



Reconstruction of Civic Education thought to Develop Life Skills and Character of Human Resources in the Creative Industry

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to reconstruct the conceptual foundation of Civic Education in fostering life skills education and character education to strengthen human resources (HR) in the creative industry sector. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, focusing on interpreting the subjective experiences of lecturers, students, and creative industry practitioners in the Department of Business Administration at a university in Bandung. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the integration of civic education, character education, and life skills education plays a strategic role in shaping a young generation that is ethical, creative, and globally competitive.

INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia is currently confronted with a significant structural challenge characterized by a disparity between its philosophical foundations and its practical implementation. The rapid processes of democratization, globalization, and digital transformation have reshaped socio-economic structures both nationally and globally, demanding an education system that produces adaptive and innovative human resources. However, educational policies have historically emphasized cognitive achievement over character formation and life skills development, resulting in graduates who are academically competent but insufficiently prepared for complex social realities (Lutfi & Fathani, 2013). Globally, education systems are shifting toward competency-based and character-driven models to respond to the demands of the knowledge economy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021). In Indonesia, this transformation remains partial, creating urgency for reform, particularly in aligning civic education with contemporary workforce needs. Therefore, reconstructing civic education becomes a strategic necessity in strengthening human resources within the creative industry sector.

Civic education plays a central role in shaping democratic, ethical, and socially responsible citizens. Traditionally, it has functioned as a medium for transmitting state ideology and national identity (Winataputra, 2012). However, contemporary scholarship argues that civic education must evolve beyond normative instruction toward the development of critical thinking, collaboration, and creative problem-solving skills (Nurgiansah et al., 2024). Studies indicate that twenty-first-century citizenship competencies require integration between civic knowledge and life skills (Martini, 2023). Despite these advancements, the implementation of civic education in Indonesia remains largely theoretical and insufficiently connected to economic and industrial realities (Jayadiputra et al., 2023). This condition reveals a gap between curricular ideals and practical competencies required in the creative economy.

The creative industry sector in Indonesia has demonstrated substantial economic growth, contributing significantly to national development and employment (Departemen Perdagangan Republik Indonesia, 2008). Globally, the creative economy is recognized as a driver of innovation and sustainable development (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2022). The sector demands human resources who are not only technically skilled but also adaptive, ethical, and innovative (Malaikosa et al., 2022). Research has emphasized that life skills education enhances creativity and productivity among citizens (Saravanakumar, 2020). Nevertheless, there remains limited empirical integration between civic education, character education, and life skills development within higher education curricula. This limitation signals a research gap concerning how civic education can function as a catalyst for strengthening creative human capital.

Previous studies have explored related dimensions but have not comprehensively addressed their integration. Rafzan et al. (2020) examined the development of critical thinking through civic education but did not link it explicitly to the creative industry sector. Nugroho (2016) discussed curriculum reorientation toward the creative economy, yet the focus remained primarily within economics education. Ananto and Dwilanusantya (2023) proposed reconstructing civic learning to improve soft skills; however, empirical elaboration within the context of broader human resource development remains limited. Similarly, international research highlights the importance of civic competencies in digital and economic participation (Tirza et al., 2025), yet contextual application in vocational settings is underexplored. Thus, a conceptual and empirical reconstruction that integrates civic education, character formation, and life skills within the creative industry framework remains insufficiently developed in existing scholarship.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to reconstruct the conceptual foundations of civic education to foster life skills and character development aligned with the demands of the creative industry era. Specifically, the research seeks to analyze the philosophical and argumentative basis of civic education in strengthening human resources, examine its integration with life skills education, and formulate a contextual model applicable within higher education institutions. The study also intends to respond to the challenges of globalization and the weak implementation of merit-based systems in Indonesia's bureaucracy (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2007). By employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, this research explores lived experiences among lecturers, students, and practitioners to generate a grounded conceptual model. Through this objective, civic education is repositioned as both normative and applied knowledge.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the advancement of civic education scholarship by proposing an integrative framework that harmonizes character education and life skills education within a single conceptual model. It strengthens the discourse on transformative civic education responsive to socio-economic change (Rustiadi, 2015). Moreover, the study extends contemporary debates on citizenship competencies in the digital era (Nurgiansah et al., 2024). By situating civic education within the creative economy context, this research bridges normative theory with practical skill development. Consequently, it enriches theoretical perspectives on human capital formation grounded in national values. The model developed offers a reconceptualization of civic education as a driver of innovation and ethical professionalism.

Practically, the findings are expected to inform policymakers and higher education institutions in designing contextual and competency-based civic education curricula. The integration of life skills within civic learning can enhance graduate competitiveness and address intellectual unemployment (Saravanakumar, 2020). Furthermore, this study provides guidance for collaborative efforts among academia, government, and industry in strengthening the creative economy ecosystem. By aligning civic education with industrial needs, universities can produce morally responsible and globally

competitive graduates. Ultimately, this reconstruction contributes to sustainable national development by integrating character, creativity, and innovation within human resource formation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Reconstruction of Civic Education in the Twenty-First Century

Civic education has undergone significant transformation in response to global socio-political and economic shifts. In the twenty-first century, citizenship education is no longer confined to transmitting constitutional knowledge and state ideology, but has expanded to include participatory competencies, democratic engagement, and socio-economic awareness. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2021) emphasizes that civic competence must integrate critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and collaborative problem-solving in increasingly complex societies. This reconceptualization aligns with global calls for education systems to prepare learners for uncertainty, digital transformation, and transnational challenges. Furthermore, Veugelers (2021) argues that contemporary civic education must balance national identity formation with global citizenship awareness to remain relevant. These perspectives suggest that civic education requires philosophical reconstruction to integrate normative values with applied competencies that address real-world socio-economic dynamics.

Recent empirical research also indicates that civic education effectiveness depends on contextualized and experiential pedagogies. For instance, García-Cabrero et al. (2022) found that participatory civic learning models significantly enhance democratic attitudes and social responsibility among university students. Similarly, Kennedy (2020) stresses that civic education must incorporate reflective and action-based learning approaches to foster meaningful civic engagement. These findings reinforce the need for integrating life skills within civic education frameworks, particularly in vocational and higher education contexts. Therefore, reconstructing civic education involves not merely curricular revision but also pedagogical transformation. Such transformation becomes particularly relevant in societies experiencing rapid economic change.

Life Skills Education and Human Capital Development

Life skills education has emerged as a central framework in preparing human resources for knowledge-based economies. The World Economic Forum (2023) highlights analytical thinking, resilience, leadership, and creativity as essential competencies for future employment. These competencies extend beyond technical expertise and align closely with the broader concept of human capital development. Research by Pellegrino and Hilton (2021) demonstrates that integrating cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills enhances workforce adaptability and innovation capacity. This integration is crucial for sectors driven by creativity and idea-based production. Consequently, life skills education becomes a strategic component in strengthening national competitiveness.

International studies further reveal that life skills education contributes to employability and entrepreneurship. In a cross-national study, Suleman (2022) found that graduates possessing strong soft skills demonstrate higher career mobility and entrepreneurial orientation. Additionally, Tang and Peng (2023) report that life skills-oriented curricula significantly improve students' problem-solving and collaborative abilities in creative disciplines. These findings suggest that life skills education should not operate independently but must be embedded within broader educational paradigms, including civic and character education. Thus, integrating life skills within civic education provides a holistic framework for developing adaptive and innovative human resources.

Character Education and Ethical Foundations in the Creative Economy

Character education remains fundamental in shaping ethical and socially responsible professionals. Berkowitz and Bier (2020) emphasize that moral reasoning, integrity, and civic responsibility form the ethical backbone of democratic societies. In the context of economic development, character education ensures that innovation and entrepreneurship remain aligned with social accountability. This alignment is particularly important in the creative industry, where intellectual property, collaboration, and cultural representation demand ethical sensitivity. Therefore, character education complements life skills by grounding technical competence in moral values.

Recent scholarship underscores the intersection between character formation and economic productivity. For example, Kristjánsson (2021) argues that virtue-based education enhances professional resilience and ethical decision-making in dynamic industries. Similarly, OECD (2022) reports that social-emotional learning strengthens both academic outcomes and long-term labor market participation. These findings demonstrate that character education is not merely a moral discourse but also an economic imperative. Within the creative industry context, ethical professionalism and collaborative trust significantly influence sustainable growth. Hence, civic education reconstructed with character orientation can function as a stabilizing moral framework for creative human capital.

Civic Education and the Creative Industry Nexus

The relationship between civic education and the creative economy remains underexplored in contemporary scholarship. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2022) identifies the creative economy as one of the fastest-growing global sectors, driven by innovation, cultural capital, and intellectual creativity. However, sustaining this growth requires human resources who combine technical proficiency with civic consciousness and social responsibility. Recent research by Cunningham and Flew (2021) highlights that creative industries thrive in ecosystems supported by ethical governance, participatory citizenship, and collaborative networks. These factors reflect competencies traditionally associated with civic education.

Furthermore, digital transformation has reshaped civic participation within creative industries. Livingstone and Third (2022) argue that digital citizenship skills are essential for navigating online creative markets and global platforms. In higher education, integrating civic responsibility with entrepreneurial education enhances students' readiness for creative economic engagement (Bridgstock, 2020). These studies suggest that civic education can serve as a bridge between moral values and economic innovation. Therefore, reconstructing civic education to integrate character and life skills aligns with the structural demands of the creative economy.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Approach

This study employed a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach (Ananto, 2013; Groenewald, 2003) to reconstruct the conceptual foundation of Civic Education in developing life skills and character within the creative industry context. A qualitative approach was selected because the research sought to explore lived experiences, perceptions, and meanings constructed by participants regarding the integration of civic education, character education, and life skills education. Phenomenology is particularly appropriate for examining how individuals interpret social and educational realities in specific institutional contexts (Creswell, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2023; Patton, 2002). It is grounded in the assumption that meaning is socially constructed through interaction and shared understanding (Berger & Luckmann, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Recent qualitative scholarship further emphasizes that phenomenological inquiry remains highly relevant for educational reconstruction studies that seek conceptual innovation grounded in lived experience (Neubauer et al., 2021). Therefore, the chosen design aligns with the objective of generating a grounded conceptual reconstruction rather than statistical generalization.

Research Site, Population, and Sampling

The research was conducted in the Department of Business Administration at a university in Bandung, selected purposively due to its integration of entrepreneurial values, creativity-based learning, and civic ethics within its curriculum. The population consisted of lecturers of Civic Education and entrepreneurship-related courses, undergraduate students enrolled in Civic Education subjects, and creative industry practitioners collaborating with the department. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that participants possessed direct experience relevant to the research focus. In total, 18 participants were involved, comprising 6 lecturers, 9 students, and 3 creative industry practitioners. The sample size was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which in qualitative research indicates that additional data no longer produce new conceptual insights (Hennink et al., 2020). This sampling strategy is consistent with phenomenological standards that prioritize depth and richness of meaning over numerical representation (Groenewald & Schurink, 2003). The selection of diverse participants also allowed triangulation across academic and professional perspectives.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis (Sugiyono, 2021). Semi-structured interview guides were developed based on theoretical constructs of civic competencies, character education, and life skills frameworks derived from contemporary educational literature (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022). The interview protocol included open-ended questions exploring participants' experiences in integrating civic values with creativity, innovation, and professional preparation. Observations were conducted during classroom interactions and entrepreneurship-based activities to capture contextual implementation patterns. Institutional documents, including syllabi and curriculum outlines, were analyzed to examine formal integration mechanisms within the educational system. To ensure validity and credibility, triangulation across data sources, methods, theoretical perspectives, and researchers was implemented (Denzin, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2021). Member checking was also conducted by returning summarized findings to participants for confirmation of interpretive accuracy.

Research Procedure

The research procedure was conducted systematically in several stages. First, a preliminary study and literature review were undertaken to identify conceptual gaps related to civic education reconstruction. Second, research permits and ethical approvals were secured from the institutional authorities to ensure compliance with research ethics standards. Third, participants were recruited through formal invitation letters and informed consent was obtained to protect confidentiality and voluntary participation. Fourth, data collection was conducted over a three-month period through interviews lasting approximately 60–90 minutes each, classroom observations, and document review. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to preserve accuracy. Fifth, data verification was performed through triangulation and reflective journaling to minimize researcher bias and enhance trustworthiness (Tracy, 2020). This systematic procedure ensured methodological rigor consistent with qualitative research traditions.

Data Analysis Techniques and Tools

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (2014), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Initially, interview transcripts and observational notes were coded using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to civic values integration, life skills development, and character formation. Coding was conducted iteratively to allow themes to emerge inductively while remaining theoretically informed (Braun & Clarke, 2021). NVivo qualitative analysis software was utilized to organize, categorize, and visualize thematic relationships among data segments, thereby enhancing analytical transparency and auditability. The analysis process emphasized identifying emergent conceptual linkages that reinforce the interrelationship between Civic Education, life skills education, and character formation within human resource

development in the creative industry sector (Haunschild & Eikhof, 2009). Through this systematic analytical procedure, the study generated a conceptual model grounded in empirical evidence while maintaining philosophical coherence.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Weak Implementation of the Merit System and the Role of Education in Human Resource Development within the Creative Industry

The findings reveal that the weak implementation of the merit system within Indonesian bureaucracy is not merely an administrative issue but is deeply rooted in structural and educational dimensions. Prior studies have demonstrated that the fragility of meritocracy is closely associated with inconsistencies in human resource governance and insufficient internalization of professional and ethical values (Mubin & Roziqin, 2018; Sampe, Rasdiyanti, & Herdayani Darsim, 2022). Field observations conducted in the Department of Business Administration indicate that although curriculum reforms have introduced entrepreneurship-based learning and professional training initiatives, the institutionalization of merit-based principles remains uneven (Ananto, 2013; Rustiadi, 2015). This discrepancy reflects a structural misalignment between higher education institutions, state policy frameworks, and the innovation-driven demands of the creative industry (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000; Syahraini, Hamzah, Rahim, & Sultan, 2025). As a result, the educational system has yet to fully function as a mechanism for cultivating competence-based human capital aligned with meritocratic governance.

Furthermore, higher education practices continue to emphasize theoretical mastery over experiential learning, thereby limiting the development of applied competencies (Groenewald, 2003; Haunschild & Eikhof, 2009). This imbalance weakens students' opportunities to cultivate creativity, leadership capacity, and critical reasoning—competencies that form the backbone of a competitive creative workforce (Karismawati, 2025). The situation is further complicated by a bureaucratic culture characterized by patrimonial tendencies and politicized appointment systems, which undermine professional objectivity and merit-based evaluation (Dwiputrianti, 2018; Malik & Prasojo, 2023). From a Weberian perspective, public institutions ideally operate on rational-legal authority grounded in competence and objectivity; however, empirical realities suggest that political proximity frequently overrides meritocratic standards. Consequently, educational reform cannot be separated from broader institutional reform.

The crisis of meritocracy is also reinforced by an educational paradigm that privileges cognitive achievement while marginalizing character formation and social skill development. Civic Education holds significant transformative potential in addressing this structural imbalance by fostering integrity, accountability, and professionalism through participatory pedagogies such as democratic simulations, social engagement projects, and dialogical learning processes (Freire, 2005). When implemented substantively, Civic Education transcends normative instruction and becomes a platform for cultivating soft skills essential to merit-based governance. In this sense, Civic Education contributes not only to ethical awareness but also to competency formation that supports professional excellence in the creative industry sector (Vincent Simandjorang & Kurniawan, 2022). Therefore, the reconstruction of Civic Education is intrinsically linked to strengthening meritocratic culture within public and economic institutions.

The findings further demonstrate that synergy among Civic Education, character education, and life skills education forms a foundational framework for human resource development in the creative economy (Ananto, 2013; Rustiadi, 2015). Within the triple helix model of collaboration among academia, industry, and government, higher education institutions are expected to act as innovation hubs capable of producing adaptive and ethically grounded graduates (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). The creative economy's substantial contribution to national GDP and employment absorption illustrates that creativity, rather than natural resources, has become a primary driver of sustainable development. As Howkins (2002) emphasizes, creative industries are fundamentally idea-based economies in which innovation and intellectual capital function as the principal assets. Accordingly, educational reform grounded in character and life skills development becomes indispensable for producing competitive creative human resources.

Thus, strengthening the merit system requires parallel transformation within educational structures. Reform initiatives must be anchored in value-based education and experiential learning frameworks that cultivate adaptive, ethical, and innovative citizens (Karismawati, 2025; Syahraini et al., 2025). Without such integration, attempts to institutionalize meritocracy risk remaining superficial. Education, particularly Civic Education, must therefore serve as both a moral compass and a competency-building mechanism within the broader ecosystem of creative industry development.

Life Skills and Character Education within the Civic Education Curriculum

The data indicate that conceptual misunderstandings surrounding life skills education remain prevalent among both lecturers and students. Life skills are frequently reduced to technical or vocational abilities, with limited recognition of their broader cognitive and socio-emotional dimensions. Such misinterpretation reflects the dominance of a cognitively oriented educational paradigm that neglects holistic human development (Defitrika & Mahmudah, 2021). As a consequence, general life skills such as critical thinking, adaptability, communication, and collaboration are insufficiently integrated into formal instructional practices.

Within the Civic Education curriculum, instructional practices continue to prioritize normative discourse emphasizing nationalism, moral responsibility, and ethical values. While these elements are essential, they are rarely connected to methodological strategies that cultivate applied competencies such as problem-solving and social adaptability (Ananto & Dwilanusantya, 2023; Nurgiansah, Komalasari, Insani, Adham, & Suriaman, 2024). Although curriculum revisions have formally incorporated life and career skills, including flexibility and initiative (Ananto & Dwilanusantya, 2023; Sari & Sutirman, 2024), implementation remains fragmented. The gap between curricular intent and pedagogical practice indicates structural weaknesses in translating normative objectives into practical learning outcomes.

This condition suggests that the integration of character education and life skills within Civic Education remains conceptual rather than operational. Consequently, students are inadequately prepared to navigate dynamic professional environments characterized by innovation and global competition. Addressing this gap requires not only curriculum reform but also pedagogical reconstruction that aligns civic values with experiential and competency-based learning.

Civic Education as a Catalyst for Integrative Human Resource Development

The findings further reveal that Civic Education has not yet been fully positioned as a catalyst for life skills and character integration. Misconceptions among lecturers and students persist, with life skills frequently conflated with technical expertise and moral instruction confined to abstract principles (Agnesti, 2024). This indicates a continued dominance of cognitive transmission models that marginalize applied and participatory learning approaches.

Within the Civic Education curriculum framework, instruction remains largely normative, focusing on citizenship obligations and national identity while neglecting methodological integration with critical and collaborative competencies (Sarkadi, Casmana, Hisyam, & Wardatussa'idah, 2022). The absence of coherent integration among civic, character, and life skills education restricts students' preparedness for productive and innovative participation in contemporary society (Agnesti, 2024). Although Civic Education theoretically encompasses ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions, practical implementation remains disproportionately normative (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006).

The synergy between Civic Education and life skills education becomes particularly urgent within the creative industry context. Despite rapid sectoral growth and significant economic contribution, empirical evidence indicates that integration remains underdeveloped (Jayadiputra, Karim, Sapriya, & Rahmat, 2023). Practitioners often perceive Civic Education as disconnected from innovation and entrepreneurship. However, foundational civic values—integrity, social responsibility, collaboration, and work ethic—constitute the ethical infrastructure required for sustainable creative development (Nurgiansah et al., 2024).

Institutional initiatives such as entrepreneurship training, workshops, and industry engagement activities represent positive steps toward bridging this divide. Nevertheless, the lack of systematic curricular integration prevents these initiatives from achieving transformative impact (Malaikosa et al., 2022). Civic and entrepreneurial education continue to operate in parallel rather than synergistically. An integrative educational perspective suggests that moral and practical competencies are mutually reinforcing rather than dichotomous (Firdaus & Abdulkarim, 2022).

Moreover, Civic Education pedagogy remains predominantly lecture-based and theoretical, limiting students' engagement in reflective and applied learning processes (Martini, 2023). In the era of digital transformation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, civic competencies must include creativity, adaptability, and collaborative capacity (Tirza, Tambunan, Parwati, & Cendana, 2025). Citizenship in a creative economy entails not only compliance with national values but also active contribution through innovation and productive engagement (Malaikosa et al., 2022).

Accordingly, this study proposes a reconstructed conceptual model positioning Civic Education as an integrative platform that harmonizes character formation and life skills development. This model redefines Civic Education as both normative foundation and practical driver of creative competence. Through value-skill integration, Civic Education can foster ethically grounded innovation, enabling the younger generation to become virtuous, productive, and globally competitive citizens.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, this study concludes that Civic Education must be repositioned beyond its traditional normative function as a subject concerned solely with citizens' rights and obligations, and instead be reconstructed as an integrative and transformative educational framework that cultivates character, creativity, critical thinking, and adaptive life skills essential for human resource development in the creative industry sector. The study demonstrates that the weak implementation of merit-based systems and the limited competitiveness of graduates are closely linked to an educational paradigm that remains predominantly cognitive and insufficiently experiential. Therefore, integrating character education and life skills education within the Civic Education curriculum represents a strategic and philosophical reform that aligns educational objectives with the demands of globalization, innovation-driven

economies, and the evolving creative labor market. Civic Education should function not only as a vehicle for instilling national identity and ethical values but also as an applied discipline that promotes professionalism, self-reliance, collaborative competence, and entrepreneurial awareness grounded in foundational national principles. Accordingly, higher education institutions are encouraged to revitalize Civic Education through contextual, participatory, and interdisciplinary approaches that connect civic values with creative industry practices, while policymakers, academia, and industry stakeholders must collaborate to design responsive educational policies that strengthen meritocracy and sustainable economic development. Through such reconstruction, Civic Education can serve a dual role as both the moral foundation and the practical catalyst for developing creative, globally competitive, and socially responsible citizens in the twenty-first century.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Building upon the findings of this study, future research should expand the reconstruction model of Civic Education by employing mixed-method or longitudinal designs to measure its measurable impact on students' creativity, employability, and ethical professional behavior within the creative industry sector. Comparative studies across universities, vocational institutions, and creative industry ecosystems are also necessary to examine the scalability and adaptability of the integrative civic-character-life skills framework in diverse educational contexts. Furthermore, experimental or quasi-experimental research could be conducted to test the effectiveness of participatory pedagogies such as civic simulations, social entrepreneurship projects, and industry-based learning in strengthening merit-oriented competencies. Future investigations may also explore policy-level integration between higher education reform and bureaucratic merit system implementation to assess systemic alignment between education and governance. By deepening empirical validation and expanding institutional contexts, advanced research can refine the proposed conceptual model and strengthen Civic Education's strategic role in developing innovative, ethical, and globally competitive human resources.

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