

# THE IMPACT OF CIVIC EDUCATION ON SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGES AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS OF GEN Z AT BANYUWANGI STATE POLYTECHNIC

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## Abstract

Civics education is a key factor in shaping the social and critical behavior of the younger generation in the digital era. It is known that Gen Z's social behavior lately when giving criticism on social media can be said to be impolite. In addition, they are also less concerned about the environment. This study aims to analyze the impact of civics education on the social behavior and critical thinking of Gen Z (students) at Banyuwangi State Polytechnic. This research method uses a quantitative approach with a survey method of 150 students, data collected through a Likert-scale-based questionnaire that measures aspects of social concern, public participation, and critical thinking. The results show a significant positive correlation between the level of understanding of civics education on social behavior and critical thinking skills of students (Gen Z). The highest correlation coefficient is found in the relationship between understanding of Civics Education and Critical Thinking Skills with  $r = 0.921$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). This finding confirms that in-depth and integrated civics education in the campus curriculum can encourage the birth of more aware, proactive, and critical thinking citizens. Practical implications include the importance of strengthening contextual civics education modules and learning based on case studies, interactive, and relevant to current issues among students (Gen Z).

**Keywords:** *Impact, Civic Education, Changes in Social Behavior, Critical Thinking Skills*

## Introduction

Civics Education plays a crucial role in shaping the social behavior and critical thinking skills of Gen Z, particularly in higher education settings like Banyuwangi State Polytechnic. Gen Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, faces unique challenges in the context of globalization and digitalization. (Cleofas & Labayo, 2024). Studies show that Civic Education not only teaches national values but also encourages active participation in society. (Younas & Imran, 2025) However, the effectiveness of Civic Education in the context of vocational education remains underexplored, especially in Indonesia. Many studies have discussed the impact of Civic Education on the younger generation, but specific research on Gen Z in polytechnic environments is still limited. (Agustianingsih, D., Susiba, S., Az-zahra, N., & Sari, 2025; Nur Alvi Puriamandawati & Jani Jani, 2025; Syahwalia, 2025) This study aims to analyze the impact of Civics Education on the social behavior and critical thinking skills of Gen Z students at Banyuwangi State Polytechnic. This Civics Education program utilizes video-based case studies, which are then analyzed in-depth by the students.

Several studies have identified that conventional approaches to Civics Education are still less effective for Gen Z, who are more accustomed to digital learning. It has also been shown that technology integration in Civics Education can increase student engagement. Recent literature shows a growing trend of using social media and online discussions in Civics Education to enhance student engagement. (Waghid, 2024) However, its effectiveness in vocational settings like Banyuwangi State Polytechnic still requires further study. This research is expected to provide recommendations to Civics Education teaching teams at various vocational campuses regarding the evaluation of Civics Education learning that directs social awareness, public participation, and critical thinking among Gen Z. (Eka Rahma Salsabila et al., 2024; Pradana & Sundawa, 2023). In this research, a learning method will be carried out using case studies that lead to real projects so that Gen Z can experience the process of character formation slowly. (Biringan et al., 2025; Burce & Callo, 2024; Younas & Imran, 2025; Yuniwati et al., 2025). Case study learning also encourages

changes in social behavior as explained in various studies.(Gherguț-Babii et al., 2025; Japar, 2018; Younas & Imran, 2025)The test is in the form of a questionnaire regarding the understanding of Civic Education and a rubric for changes in social behavior and critical thinking skills during the learning process. The Pancasila Education comprehension test uses a Likert scale with a score of 1 to 4. A correlation analysis is then conducted. The results of this analysis will determine the relationship between the understanding of Civic Education among Gen Z students and changes in social behavior and critical thinking skills.

## Research methods

This study employed quantitative research by distributing questionnaires to students after learning and using an assessment rubric throughout the learning process. The number of students studying Citizenship Education at Banyuwangi State Polytechnic is 1,000. Therefore, a sample selection was conducted to ensure more accurate research results. The sample was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across various study programs.(Trianasari et al., 2022)The number of students involved was 150 students from Banyuwangi State Polytechnic. The stages of this research are shown in Figure 1 below.

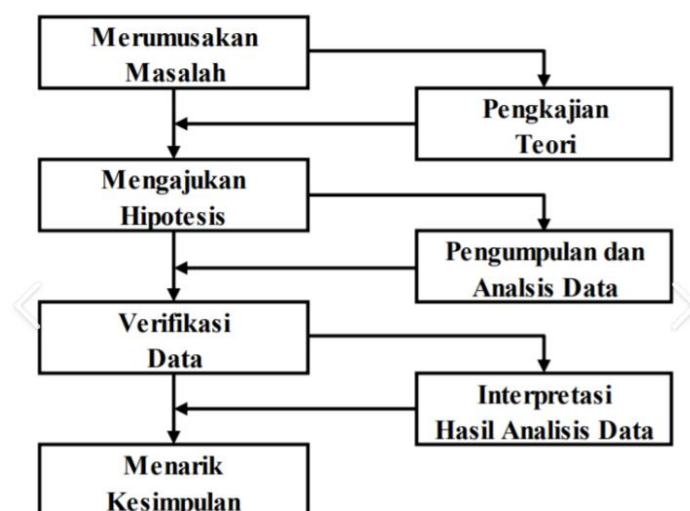


Figure 1. Research Stages

The research instruments included a closed-ended questionnaire to measure civics understanding, a rubric for social behavior change, and a rubric for assessing critical thinking skills. A questionnaire was used to measure civics understanding and social behavior change. The questionnaire used a Likert scale. A Likert scale is a measurement tool that provides assignments based on symbols or numbers to individuals or behaviors based on specific rules. The scale used in this study is a modified Likert scale with four levels: strongly agree (SS), agree (S), disagree (TS), and strongly disagree (STS). The Likert scale was chosen because it is easy to use in measuring psychomotor and affective domains, while the selection of four levels was taken into consideration so that students' answers do not tend to be in the middle. For scoring negative statements, the STS level is given a score of 4, TS is given a score of 3, S is given a score of 2, SS is given a score of 1. Meanwhile, positive statements at the SS level are given a score of 4, S is given a score of 3, TS is given a score of 2, STS is given a score of 1. This avoids the tendency for someone or respondents to give answers at the middle level if the number of levels is odd, so that the researcher does not obtain definitive information.(Yuniwati et al., 2021)If 75% of Gen Z understands Civics, it can be expanded to critical thinking skills and social behavior change.

Meanwhile, according to Facione, there are six dimensions to critical thinking skills: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation.(Warsame et al., 2023)Interpretation is the ability to accurately understand the meaning, intent, or significance of data, text, symbols, or situations. Analysis is the process of breaking information down into its components, identifying relationships, patterns, or underlying assumptions. Evaluation is the process of judging the quality of arguments, evidence, or sources against standards of logic, relevance, and validity. Inference is drawing logical conclusions or projecting consequences based on available evidence, without jumping to unproven causal conclusions. Explanation is constructing arguments or descriptions in a coherent, structured, and accountable manner with evidence. Self-Regulation is the ability to monitor, control, and revise one's own thought processes; to recognize biases, examine assumptions, and correct errors. After the data was collected, a correlation analysis was conducted. This analysis was conducted to measure whether there was an impact between

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civics education and changes in social behavior and critical thinking skills.(Edwards et al., 2022; Popovici & Mironov, 2015; Saadati & Celis, 2023). The hypothesis used is:

$$H_0: r_1 = r_2$$

$$H_1: r_1 \neq r_2$$

This analysis used a 99% confidence level using SPSS. Based on these results, we analyzed the correlation coefficient of each relationship. A correlation level above 0.7 is considered high and indicates impact.

## Results and Discussion

### Research Instrument Development

This study developed three research instruments: the Civics Education Understanding Measurement Instrument, the Social Behavior Change Test Instrument, and the Critical Thinking Instrument. The Civics Education Understanding Measurement Instrument consisted of 15 Likert-scale statements with indicators as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Indicators of Gen Z's Understanding of Civic Education**

| No | Indicator                                                  | Item Number                                               |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Knowledge of the constitution and basic rights             | Items 1-3 (1 positive statement, 2 negative statements)   |
| 2  | Ability to explain the democratic process                  | Items 4-6 (2 positive statements, 1 negative statement)   |
| 3  | Understanding the implementation of citizenship activities | Items 7-9 (1 positive statement, 2 negative statements)   |
| 4  | Attitude of tolerance and respect for diversity            | Items 10-12 (2 positive statements, 1 negative statement) |
| 5  | Awareness of civic responsibility                          | Items 13-15 (2 positive statements, 1 negative statement) |

Based on the scale that has been explained in the background, the maximum total score for Gen Z's Civics Education Understanding is 60 and the minimum total score for Gen Z's Civics Education Understanding is 15. From this score range, Gen Z is divided into 3 Gen Z categories as in Table 2.

**Table 2. Categories of Gen Z's Understanding of Civic Education**

| No | Total Value Interval | Category                                       |
|----|----------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | 15 – 30              | Gen Z Doesn't Understand Citizenship Education |
| 2  | 31 – 45              | Gen Z Understands Citizenship Education Enough |
| 3  | 46 – 60              | Gen Z Really Understands Citizenship Education |

After developing an instrument for Gen Z's understanding of Civic Education, a second instrument was developed, measuring social behavior change and critical thinking skills in case study activities. The rubric for social behavior change is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Rubric for Assessment of Social Behavior Change**

| No | Indicator                             | Point 30                                                              | Point 20                                         | Point 10                                              |
|----|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Environmental Awareness Increases     | can explain in detail examples of pollution and its impacts           | adequate explanation but still lacking in detail | almost unaware of the pollution issue.                |
| 2  | Active Participation in Environmental | Participate in >2 consistent documentation case resolution activities | Participate in 12 activities per case resolution | Never participated or only passively attended without |

| No | Indicator                                              | Point 30                                                                   | Point 20                                                          | Point 10                                                                 |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | Retention Activities                                   |                                                                            | consistent documentation                                          | real contribution or inconsistent documentation                          |
| 3  | Changing Consumption and Recycling Habits              | Household waste audit shows $\geq$ 80% of waste is separated               | Household waste audits show 60-79% of waste is sorted             | Household waste audit shows $<$ 60% of waste is separated                |
| 4  | Advocacy and Information Dissemination to Peers/public | High interaction (likes, comments) on videos uploaded to YouTube ( $>10$ ) | Interaction (likes, comments) on videos uploaded on YouTube (5-9) | Low interaction (likes, comments) on videos uploaded on YouTube ( $<5$ ) |

The third instrument developed was an instrument for assessing critical thinking skills in case study work. The rubric indicators were taken from Facione (2015). The critical thinking skills rubric can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4. Critical Thinking Skills Assessment Rubric**

| No | Dimensions      | Point 30                                                                                                                                                                         | Point 20                                                                                                                                                                                | Point 10                                                                                                                                                   |
|----|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Interpretation  | Identify all important data (location, pollution source, impact)                                                                                                                 | Identify 2 important data (location, pollution source, impact)                                                                                                                          | Identify 1 important data (location, pollution source, impact)                                                                                             |
| 2  | Analysis        | Mapping factors (economic, social, technical) in a structured manner and all factors                                                                                             | Mapping factors (economic, social, technical) in a structured manner and only 2 factors                                                                                                 | Mapping factors (economic, social, technical) in a structured manner and only 1 factor                                                                     |
| 3  | Evaluation      | Evaluation is limited to all sources or all solutions; in-depth criticism (at least 2 solutions are compared)                                                                    | Evaluation is limited to one source or one solution; criticism lacks depth.                                                                                                             | No critical evaluation; just presenting solutions without consideration                                                                                    |
| 4  | Inference       | Draw logical conclusions based on analysis; predict long-term impact                                                                                                             | Draw logical conclusions based on analysis; but do not predict long-term impacts                                                                                                        | There are no logical conclusions based on analysis; there is no prediction of long-term impact                                                             |
| 5  | Explanation     | The presentation (written and video) is highly structured: introduction, methodology, findings, solutions, and reflections; the language is clear, visuals support the argument. | The presentation (written and video) is well structured: introduction, methodology, findings, solutions, and reflections; the language is clear, and the visuals support the arguments. | Unstructured presentation (written and video): introduction, methodology, findings, solutions, and reflections; clear language, visuals support arguments. |
| 6  | Self-Regulation | Demonstrates critical reflection, videos contain self-                                                                                                                           | Demonstrates critical reflection, but the video does                                                                                                                                    | Does not show critical reflection, video does not                                                                                                          |

| No | Dimensions | Point 30                  | Point 20                                       | Point 10                                  |
|----|------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
|    |            | commentary on improvement | not contain self-commentary about improvement. | contain self-commentary about improvement |

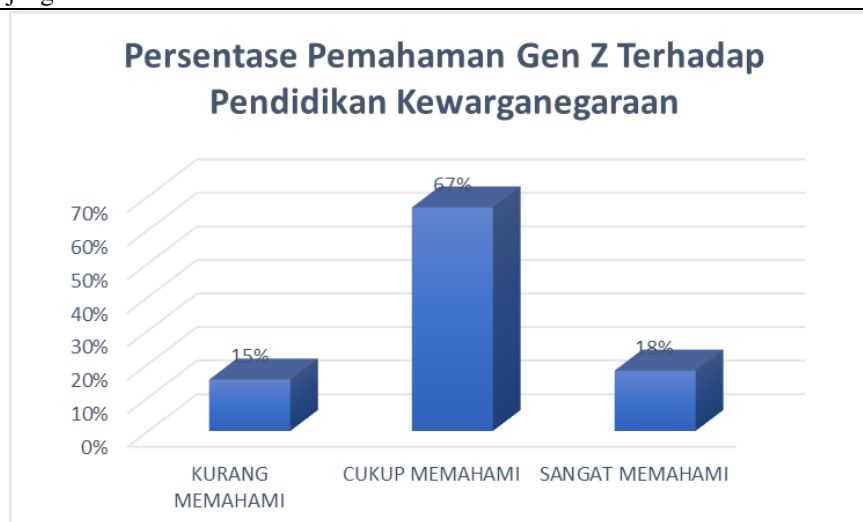
### **The Learning Process and Evaluation of Understanding of Civic Education**

The Civics learning process is conducted using a case study method. This case study method was chosen so that Gen Z can directly implement changes in social behavior and critical thinking. The relevant case chosen is understanding how to be an Indonesian citizen who cares about the environment around the home. The environmental cases chosen include river pollution and soil pollution from waste. The case study learning syntax can be seen in Table 5.

**Table 5. Syntax of Civic Education Learning Using the Case Study Method**

| No | Stages                                 | Lecturer Activities                                                                                                            | Student Activities (Gen Z)                                                                        |
|----|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Introduction and Case Selection        | The lecturer explains the flow of the case study learning process and provides case examples.                                  | Students form groups and record individual and group assignments.                                 |
| 2  | Identification of problems             | The lecturer asked students to identify environmental pollution problems.                                                      | Students conduct surveys and observations in the surrounding environment                          |
| 3  | Citizenship Activities                 | The lecturer asks students to solve the selected case by sorting waste, etc., according to the students' innovations.          | Students carry out waste sorting and various activities to resolve environmental pollution cases. |
| 4  | Data Collection and Report Preparation | The lecturer asked students to analyze from surveys, observations and real actions of citizenship.                             | Students identify the factors causing environmental pollution and compile a report.               |
| 5  | Video Making                           | The lecturer asked students to make a video with a duration of 2-3 minutes and upload it to their respective YouTube channels. | Students make videos and upload them to YouTube.                                                  |
| 6  | Presentation and Reflection            | The lecturer asked students to present the videos they made and provide reflections on the results of the case.                | Students conduct group presentations and discussions                                              |

The results of understanding Civic Education can be seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Results of Understanding Civic Education**

Based on Figure 2, it can be seen that the percentage of students (Gen Z) is divided into 3 categories: Gen Z who do not understand civics education, Gen Z who understand civics education sufficiently, and Gen Z who understand civics very well. From the Figure, it can be seen that 67% of Gen Z have a sufficient understanding of Civics Education. Meanwhile, for Gen Z who understand Civics Education very well, it is 18%. If these categories are added together, the total number has exceeded 75%, so it can be continued for the Assessment of Social Behavior Change and Critical Thinking Skills.

### **The Relationship between Understanding of Civic Education and Changes in Students' Social Behavior and Students' Critical Thinking**

The relationship between Civics understanding, changes in social behavior, and critical thinking skills among Gen Z was analyzed using SPSS software. A correlation analysis was performed on each variable to determine the closeness of the relationship. The results of the analysis can be seen in Table 6.

**Table 6. Results of the Correlation Analysis of Understanding Civic Education, Changes in Social Behavior, and Critical Thinking Skills of Gen Z**  
**Correlations**

|                               |                     | Understanding Civic Education | Critical thinking skills | Social Behavior Change |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Understanding Civic Education | Pearson Correlation | 1                             | ,921**                   | ,903**                 |
|                               | Sig. (1-tailed)     |                               | ,000                     | ,000                   |
|                               | N                   | 150                           | 150                      | 150                    |
| Critical thinking skills      | Pearson Correlation | ,921**                        | 1                        | ,864**                 |
|                               | Sig. (1-tailed)     | ,000                          |                          | ,000                   |
|                               | N                   | 150                           | 150                      | 150                    |
| Social Behavior Change        | Pearson Correlation | ,903**                        | ,864**                   | 1                      |
|                               | Sig. (1-tailed)     | ,000                          | ,000                     |                        |
|                               | N                   | 150                           | 150                      | 150                    |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Based on Table 6 above, it can be seen that the understanding of Civic Education and Critical Thinking Skills has a correlation coefficient of 0.921 with a p-value of 0.000. So it can be said that there is a relationship between Civic Education and Critical Thinking Skills. Meanwhile, the understanding of Civic Education and Social Behavior Change has a correlation coefficient of 0.903 with a p-value of 0.000. So it can be said that there is a relationship between Civic Education and Social Behavior Change. For Critical Thinking Skills and social behavior changes, it has a correlation coefficient of 0.864 with a p-value of 0.000. So it can be said that there is a relationship between

Critical Thinking Skills and Social Behavior Change. Of the three relationships, it can be seen that the strongest correlation is the Understanding of Civic Education with Gen Z's Critical Thinking Skills.

## Conclusion

Civics plays a significant role in enhancing the critical thinking skills of Gen Z at Banyuwangi State Polytechnic. This can be seen in that Civics has a strong contribution to positive changes in students' social behavior, indicating that this learning can foster responsible citizenship attitudes. Critical thinking skills are closely related to changes in social behavior, indicating that students who are able to think critically tend to demonstrate more proactive and collaborative social behavior. Of the three relationships, the most dominant relationship is between understanding Civics Education and critical thinking skills, so improving the quality of Civics Education materials and teaching methods can be a key factor in developing both while improving social behavior.

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