Approach learning high-order thinking skills to improve civic knowledge in Pancasila and Civic Education

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Abstract
Higher-order thinking skills require students to process information critically using specific methods to develop new understandings and insights. This approach encourages students to integrate reality with critical thinking, allowing them to analyse, synthesise, conclude, and evaluate information before reaching a final decision. This study employs an explanatory subjective exploration approach, focusing on interactive processes that provide a comprehensive description through subjective analysis. Educators formulate questions based on specific learning indicators, using simple and accessible language to ensure students can engage effectively. Classroom debates help students develop fundamental thinking skills, enabling them to analyse and address issues objectively without bias. In Pancasila and Civic Education (PCE), the HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) approach is applied selectively, as students have varying capacities. Teachers assess students through written responses to comprehension-based questions derived from lesson materials. Indonesia's education system emphasises civic education, aiming to enhance students' understanding of national identity and uniqueness.

Keywords: Civic Knowledge, HOTS, Pancasila and Civic Education.

Introduction

Individuals cannot disengage from the importance of education, especially when fostering ethical behaviour. School plays a vital role in daily life, not just in imparting knowledge but also in shaping our moral compass. Many believe that education elevates human beings, which implies guiding individuals towards ethical behaviour and providing them with valid knowledge. This is akin to cultivating a sincere person through instruction, a responsibility we all share.

According to the Republic of Indonesia's Regulation Number 20 of 2003, a significant document that outlines the National Education System, education is defined as follows: It is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment and educational experiences that effectively foster personal growth and the ability to pursue in-depth and rigorous learning. This

includes the development of strength, self-control, character, knowledge, honourable ethics, and essential skills without reliance on others, society, or the state.

Educators serve as a cornerstone of this educational framework. Furthermore, Regulation Number 14 of 2005, Article 1, Paragraph 1, concerning teachers and educators, defines an educator as a competent individual tasked with central responsibilities in teaching, educating, directing, coordinating, preparing, assessing, and evaluating students in a conventional educational setting, such as a classroom or a school environment.

As these leaders, educators directly interact with students in the classroom and are crucial in imparting knowledge and ensuring students grasp the lessons (Keiler, 2018). Schools, as educational organisations, require influential educators who are proficient in teaching specific subjects and provide guidance on morals, life skills, ethics, compassion, creativity, and more (Abuhassira et al., 2024; Keiler, 2018; van Velzen & Volman, 2009; Xhomara, 2021).

The explanation emphasises the significance of education as a vital phase that allows individuals to navigate their daily lives effectively. A nurturing environment, supportive family, and well-structured schools all contribute to the realisation of educational goals. The primary objective of education is to cultivate instructive outcomes, which manifest through the achievements of students. This process aims to shape well-rounded individuals, equipping them with the ability to think critically, coherently, and systematically while demonstrating impartiality, legitimacy, accountability, and open-mindedness. Moreover, it encourages collaborative problem-solving across various fields of study.

The Indonesian government is actively pursuing initiatives to foster the development of students with advanced cognitive abilities. One notable effort is the educational framework implemented in 2013, which urges educators to adopt methodologies that promote higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). HOTS involve complex judgmental skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, which are crucial for problem-solving and critical thinking (Asok et al., 2017). These skills are activated when individuals face unfamiliar problems or dilemmas, leading to valid justifications and decisions within existing knowledge (Asok et al., 2017).

Developing Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) through active learning and critical thinking exercises directly enhances civic knowledge (Arensmeier, 2015; Suarniati et al., 2019). For example, involving students in controversial discussions and civic action projects fosters their ability to think critically about social and political issues, enriching their understanding of civic matters. Research indicates that integrating HOTS into civic education enhances democratic skills, including logical argumentation, respectful discourse, and responsible problem-solving (Muhibbin et al., 2019; Navarro, 2017). Furthermore, civic education prioritising critical thinking and participatory learning equips students with a strong civic identity, encouraging them to engage meaningfully in their communities.

In line with this initiative, assessments in Indonesia began incorporating HOTS-type questions, starting with the Computer-Based National Exam (UNBK) in 2018. Notably, about 10% of the questions in this assessment were derived from the HOTS category. This aligns with the global educational standards the Department of Education and Culture set forth in 2015, which stipulates that all questions reflecting HOTS criteria should assess knowledge and gauge reasoning and imaginative capacities.

Despite the intended implementation of HOTS questions within the UNBK framework, participants have complained about the practicality of these assessments. The 2013 educational guidelines ultimately emphasise students' need to engage in reasoning skills encompassing logical thinking, consistent thought processes, and a metacognitive approach to learning. Each educational experience is crucial in enhancing cognitive abilities, particularly in subjects such as civics, which are integral across all educational levels, from primary to higher education.

Integrating HOTS into civic education through active learning, open classroom climates, and debate-centered pedagogy can significantly enhance students' civic knowledge, critical thinking, and engagement (Alscher et al., 2022; Dassonneville et al., 2012; Ryan, 2006; Torney-Purta et al., 2010). The effectiveness of these methods can vary, highlighting the need for diverse and inclusive teaching strategies.

However, a gap exists in the actual recognition and execution of these educational principles among students, particularly at Tondano Junior High School 3. Many students perceive the Pancasila and Civic Education (PCE) as tedious and overwhelming due to the extensive material covered. This perception correlates with a lower-than-expected level of high-order thinking skills observed among students.

Challenges faced by educators in developing engaging and motivating lesson plans have led to several barriers to student learning. Many students struggle to comprehend the civics material, which results in their inability to answer questions accurately. Traditionally, education has been overly teacher-centred, with students frequently disregarding the teacher's explanations, further diminishing their engagement and understanding. The lack of interactive and stimulating civic education hampers students' abilities to engage in higher-order thinking.

Classroom dynamics significantly influence the effectiveness of civics education, as disengaged students often create disruptions that hinder the learning process. When students lack focus, they not only fail to absorb essential civic concepts but also disturb their peers, reducing the overall level of engagement and participation. Such disruptions can weaken the collaborative spirit necessary for meaningful discussions on citizenship, democracy, and ethical responsibilities. The interactive nature of civics education requires an environment that fosters critical thinking and respectful dialogue, but when distractions arise, these objectives become difficult to achieve.

To overcome these challenges, educators must implement innovative strategies that enhance student engagement and maintain productive classroom interactions. One effective approach incorporates student-centred learning activities, such as debates, simulations, and problem-solving exercises, encouraging active participation. Integrating technology, such as digital forums and gamified learning experiences, can make civics lessons more appealing and interactive. By addressing these classroom dynamics proactively, educators can create a more inclusive and stimulating learning environment that empowers students to develop a deeper understanding of civic responsibilities.

Thus, this research proposes a detailed study examining the utilisation of the HOTS learning model to enhance the imaginative reasoning abilities of PCE students at Tondano Junior High School 3. This exploration is crucial as it aims to improve academic performance and foster a more engaging and conducive learning environment. The user has made scholarly contributions in the field of PCE, particularly in the approach of high-order thinking skills learning to enhance civic knowledge in Pancasila and civic education.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the implementation of HOTS in PCE, aiming to understand its meanings, reasons, and context. This method effectively reveals real-world conditions. Qualitative methods enable a comprehensive examination of learning challenges and strategies to enhance critical thinking skills. The research at SMP Negeri 3 Tondano focuses on structuring learning, evaluating methods, and understanding factors affecting HOTS.

Data collection utilised both primary and secondary sources. Primary data came from structured interviews and observations, while secondary data included documents and relevant literature. This thorough approach bolsters the research's validity. The researcher played the dual role of observer and interviewer, emphasising active listening and analysis to

maintain credibility (Creswell, 2014). Data collection techniques included real-time observations, interviews for deeper insights, and documentation of relevant materials.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's framework, involving data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing to provide clear insights into HOTS implementation factors. According to Sugiyono (2020), the validity of qualitative research relies on credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Researchers ensure credibility through ongoing observations, data triangulation, and careful documentation to support accurate findings.

Result and Discussion

While not all objective materials incorporate HOTS, assessments are highly esteemed for possessing these critical components. Educators meticulously design assessments using engaging articles infused with HOTS elements, guiding students to delve deeper into the subject matter and grasp complex concepts. These thoughtfully crafted assessments are then conveyed to instructors for review and feedback.

The impact of perception also plays a crucial role in the learning process. Educators instil confidence in their students by utilising clear and straightforward language in their questions. This approach fosters an environment where students can easily engage with the inquiries presented during PCE lessons, as the language is accessible and devoid of patronising tones. For questions that encourage a deeper level of reasoning, the exploration reaches the C4 level—breaking down ideas and concepts into manageable parts.

Educators in the PCE context possess a keen awareness of this progression. It becomes evident when student complete tasks within appropriate timeframes and articulate their answers thoughtfully during lessons. For instance, when students employ critical thinking skills to tackle problems, describe investigative processes, and evaluate methodologies, it reflects their evolving reasoning abilities (Raj et al., 2022; Witarsa & Muhammad, 2023).

Additionally, this understanding is illuminated through students' responses during evaluations. It can be assumed that their answers are contingent upon a solid grasp of the material and a meaningful connection. This demonstrates that they have reached a high level of reasoning, showcasing their development and engagement in the learning journey (Isac et al., 2011). Then, the creator asks how the method opens the door for students to introduce works created by his students. In addition, seeing media work supports a level of ability reasoning that cannot be denied, and then the educator gives an understanding of who has finished the task.

Moreover, in the past, media was often used to introduce tasks by searching for relevant materials to help significantly develop reasoning skills. Through questions that require high-order thinking skills, students can analyse and construct logical reasoning, enabling them to solve problems more effectively. This process allows them to understand information passively and apply it in various contexts to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

High-order thinking is when someone connects new information with previously stored knowledge, organises, revises, and develops the information to achieve a goal or find solutions in complex situations. In this case, deeper cognitive processes are required for individuals to understand, evaluate, and create new ideas based on their comprehension of existing information. Thus, the use of media in learning tasks is not merely about presenting information but also plays a crucial role in stimulating deeper and more innovative thinking.

Another research on a civic education (PCE, in this context) model that addresses controversial issues portrayed in mass media reveals a dynamic learning approach. This methodology, characterised by perception, presentation, spirited discussions, deep material comprehension, and validation of ideas, has led to remarkable improvements in HOTS proficiency. Students have shown heightened abilities to critically analyse information, express

well-reasoned perspectives, evaluate the viewpoints of others, and adeptly tackle complex problems (Muhibbin et al., 2019). Moreover, comprehensive curricula in PCE have proven instrumental in nurturing political acumen, fostering positive civic attitudes, and invigorating democratic participation. These essential components work synergistically to advance overall civic knowledge among learners (Altaany & Abdelbary, 2024).

Despite its potential, the incorporation of HOTS into PCE encounters significant challenges. PCE often finds itself marginalised within the broader educational landscape, subjected to the whims of politicised curricula, and hindered by a lack of innovative teaching methods. This oversight can stifle the development of strong character traits in students (Altaany & Abdelbary, 2024). Furthermore, educators frequently struggle with effectively integrating diverse learning strategies and models. The disconnect between classroom instruction and local community knowledge exacerbates these challenges, leaving students adrift in civic understanding (Adiputra et al., 2021).

Innovative approaches have played a crucial role in advancing the integration of HOTS in civic education. One such approach is developing engaging learning videos highlighting collective decision-making processes, which have proven effective in improving student outcomes and character development within Political and Civic Education (PCE). These videos help students grasp complex civic concepts while fostering a sense of responsibility and active citizenship. Connecting theoretical knowledge with real-world applications creates an immersive learning experience beyond traditional teaching techniques (Adiputra et al., 2021).

Active learning methodologies have also significantly revitalised civic education, particularly in primary and secondary education settings. Programs emphasising interactive learning, collaboration, and critical thinking have successfully equipped young learners with essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions for effective civic engagement (Owen & Irion-Groth, 2020). These strategies promote intellectual growth and encourage students to participate actively in democratic processes, thus cultivating an informed and engaged citizenry. This approach to education helps nurture the qualities necessary for future leaders and responsible citizens.

A comprehensive educational effectiveness model has shed light on the factors that underpin students' civic knowledge. The interplay of individual characteristics, alongside the quality and availability of civic learning experiences in classrooms, shapes students' understanding (Isac et al., 2011). Additionally, national contextual factors play a crucial role in this dynamic. Participating in active learning environments has fostered notable increases in students' civic knowledge, albeit with a modest effect size (Littenberg-Tobias, 2021).

Applying HOTS within PCE significantly enhances the development of civic knowledge. HOTS equips learners with the ability to engage with complex civic issues by fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical reasoning. However, despite its potential, the full integration of HOTS into PCE faces multiple challenges, including curriculum constraints, teacher preparedness, and varying student capabilities.

Effective implementation strategies are essential to address these challenges. Engaging learning methods, such as interactive videos and active learning practices, have shown promise in promoting HOTS. These approaches encourage students to analyse civic concepts rather than passively absorb information critically. Additionally, fostering a learning environment that supports inquiry-based discussions and collaborative problem-solving can further strengthen the development of civic knowledge.

Assessing the impact of HOTS on civic knowledge acquisition requires a nuanced perspective. Factors such as individual cognitive traits, the quality of civic learning opportunities, and the broader national context play crucial roles in determining outcomes. While research highlights the benefits of HOTS in civic education, direct measurement of its

influence on civic knowledge remains an area for further exploration, necessitating continued empirical investigations.

Conclusion

Civics lessons use the HOTS approach, but not all HOTS material is objective because every student has different abilities. The teacher assesses them through questions and articles made by students. Material, then submit questions to students like That. Students in a way: There is no direct request to decide so that they can respond to questions given by the educator. The teacher also uses language-based teaching to help students understand the material. Exam This also underlines the importance of HOTS in assisting students to introduce their abilities realistically. Skills This helps students see new data and apply it effectively. Information citizenship in exercise education and learning is outstanding for students. It helps them understand what they can do when they become students or residents overall. This also shows that system education in Indonesia is based on strength in training citizenship, which aims to show students about the state and rights.

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Authors' contributions

Authors JB, RFL, and FLKS contributed to analysing the problems, finding solutions and interpreting issues related to this topic. All authors designed the research, conducted the study, analysed the final results and contributed to the preparation of the final manuscript. JB supervised, provided direction and verified the methods, data processing and research results.

Competing interests

The authors have declared no competing interests.