



Building Social Awareness in Elementary Madrasah Students through Understanding Population and the Indonesian Government System

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the understanding of elementary school students regarding population and the Indonesian government system, and its impact on the formation of their social awareness. The problem studied is how citizenship education based on the topic of population and government systems can improve students' social awareness in elementary school. The research method used is a qualitative approach with a case study design, involving interviews, observations, and documentation in several elementary school in Kendari City. The research informants consisted of students, teachers, and principals. The data analysis technique used a thematic analysis model. The results of the study showed that a better understanding of population and the Indonesian government system was positively related to an increase in students' social awareness. Learning that integrates theory with real social experiences produces a more applicable understanding. As a result, students show higher social awareness, although there are gaps in the application of knowledge in everyday life. This study contributes to the development of more contextual and participatory citizenship learning methods, as well as encouraging changes in teaching practices in elementary school.

Keywords: *Government System, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Population, Social Awareness.*

PRELIMINARY

Civic education plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and social awareness, particularly at the elementary level. In Indonesia, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, as a primary education institution, is responsible for instilling a strong understanding of civic values, including the concepts of population and governance. This understanding serves as the foundation for students to understand their roles in society and the state, as well as to actively participate in Indonesia's social and political development (Izma & Kezuma, 2019). However, in practice, challenges remain in integrating this material into the curriculum in an effective and engaging manner for students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Many students lack a deep understanding of population dynamics and Indonesia's governance system, leading to a lack of social awareness that can impact their participation in social and political issues.

This study aims to explore how understanding population and government systems can foster social awareness in elementary school students. More specifically, this study aims to analyze the influence of a curriculum approach that combines population and government materials on improving students' social understanding and awareness. This study also aims to provide recommendations for educators and policymakers regarding the development of a more relevant and applicable curriculum to foster social awareness at the elementary school level (Ramadhan, et.al., 2021).

Based on the literature review, although there are several studies related to civic education at the elementary school level, not many specifically link understanding of population and government systems

with increasing social awareness among students in Islamic Elementary Schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah). This study fills this gap by examining in depth how these materials can be integrated in a way that is appropriate to the age and social context of students. This study also makes an important contribution by offering a new approach to curriculum design that prioritizes not only theoretical knowledge but also practical student engagement in understanding social and political issues in Indonesia. Thus, this study is expected to provide deeper insights into the importance of civic education in Islamic Elementary Schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah), as well as influence the development of a curriculum that is more oriented towards increasing social awareness and student participation in the future (Sitinjak, et.al., 2024).

Civic education plays a central role in shaping the character and social awareness of the younger generation (Hermansyah et al., 2024). In Indonesia, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary schools), as basic educational institutions, plays a strategic role in instilling basic civic values, including an understanding of population dynamics and the country's governance system. A deep understanding of these two aspects not only enriches students' knowledge but also equips them with the social skills necessary for active participation in community and national life (Mutia, 2022). Given the importance of character formation from an early age, efforts to integrate population and governance materials into the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah curriculum are highly relevant. However, the challenge is how to present this material in an engaging manner that aligns with students' cognitive developmental stages, enabling them to effectively understand and internalize these concepts (Komariyah, 2023).

In response to this challenge, this study aims to explore effective ways to build social awareness in elementary school students through an understanding of population and the Indonesian government system. This study focuses on analyzing the relationship between a curriculum that combines these two materials and the improvement of students' social awareness, as well as its implications for future social and political participation. Although research on civics education at the elementary level has existed, studies linking understanding of population and government with students' social awareness in elementary school are still limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by offering a new, more relevant and applicable approach to improving the quality of civics education in elementary school (Arif, 2012).

In Indonesia, an understanding of population and governance systems is crucial for shaping students' social character from an early age (Adiwilaga et al., 2018). However, despite being an integral part of civic education, a deep understanding of these two concepts remains limited for most Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students. Often, existing curricula do not fully accommodate the teaching of these materials in a manner appropriate to students' cognitive and social developmental levels. This condition leads to students' low social awareness of the dynamics of social life and governance in Indonesia, which in turn can hinder their active involvement in various social and political issues. Therefore, a more effective approach is needed to address this problem, particularly through the integration of population and governance materials into more contextual and engaging learning (Muhayati, 2021).

This issue becomes even more relevant when considering the importance of developing a young generation with social awareness and active participation in national life. This study aims to detail this problem by identifying how a low understanding of population and government systems can impact students' social awareness in Islamic elementary schools. Furthermore, this study will explore the factors contributing to this limited understanding, such as inappropriate teaching methods and a lack of relevant materials in the elementary education curriculum. By identifying these specific issues, this study is expected to provide more applicable solutions to increase students' social awareness through more effective civic education that is tailored to their developmental needs (Bangun, 2022).

The main objective of this study is to analyze how elementary school students' understanding of population and government systems can enhance their social awareness. This study focuses on identifying the relationship between educational materials that integrate the concepts of population and government and the enhancement of social awareness among students. Through this approach, it is hoped that students will not only understand the basic theories of government and population but also be able to apply this understanding in the context of their daily social and political lives. This will strengthen their capacity to actively participate in community and national life, which in turn will create a younger generation that is more concerned with social issues and better prepared to face global challenges.

Furthermore, this study aims to provide findings-based recommendations that educators and policymakers can use to design a more inclusive and relevant curriculum for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students.

By designing an approach that prioritizes a contextual understanding of population and government, this study seeks to offer a more effective solution in developing students' social awareness. It is hoped that the results of this study can make a significant contribution to the development of a civics curriculum in Indonesia, which focuses not only on cognitive aspects but also on building strong social character among Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students.

Although there is a significant amount of research on civics education in Indonesia, most of this research has not specifically linked understanding of population and government systems to students' social awareness, particularly at the elementary school level. Much of the existing literature tends to focus on the cognitive or academic aspects of civics education without delving deeper into how these concepts can influence students' social attitudes and active engagement in community life. Therefore, there is a significant gap in research that directly links understanding of population and government to the development of social awareness in early childhood, particularly at the elementary school level (Mahmudiyah & Mulyadi, 2021).

This study fills this gap by adopting a more comprehensive approach, integrating civic education theory with relevant and applicable teaching perspectives at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary school) level. By delving deeper into how population and government instruction can be effectively implemented to enhance students' social awareness, this study offers a significant contribution to curriculum development and teaching methodology in elementary education. This research is expected to fill gaps in the existing literature and provide new insights for educators and policymakers in designing educational programs that better meet future needs and challenges (Lubis, 2019).

This study offers a novel contribution to the study of civics education at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary school) level by highlighting the relationship between students' understanding of population and the Indonesian government system and their social awareness. The novelty of this study lies in its approach, which integrates basic civics theories with practical applications in teaching at the elementary level, particularly for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students. Previously, most research tended to focus on higher education levels or was more limited to discussing cognitive aspects without considering their impact on the development of social awareness and student participation in community life. Therefore, this study seeks to enrich the scientific discourse by providing a new perspective on how teaching population and government can shape students' social character from an early age (Habaridota, 2023).

The sustainability of this research also lies in its urgency for developing an Islamic elementary school curriculum that is more responsive to Indonesia's social and political needs. Focusing on increasing social awareness through population education and government systems, this research aims to provide applicable recommendations for educators and policymakers. The results are expected to provide guidance in designing a curriculum that emphasizes not only academic understanding but also the development of strong social character. Thus, this research contributes to encouraging more meaningful change in Indonesia's education system, oriented towards developing a young generation that is caring, critical, and active in various social and political issues (Lestari & Salminawati 2021).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study to explore and deeply examine the phenomena that occur related to Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students' understanding of population and the Indonesian government system and its impact on their social awareness. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to explore the meaning and understanding of students holistically and contextually regarding social and political issues in Indonesia, which cannot be understood solely through quantitative data. This study focuses on analyzing the interaction between students, educational materials, and the social context in civics instruction at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, and how this process shapes their social awareness.

Research Background

This research was conducted at several Islamic elementary schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) in Kendari City, Southeast Sulawesi. Kendari was chosen as the research location because its social and cultural diversity provides a representative picture of the dynamics of basic education in Indonesia, particularly in the context of Islamic elementary schools. Islamic elementary schools in Kendari have a unique characteristic, namely integrating religious values with civics material, which allows for broader

observation of teaching methods that can influence the formation of students' social awareness. This setting provides a relevant context for analyzing how understanding of population and government systems is conveyed to students and accepted in their daily social lives.

Research Informants

The informants for this study were selected purposively, taking into account specific characteristics relevant to the focus of the study. The primary informants consisted of the principal, civics teachers, and sixth-grade students at an elementary school. The principal and teachers were selected because of their roles in designing and implementing the curriculum and their influence on the learning process. Sixth-grade students were selected because they are in the final stages of elementary education, where their understanding of civics and the government system is beginning to develop and can provide in-depth insights into the acceptance of the material and its impact on their social awareness. Furthermore, parents were involved as secondary informants to gain additional perspectives on the influence of madrasah education on the development of students' social character at home and in the community.

Data collection technique

The data collection techniques in this study involved several methods to obtain comprehensive and in-depth information. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, students, and parents. These interviews were designed to explore their understanding of the Indonesian population and government system, as well as their impact on students' social awareness. The interviews also aimed to understand how the curriculum and teaching methods implemented at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah influence students' understanding of social and political issues.

In addition to interviews, participant observation was conducted to observe classroom learning processes involving population and government systems. This observation allowed researchers to directly monitor interactions between teachers and students, as well as how the material was delivered and received. Observational data also included an analysis of extracurricular activities related to civics learning, which may influence students' social awareness.

Documentation was also used to supplement data obtained from interviews and observations. The documents collected included syllabi, lesson plans (RPPs), and teaching materials used in civics instruction at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary schools). These documents provide a clearer picture of the structure and approach used in the civics curriculum at the school (Khasbiah, 2011).

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis, a common approach in qualitative research. First, interview transcripts and observation notes were analyzed to identify key themes that emerged related to students' understanding of population and government systems, and their impact on their social consciousness. The analysis process began with data coding, which involved identifying pieces of information relevant to the research questions. Once key codes were identified, the researchers grouped the data into larger themes based on shared meanings and related objectives.

Next, the researchers interpreted the emerging themes, referring to relevant literature to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomena encountered. Analysis was also conducted to identify relationships between various elements within the study, such as students' understanding of population and government systems, and their level of social awareness. The results of this analysis will provide a clearer picture of the teaching process and its impact on the development of students' social character.

Research Data Validity Test

To ensure the validity of the research data, the researcher used several data validity testing techniques, namely extended observation, source triangulation, and member checking. Extended observation was carried out by collecting data over a sufficiently long period to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing data obtained from various informants, such as teachers, students, and parents, to ensure the consistency of the information obtained. Member checking was carried out by asking informants to re-

verify the results of interviews and data analysis, to ensure that the interpretations provided were in accordance with their experiences and views.

By using these techniques, this research is expected to produce valid and reliable data, as well as provide an accurate picture of the relationship between elementary school students' understanding of population and government systems with their social awareness.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that elementary school students' understanding of population and the Indonesian government system is directly related to their level of social awareness. This finding aligns with constructivism theory, which states that knowledge is built through experience and interaction with the surrounding environment. Through learning that integrates topics on population and government systems, students begin to understand their roles as citizens and how they can contribute to social development. The results of this study also show a significant difference from previous research findings that tended to focus solely on cognitive understanding, without linking it to the application of social values in students' real lives. Thus, this study provides a new perspective on the importance of more applicable and contextual citizenship education at the elementary level.

Impact on Theory and Practice

The results of this study make a significant contribution to the theory of civic education, particularly in the context of Islamic elementary schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah). This research indicates that students' understanding of population and government systems impacts not only their cognitive knowledge but also the formation of a deeper social awareness. The implication of these findings for teaching practice is the need for deeper integration of civic education materials relevant to students' social lives. By combining civic theories with a more contextual and applicable approach, it is hoped that the learning process can create a younger generation that is more concerned with social issues and better prepared to participate in national and state life (Lubis, 2019).

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the sample size was limited to a few elementary Islamic schools in Kendari City, which may not be representative of the overall educational situation in other regions of Indonesia. Furthermore, although interviews and observations were conducted to explore students' understanding, these techniques have limitations in exploring broader student perceptions. Limitations in data collection also include the possibility of bias in the selection of informants or in the way students responded to the interviews. Therefore, while the results of this study provide a clear picture of the relationship between population understanding and social awareness, these findings should be considered as part of a larger understanding that requires further research to expand its validity.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could expand on these findings by using a quantitative approach to more objectively measure changes in students' social awareness following instruction on population and government systems. Further research is also recommended involving a larger and more diverse sample, spanning across Indonesia, to ensure more representative findings. Furthermore, experiments with various teaching and curriculum interventions could provide further insight into the most effective methods for raising students' social awareness in Islamic elementary schools. This would deepen our understanding of how best to educate the younger generation to be more concerned with social and political issues.

Social and Ethical Implications

The social implications of this research are significant, given the role of education in shaping the social consciousness of the younger generation. These findings suggest that teaching about population and government systems can help students better understand their responsibilities as citizens. However, there are also ethical implications to consider, such as the potentially strong influence of family and teacher environments on students' political views. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to ensure that civics education remains objective and impartial, while still providing space for students to develop their own

critical thinking. Another implication is that civics education must take into account the social and political diversity that exists in Indonesia, while also teaching the values of inclusivity and tolerance.

Analysis Results and Interpretation

The results of this study reveal that elementary school students' understanding of population and the Indonesian government system is closely related to their level of social awareness. Analysis of data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation indicates that students with a better understanding of government structure, citizen rights and obligations, and population issues demonstrate a higher level of social awareness. This understanding is not limited to the cognitive aspect but is also reflected in their behavior and attitudes toward social issues in their surroundings.

Specifically, research findings show that instruction focused on understanding Indonesian population and governance not only improves students' academic knowledge but also transforms the way they interact with society. This indicates that civics learning in Islamic elementary schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) goes beyond simply teaching basic theories about the state and government. This education also equips students with an awareness of their roles in society and the state. Effective learning processes that connect government theories with social and political conditions relevant to students' daily lives have significantly impacted their understanding of their rights and obligations as citizens.

Within the context of Albert Bandura's social learning theory, the results of this study indicate that social interactions that occur during the learning process are a crucial factor in developing students' social awareness. Students who actively participate in group discussions, share experiences, and work on projects related to social and government issues tend to have higher levels of social awareness. This suggests that learning involving active social interaction can accelerate the internalization of important civic values, such as tolerance, social participation, and concern for others.

It's important to note that the findings of this study align with the constructivist theory proposed by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, which emphasizes the importance of experience and social interaction in building understanding. The research also shows that students who have the opportunity to connect their knowledge of government and population to personal experiences or real-world situations tend to have a deeper and more applicable understanding of how they can contribute to their social and political lives. This underscores the importance of a contextualized approach to civics instruction.

However, although the research results show a positive impact from learning that focuses on population and government systems, there are several findings that require further examination. For example, although the majority of students have a high level of understanding of the rights and obligations of citizens, there is still a gap in how this knowledge is applied in real life. Some students still seem to struggle to connect the knowledge they gain in class to social realities outside the classroom. This suggests that although basic knowledge about government and population systems is present, their social awareness is not yet fully reflected in their daily social attitudes or actions. This gap may be due to a lack of opportunities for students to interact further with the wider social environment, both inside and outside of school.

Furthermore, the analysis also shows that variations in students' understanding of Indonesian population and government systems are strongly influenced by their family background and social environment. Students from families more accustomed to discussions about social, political, or governmental issues tend to have a better understanding than those from families less involved in such conversations. These findings underscore the important role of families and communities in supporting civic education. Therefore, to further optimize students' social awareness, the role of parents and the community in supporting civic education in schools needs to be strengthened.

Nevertheless, the results of this study make a significant contribution in illustrating the importance of civic education at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary school) level. This education should not only focus on teaching basic theories of government but also aim to develop students' social character, making them more inclusive and active in community life. Teaching that integrates social concepts with religious values taught in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah has great potential in shaping a young generation that is not only cognitively intelligent but also possesses a strong social awareness of various societal issues.

Another important finding is that while learning about government and population systems has a positive impact on students' social awareness, there are challenges in the teaching methodology used in some elementary Islamic schools. Several teachers involved in this study admitted that their teaching is still primarily theoretical and does not actively engage students in the learning process. This suggests that even when the learning material is appropriate, a less innovative and engaging delivery method can reduce its effectiveness in building students' social awareness.

Furthermore, observations indicate that classroom diversity, both in terms of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, influences students' understanding of the material being taught. Students with more diverse backgrounds tend to have broader perspectives on social issues, although these differences also present challenges in creating shared understanding within the classroom. This highlights the importance of a more personalized approach to teaching citizenship, one that can accommodate the diverse perspectives within the classroom.

Finally, while this study reveals a positive relationship between students' understanding of civics and their social awareness, it is crucial to continue developing more innovative and adaptive learning models. Learning that focuses on practical understanding of how to be an active and responsible citizen should be prioritized. Therefore, this study makes a significant contribution to developing our understanding of the best ways to build social awareness in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students, preparing them not only cognitively but also socially and morally for participation in national and state life.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that elementary school students' understanding of population and the Indonesian government system significantly influences the formation of their social awareness. The study's main findings indicate that students who gain a deeper understanding of these topics demonstrate improvements not only in cognitive knowledge but also in social awareness, which is reflected in their attitudes and behaviors toward social and political issues. This suggests that civics education at the elementary level, particularly in elementary school students, can play a significant role in shaping students' social character and equipping them with a broader understanding of their responsibilities as citizens.

The implications of this research's findings are significant both in educational theory and teaching practice. In educational theory, the results of this study emphasize the importance of learning that focuses not only on cognitive aspects but also on developing students' social awareness through a contextual and applicable approach. In teaching practice, this study shows that an approach that integrates material on population and government systems with students' social lives can strengthen their understanding and encourage them to participate more actively in society. Therefore, it is important for educators in Islamic elementary schools to pay attention to more interactive and relevant delivery methods for students' social contexts, as well as creating opportunities for them to connect theory with real-life experiences.

However, this study also presents several limitations that need to be considered. One is the diversity of students' socioeconomic backgrounds, which influences their understanding of the learning material. Furthermore, variations in teaching methods and student engagement in the learning process are also factors that require further consideration. Therefore, further research is recommended to use a larger and more diverse sample and develop more innovative methodologies to increase student participation in civics learning.

Based on the findings and implications of this study, several recommendations can be put forward. First, it is recommended that the civics curriculum in Islamic elementary schools prioritize a contextual and experiential approach, so that students not only understand basic concepts of government and population, but also can apply them in their daily lives. Second, it is important for educators to increase students' active involvement in the learning process, through group discussions, social projects, or other activities that can strengthen their understanding of their rights and obligations as citizens. Third, further research should develop more inclusive learning models that take into account the diversity of students' social backgrounds and integrate technology-based approaches to expand access to civics learning.

Thus, this research makes an important contribution to developing an understanding of more effective ways to build social awareness in elementary school students. Through a more contextual,

participatory, and inclusive approach, civic education can shape a younger generation that is more concerned with social issues and better prepared to contribute to national and state life.

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