

TRANSFORMING CIVIC EDUCATION THROUGH
NATIONALISM PROJECTS TO STRENGTHEN GLOBAL
DIVERSITY CHARACTER IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has influenced citizens' mindset, behavior, and attitudes, shifting traditional national values such as mutual cooperation, care, fairness, and mutual respect toward more individualistic and egocentric orientations. These changes pose a serious challenge to shaping national character, particularly among university students. This study aims to develop a Global Civics Learning Model Based on Nationalism Projects to strengthen students' character in embracing diversity. The research employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach using the 4-D model: Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate. Data were analyzed using the Independent Sample T-Test to assess the model's effectiveness. The results indicate that the model has a very high level of validity, with content validation scoring an average of 94.72% and construct validation at 94.20%. Effectiveness testing revealed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($\text{sig.} < 0.001$), demonstrating the model's effectiveness in enhancing students' character related to global diversity. It is recommended that the model be applied more widely in civic education courses to cultivate national identity while promoting global citizenship values among students.

ABSTRAK

Globalisasi memengaruhi pola pikir, perilaku, dan sikap warga, menggeser nilai-nilai nasional tradisional seperti gotong royong, peduli, adil, dan saling menghormati ke arah yang lebih individualistik dan egosentris. Perubahan ini menimbulkan tantangan serius dalam membentuk karakter bangsa, khususnya di kalangan mahasiswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan Model Pembelajaran Kewarganegaraan Global Berbasis Proyek Nasional sebagai strategi untuk memperkuat karakter mahasiswa dalam merangkul keberagaman. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan Penelitian dan Pengembangan (R&D) dengan menggunakan model 4-D: Define, Design, Develop, dan Disseminate. Data dianalisis menggunakan Independent Sample T-Test untuk menilai efektivitas model. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa model tersebut memiliki tingkat validitas yang sangat tinggi, dengan skor validasi konten rata-rata 94,72% dan validasi konstruk 94,20%. Pengujian efektivitas menunjukkan adanya perbedaan yang signifikan antara kelompok eksperimen dan kontrol ($\text{sig.} < 0,001$), yang menunjukkan efektivitas model dalam meningkatkan karakter siswa terkait keberagaman global. Disarankan agar model ini diterapkan lebih luas dalam mata kuliah pendidikan kewarganegaraan untuk menumbuhkan identitas nasional sambil mempromosikan nilai-nilai kewarganegaraan global di kalangan siswa.

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INTRODUCTION

Social and cultural changes resulting from globalization have significantly influenced citizenship character and identity, particularly among the younger generation. According to Hofstede (2011), globalization has led to a shift in cultural values due to intensive intercultural contact, which can erode local identity if not balanced with the reinforcement of national values. In today's global society, there is a noticeable transformation in the behaviors and perspectives of citizens across various aspects of life. Local values, which once served as fundamental guidelines for actions and attitudes, are increasingly marginalized due to the influx of foreign cultures disseminated through various media and lifestyles.

Research by Rosalina et al.(2022) indicates that the younger generation in Indonesia is increasingly forgetting their nation's local wisdom and is more inclined to adopt global cultural values characterized by individualism and consumerism. This is concerning, given that Indonesia possesses a rich and extraordinary artistic heritage that reflects the nation's identity and distinguishes it from others. The country's cultural diversity should serve as a source of national pride, preserved and passed down through daily life practices. Similarly, Hidayati, Waluyo, Winarni, and Suyitno (2020) emphasize that integrating local wisdom into higher education through contextual learning and value-based campus culture can strengthen students' discipline, honesty, and social care. In line with this, Pesurnay (2018) argues that local wisdom should be understood holistically as a living system within Indonesia's diverse cultures. Applying system theory, he highlights that local wisdom is a dynamic self-organizing process (autopoiesis) that continuously adapts and responds to external influences while maintaining cultural identity. This perspective underscores that preserving local wisdom is about maintaining old traditions and sustaining a resilient cultural system that evolves alongside modern challenges.

In comparison, Suprpto, Prahani, and Cheng (2021) underscore the urgent need for Indonesia's curriculum reform to embrace culture-based learning and ethnoscience as strategic approaches to maintain national identity amid globalization. They argue that while globalization brings external influences, culturally based education counterbalances, ensuring Indonesian students remain grounded in local values. By integrating local wisdom into science education, they promote a "glocalization" approach, thinking globally while acting locally, so that global competencies can coexist with preserving and developing indigenous knowledge and traditions. This holistic framework emphasizes that cultural identity and scientific progress are not mutually exclusive but must progress in harmony.

However, the rapid flow of globalization has also influenced citizens' mindset, attitudes, and behavior. Western values contradicting the nation's noble values, such as individualism, egocentrism, and a lack of appreciation for diversity, are beginning to displace core national values such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong), empathy, justice, and respect. This highlights the urgent need to strengthen civic education rooted in local culture to foster citizens' awareness of and responsibility for their national identity.

Similarly, Alscher, Ludewig, and McElvany (2022) reveal that Indonesian youth are experiencing a growing tension between global cultural influences and traditional civic values. While many young people appreciate global norms such as freedom of expression and individual rights, they also express concern over the erosion of communal values and national identity. The study emphasizes embedding civic values within educational practices to promote critical thinking, tolerance, and shared responsibility. It concludes that education must mediate between global and local values, empowering youth to engage globally without losing their cultural and civic roots.

In line with this, Best Practices in Civic Education (Bennion & Laughlin, 2018) emphasizes that effective civic education should be both content-rich and participatory, fostering not only knowledge of democratic institutions but also civic dispositions such as responsibility, tolerance, and engagement. The report highlights that civic education is most impactful when it connects classroom learning to students' lived experiences, community involvement, and cultural identity. This reinforces the idea that civic education in Indonesia must be contextualized and grounded in local values while also preparing students for active participation in a global democratic society.

As stated by Ermawan (2017), globalization should not be used as a justification to undermine the noble cultural values of Indonesia as embodied in Pancasila. In this context, Pancasila must serve as the center of gravity, a core value system capable of maintaining the stability of national identity amidst global currents. Pancasila also filters against the influx of foreign values that contradict national ideals. Thus, reinforcing Pancasila as the foundation of the state and the nation's philosophical worldview is essential for safeguarding the sustainability of local culture in the face of various obstacles, disruptions, challenges, and threats confronting Indonesia.

One of the main challenges in Indonesia's pluralistic society is the ability to accept and respect differences. A report by the Center for Islamic & Social Studies, Universitas Islam Negeri of Jakarta (PPIM UIN Jakarta) revealed that although students generally exhibit a moderate tolerance, one in three demonstrates low religious tolerance. Students from religious higher education institutions show the lowest tolerance levels, followed by those from private universities, public universities, and teacher training colleges. Three main factors influence these attitudes toward tolerance: (1) Interaction with diverse groups tends to enhance tolerance, whereas involvement in exclusive religious activities often reduces it; (2) the social climate of campuses and institutional policies toward minorities significantly affect tolerance, especially among non-Muslim students and Muslims in religious universities and private universities; and (3) parental economic status also plays a role, particularly for students in public universities (Abdallah, 2021).

Strengthening attitudes of tolerance and appreciation for diversity among university students is a crucial responsibility of higher education. One practical approach to fostering such attitudes is integrating a global diversity character into learning. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (2022), students with global diversity can preserve noble cultural values, local traditions, and national identity, and are open to cross-cultural interactions. This openness enables them to respect differences and contribute to creating new, positive cultural forms without disregarding the nation's core values. Integrating these values into the curriculum and learning strategies will enhance multicultural awareness and reinforce students' national character in the face of globalization.

A study by Ghosh & Jing (2020) emphasizes that effective global Civic Education must include a deep understanding of cultural diversity and the ability to engage constructively in multicultural contexts. These findings are supported by research from Wang et al. (2012), which highlights that the development of cross-cultural competencies among university students can enhance tolerance and reduce prejudice. Therefore, integrating global diversity education into higher education curricula enriches students' learning experiences and prepares them to become tolerant and responsible global citizens.

Higher education plays a strategic role in shaping student character, particularly fostering mutual respect for diversity. As institutions of enlightenment and cultural development, universities are expected to create inclusive and democratic learning

environments that uphold the values of tolerance. According to Tillar (2022), quality education should not solely focus on cognitive development, but must also play a crucial role in cultivating social character that respects differences and embraces diversity.

One example of implementing tolerance values in higher education is reflected in the research by Mahbubah, Suharsono, and Mukhtar (2022), which examined religious tolerance practices at Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang. The study showed that tolerance is manifested through relationships among students, student programs, academic activities, and campus regulations that support interfaith students. Their findings also revealed that all campus activities operate peacefully and harmoniously, with no signs of intolerance, despite students from different religious backgrounds. These findings strengthen the view that higher education can be effective.

Civic Education learning has so far primarily focused only on the cognitive aspect, with a predominantly one-way delivery method where the teacher acts as the primary source of information while students tend to remain passive (Hodriani et al., 2025). Strengthening respect for diversity is key to shaping students' character as responsible global citizens. In higher education, the formation of this character cannot be solely entrusted to formal classroom learning; it must be systematically and continuously developed through various intra- and extracurricular activities. Previous research has shown that respect for diversity must be nurtured thoughtfully through a contextual and integrative educational approach. In response to this need, this study aims to develop a model of global civic education based on a national project as a systemic approach to strengthen students' global diversity character.

While project-based learning models have been widely implemented in various educational contexts, a specific model of Civic Education that integrates nationalism-based projects has not yet been developed. This study proposes a new model encouraging students to actively and collaboratively engage in national issues within a global civic framework, addressing the current gap in civic education practices. Civic Education, as part of the curriculum, plays a crucial role in equipping students with knowledge, attitudes, and civic skills aligned with the values enshrined in Pancasila (Junaidi et al., 2025). This aligns with the views of Kaelan & Zubaidi (2010), who assert that the goal of Civic Education aims

Moreover, developing a project-based learning (PjBL) model within civic education is supported by Vygotsky (1978), constructivist theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and real-life experiences in constructing knowledge. Project-based learning allows students to engage directly in contextual and collaborative activities, thereby fostering the development of critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and essential social skills needed in the global era. This is further reinforced by the findings of Bell (2010) and Kokotsaki, Menzies, & Wiggins (2016), which demonstrate that PjBL effectively enhances learning motivation, social responsibility, and the relevance of course content to real life. Therefore, developing a national project-based civic education model is seen as relevant for addressing the challenge of instilling civic values amid the currents of globalization and pluralism.

In the Indonesian context, Civic Education aims to shape students into intelligent, character-driven, and responsible citizens. This is supported by the research of Setiawan (2021), which shows that developing a multicultural-based PKn model that incorporates local wisdom effectively enhances students' tolerance and national awareness in the face of social diversity post-reformation. This goal aligns with the mandate of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article 3, which states that national education aims to develop students' potential to become individuals who

are devout, knowledgeable, and democratic citizens who are responsible (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional). This objective is reinforced in Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2022 concerning Amendments to Government Regulation Number 57 of 2021 concerning National Education Standards, which emphasizes the importance of higher education graduates having a character based on Pancasila values and the ability to develop science and technology for the benefit of humanity (Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 4 Tahun 2022 Tentang Perubahan atas Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 57 Tahun 2021 Tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan).

Character education is the cornerstone of strengthening the citizenship values of university students (Pardede, 2022). The goal of Civic Education, as stated by Bourke et al. (2012), is to encourage students to fulfill their roles as responsible citizens who actively fight for social justice through involvement in various communities. Strengthening students' character through a contextual and inclusive learning model becomes very important in this context. Based on National Projects, the Global Civic Education model is a potential and relevant approach that has not yet been specifically developed. This model is designed to equip students with cognitive understanding and foster their genuine and active involvement in addressing social issues at local, national, and global levels. The development of this model addresses the current gap in civic education practices that lack contextual integration between nationalism and global civic engagement. This model is considered crucial given the still-weak character reinforcement in several universities, which has led to an increase in cases of radicalism, intolerance, and extremism among students. As Huda, Haryanto, and Haryanto (2018) explain, the weak implementation of character education can create a gap in the entry of radical ideologies. This is supported by the report from The Wahid Institute, which shows that youth, including university students, are highly vulnerable to intolerant and radical ideologies (Wahid et al., 2015).

The issues in the process of Civic Education in higher education directly impact the achievement of three competencies for students as citizens, namely knowledge, attitudes, and civic skills. According to Aydin (2012), an effective Civic Education curriculum should reflect the complex national identity through challenging and meaningful learning approaches. Such a curriculum would encourage students to understand social dynamics and internalize real-life civic values critically. Osler & Skarra (2024) further emphasize that Civic Education should provide space for students to develop their identities, actively participate in community life, and engage with the principle of mutual respect in diversity. Moreover, as Osler states in Bourke et al. (2012), contextual civic education cannot be separated from the values of history, language, and culture that exist in society. Civic Education must be grounded, aligned with social realities, and strengthen the understanding of a plural national identity.

Civic Education is pivotal in shaping students' civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed in a democratic society. In an era marked by growing social complexity, political polarization, and global interdependence, Civic Education is no longer sufficient to focus solely on cognitive development. Instead, it must foster active citizenship, critical thinking, and social responsibility through experiential and participatory learning strategies (Hoskins et al., 2008; Kerr, 1999).

Recent studies have shown that Project-Based Learning can be a transformative pedagogical approach in Civic Education. Akirav (2023) demonstrated that PjBL significantly enhanced civic engagement among Israeli college students, particularly those from minority

groups, by deepening their understanding of democratic values such as accountability, transparency, and civil rights. Similarly, Rafzan, Belladona, and Saputro (2024) found that project-based Civic Education through the "Project Citizen" model effectively improved students' critical thinking skills and environmental awareness, cultivating a more profound sense of responsibility and civic participation.

Despite these promising outcomes, several research gaps remain. First, existing studies have not adequately explored how project-based Civic Education can be contextualized within specific socio-cultural environments, especially in regions like Indonesia, where civic identity is deeply intertwined with local traditions and national narratives. Second, little attention has been paid to how such models might bridge the gap between national identity and global civic responsibility, an increasingly urgent challenge in the face of globalization and pluralism.

Based on these challenges and research gaps, it is crucial to strengthen the role of Civic Education as a multifaceted learning program that not only develops cognitive competencies but also cultivates character and active citizenship. One way to realize this is by developing a Global Civic Education model based on a National Project approach. This model is designed to address the gap between local-national identity and global civic responsibility, aiming to foster an attitude of respect for diversity and strengthen unity amidst differences. Therefore, the formulation of this research is: How can a Global Civic Education model based on National Projects be developed to strengthen students' global diversity character? This study aims to design and validate a learning model that integrates global civic values with national identity through project-based learning rooted in local and national issues.

METHOD

This study applies the Research and Development (R&D) approach, a method commonly used in education to design, develop, and test the effectiveness of a product to meet specific needs (Fayrus & Slamet, 2022). The development model used is the 4-D model, which includes four stages: Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate (Lawhon, 1976). The types of data collected consist of qualitative and quantitative data, obtained through a validation process. Validation aims to measure whether the developed product (such as a learning guidebook) is considered feasible. This process is carried out using a validation sheet filled out by expert validators (faculty members) and through a written test systematically designed to evaluate students' competencies. In the context of this research, product validation is carried out through internal/logical validation, which includes two types of validity. First, content validity assesses the extent to which the learning model is based on relevant theory. Second, construct validity ensures that all components of the learning process are interconnected and consistent (Sugiyono, 2013). The validation data is then analyzed using percentage analysis techniques with the following formula (Sa'dun, 2017):

$$V = \frac{TSE}{TSM} \times 100\%$$

To assess the feasibility of the developed learning product, a validation instrument was constructed and evaluated by expert validators. The instrument has several components covering content relevance, structure, language, practicality, and aesthetics. The following table presents the grid of feasibility test components used in the validation process.

Table 1. Grid of Feasibility Validation Components for the Global Civic Education Model Based on National Projects

No	Assessment Aspect	Indicators
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1	Content Feasibility	Alignment with learning outcomes
		Relevance to civic education values and global diversity
2	Content Completeness	Availability of core components (objectives, materials, activities, evaluation)
		Integration among components
3	Language Construction	Clarity of language and terminology
		Language appropriate to the student's level
4	Suitability with PjBL Principles	Project-based activities relevant to national and global contexts
		Encourages active student engagement
5	Practicality of Use	Easy to implement by lecturers
		Reasonable time and resource requirements
6	Aesthetic Aspect	Visually appealing and professional design
		Layout and visuals support comprehension

The data is then converted into descriptive quantitative data by applying the assessment criteria in the following table.

Table 2. Validation Criteria for the Learning Model

No	Category	Percentage
1	Very Valid	$81,25 < X \leq 100$
2	Valid	$62,5 \leq X < 81,25$
3	Less Valid	$43,75 \leq X < 62,5$
4	Invalid	$25 \leq X < 43,75$

Source: Sa'dun (2017)

Next, the effectiveness of critical thinking skills is measured through the results of the critical thinking skills test. The effectiveness of the developed product can be evaluated based on students' ability to think critically. The obtained data is then explained descriptively by applying the following formula:

$$\text{Critical Thinking Skills Score} = \frac{\text{Obtained Score}}{\text{Maximum Score}} \times 100\%$$

The researcher used the SPSS application to conduct various statistical analyses in this study. The analyses include normality tests to ensure that the obtained data is normally distributed and the Independent Sample T-Test to examine the differences between the experimental and control groups (Fayrus & Slamet, 2022). This test aims to objectively present the impact of the implemented learning model on the experimental group compared to the conventional teaching method applied to the control group. Therefore, the results of this analysis provide a clear overview of the effectiveness of the developed learning model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The define stage is the initial step in developing the learning model, aimed at comprehensively identifying and formulating the learning needs and issues. In this stage, five main steps are carried out: needs analysis, learner analysis, task analysis, concept analysis, and learning objectives. First, the needs analysis results include data from teachers, students, and the learning context, indicating the necessity for enhancing critical thinking skills. The results of this definition stage can be seen in the following table.

Table 3. Interview Results Analysis of National Project Model Development Needs

Aspect	Results
Learning Model	Most lecturers still use traditional lecture and discussion methods, not project-based, and lack integration of global contexts.
Global Diversity Character	Students have not fully understood the values of diversity in a global context. There is a lack of activities involving cross-cultural tolerance.
Collaborative Skills	Students are not involved in cross-program teamwork. There are no learning media that train collaboration based on nationalism.
Civic Education	The material still focuses on fundamental concepts without linking them to national and globalization issues.

Source: Research Results, 2023

Based on the table, it can be seen that these needs were identified by six Civic Education lecturers, indicating that the current learning model is still predominantly characterized by conventional lecture and discussion methods, lacking a contextual and globally oriented project-based approach. This highlights the urgency to develop a learning model that aligns more closely with the demands of the modern era. According to constructivist theory, as described by Vygotsky (1978), learning grounded in real-world experiences and social interaction is more effective in helping students construct their knowledge. A project-based approach, which allows students to solve real-world problems, can significantly foster the development of critical thinking and collaborative skills. This is supported by research conducted by Thomas (2000), which demonstrates that project-based learning models can enhance students' understanding of global issues and strengthen their cross-cultural collaboration skills..

However, based on these findings, students at Universitas Negeri Medan have not yet fully understood the meaning and implementation of global diversity values. This is evident from the limited number of activities that foster cross-cultural tolerance. Furthermore, students' collaborative skills remain underdeveloped, as indicated by their low participation in interdepartmental projects and the lack of instructional media that promote collaboration grounded in nationalism. Research by Johnson & Johnson (1999) indicates that cross-cultural and interdisciplinary collaboration can be significantly enhanced by implementing project-based learning models.

The Civic Education curriculum at Universitas Negeri Medan is still mainly limited to understanding basic concepts and lacks integration with current national issues and the dynamics of globalization. Therefore, developing a project-based national learning model is essential to strengthen students' global diversity character in a more contextual and applicable manner. Research by Bell (2010) indicates that project-based learning can help students grasp national issues within a global context more concretely and practically.

Second, learner analysis is crucial in developing a nationalism-based Civic Education model. This analysis aims to identify students' characteristics, needs, and readiness, thereby aligning instructional strategies with actual learner conditions. Studies indicate that many students possess a limited understanding of global diversity and tend to perceive Civic Education as a theoretical subject with minimal connection to real-life civic experiences. This perception is often reinforced by conventional lecture-based learning methods, which inhibit

the development of critical thinking skills and active civic participation (Dahliyana & Suabuana, 2019).

To address these issues, the Project-Based Learning approach has been identified as an effective method for enhancing students' civic competencies. Research conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Tonjong, for example, demonstrated that students engaged in Project-Based Learning showed significant improvements in both intellectual skills (94%) and participatory skills (82%), compared to control groups (70% and 68.7%, respectively) (Wijayanti et al., 2024). Furthermore, another study at SMP Muhammadiyah 19 Pematangsiantar found that implementing Project-Based Learning in Civic Education positively influenced students' development of civic skills, particularly in areas of critical thinking and active engagement in community issues (Nisa & Amin, 2023). Therefore, integrating the Project-Based Learning model into nationalism-based Civic Education effectively creates dynamic, relevant, and empowering learning experiences. It enables students to develop as active citizens who are nationally committed and globally conscious.

Third, Task analysis in developing this learning model aims to identify types of activities and learning experiences relevant to strengthening global diversity through nationalism-based projects. Findings indicate that tasks assigned in Civic Education courses have predominantly been theoretical, offering limited opportunities for students to apply citizenship concepts in real-world contexts. Students have not been extensively engaged in interdisciplinary projects or collaborative activities that require active involvement, social problem-solving, and interaction with cultural diversity. To address these shortcomings, the tasks in the developed model are directed towards project-based learning activities rooted in current national issues such as religious tolerance, ethnic diversity, social justice, and the preservation of local cultures. These tasks are designed to enable students to explore these issues through teamwork, field research, and critical reflection, culminating in producing outputs or solutions that reinforce national values and global awareness.

This approach aligns with the Global Citizens Project Learning Model, which emphasizes the development of global citizenship dimensions among youth, including critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity in addressing local, national, and global issues. The model advocates for activity-driven learning experiences, enhancing classroom social interaction and reasoning skills (Sutrisno et al., 2021).

Moreover, implementing PBL in Civic Education has significantly improved students' social skills and civic awareness. A study conducted at Universitas Negeri Jakarta demonstrated that a PBL model tailored to Civic Education courses enhanced interpersonal and collaboration skills, increased emotional sensitivity, and improved teamwork abilities among students. The study also reported advancements in communication skills and critical thinking, indicating that PBL effectively fosters civic competencies (Raharjo et al., 2025). In addition, integrating PBL into Civic Education aligns with the principles of transformative learning and global citizenship education initiatives in Indonesia. Such integration promotes self-directed learning and addresses global issues, thereby preparing students to participate actively in democratic life and to develop as critical, caring, and responsible citizens (Sakban et al., 2025).

Fourth, Conceptual analysis is fundamental in formulating core knowledge and values underpinning Civic Education learning. Key concepts that need to be developed in transforming Civic Education include nationalism, civic responsibility, global diversity, tolerance, inclusivity, and social sustainability. Nationalism, in this regard, is not merely seen

as love for the homeland, but also as an active awareness to maintain unity in diversity and openness to universal, inclusive values. According to Damayanti, Youanda, and Utami (2024), instilling the spirit of nationalism through Civic Education requires a holistic approach involving various stakeholders in the educational system.

Global diversity is also a critical foundation for this model, as students in the era of globalization must understand and appreciate differences in culture, religion, language, and identity. Global civic education enables students to see, imagine, understand, and act as global citizens at local, national, and global levels. This is emphasized by Usmi & Samsuri (2022), who argue that global civic education is urgent in today's curriculum to foster global citizenship competencies. These concepts are integrated into project-based learning activities, enabling students to explore and internalize such values in a contextual and applicable manner. Through this approach, students can develop critical thinking, empathy, and collaboration skills needed to participate actively in a democratic, inclusive, and sustainable society (Putri et al., 2023).

Fifth, the learning objectives in this development model are directed at forming student profiles as active, critical, and inclusive global citizens. Specifically, the model has the following objectives: (1) To habituate students to recognize and respect differences, an essential aspect of living in a multicultural nation, such as the Province of North Sumatra, particularly in Medan. (2) To enhance students' civic competence in knowledge, attitudes, and skills. (3) To promote collaboration among students from diverse religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds through national project-based learning. (4) To encourage innovative teaching and learning practices in the Civic Education (Pancasila and Civic Education) course, thereby providing meaningful learning experiences. (5) To facilitate the development of 21st-century skills in students, including communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and innovation.

The next stage is the design phase, which focuses on preparing the necessary components for implementing the learning model. This includes test preparation, case selection, media selection, assessment design, and initial planning for the model's application. Specifically, the test preparation involves developing instruments that will later be used in feasibility testing, ensuring alignment with learning objectives. Case selection is conducted to identify relevant civic issues reflecting national and global contexts, serving as authentic problems for students to address. Media selection focuses on choosing appropriate instructional and technological resources that support project-based learning and facilitate student engagement. Assessment design outlines how student performance and learning outcomes will be evaluated throughout the learning process. Initial planning includes scheduling, resource allocation, and defining the roles of lecturers and students in the implementation phase. A civic education instructional syntax based on the National Project-Based Learning Model was developed to operationalize these components. The syntax outlines the flow of learning activities, as presented in the following table.

Table 4. Syntax of the National Project-Based Learning Model

Syntax Stage	Lecturer Activities	Student Activities
Initial Orientation	The lecturer poses triggering questions related to the rights and responsibilities of citizens in the context of civic issues.	Students respond to the triggering questions by expressing their initial opinions on civic issues.

Issue Exploration	The lecturer facilitates a joint examination of local, national, and global civic issues.	Students analyze current civic issues and relate them to national and multicultural values.
Knowledge Elaboration	The lecturer guides students in studying concepts, principles, and theories of civics, and encourages them to seek additional sources.	Students explore and construct an understanding of civic concepts and theories based on the issues being analyzed.
Project Design	The lecturer provides guidelines and directions for designing a project based on relevant civic issues.	Students work in groups to design a project that offers a solution or preventive action related to the chosen civic issue.
Real Action	The lecturer supervises the implementation of the social action as a practical application of civic issue studies.	Students carry out their designed projects and actions to demonstrate concern for national problems.
Reflection	The lecturer facilitates a class reflection session or invites relevant external stakeholders.	Students reflect on the learning process and outcomes and the impact of their completed projects.

Source: Research Results, 2023

The next phase is the development stage, which involves refining the instructional model design based on validation results. Instrument validation in this study represents a crucial initial step before implementing trials in the control and experimental classes. The national project-based learning model was validated using assessment sheets completed by expert validators. The validators consisted of two lecturers in Pancasila and Civic Education from the Faculty of Social Sciences at Universitas Negeri Medan, who served as experts in instructional model development. The results of the validation process for the national project-based learning model are presented in the table below.

Table 5. Validation Result

No	Validation Indicator	Validation Result			Category
		V1	V2	Average	
1	Content	94,57	94,87	94,79	Highly Valid
2	Construct	92,73	95,67	94,2	Highly Valid

Source: Research Results, 2023

Based on the table, it can be observed that the percentage scores for the content aspect include indicators such as the relevance of learning theories, the supporting theoretical foundations of the model, and a systematic sequence of learning activities designed to foster character development related to diversity. Meanwhile, the construct aspect includes the underlying rationale for model development, clearly defined learning objectives, the instructional syntax, and the evaluation mechanisms used to measure the model's effectiveness. The validation results demonstrate that Validator 1 assigned a score of 94.57% for content validity and 92.73% for construct validity. Validator 2 assigned slightly higher scores, 94.87% for content and 95.67% for construct. The average scores across both validators resulted in 94.72% for content and 94.20% for construct. These figures indicate that the model is categorized as Highly Valid.

However, these scores are not merely numerical indicators; they reflect a comprehensive expert judgment that affirms the model's relevance, coherence, and feasibility in achieving its intended pedagogical goals. High content validity signifies that the model

successfully integrates essential civic education principles and theories, while high construct validity reflects the internal consistency and logic of the instructional framework, including its goals, process, and assessment strategies.

In addition, the qualitative feedback from the validators highlighted the need for certain refinements. These include simplifying the instructional syntax to improve clarity and expanding the learning scenarios to encompass all 16 sessions following the semester structure. These suggestions were carefully addressed and integrated into the revised version of the National Project-Based Learning Model handbook. Following this revision, the model was deemed ready for trial implementation in control and experimental classroom settings to evaluate its practical effectiveness in real learning environments.

The next phase of this study is the trial implementation of the National Project-Based Learning Model to evaluate its effectiveness. This trial involves two class groups: an experimental class and a control class, each consisting of 20 students, for a total of 40 participants. The experimental class will receive instruction using the National Project-Based Learning Model, while the control class will use a conventional instructional model. The effectiveness of the developed learning model will be measured through students' critical thinking skills, one of the essential 21st-century skills that help students address various civic issues. Critical thinking skills enable individuals to analyze problems, articulate arguments, and make rational and responsible decisions.

In this trial, critical thinking skills are measured based on the indicators developed by Ennis (1993), which include five main aspects. Students are required to answer five questions designed according to these indicators, with different weightings: (1) Providing a simple explanation, with a maximum score of 5, (2) Building basic skills, with a maximum score of 5, (3) Formulating conclusions, with a maximum score of 10, (4) Providing further explanations, with a maximum score of 10, and (5) Formulating strategies and tactics, with a maximum score of 10. With a total maximum score of 40, the average critical thinking score of the students will fall within a specific category. The result should at least fall into the "Good" category, which ranges from 62.50% to 81.25% of the maximum score. The findings from this trial will serve as the basis for assessing the effectiveness of the National Project-Based Learning Model in improving students' critical thinking skills in the Civic Education course.

To determine the extent of the improvement in students' critical thinking skills after the implementation of the National Project-based learning model, an initial test (pretest) and a final test (posttest) were conducted on two groups: the experimental class and the control class, each consisting of 20 students. The pretest was given to all students before the learning process began, both in the experimental and control classes. Afterward, the experimental class underwent learning using the National Project model, while the control class followed conventional learning. After all stages of the learning process were completed, a posttest was conducted to measure changes in critical thinking skills in both groups. A comparison of the pretest and posttest results for each group was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the developed model. The results of the pretest and posttest for both experimental and control groups can be seen in the table below.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics: Pretest and Posttest

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest_Control	20	27.5	50.0	36.5	5.5843
Posttest_Control	20	37.5	72.5	51.0	8.6374

Pretest_Eksperimental	20	27.5	52.5	38.5	7.4956
Posttest_Eksperimental	20	70.0	90.0	80.63	5.9535

Source: Research Results, 2023

In the control group, the average pretest score was 36.5%, indicating that before the intervention, students' critical thinking skills were still below the "Good" category, which starts at 62.50%. After the learning process without the developed model, the posttest mean increased to 51.0%, showing some improvement, but still falling below the "Good" threshold. This suggests that the conventional learning method contributed to a slight increase in students' critical thinking, but was insufficient to bring them into the expected category. Meanwhile, the mean pretest score in the experimental group was 38.5%, comparable to the control group's initial score and still in the "Low" category. After implementing the National Project-Based Learning Model, the posttest mean score increased significantly to 80.63%, which places it in the upper limit of the "Good" category (62.50%–81.25%). The experimental group's minimum and maximum posttest scores also showed notable improvement (from 27.5%–52.5% in the pretest to 70%–90% in the posttest), with a relatively low standard deviation, indicating consistent improvement among students.

These results show that the developed learning model effectively enhanced students' critical thinking skills in Civic Education, as reflected by the experimental group's average score, reaching the "Good" level according to the set criteria. The score increase across all five indicators demonstrates that the students could develop their abilities in providing explanations, building skills, drawing conclusions, elaborating further arguments, and formulating strategies and tactics more effectively than those in the control group. Therefore, the descriptive analysis supports the conclusion that the National Project-Based Learning Model significantly improves students' critical thinking skills.

This finding aligns with Frans, Abdin, & Jakob (2024), who reported that Project-Based Learning in Civil Engineering significantly improved students' attitudes and skills when involved in practical community projects such as embankment construction and mangrove planting. Their study shows that project-based activities encourage students' sense of responsibility, integrity, real-world problem-solving skills, and key critical thinking attributes. Similarly, Suriaman, Hariati, Salim, and Haris (2024) demonstrated that applying the Team-Based Project method in Civic Education increased students' critical thinking from 52.9% in the pretest to 77.4% in the posttest. This confirms that collaborative, project-focused learning strengthens students' ability to communicate, collaborate, and analyze information critically.

In addition, the research by Firdausia & Wibawa (2024), further supports this conclusion. Their study implemented a Tri-N integrated Project-Based Learning model using digital poster media for Pancasila Education in elementary school. The approach successfully increased students' active learning and participation. Through creating, presenting, and discussing digital posters titled "*Aku Peduli Diriku*" using Canva, students became more involved in asking questions, discussing, and articulating ideas practices directly linked to higher-order thinking and critical reflection. The Tri-N principles (Niteni, Nirokke, and Nambahi) emphasize observing, analyzing, and adding new knowledge steps that match Ennis's notion of structured critical thinking. All three studies demonstrate that active, project-oriented, and technology-supported learning environments significantly encourage students to develop their critical thinking and engagement. The findings from Luftia Firdausia also highlight the role of digital media as an innovative tool that enhances students'

motivation and creativity, which is critical for applying critical thinking skills in real-world contexts.

Furthermore, Akirav (2023) expands this perspective in a heterogeneous society. Her study of Israeli college students found that Project-Based Learning in civic education increased students' knowledge, awareness, accountability, transparency, and sense of civic responsibility. Students from non-Jewish minority groups developed stronger attitudes toward civic engagement and democratic participation after actively investigating municipal budgets, communicating with public officials, and analyzing real-world governance issues. This participatory model gave students hands-on experiences that fostered critical thinking, reflective inquiry, and a sense of agency within a diverse democratic society.

Before conducting inferential statistical analysis using the Independent Sample T-Test, the first step is to test the normality of the data in each group, both the control group and the experimental group. The purpose of the normality test is to ensure that the data to be analyzed follows a normal distribution, which is one of the prerequisites for applying parametric tests. The normality test is conducted using two methods, namely Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk. However, since the sample size in each group is only 20 participants ($n < 50$), the main interpretation is based on the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is preferred for small samples. The results of the normality test are shown in the table.

Table 7. Tests of Normality

Class	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest A (Control)	.920	20	.097
Posttest A (Control)	.924	20	.117
Pretest B (Eksperimental)	.918	20	.092
Posttest B (Eksperimental)	.945	20	.292

Source: Research Results, 2023

Based on the table, the results of the normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk method show the significance values for each group as follows: Pretest A (Control) = 0.097, Posttest A (Control) = 0.117, Pretest B (Experimental) = 0.092, and Posttest B (Experimental) = 0.292. All significance values (Sig. > 0.05) indicate that the data in all four groups follow a normal distribution. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data meet the normality assumption, allowing for further analysis using the parametric test, the Independent Sample T-Test.

In the analysis using the Independent Sample T-Test, the researcher only used the posttest data from the control and experimental groups. This is to directly observe the effect of applying the learning model used in the experimental group compared to the control group. The results of the Independent Sample T-Test can be seen in the table.

Table 8. Posttest Scores Summary

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental	20	85.25	4.38
Control	20	55.63	6.21

Source: Research Results, 2023

Table 9. Independent Sample T-Test Summary

Test Item	Value
Levene's sig. Value	0.171
t-value	-12.629
Df	38
Sig, (2-tailed)	0.000
Mean Difference	-29.63

Source: Research Results, 2023

Based on the results of the Independent Sample T-Test on the posttest data between the control and experimental groups, the significance value from Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was 0.171 (> 0.05), indicating that the variances of the two groups are considered homogeneous. Therefore, the t-test analysis was conducted under the assumption of equal variances. The t-test results showed a significance value (2-tailed) of less than 0.001, indicating a highly significant difference between the experimental and control groups' posttest results. The calculated t-value was -12.629, and the mean difference was -29.6250, indicating that the experimental group's average posttest score was significantly higher than the control group.

These findings align with previous research implementing the Project Citizen model in Civic Education. A study by Apandie & Rahmelia (2022) showed that implementing Project Citizen in the Civic Education course at IAKN Palangka Raya effectively improved students' critical thinking skills. Activities such as brainstorming, dialogue, and communication skills among students improved, and they felt that Project Citizen positively impacted their citizenship knowledge and attitudes. Similarly, research by Gumelar et al (2023), revealed that the Project Citizen model in Civic Education was more effective than the conventional model, which often felt monotonous and less interactive. This model enhanced knowledge and fostered a sense of mutual cooperation among students.

Social constructivist theory, Vygotsky (1978), provides a strong theoretical foundation to support these findings. This theory emphasizes that learning becomes more meaningful when students construct knowledge through direct experiences and social interactions. In the context of this study, the National Project model allows students to learn within their zone of proximal development, where they gain a deeper understanding through group work and guidance from instructors and peers. In this way, students acquire cognitive knowledge and develop social and citizenship skills that can enrich their understanding of their roles in society.

Thus, this study reinforces the evidence that the project-based learning approach, notably the National Project, is effective for mastering practical skills and highly relevant in enhancing national literacy and strengthening students' national identity. This aligns with the strategic objectives of the Mandatory Curriculum Courses in shaping a strong national character within higher education environments.

In line with this, the study by Mardiaty & Leba (2018) showed how a Food Bank Project in Civic Education engaged students directly with real social issues, cultivating civic skills and a sense of social responsibility. Similarly, Mutakinati, Anwari, and Yoshisuke (2018) demonstrated how STEM-based PBL strengthened students' critical thinking by integrating real-world environmental problems. Adding to this, Miller, Severance, & Krajcik (2021), stressed that PBL motivates students when teachers design flexible learning, meaurally relevant, keeping students' ideas at the center of learning. Furthermore, a recent systematic

review by Loyens, van Meerten, Schaap, & Wijnia (2023) confirmed that well-implemented PBL and PjBL consistently foster Higher-Order Thinking, Critical Thinking, and elements of Critical-Analytic Thinking by situating learning around authentic, collaborative problem-solving. They emphasize that these environments encourage students to process knowledge and question assumptions, weigh evidence, and construct arguments—abilities central to forming reflective and responsible citizens. Together, these studies strengthen this present study's finding that the National Project-Based Learning Model bridges theory and civic action, transforms passive learning into active engagement, and fulfills the mission of higher education to cultivate informed, empathetic, and socially responsible graduates.

The dissemination stage is the final step in developing the National Project-based learning model. The previously developed National Project Learning Model guidebook is distributed in this phase. This dissemination process includes distributing the guidebook and teaching materials to faculty members and students, particularly those teaching or enrolled in the Mandatory Curriculum Courses at Universitas Negeri Medan. This stage aims to ensure that the developed learning model is widely implemented, promotes the enhancement of national literacy, and strengthens students' character and national identity through a contextual and participatory project-based approach.

CONCLUSION

This study proves that the developed Project-Based Civic Education Model has a very high content and construct validity level. The validation results from two validators showed that this model achieved an average score of 94.72% for content and 94.20% for construct, thus categorizing it as highly valid. Furthermore, the effectiveness test results through the Independent Sample T-Test revealed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the posttest results. A significance value of < 0.001 indicates that applying the Project Kebangsaan model significantly improves students' understanding of global diversity compared to conventional methods. The Project Kebangsaan model is highly relevant for implementation in Civic Education courses because it can foster national awareness, critical thinking skills, and students' spirit of tolerance in the context of global diversity. Through a project-based approach, students are trained to be active, reflective, and collaborative in addressing diversity issues, forming a concrete profile of students as global citizens with Pancasila character. Future research is recommended to test the effectiveness of this model in a broader context, such as involving different study programs or universities. Additionally, sustainability and integration with digital platforms could be a focus for further development to address educational challenges in the digital era.

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