems related to the meaning and value of life.

In civic spirituality, SQ provides a deep moral and spiritual foundation, enabling individuals to understand purpose in life and social responsibility. This approach broadens individuals' perspectives on social and political issues. Civic disposition encourages applying values in concrete actions, such as participating in social life, fighting for justice, and contributing to the common good. Integrating SQ, civic spirituality, and civic disposition shapes individuals who think critically about values and translate them into actions to support a more just and ethical society.

Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia mandates that national education should improve intellectual abilities and foster faith, piety, and noble morals, shaping ethical and virtuous citizens. Civic spirituality provides a moral and spiritual foundation, while civic disposition encourages applying these values in social and political life. Integrating these concepts will make education more effective in producing smart, caring, and responsible citizens. The goal is to develop individuals who are religious, ethical, knowledgeable, creative, and democratic. A key solution is creating a harmonious mystical atmosphere for citizens, where Pancasila, especially its first principle, emphasises the role of religion in national life.

The biggest challenge is to create citizens who strongly commit to spiritual values when determining how the state treats others, especially those who are perceived as different (MacMullen, 2018). Therefore, the right formula is needed to synergise the relationship between religion and politics for the common good. Civics is a lesson that discusses theories about citizens, government, and legal relations between them. It belongs to a branch of political science called political democracy (Wahab & Sapriya, 2011). Civic education's main purpose is to shape ethical citizens' character. Schools and neighbourhoods should instil tolerance, respect, and recognition of equal moral values for everyone. The religious value, often used as a reference by humans in their lives, is believed by its adherents to be sourced from the Almighty God (Muchson Ar & Samsuri, 2013).

Instilling religious character values in students is a tangible manifestation of the first principle of Pancasila, which affirms that religious morality and spirituality play an important role as the main foundation for the integrity and sustainability of the state (Marzuki & Haq, 2018). Integrating civic spirituality and disposition has significant implications for civic education. The civic education curriculum should include relevant spiritual and moral

elements, aiming to shape an intellectually intelligent generation and spiritually and ethically mature.

The integration of civic spirituality and civic disposition is key to building individual and community character. Social care promotes togetherness and personal responsibility, while strong morality fosters peace, moral discipline, and adherence to social norms. Spiritual foundations, such as reconciliation and forgiveness, guide social interactions and personal reflection. This integration encourages active citizenship and promotes spiritual values through education and public policies, leading to a more just and inclusive society. Citizens shaped by this integration focus on the common good, demonstrating critical thinking, empathy, and social responsibility. However, implementing this integration faces challenges, including differing views on spirituality, limited curricula, and varying teacher preparedness. Overcoming these obstacles requires improved teacher training, curriculum revision, and open discussions on spirituality in education.

Conclusion

The results highlight that integrating civic spirituality and disposition is crucial in shaping the character of ethical citizens. Combining these concepts fosters individuals who are active in social and political life with a strong commitment to moral and spiritual values. Civic spirituality provides a solid moral and spiritual foundation, while civic disposition enables the practical application of these values. Citizens with high civic spirituality are likelier to participate in social activities and contribute to the common good. However, diverse socio-cultural contexts can influence the application of these concepts. In multicultural societies, differing views on spirituality and citizenship may pose challenges, requiring a more inclusive and adaptive approach to civic education. Further research should explore accepting and applying these concepts across cultures and social contexts and consider adjusting the civic curriculum for multicultural societies. Educators must also receive adequate training and resources to effectively integrate these aspects, fostering ethical citizens who care for the common good.

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