

The Role of Educational Philosophy and Civic Education in Strengthening Students' Integrity and Civic Responsibility

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received : 17-12-2025

Revised : 22-03-2026

Accepted : 25-03-2026

Online : 10-04-2026

Keywords:

Educational Philosophy;

Civic Responsibility;

Integrity;

Civic Education.



ABSTRACT

Integrity and civic responsibility are two crucial elements in the life of a nation and state. Both are widely believed to be developed through processes of awareness and education. Accordingly, this study aims to identify the role of educational philosophy, as a framework for cultivating awareness, and civic education in strengthening students' integrity and civic responsibility. This research employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, involving 22 respondents consisting of students, teachers, and school principals. The study began with the collection of quantitative data using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire to identify the perceptions of students, teachers, and school principals regarding the role of educational philosophy and civic education in strengthening students' integrity and civic responsibility. The collected data were quantified and analyzed quantitatively by calculating percentages and mean scores. Subsequently, qualitative data were gathered through interviews to confirm and elaborate on the previously obtained quantitative findings. The interview data were analyzed qualitatively using an interactive analysis model. The findings indicate that, in general, students, teachers, and school principals hold positive perceptions of the role of educational philosophy and civic education in strengthening students' integrity and civic responsibility. This is reflected in the mean scores obtained from the questionnaire results, which show positive responses from students (4.52), teachers (4.57), and school principals (4.95). Furthermore, the qualitative findings support and reinforce the quantitative results. Therefore, it can be concluded that educational philosophy and civic education play a significant role in strengthening students' integrity and civic responsibility.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a broad and strategic role that extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge. More fundamentally, education contributes significantly to the formation of students' character and personality (Nurhabibi et al., 2025). In the contemporary digital era, characterized by rapid technological advancement, modern societies are increasingly confronted with complex moral challenges (Petruneva et al., 2020); (Tsvyk & Tsvyk, 2021). Among these challenges, the most pressing issues include the weakening

of integrity and the decline of civic responsibility within society (Vareikis, 2025). These conditions are reflected in the persistent rise of corruption, which is closely associated with dishonest behavior and low levels of social concern (Džunić & Golubović, 2016); (Layton, 2016); (Zickfeld et al., 2024). Additionally, declining civic participation further signals the erosion of moral values and civic awareness in social life (Procentese & Gatti, 2022).

In Indonesia, a concerning decline in integrity and civic responsibility has also been observed among students. This phenomenon is evident in the increasing prevalence of plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and reduced student participation in social activities and national issues. One contributing factor is the insufficient internalization of character values from an early age within families, schools, and communities (Makmur et al., 2025); (Khoiriyah et al., 2025); (Aji, 2025). Moreover, rapid technological and social media development is often not accompanied by adequate digital and moral literacy, making students more vulnerable to negative content and individualistic attitudes. Curricula that prioritize academic achievement over character education further exacerbate this problem, despite the essential role of values such as honesty, responsibility, and social concern in shaping good citizens. If left unaddressed, this condition threatens not only the quality of future generations but also the sustainability of national life.

Educational philosophy serves as a normative and reflective foundation that guides the direction of education toward the holistic development of human beings (Gluchman, 2018). Beyond examining the nature of education, educational philosophy critically addresses why education is conducted and for whom it is intended (Gluchman, 2018). In this context, educational philosophy provides a value-based framework that encourages stakeholders to think critically, act ethically, and embody universal moral values. Complementarily, civic education functions as a practical instrument for cultivating students' understanding of rights and obligations, fostering democratic attitudes, tolerance, and social solidarity—values that are integral to Indonesian national identity.

Civic education has been systematically implemented to nurture moral values, particularly honesty, responsibility, and social awareness among students (Sembiring, 2021). Given that corruption in Indonesia remains a persistent and structurally embedded problem (Pujowati et al., 2024); (Putra & Linda, 2022), preventive strategies through education are essential. Civic education enables students to understand the dangers of corruption, develop civic attitudes, and internalize moral awareness in everyday life, positioning education as a long-term preventive approach rather than merely a legal response.

Despite the growing body of literature on character education and civic education, a critical gap remains in understanding how these two domains can be conceptually and practically integrated within a unified framework. Existing studies tend to examine civic education primarily from a cognitive and institutional perspective, focusing on legal knowledge and citizenship competencies, while studies on character education often emphasize behavioral outcomes without sufficiently grounding them in philosophical reflection. As a result, the interconnection between ethical foundations, moral reasoning, and civic engagement remains underexplored. Furthermore, limited empirical research has investigated the role of educational philosophy as a foundational lens that systematically informs the implementation of civic education in strengthening students' integrity and civic responsibility. This indicates a lack of holistic and integrative approaches that bridge philosophical values, moral internalization, and civic practices in educational settings.

This study addresses this gap by integrating educational philosophy and civic education as complementary approaches to character formation. The novelty of this research lies in its philosophical framework, which positions educational philosophy as the foundational lens for strengthening integrity and civic responsibility. Unlike predominantly practical or normative approaches, this study adopts a reflective philosophical perspective that explores the meaning, moral purpose, and value foundations of education. Furthermore, it highlights civic education content as a strategic medium for internalizing integrity and civic responsibility through affective and moral dimensions, rather than cognitive learning alone.

By integrating educational philosophy and civic education, this study offers a comprehensive and humanistic framework for character education. It emphasizes moral awareness, ethical reflection, and active civic engagement as core outcomes of education. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the discourse on character and civic education and practically inform educators and policymakers in designing curricula and learning strategies that balance cognitive achievement with moral and civic development, thereby strengthening the moral and social foundations of Indonesian society. Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) examine students' perceptions of the role of educational philosophy and civic education in strengthening integrity and civic responsibility; (2) analyze teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of these approaches in character formation; and (3) explore school principals' views on the integration of educational philosophy and civic education within school policies and practices.

B. METHODS

The research was conducted at two public junior high schools, namely SMP Negeri 2 and SMP Negeri 6 Singaraja, and involved 10 students, 10 teachers, and 2 school principals selected through convenience sampling. Participants were chosen based on their willingness to take part in the study. The research process began with the collection of quantitative data. Quantitative data were obtained through a questionnaire instrument (Karimuddin Abdullah et al., 2022). Each respondent was provided with a questionnaire consisting of ten statements designed to measure perceptions of the role of educational philosophy and civic education in strengthening integrity and civic responsibility. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), to strongly disagree (1). The questionnaire results were subsequently quantified and analyzed descriptively using percentage distributions and mean scores.

Following the quantitative phase, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews to further explain and confirm the quantitative findings. The qualitative data obtained were analyzed using an interactive data analysis model, which comprises three main stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Students' Perceptions of the Role of Educational Philosophy and Civic Education in Strengthening Integrity and Civic Responsibility

This study aims to examine students' perceptions of the role of Indonesian educational philosophy, as conceptualized by Ki Hajar Dewantara, and civic education in fostering integrity and civic responsibility. Based on quantitative data obtained from ten student respondents who completed a ten-item questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, the overall mean score was 4.52, which falls within the very positive (strongly agree)

category. No responses indicated disagreement or uncertainty, suggesting that all students demonstrated positive attitudes toward character and civic values promoted through education.

At the item level, mean scores ranged from 4.2 to 4.7. The highest-rated statements (mean = 4.7) were related to students' understanding that corruption is a destructive act that must be avoided and that school education enhances their ability to critically distinguish between right and wrong. The lowest mean score (4.2), although still positive, pertained to students' understanding that the primary goal of education is the holistic development of human beings rather than the mere acquisition of knowledge. Overall, these findings indicate strong student agreement regarding the relevance of educational philosophy and civic education in shaping integrity and civic responsibility.

To strengthen the quantitative findings, in-depth interviews were conducted with ten students. The interview results revealed that all students held positive views toward character education grounded in Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy, particularly the concept of education as a means of developing the whole person. Most students emphasized that education goes beyond academic learning to include identity formation and social responsibility. As one student stated, "Education is not just about learning subjects, but also about learning how to live and be responsible" (Student 1, personal interview, 2025). Another student remarked, "For me, education is preparation for the future so that we can contribute to the nation" (Student 3, personal interview, 2025).

Regarding learning experiences that promote honesty, students frequently mentioned group work, classroom duties, and scouting activities as key contexts for character development. One student noted, "In group work, we have to be honest with our friends and not just take credit without contributing" (Student 2, personal interview, 2025). Similarly, another student explained, "In scouting, we are trained to be disciplined and honest because all activities follow clear rules" (Student 8, personal interview, 2025). These activities provide students with practical opportunities to apply honesty and responsibility in real-life situations.

Students also demonstrated a strong awareness of moral values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility. As expressed by one respondent, "When we are honest, others trust us and the learning atmosphere becomes better" (Student 4, personal interview, 2025). Another student added, "Discipline and responsibility help us respect time and tasks" (Student 9, personal interview, 2025). In terms of social concern, students highlighted participation in social and humanitarian activities. One student shared, "When disasters happen, we are encouraged to collect donations, which teaches us to care about others" (Student 1, personal interview, 2025).

The interview findings corroborate the quantitative results, reinforcing the very positive mean score of 4.52. These findings suggest that students possess a high level of awareness regarding the importance of character and civic education in fostering integrity and civic responsibility. Consistent with Ki Hajar Dewantara's principles, effective education not only enhances intellectual capacity but also cultivates moral virtues and a strong sense of humanity among students.

2. Teachers' Perceptions of the Role of Educational Philosophy and Civic Education in Strengthening Integrity and Civic Responsibility

The findings indicate that teachers hold very positive perceptions of the implementation of Indonesian educational philosophy and civic education in shaping students' integrity and civic responsibility. The overall mean score of 4.57, categorized as

strongly agree, reflects teachers' strong confidence in the relevance of national educational values for character education within the school context.

Quantitative results show that the first, second, and third statements achieved high mean scores (4.7), indicating teachers' strong belief in the relevance of Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy for guiding students' character development, the effectiveness of civic education in instilling integrity, and the importance of teachers' moral exemplarity. These findings reaffirm the teacher's role as a moral model, consistent with the principle of *ing ngarso sung tulodo*, which emphasizes that educators must lead by example. The highest mean score (4.8) was recorded for the statement regarding the need for civic education materials to be contextualized with contemporary social issues such as corruption and intolerance. This result suggests that teachers recognize the importance of relevant and contextual learning so that civic values are not merely theoretical but closely connected to students' daily lives.

In contrast, the lowest mean score (3.7) was found for the statement asserting that students have begun to demonstrate awareness as good citizens. Although still within the agree category, this finding indicates that teachers perceive students' civic awareness as not yet optimal and in need of reinforcement through practical activities such as social engagement, mutual cooperation, and participation in community-based projects.

To deepen and validate the quantitative findings, interviews were conducted with ten teachers. The qualitative results strongly support the survey data, confirming that teachers not only understand the concepts of character and civic education theoretically but also actively apply them in classroom practices and school life. Teachers consistently emphasized that Ki Hajar Dewantara's principles—*ing ngarso sung tulodo*, *ing madyo mangun karso*, and *tut wuri handayani*—remain highly relevant in contemporary education. One teacher explained, "As an educator, I strive to be a role model for students by showing discipline and honesty every day, in line with the principle of *ing ngarso sung tulodo*" (Teacher 1, personal interview, 2025). Another teacher stated, "I apply student-centered learning by giving students space to think and express their opinions, in the spirit of *tut wuri handayani*" (Teacher 4, personal interview, 2025). These responses demonstrate that Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy functions as a living ethical and pedagogical foundation in teachers' professional practice.

Regarding civic education, teachers viewed the subject as strategically important for guiding students' social behavior and moral development. One teacher remarked, "Civic education does not only provide theory but also concrete examples of how to be a good citizen" (Teacher 5, personal interview, 2025). Another added, "Through civic education, students learn to interact politely and respect differences, both at school and in society" (Teacher 8, personal interview, 2025). These statements indicate that teachers conceptualize civic education as a moral and social learning space that fosters national awareness and responsible citizenship.

In terms of cultivating honesty, responsibility, and social concern, teachers emphasized their role as daily role models. One teacher noted, "The most effective way to teach honesty and responsibility is by directly demonstrating them to students" (Teacher 2, personal interview, 2025). Similarly, another teacher stated, "We consistently enforce school rules so that students become accustomed to discipline and responsibility" (Teacher 7, personal interview, 2025). These findings highlight teachers' awareness that character education cannot rely solely on theoretical instruction but must be embodied through consistent actions and school culture.

Nevertheless, teachers also acknowledged challenges in fostering civic responsibility among students. Some students, according to teachers, understand civic values at a

conceptual level but struggle to apply them in practice. As one teacher explained, “Students understand the theory of social responsibility, but in practice they still often violate rules or show limited concern for social activities” (Teacher 6, personal interview, 2025). Another teacher emphasized the need for experiential learning, stating, “More activities that directly involve students in social projects are needed so they can learn responsibility through experience” (Teacher 10, personal interview, 2025).

In conclusion, both quantitative and qualitative findings reveal a very high level of teacher confidence in the role of Ki Hajar Dewantara’s educational philosophy and civic education in strengthening students’ integrity and civic responsibility. Teachers regard these two elements as fundamental pillars of character formation. Consistent with the principle of *ing ngarso sung tulodo*, they emphasize that sustained moral exemplarity and value-based learning are essential to nurturing a generation of students who possess strong integrity and civic responsibility.

3. Principals’ Perspectives on the Role of Educational Philosophy and Civic Education in Strengthening Integrity and Civic Responsibility

Based on questionnaire responses from two school principals, the overall mean score reached 4.95, which falls within the strongly agree category. This finding indicates that principals hold very positive perceptions of the implementation of Ki Hajar Dewantara’s educational philosophy and civic education as foundational elements for fostering integrity and civic responsibility in schools. All items, except the final statement, achieved perfect mean scores (5.00), reflecting a high level of consistency in principals’ views regarding the importance of national values and character education within the school system. The tenth statement recorded a mean score of 4.50, suggesting slight variation in perceptions regarding the extent to which these values have fully shaped an integrity-driven younger generation. Overall, principals believe that schools play an active and systematic role in cultivating character, honesty, discipline, and social responsibility through policies and school culture grounded in national educational philosophy.

To reinforce the quantitative findings, in-depth interviews were conducted with both principals. The interview data strongly support the survey results, demonstrating principals’ firm belief in the significance of educational philosophy and civic education for character formation. Both principals agreed that Ki Hajar Dewantara’s philosophy serves as a fundamental framework for school leadership and instructional practices. One principal stated, “We strive to implement Ki Hajar Dewantara’s teachings in every aspect, including leadership, teaching, and teacher–student relationships” (Principal 1, personal interview, 2025). Another principal emphasized, “The principles of *ing ngarso sung tulodo*, *ing madyo mangun karso*, and *tut wuri handayani* guide us in leading and building school culture” (Principal 2, personal interview, 2025). These statements indicate that Dewantara’s philosophy is not merely understood conceptually but actively integrated into leadership and pedagogical practices.

Both principals also highlighted the importance of targeted programs aimed at strengthening students’ integrity. They acknowledged that moral exemplarity and consistent rule enforcement are inseparable in character development. As one principal explained, “We enforce school regulations consistently and provide role models so that students learn discipline and honesty” (Principal 1, personal interview, 2025). The other principal added, “Integrity does not emerge from commands, but from example. Teachers and school leaders must serve as role models in thought and behavior” (Principal 2, personal interview, 2025). These perspectives demonstrate alignment between school policies and daily moral practices.

Regarding civic education, principals viewed it as a critical component in developing students' moral and social awareness. One principal noted, "Civic education helps students understand their rights and obligations, distinguish right from wrong, and develop responsibility toward the nation" (Principal 2, personal interview, 2025). Another principal stated, "Civic education plays a major role in instilling honesty, discipline, and social concern, which are urgently needed by today's younger generation" (Principal 1, personal interview, 2025). These views suggest that principals perceive civic education not merely as a theoretical subject but as a practical vehicle for building national character.

The interviews further revealed that successful integrity development depends heavily on teachers' active roles. As one principal emphasized, "Teachers are the front line in building students' integrity; they provide understanding, serve as role models, and consistently enforce school rules" (Principal 1, personal interview, 2025). Another principal added, "Teachers with integrity will naturally transmit the same values to their students" (Principal 2, personal interview, 2025). This highlights principals' recognition of teachers as key agents in character education.

Finally, both principals stressed the importance of collaboration between schools and parents in strengthening students' civic responsibility. One principal explained, "We maintain strong communication with parents, involve them in school committees, and report not only academic outcomes but also students' social and character development" (Principal 2, personal interview, 2025). Another principal added, "Character education cannot rely solely on schools; it must also be reinforced at home" (Principal 1, personal interview, 2025).

In conclusion, both quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrate an exceptionally high level of agreement among principals regarding the role of educational philosophy and civic education in strengthening integrity and civic responsibility. The principles of *ing ngarso sung tulodo*, *ing madyo mangun karso*, and *tut wuri handayani* are perceived as central guidelines for building a school culture oriented toward integrity and social responsibility. Principals emphasize that value-based leadership, contextual learning, and strong collaboration with parents constitute effective strategies for nurturing a morally grounded and civically responsible younger generation.

4. Analysis of the Role of Educational Philosophy and Civic Education in Strengthening Integrity and Civic Responsibility

From the students' perspective, the questionnaire results indicate a highly positive perception of the implementation of educational values rooted in Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy, particularly the principles of *ing ngarso sung tulodo*, *ing madyo mangun karso*, and *tut wuri handayani*. The mean score of 4.40 for these statements suggests that students strongly recognize the importance of teacher exemplarity and the school environment in shaping their behavior. This finding aligns with Dewantara's educational thought, which positions teachers as moral role models who guide students through example, motivation, and emancipatory encouragement (Febriyanti et al., 2021); (Nita & Fuadi, 2023).

High scores were also recorded for statements related to honesty and moral responsibility, such as "Civic education helps me understand the importance of honesty" and "I feel responsible for not cheating during examinations," with mean scores of 4.60 and 4.50, respectively. These results reinforce the view that civic education plays a strategic role in instilling moral and ethical values among students (Azka et al., 2025); (Harefa et al., 2025). Previous studies have consistently shown that Civic Education (PKn)

enhances students' legal awareness, ethical sensitivity, and social responsibility (Hidayati & Riska, 2023); (Panggabean et al., 2025); (Siahaan et al., 2023).

The statement related to anti-corruption awareness received the highest score, indicating that students possess strong moral sensitivity toward this national issue. This finding is consistent with the study by Pujowati, which emphasizes that anti-corruption education at primary and secondary school levels can foster intolerance toward corrupt behavior through the integration of honesty and responsibility values in learning. In this context, schools function not merely as institutions of knowledge transmission but as arenas for public moral formation (Pujowati et al., 2024).

Beyond individual morality, the questionnaire results reveal a high level of social awareness and civic responsibility. Statements such as "Through school lessons, I learn the importance of participating in community activities" and "I realize that my responsibility as a citizen extends beyond school to society" achieved a mean score of 4.60. These findings support progressive civic education theory, which emphasizes experiential learning and social participation as essential components of meaningful civic education (Pradanna & Irawan, 2024).

Other highly rated statements include "I feel that the values taught at school shape me into a person of integrity" and "Education at school makes me more critical in distinguishing right from wrong," with mean scores of 4.50 and 4.70, respectively. These results indicate that students perceive school education as instrumental in developing personal integrity and moral critical thinking. Lickona argues that value education integrated with moral reflection and discussion strengthens students' ethical decision-making abilities (T. E. S. Lickona & Levis, 2003).

From the teachers' perspective, the findings further confirm the role of educational philosophy and civic education in strengthening integrity and civic responsibility. The results support Ki Hajar Dewantara's humanistic character education theory, which emphasizes that education should cultivate not only intellectual capacity but also personality and moral character. The principles of *ing ngarso sung tulodo, ing madyo mangun karso*, and *tut wuri handayani* remain relevant as guiding frameworks for character education practices (Suparlan, 2005); (Sukma Wardani et al., 2024); (Permatasari et al., 2025). Teachers are perceived as moral exemplars who guide and inspire students through ethical behavior and social responsibility (Fitriyah et al., 2024).

The finding that teachers regard civic education as effective in instilling integrity (mean score = 4.73) is consistent with Gufran and Rostati, who argue that PKn plays a crucial role in developing legal awareness, ethical values, and national identity. Civic education grounded in value-based learning can foster civic virtues such as honesty, empathy, and social responsibility (Gufran & Rostati, 2025). Teachers also emphasized the importance of practical learning approaches (mean score = 4.64) in strengthening student integrity. This aligns with Kolb's experiential learning theory (2014), which posits that values and character are more effectively internalized through direct experience than through theoretical instruction alone. Activities such as simulations, social practices, and civic projects are therefore considered effective in reinforcing moral and ethical learning.

The high score for contextualizing PKn materials (mean score = 4.82) reflects teachers' awareness of the need to connect civic education content with contemporary issues such as corruption and intolerance. This supports Harefa, who argue that civic education must relate moral values to real-life challenges to foster critical and ethical citizenship (Harefa et al., 2025). Conversely, lower scores on statements related to behavioral transformation (mean scores = 3.73 and 4.00) indicate teachers' reflective awareness of the challenges in translating civic knowledge into actual behavior. This underscores the importance of

collaborative efforts among schools, families, and communities in building a consistent civic culture (T. Lickona, 1991).

These findings reinforce Ki Hajar Dewantara's view that education is fundamentally a process of holistic human development through character and moral cultivation (Suparlan, 2005). The results also align with humanistic education theory, which positions learners as central agents in the development of values, knowledge, and skills. Through teacher exemplarity, experiential learning, and social engagement, students not only acquire cognitive knowledge but also internalize moral and social values essential for integrity and civic responsibility.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that the integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy and civic education plays a significant role in strengthening students' integrity and civic responsibility. Students, teachers, and school principals demonstrate consistently positive perceptions, indicating that the internalization of values such as honesty, responsibility, and moral integrity has been effectively fostered through teacher exemplarity, practice-based learning, and value-oriented school culture. Despite this effectiveness, challenges remain in translating civic knowledge into consistent student behavior, highlighting the need for more contextual, participatory, and experience-based learning approaches.

This study is limited by its small sample size and descriptive scope, which restrict the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples, employ validated and reliable instruments, and utilize more robust mixed-method designs to deepen analysis. Additionally, further studies should explore innovative and context-based models for integrating educational philosophy and civic education, particularly in addressing contemporary challenges such as digital ethics and civic engagement in the modern era.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the academic leadership and faculty members of Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha for their scholarly contributions, valuable feedback, and support throughout the implementation and preparation of this study. Appreciation is also extended to the Study Programs of Law, Pancasila and Civic Education, Physics Education, and English Education at Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha for their institutional support, which enabled this research to be conducted successfully.

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