

21st Century Skills as an Effort to Strengthen Civic Skills in Pancasila Education at MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta

Fariq Akbar^{1,*}, Bambang Sumardjoko²

^{1,2} Faculty of Education Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to describe the application of 21st-century skills (6C) critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, citizenship, and character as an effort to strengthen civic skills in Pancasila Education at MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta. Specifically, it analyzes how 6C-based learning practices reveal indicators of students' civic skills, including intellectual and participatory skills, teachers' pedagogical strategies in structuring learning activities, and supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the strengthening of civic skills in the madrasah environment.

Methodology: This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis using triangulation of sources, methods, and time to ensure data validity. The participants consisted of Pancasila Education teachers, students, and the principal and vice principal of the madrasah. Data were analyzed through stages of reduction, presentation, and inductive conclusion drawing.

Results: The findings show that the application of 21st-century skills in Pancasila Education strengthens students' civic skills through critical thinking, group collaboration, reflective communication, and active participation. Teachers' pedagogical strategies that integrate constructivism and deliberative democracy theories effectively foster students' intellectual abilities and social responsibility. Supporting factors include a religious and collaborative school culture and a curriculum emphasizing moral and spiritual values, while obstacles involve limited facilities, time, and varied student engagement.

Applications/Originality/Value: This study contributes theoretically to developing a 6C-based Pancasila Education model relevant to the madrasah context. Practically, it serves as a reference for teachers to design contextual, participatory, and character-oriented learning. Its originality lies in integrating 21st-century competencies with Islamic and national values to form critical, religious, and responsible citizens.

Keywords: 21st Century Skills, Civic Skills, Pancasila Education

Introduction Section

Based on research by Putri and Dewi (2024), Pancasila Education is a very important subject for students. Pancasila Education is a compulsory subject and course taught at all levels of education from elementary to higher education (Aditia & Dewi, 2022). Pancasila Education aims to increase knowledge, shape noble character, and foster devotion to God Almighty. In addition, Pancasila Education also equips students with civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic disposition. Pancasila education also serves as national ideology education and aims to shape citizens who understand their rights and obligations and love their homeland (Aryani et al., 2022).

However, the reality is that the results of research conducted by Srirahmawati and Deviana (2023) show that there are still many students who do not yet have or master 21st-century skills, which include the 6Cs. Quoted from research by Daniar & Iswatiningsih (2025), 21st-century skills, which originally focused on four main competencies (4Cs): critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, have now developed into six competencies or 6Cs, with the addition of character and citizenship. The application of learning models that support the development of these skills is still limited, thus affecting the learning achievements of students, which are not yet optimal.

The tendency for individual activities means that students rarely interact, lack cooperation, and are not accustomed to discussing topics to practice critical thinking skills. Pancasila Education in the classroom still tends to be dominated by lectures and exercises from textbooks, which are ineffective in developing 21st-century skills (6C). Supported also Based on the results of research conducted by Hulu and Bawamenewi (2022), several weaknesses were still found in the application of civic skills. The importance of civic skills is an indicator in Pancasila Education so that the knowledge gained is meaningful for national life. These aspects include intellectual skills, such as critical thinking and problem analysis, as well as participation skills, namely the ability to work together, contribute, and engage in social and political activities (Rosalia et al. 2025). In the learning process, some students are less active in expressing their opinions in class, do not show responsibility for creating a safe, comfortable, and conducive atmosphere, and some do not complete their

*Corresponding author: bs131@ums.ac.id

assignments on time. In addition, in the application of civic skills, it is also apparent that there are still students who are unable to think critically when participating in discussions (Fauziyah et al., 2018).

The expansion of 21st-century skills to 6Cs emphasizes the importance of education that not only hones cognitive abilities and technical skills but also shapes individuals who are moral, grounded in noble values, and have social responsibility (Venco et al., 2025). The addition of these two aspects is relevant given the increasing problems among school-age children stemming from weak character building and civic awareness (Usmi & Puspitaningrum, 2022). According to Dr. Michael Fullard, the initiator of New Pedagogies for Deep Learning in Fauziati (2025) research, the six 21st-century skills are interrelated and form the main foundation for students to be able to learn deeply while growing as active citizens and making positive contributions to society. Character building is the main foundation for national development, especially in facing the multidimensional crises currently experienced by the younger generation, such as individualistic attitudes, intolerance, moral decline, and low social ethics (Fauziati, 2025). Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency and the 2022 report of the National Commission for Child Protection in the research by (Ronny & Mahendra, 2024), there has been an increase in cases of violence, bullying, and juvenile delinquency, which reflects the weak instillation of moral and spiritual values among students.

Constructivism is an epistemological view and learning theory that states that knowledge is not simply received passively, but rather constructed by learners through an active process of processing experiences, reflection, and interaction with the environment. Learning is seen as a process in which new knowledge is always related to and modified by existing cognitive structures or schemas within individuals (Allen, 2022). According to Vygotsky in the research by Hidayati and Suryana (2023), cognition is formed primarily through social interaction, language, and cultural tools. His central concept, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), explains the potential for development that arises when learners are given support (scaffolding) by adults or more capable peers; over time, this support is withdrawn so that the learner becomes independent. In other words, learning is a social process guided by culture and language (Shabani, 2010). In the context of the 21st century, the development of the 6C aspects is very much in line with constructivist theory, whereby students not only acquire knowledge individually but also build it through collaboration and communication in groups by thinking critically to negotiate shared meaning and explore creativity in mutually supportive dialogue and activities (Bulki et al., 2025). Meanwhile, the process of social interaction driven by teachers or peers supports character building and understanding of social responsibility or citizenship, all through cultural and social contextualization. Thus, an active, social, collaborative, and meaningful learning environment is wide open for developing 6C skills in line with the 21st century (Allen, 2022). Vygotsky's ideas in Maghfiroh and Muttaqin (2025) research on social learning are relevant for developing 21st-century skills (6C) while strengthening civic skills in Pancasila Education learning. Through cooperative learning, students can actively build knowledge from social experiences, think critically and creatively, communicate, and collaborate in solving public problems. This process fosters intellectual abilities in analyzing national issues and participatory abilities in deliberation, thereby shaping active, responsible, and democratic citizens.

Deliberative democracy emphasizes the need for dialogical and collaborative public participation, in which all parties work together to find the truth based on facts, consider the public interest, and avoid dogmatic attitudes. Habermas, in his research Muthhar (2025), proposes a model of democracy that gives the people the opportunity to participate in the process of formulating laws and political policies. This deliberative democracy emphasizes the active involvement of civil society as a whole through various forms of discourse in the process. The theory of deliberative democracy is highly relevant to the development of 21st-century skills or 6Cs in Pancasila education. Through deliberation, students are trained to think critically in assessing arguments and facts, communicate effectively when conveying ideas, and collaborate in seeking consensus. The open discussion process also fosters creativity in finding solutions, strengthens character traits such as tolerance and responsibility, and shapes citizenship awareness through direct experience of being active citizens participating in public decision-making (Narmoatmojo, 2007; Astuti, 2024). Thus, deliberative democracy is an effective theory for strengthening students' civic skills. Through dialogue and deliberation, students are trained to hone their intellectual abilities, such as critical thinking, analyzing national issues, evaluating arguments based on facts, and formulating rational and fair solutions. On the other hand, the aspect of participation is also developed through discussion activities, group work, and decision-making simulations, so that students become accustomed to expressing their opinions, listening to the views of others, and contributing actively to the deliberation process (Toha & Mada, 2024).

The launch of the Merdeka Curriculum was motivated by the decline in the orientation of education in Indonesia. This curriculum should be able to foster courage, independence in thinking, enthusiasm for learning, self-confidence, optimism, and freedom of thought, while also training students to accept both success and failure (Saputri et al., 2024). In addition, Merdeka Belajar aims to encourage students to actively learn and develop themselves, foster concern for the learning environment, increase confidence and skills, and prepare them to be able to adapt to society through the mastery of 21st-century skills (Rizki & Ningrum, 2024). However, since its launch, the implementation of the independent curriculum has remained optional and has not been applied simultaneously in all educational units due to various challenges, especially for teachers and students. Many teachers still do not understand the concept of the independent curriculum, so its implementation in several schools needs to be evaluated. To overcome this, the government provides support in the form of training and financial assistance to support the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesian educational institutions (Sartini & Mulyono, 2024).

21st century skills are a major focus in improving the quality of Pancasila Education, with the aim of shaping a generation that is able to face global challenges and become active and influential citizens in society (Ronny & Mahendra, 2024). Pancasila Education is specifically designed to develop the potential of individuals to become noble, intelligent, and responsible Indonesian citizens. Theoretically, Pancasila Education is designed in an integrated manner by combining cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions within the framework of Pancasila ideas, values, concepts, morals, democracy, and national defense. Therefore, to optimize the potential of students, a systematic and targeted learning strategy is needed so that the strengthening of civic skills in students can be achieved (Naibaho & Nainggolan, 2023).

In the midst of globalization, strong 21st Century Skills (6C) are a major necessity, especially in the context of national and state life. Pancasila Education, which integrates national values and social ethics, will be more optimal if it is supported by competent 21st century skills and can strengthen civic skills in students. These skills encourage students to develop civic skills so that they can become responsible citizens and actively contribute to society. This is in line with research by Hidayati et al (2025), which states that madrasahs have existed since before Indonesia gained independence and have played an important role in producing a generation that is intelligent, has noble character, and is religiously devout. Therefore, madrasahs have strong ties to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which from the beginning has been tasked with ensuring that graduates have a comprehensive mastery of both general knowledge and religion. They also strengthen character education by instilling moral and ethical values so that students have good character, are responsible, and care for others. Based on this explanation, the researcher proposes the title of this research, namely **“21st Century Skills as an Effort to Strengthen Civic Skills in Pancasila Education at MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta.”**

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design because it focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of the process of strengthening civic skills through the implementation of 21st-century skills (6C) in Pancasila Education learning at MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta. This approach is relevant for exploring the meaning, dynamics, and interactions that occur in the natural learning context (Ridlo, 2023; Sugiyono, 2020). Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis as a form of triangulation to enhance data credibility (Noble & Heale, 2019; Nurfajriani et al., 2024). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow researchers to explore the experiences of teachers, students, and school leaders regarding the implementation of the 6Cs (Sarib & Rasak, 2022). Moderate participatory observation was conducted to observe learning practices in their natural settings (Kawulich, 2005). Meanwhile, document analysis is used to verify the alignment of planning and implementation of learning (Bowen, 1997). All stages of data analysis follow the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, which includes data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). The research process also applies ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality of identities, and non-maleficence to protect participants' rights (Millum & Bromwich, 2020; Kenneth John Ryan et al., 1979).

Results and Discussion

Based on interviews with the Vice Principal of Curriculum, Vice Principal of Student Affairs, teachers, and students, it was found that the implementation of 21st-century skills (6C) has been applied in Pancasila Education learning, although not evenly. From the interview with the Vice Principal of Curriculum, it was obtained that the madrasa implements the principles of a curriculum based on tawhid, integrative-interconnected, and religious moderation that support character building, cooperation, and civic awareness. Pancasila Education teachers also implement learning models based on discussions, group work, and presentations as a form of applying critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. From student interviews, most stated that PPKn learning helps them become more critical, able to cooperate, and practice expressing opinions. However, some students revealed that the use of learning technology is still minimal, and they are rarely involved in project-based activities. Meanwhile, the Vice Principal of Student Affairs emphasized that a religious culture activities such as congregational prayers, brief religious lectures, and discipline are important factors in shaping students' character and responsibility. The obstacles encountered include students' low confidence in speaking in front of the class, limited digital learning facilities, and challenges in adapting the Merdeka Curriculum for teachers.

Research findings indicate that the implementation of 6C at MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta has a significant contribution to strengthening civic skills, particularly the intellectual and participatory aspects of students. The application of critical thinking through case analysis and worksheets aligns with Vygotsky's constructivism, which emphasizes that social interaction and teacher guidance help students build more complex understanding (McLeod, 2009). Collaboration and communication conducted through group discussions, presentations, and teamwork support the development of students' deliberative abilities, as explained in Habermas' democracy theory, where dialogue and rational argumentation are key to enhancing civic awareness (Susen, 2017). The religious culture of madrasahs strengthens aspects of character and citizenship, in line with the statement of the Vice Principal for Student Affairs that the habit of worship and ethics plays an important role in the formation of discipline and responsibility. However, several inhibiting factors such as limited digital facilities, low student participation, and challenges in adapting the Independent Curriculum hinder the optimal

implementation of the 6C. This supports Sugiyono's (2020) view that the effectiveness of learning is greatly influenced by environmental conditions, teacher readiness, and the availability of facilities. Thus, the research results show that madrasahs have strong potential in implementing the 6C to strengthen civic skills, but they require the enhancement of facilities, teacher training, and strategies to increase student participation for more optimal implementation.

The application of 21st-century skills (6C) in Pancasila Education learning produces civic skills indicators

Based on interviews with Pancasila Education teachers, it can be concluded that the application of 21st century skills (6C) in learning at MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta has been carried out in a planned manner and has had a direct impact on strengthening students' civic skills, both intellectually and in terms of participation. Teachers facilitate the development of 6C through various strategies, such as group discussions based on current issues, analysis of social case videos, creation of posters and digital content using Canva, project presentations, and reflective question and answer sessions that bring out students' critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration skills. These activities have been proven to produce indicators of intellectual skills, such as students' ability to analyze information, identify facts and opinions, understand values and norms, and give opinions based on logical arguments. Meanwhile, indicators of participatory skills emerge through students' courage to express ideas, cooperation in groups, ability to take on roles in projects, and the ability to deliberate and formulate solutions to the social issues being studied.

Teachers also explained that project-based activities such as presentations, video production, and group assignments in the PjBL and PBL models help students become more actively involved and responsible in the learning process. However, character building as part of the 6C is the most challenging aspect because it is greatly influenced by family support and habits outside of school. In addition, some teachers' limited understanding of the PjBL process and time management also hinders the maximization of 21st-century activities. Despite these obstacles, teachers believe that 21st-century skills are very important to instill because they equip students with adaptive abilities in the digital age, including the ability to collaborate, communicate effectively, understand the value of diversity, and act as critical and responsible citizens. Thus, the practice of 6C in Pancasila Education not only improves academic competence but also strengthens students' civic identity as a generation ready to actively participate in democratic and social life.

Pedagogical strategies of Pancasila Education teachers in organizing 6C activities

Based on the interview results, the pedagogical strategies of Pancasila Education teachers in developing 21st century skills (6C) appear to be structured and consistent through three main phases, namely pre-task, task, and post-task. In the pre-task phase, teachers begin the lesson by showing videos or presenting actual cases relevant to students' social lives in order to stimulate curiosity, activate prior knowledge, and encourage critical thinking and information literacy skills. Teachers also open up an initial discussion so that students can identify problems, express their opinions, and prepare themselves for the main activity. In the task phase, students are directed to complete project-based activities, such as creating PowerPoint presentations, videos, creative content, or Canva posters related to Pancasila values and the social issues discussed. This phase serves as a means to practice creativity, collaboration, communication, and problem solving. Group division strengthens interpersonal skills, while open projects provide space for students to explore ideas and demonstrate their analytical abilities. In the post-task phase, teachers deepen the material through worksheets and opinion essay questions, which not only assess mastery of the material but also assess students' reflective abilities in formulating attitudes, making decisions, and providing solutions to the social issues they have learned about.

In terms of formative assessment, teachers use various techniques ranging from worksheets, discussion observations, project assignments, essay tests, to direct questioning in class. This formative assessment aims to ensure conceptual understanding, analyze how students think, and monitor the development of their soft skills, such as the ability to express opinions, the accuracy of arguments, cooperation during discussions, and discipline in completing assignments. Teachers also assess students' character and religiosity as part of value-based learning, in accordance with the madrasah context. The assessment approach, which focuses not only on cognition but also on thinking processes, social interaction, and ethics, shows that teachers have comprehensively integrated the 6Cs to support the strengthening of students' civic skills, both in terms of intellectual skills such as analyzing information and constructing arguments, as well as participation skills such as expressing opinions, working together, problem solving, and being actively involved in the context of citizenship. Thus, the pedagogical strategies applied by teachers show the direction of Pancasila Education learning development that is more responsive to 21st-century learning needs, relevant to digital social developments, and in line with the objectives of strengthening students' character and citizenship in madrasah.

Madrasah factors that facilitate or hinder the strengthening of civic skills through 6C

The supporting factors for strengthening civic skills through the implementation of the 6C at MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta primarily come from the madrasah culture, school policies, and classroom climate. Based on interviews with the vice principal for curriculum, the madrasah has a strong religious culture through the habituation of Dhuha prayer, congregational Dzuhur prayer, short religious lectures (kultum), and character strengthening, which directly support the indicators of character, citizenship, and student discipline. Teachers have also implemented the 3T strategy (Embedded,

Integrated, Habitual) so that the values of Pancasila and 21st-century competencies can be injected into various learning activities. From the student affairs perspective, various extracurricular activities such as journalism, English Club, robotics, and social activities also expand students' opportunities to practice communication, collaboration, and citizenship. Students also acknowledged that group discussions, presentations, and case analyses make them actively engaged and encourage the courage to express their opinions.

In addition, the interview results show that Pancasila Education teachers have a good understanding of 21st century skills (6C) and civic skills, which include intellectual abilities and student participation. Teachers apply various 6C-based learning strategies such as real-case discussions, poster and digital content creation, group presentations, and problem-based projects (PBL and PjBL) to encourage critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication among students. Communication is the skill that is most easily developed through regular presentations, while the formation of religious character and civic attitudes is a major challenge because it is greatly influenced by the family environment and student social circles. During the learning stage, teachers systematically organize pre-tasks, tasks, and post-tasks through motivational videos, discussions, media creation, and reflective evaluation. Formative assessment is conducted through worksheets, analytical essays, question and answer sessions, and thinking process assessments. Teachers assess that the application of 6C greatly helps strengthen civic skills, improve students' ability to analyze information, work together, express opinions, and understand social values. The integration of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' curriculum also strengthens religious character through the habit of worship, religious moderation, and structured religious activities.

Nevertheless, strengthening civic skills through the 6C framework still faces several obstacles. Interviews with teachers and students revealed limitations in digital facilities, a lack of variety in teaching methods, and low student confidence in expressing opinions. In addition, curriculum staff emphasized that the transition to the Merdeka Curriculum remains a challenge because not all teachers fully understand competency-based learning design. From the student perspective, obstacles include the indiscipline of some students, difficulties in supervising gadgets, and a lack of consistency in enforcing rules. Some students also mentioned that project-based activities and civic practice are still rarely conducted, so aspects of citizenship and creativity have not been fully optimized. Therefore, these supporting and inhibiting factors directly affect the effectiveness of implementing the 6C framework in strengthening students' civic skills.

Figures



Figures 1. Interview with Student Affairs Staff / Pancasila Education Teacher



Figures 2. Interview with the Curriculum Staff



Figures 3. Interview with Student 9A1 Science



Figures 4. Pancasila Education Teacher teaching in Class 9A1 Science



Figures 5. Group discussion in class 9A1 Sains



Figures 6. Presentation of group discussion results in class 9A1 Science



Figures 7. Group photo of class 9A1 Science

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of 21st-century skills (6C) critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, citizenship, and character plays a strategic role in strengthening civic skills in Pancasila Education at MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta. The findings show that 6C-based learning promotes students' intellectual skills through activities such as case analysis, critical questioning, argument evaluation, and reflective reasoning, while participatory skills develop through group collaboration, discussion, presenting ideas, and formulating collective solutions to social problems. These practices align with constructivism and deliberative democracy theory, which emphasize active knowledge construction, dialogue, and rational civic engagement.

Teachers' pedagogical strategies and structured into pre-task, task, and post-task phases—successfully integrate the 6C competencies through multimodal activities including video-based case exploration, project-based learning, digital content creation, and formative assessments. These strategies not only improve students' conceptual mastery but also foster communication, teamwork, responsibility, and confidence in expressing opinions. The madrasah environment further strengthens citizenship and character development through religious routines, disciplined school culture, and extracurricular programs that broaden opportunities for civic participation.

However, the strengthening of civic skills through 6C implementation still faces several challenges, including limited digital facilities, students' low confidence in public communication, inconsistent participation, and teachers' varying readiness in adapting to competency-based learning within the Merdeka Curriculum. External factors such as family environment and peer influence also affect character formation and civic awareness.

Despite these obstacles, this study concludes that integrating 21st-century skills in Pancasila Education is essential and effective in shaping students to become critical thinkers, collaborative learners, morally grounded individuals, and responsible democratic citizens. Therefore, continuous capacity-building for teachers, improvement of digital infrastructures, and expansion of project-based and participatory learning models are needed to optimize the implementation of 6Cs in madrasah. This research contributes to the development of a 6C-based Pancasila Education model that is contextually relevant to Islamic educational institutions and capable of forming a generation with strong intellectual and civic competencies.

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