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THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS OF THE SULTAN AGUNG PRIVATE MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH IN LEARNING CIVIC EDUCATION ON THE FORMATION OF DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the experience of students of private madrasah ibtidaiyah (MIS) Sultan Agung, Depok District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, in learning Civic Education and how these experiences are interpreted in the formation of democratic character. The research uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, which focuses on the subjective experience of students in interpreting democratic values experienced during the learning process at MIS Sultan Agung, Depok District, Sleman Regency. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and reflection on students' experiences, then analyzed thematically using phenomenological analysis stages to find the essence of the learning experience in madrasah. The results of the study show that MIS Sultan Agung students of Depok District interpret Civic Education learning as a starting space to experience democratic practices through active participation, dialogue, and joint decision-making. Democratic values such as openness, tolerance for differences, collective responsibility, and awareness of process fairness are formed through the experience of social interaction in the classroom. The role of teachers as learning facilitators is a key factor in opening or limiting the democratic space in learning. In addition, the process of reflection on experience strengthens the internalization of democratic values so that it has an impact on the attitude of MIS Sultan Agung students, Depok District, Sleman Regency outside the classroom context. This study concludes that the formation of the democratic character of MIS Sultan Agung students is highly determined by the quality of the learning experience they experience in Civic Education learning. Learning Civic education that is oriented to experience, participation, and reflection has great potential in shaping a contextual and sustainable democratic character in madrasah.

Keywords: Democratic Character, Democratic Learning, Civic Education, Student Experience

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INTRODUCTION

Civic Education (PKn) in Indonesia is designed as a strategic subject to instill the values of democracy, constitutionalism, and nationality to students at every level of education.[1] Civic Education is not only directed at the mastery of civic knowledge, but also the formation of democratic character which is reflected in a tolerant, participatory, and responsible attitude.[2] Thus, the success of Civic Education is highly determined by the extent to which learning is able to touch the dimensions of the experience and democratic praxis of participants in madrasah.[3]

As a result of the learning of Civic Education which has minimal democratic experience, values such as openness, respect for differences of opinion, and active participation have not been optimally internalized in madrasah ibtidaiyah students.[4] Students of madrasah ibtidaiyah may understand the concept of democracy conceptually, but they are not necessarily able to apply it in daily social internalization. This shows that there is a gap between the ideal goals of Civic Education and field practice in madrasah.[5]

From the perspective of character education, the learning experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students plays a central role in the process of internalizing democratic values.[6] Learning that provides space for madrasah ibtidaiyah students to discuss, deliberate, debate in a guided manner, and be involved in joint decision-making allows the value of democracy to be learned through direct experience, not just theoretically understood in madrasah.[7] In other words, democratic character is formed through the process of experiencing, reflecting, and practicing democratic values on an ongoing basis.

On the other hand, the learning of Civic Education that takes place in an authoritarian and one-way manner has the potential to hinder the development of critical and democratic attitudes of madrasah ibtidaiyah students. Teachers who are too dominant in controlling the learning process can limit the space for dialogue and participation of madrasah ibtidaiyah students so that the

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[1] Giandari Maulani dkk., *Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan* (Banten: Sada Kurnia Pustaka, 2024).

[2] Pat Kurniati dkk., "Budaya Kewarganegaraan, Praktek Kewarganegaraan Dan Pendidikan Untuk Kewarganegaraan Demokratis," *P2M Journal* 8, no. 2 (2021), https://doi.org/10.22460/p2m.v8i2p107-115.2852.

[3] Ana Andriani dan Agung Nugroho, *Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan dan IPS dalam Dimensi Citizenship Transmission* (Purwokerto: Amerta Media, 2023).

[4] Jazim Hamidi dan Mustafa Lutfi, *Civic Education: Antara Realitas Politik dan Implementasi Hukumnya* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2010).

[5] Harnum khanaya Tabitha Silitonga dkk., "Membangun Warga Negara Ideal: Peran Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Dalam Perspektif Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Learning Studies* 5, no. 2 (Juni 2025), https://doi.org/10.53769/ijls.v5i2.1628.

[6] La Ical Salama, "Internalisasi Nilai Sosial Melalui Peran Sekolah Dalam Kehidupan Anak," *Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Mahasiswa Dan Akademisi* 1, no. 3 (Juli 2025), https://doi.org/10.64690/intelektual.v1i3.247.

[7] Nor Khakim, "Optimizing PPKN Learning with the Inquiry Learning Method in Developing Democratic Values," *Journal of Citizenship Virtues* 5, no. 1 (March 2025), https://doi.org/10.37640/jcv.v5i1.2054.

learning experience gained is actually contrary to the democratic values taught in madrasah.[8] This condition shows that the experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students in learning Civic Education is not always in line with the normative goals of the subject.[9]

The urgency of forming democratic character is increasingly strengthening in the midst of the challenges of contemporary democratic life which is characterized by increasing intolerance, social polarization, and low literacy of contemporary democracy marked by the younger generation.[10] The development of digital media and social media also affects the way madrasah ibtidaiyah students view and practice democratic values, which often gives rise to an exclusive and less dialogical attitude.[11]

A number of international studies confirm that the effectiveness of civic education learning is greatly influenced by the quality of the democratic experience experienced by students in schools. Torney-Purta et al. show that learners' involvement in open classroom discussions and shared decision-making contributes to the development of more meaningful attitudes of tolerance, participation, and civic understanding.[12] These findings are reinforced by Hoskins and Janmaat who emphasize that democratic experiences in the school environment are important predictors for the formation of active civic character. In the context of democratic pedagogy, Hess and McAvoy and Sant affirm that dialogue- and experiential civic learning enables learners not only to understand democracy conceptually, but also to practice it as a social action in everyday life.

In Indonesia, the study of Civic Education generally still focuses on the analysis of the curriculum, policies, and cognitive achievements of madrasah ibtidaiyah students. Budimansyah and Wahab & Sapriya found that the learning practices of Civics Education in madrassas tend to emphasize mastery of material and memorization of constitutional concepts, while the affective and psychomotor dimensions of citizenship receive less attention.[13] Suyato et al.'s research also shows

[8] M. Toha Mu'id, "Penanaman Nilai-Nilai Demokrasi Melalui Pembelajaran IPS Di Kelas VIII SMP Negeri 1 Wilangan Kabupaten Nganjuk" (Skripsi, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, 2021), http://etheses.uin-malang.ac.id/31707/.

[9] Pipit Widiatmaka, "Kendala Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan dalam membangun karakter peserta didik di dalam proses pembelajaran," *Jurnal Civics: Media Kajian Kewarganegaraan* 13, no. 2 (Desember 2016), https://doi.org/10.21831/civics.v13i2.12743.

[10] Eko Saputra, *Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan di Pendidikan Tinggi: Membangun Karakter Bangsa serta Tantangan Kontemporer* (Solok: PT Mafy Media Literasi Indonesia, 2025).

[11] Hariyono dkk., *Perkembangan Peserta Didik: Teori dan Implementasi Perkembangan Peserta Didik pada Era Digital* (Jambi: PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2024).

[12] Artika Devi Alamsyah Devi dan Fathurrohman, "Implementasi Model Discovery Learning Dalam Pembelajaran PPKn Untuk Membangun Pemahaman Nilai Demokrasi Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Primary Education* 3, no. 2 (Desember 2025), https://doi.org/10.61476/5b2jvj05.

[13] Sri Yunita dkk., "Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Sebagai Sistem Pendidikan Multikultural Di Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Learning Studies* 5, no. 2 (Juni 2025), https://doi.org/10.53769/ijls.v5i2.1623.

that the dominant learning method is one-way and has minimal participation of madrasah ibtidaiyah students, so that the opportunity for the formation of democratic experiences is limited.[14]

Several studies have begun to highlight the importance of subjective experiences of madrasah ibtidaiyah students in PKn learning.[15] Hidayah in his qualitative study found that students are better able to internalize the value of democracy when they feel actively involved in the learning process, such as class discussions and group deliberations.[16] However, the research is still limited to a specific context and has not comprehensively examined the relationship between the learning experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students and the formation of democratic character in a sustainable manner in madrasah. This is in line with Biesta's view which emphasizes the need to understand democratic education from the perspective of the experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students, not solely from curriculum design.[17]

Based on these studies, it can be concluded that although conceptually Civic Education is directed to form a democratic character, the learning practice still leaves a gap between the ideal goals and the real experience of the students of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Prista (MIS) Sultan Agung, Depok District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta Province.[18] Previous research has shown the importance of democratic experiences in learning in madrasah, but studies that specifically explore how madrasah ibtidaiyah students interpret their experiences in learning Civic Education and its implications for the formation of democratic character in the Indonesian context are still limited. Therefore, this study has a strategic position to fill the research gap by presenting the perspective of the subjective experience of MIS Sultan Agung students, Depok District, SlemaN Regency as the basis for analysis.[19]

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[14] Dina Mawar Iswara dan Pelita Bayhaqi A, "Metode Pembelajaran Yang Sesuai Untuk Peserta Didik," *Karimah Tauhid* 3, no. 5 (Mei 2024), https://doi.org/10.30997/karimahtauhid.v3i5.13270.

[15] David Hidayat David, "Internalisasi Nilai Kebangsaan dalam Pembelajaran PPKn di MI Melalui Media Digital: Studi Kualitatif di Era Merdeka Belajar," *Jurnal Ilmiah El Makrifah PGMI* 2, no. 2 (2025), http://ojs.stitmakrifatulilmi.ac.id/index.php/pgmi/article/view/70.

[16] Artika Devi Alamsyah Devi dan Fathurrohman, "Implementasi Model Discovery Learning dalam Pembelajaran PPKn untuk Membangun Pemahaman Nilai Demokrasi pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Primary Education* 3, no. 2 (2025), https://doi.org/10.61476/5b2jvj05.

[17] Mariana Magdalena Sihole et al., "Internalisasi Suara Demokrasi Dalam Penguatan P5 Sebagai Upaya Meningkatkan Civic Participation Peserta Didik Di SMPN 15 Bandung: Penelitian," *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Dan Riset Pendidikan* 4, no. 1 (2025).

[18] Supriyono Supriyono et al., "Model Pengembangan Materi Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Dalam Membentuk Karakter Demokratis: Pendidikan Karakter Demokratis," *Jurnal Moral Kemasyarakatan* 9, no. 1 (2024).

[19] Nurmita Sari dkk., *Strategi Pembelajaran Mendalam* (Purbalingga: CV. Eureka Media Aksara, 2025).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological design.[20] This approach allows researchers to explore the meaning of the *lived experiences* of madrasah ibtidaiyah students directly from their own perspective in the madrasah, without reducing to quantitative categories.[21] This research was carried out at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Private (MIS) Sultan Agung, Depok District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta Province.

The main focus of this research is the experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students in participating in civic education learning in madrasah and the process of their interpretation of democratic values, such as openness, tolerance, participation, respect for differences of opinion, and responsibility in joint decision-making.[22] Thus, this study does not aim to measure the level of democratic character, but to understand how learning experiences shape the way of thinking, behaving, and interpreting democracy from the perspective of madrasah ibtidaiyah students.[23]

The research subjects were determined purposively, namely students at MIS Sultan Agung, Depok District, Sleman Regency, who had participated in Civic Education learning at madrasah and were actively involved in dialogical and participatory learning activities.[24] The selection of subjects is carried out by considering the ability of madrasah ibtidaiyah students to reflect on their learning experiences consciously and communicatively. The number of subjects is not rigidly determined, but adjusted to the principle of data sufficiency until it reaches a condition of saturation of meaning (*data saturation*).[25]

The main data collection technique in this study is *in-depth interview*. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to provide flexibility to madrasah ibtidaiyah students in sharing their experiences, views, and feelings related to the learning of civic education and democratic values experienced.[26] Interview questions are directed at the concrete experiences of

[20] I. Gede Dodik Sanjiartha et al., "Makna Kurikulum Merdeka Bagi Guru Dan Siswa: Pendekatan Fenomenologis," *Widya Accarya* 16, no. 2 (2025).

[21] Oman Sukmana dkk., *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: Suatu Pengantar Konseptual dan Praktis* (Yogyakarta: Star Digital Publishing, 2025).

[22] Meli Apriliani, Sheila Aulia Putri, dan Untszaa Unzzila, "Peningkatan Partisipasi Aktif Siswa dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Melalui Model Pembelajaran Kolaboratif di Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar* 1, no. 3 (2024), https://doi.org/10.47134/pgsd.v1i3.493.

[23] Moh Wahyu Kurniawan dkk., "Analisis Model Literasi Kewarganegaraan Dalam Membentuk Karakter Kebangsaan Peserta Didik," *Jurnal Civic Hukum* 10, no. 1 (Juli 2025), https://doi.org/10.22219/jch.v10i1.40984.

[24] A. Rizal, "Peran Guru dalam Menumbuhkan Sikap Demokratis Siswa Melalui Pembelajaran Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan," *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 7, no. 10 (2024), https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v7i10.6076.

[25] Lathifatuz Zakiyah and Dya Qurotul A'yun, "Peran Sekolah Dalam Menghidupkan Nilai-Nilai Demokrasi Pendidikan," *Jurnal Media Akademik (JMA)* 2, no. 12 (2024),

[26] Luqman Wijayanto, Machmud Al Rasyid, dan Winarno, "Penerapan Metode Pembelajaran Debat Aktif untuk Membangun Sikap Demokratis Siswa pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Pancasila," *Civics Education and Social Science Journal* 7, no. 2 (2025), https://doi.org/10.32585/cessj.v7i2.7279.

madrasah ibtidaiyah students, such as involvement in class discussions, joint decision-making, differences of opinion with friends or teachers, and their reflections on the meaning of democracy in learning Civic Education in madrasah.[27]

In addition to in-depth interviews, this study also uses reflections on the experiences of madrasah ibtidaiyah students as a supporting data collection technique.[28] Reflection on experience is carried out by asking madrasah ibtidaiyah students to write or retell the most memorable learning experiences related to the value of democracy in learning Civic Education in madrasah.[29] This reflection serves to enrich the interview data and deepen the researcher's understanding of the meaning that madrasah ibtidaiyah students build on their experiences.[30]

Data analysis was carried out thematically by following the stages of phenomenological analysis, namely reading the entire data repeatedly, identifying significant statements, grouping meanings into essential themes, and compiling textural and structural descriptions of the experiences of madrasah ibtidaiyah students. This analysis process aims to find the essence of the experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students in interpreting democratic values through holistic civic education learning in madrasah.[31]

To maintain the validity of the data, this study applies the principle of trustworthiness which includes credibility and transferability.[32] The credibility of the data is maintained through triangulation of data collection techniques between in-depth interviews and reflections on students' experiences, as well as member checking to ensure the suitability of interpretation results with the

[27] Pat Kurniati dkk., "Outdoor Learning Berbasis Kearifan Lokal di Candi Prambanan: Inovasi Pembelajaran PPKn untuk Menumbuhkan Civic Culture Siswa," *Citizen: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Indonesia* 5, no. 5 (2025), https://doi.org/10.53866/jimi.v5i5.1002.

[28] Muhammad Ridho dan Salito Salito, "Makna Kegiatan Akhir Pembelajaran Bagi Guru dan Siswa: Sebuah Pendekatan Kualitatif," *Jurnal Akuntansi, Manajemen dan Ilmu Pendidikan* 1, no. 2 (2025), https://journal.yapakama.com/index.php/JAMED/article/view/253.

[29] "Penerapan Pembelajaran Model Portofolio Dalam Meningkatkan Kompetensi Pemahaman Pelaksanaan Demokrasi Mata Pelajaran Pkn (Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan) Pada Siswa Kelas Viiia SMP Negeri 1 Purwareja Klampok Kabupaten Banjarnegara (Penelitian Pada Sis," accessed December 24, 2025,

[30] Nurhayati dkk., *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif: Teori dan Praktik* (Jambi: PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2024).

[31] Budi Ali Mukmin and Oksari Anastasya Sihaloho, "Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Transformatif: Menuju Warga Negara Berpikir Politis," *Jurnal Transformative* 10, no. 2 (2024).

[32] Yasmin Salma Firdausi, "Penggunaan Kitab Jazari dalam Pembelajaran Membaca Al-Qur'an Santri Kelas 1 Aliyyah Pondok Pesantren Ar-Robbani Kebakkramat Karanganyar Tahun Ajaran 2024/2025" (Skripsi, Institut Islam Mamba'ul 'Ulum Surakarta, 2025), https://eprints.iim.ac.id/id/eprint/162/.

subject's experience.[33] Transferability is supported through the presentation of adequate contextual descriptions so that the findings can be understood in a relevant context.[34]

With this phenomenological approach, the research is expected to be able to produce a deep understanding of how civic education learning is experienced and interpreted by madrasah ibtidaiyah students, as well as how these experiences contribute to the formation of their democratic character in madrasah.[35]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through in-depth interviews and reflections on students' experiences at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swasta (MIS) Sultan Agung, Depok District, Sleman Regency, related to learning Civic Education at madrasah. Data analysis was carried out thematically with a phenomenological approach to reveal the experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students in interpreting the democratic values they experienced during the learning process in madrasah. Based on this analysis, several themes were found that represented the experience and meaning of madrasah ibtidaiyah students towards democratic values in learning Civic Education in madrasah.

Experience of Participation in Civic Education Learning

Based on interviews, several findings were obtained that can be used as material for the analysis of this research:

[33] Nur Aiman and Siti Maisaroh, "Fenomena Penggunaan Story-Telling Digital Dalam Pemahaman Nilai Budaya Lokal Siswa Kelas Iv Sdn Temanggal Magelang," *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 04 (2025).

[34] Tri Wulandari, Dewi Purnama Sari, dan Aida Rahmi Nasution, "Deskripsi Mendalam untuk Memastikan Keteralihan Temuan Penelitian Kualitatif," *Jurnal Literasiologi* 11, no. 2 (2024), https://doi.org/10.47783/literasiologi.v11i2.674.

[35] Ahsyabila Fazira, Dasim Budimansyah, dan Asep Mahpudz, "Transformasi Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Di Era Society 5.0: Menerapkan Filosofi Pendidikan Ki Hajar Dewantara," *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan* 13, no. 001 (Desember 2024), https://doi.org/10.58230/27454312.1381.

Table 1. Interview Results

Indicator	Interview Questions	Interview Answers
Experience of Speaking Your Opinion in Classes	How was your experience when asked to express their opinions in the learning of Civic Education?	"At first I was hesitant to express my opinion because I was afraid of making a mistake, but over time I felt that my opinion was appreciated by my teachers and friends."
Experience of Dealing with Differences of Opinion	How do you feel when Your opinion differs from friends in the discussion of Civic Education?	"Sometimes it's uncomfortable, but I've learned that differences are normal and don't have to fight."
Involvement in Group Decision-Making	How was your experience when making joint decisions in the tasks of the Civic Education group?	"We discussed and chose together, even though the final decision is not what I proposed."
The Role of the Teacher in Democratic Learning	How does the role of the teacher affect your experience of democracy in the Civic Education class?	"If the teacher is open, we are more courageous to speak. If the teacher immediately decides, we will be silent."
Experiences Heard by Friends and Teachers	Do you feel an opinion Are you heard in Civic Education learning?	"I feel valued when my opinions are responded to, even if they are not always approved."
Experiences of Injustice in Discussion	Have you ever felt unfair in learning Civics Education?	"Sometimes only certain students talk a lot, others are rarely given the opportunity."
The Meaning of Democracy for Students	What do you think is the meaning of democracy after participating in Civic Education?	"Democracy is not just about voting, but respecting each other and working together."
Experience Conflict in Discussion	How do you respond to conflicts of opinion in Civics Education discussions?	"I learned to hold back emotions and try to understand the reasons of friends."
Civic Education Learning and Daily Life	Did the experience in Civic Education affect your attitude outside of the classroom?	"I became more willing to listen to the opinions of others in the organization."
A Reflection on the Overall Democratic Experience	What is the most meaningful experience related to democracy in Civic Education learning?	"Learning to appreciate differences is difficult but important."

Source: Research primary data, 2025

The level of student participation at MIS Sultan Agung, Depok District, is greatly influenced by the learning strategies used by teachers. When teachers provide an open dialogue space and do not dominate discussions, students of madrasah ibtidaiyah tend to be more courageous to express their opinions. On the other hand, in a learning situation that is still lecture-oriented, the participation of madrasah ibtidaiyah students is limited and passive. These findings reinforce the

view that participatory experience is an important prerequisite for the formation of democratic character through the learning of Civic Education in madrasah.

Conceptually, these findings are in line with Dewey's view that democracy needs to be learned through real social experience, not just through the mastery of theoretical concepts. [36] Civic Education learning that provides a space for participation allows madrasah ibtidaiyah students to experience democracy as a living practice, not just as a normative discourse.[37]

Meaning of the Value of Openness and Appreciation for Differences

The second theme that emerged from the results of the analysis was the meaning of students at MIS Sultan Agung, Depok District on the value of openness and respect for differences of opinion. Madrasah ibtidaiyah students realize that in learning Civic Education, differences of views are inevitable, especially when discussing social and civic issues in madrasah. Through discussion and dialogue, madrasah ibtidaiyah students learn that differences of opinion are not a source of conflict, but part of the democratic learning process.

Some students of madrasah ibtidaiyah revealed that the experience of listening to the opinions of different friends helped them understand other points of view and practice tolerance in madrasah. This process is not always easy, because at first some students of madrasah ibtidaiyah feel reluctant or afraid that their opinions will be rejected. However, repeated experiences in learning Civic Education slowly shaped courage and an open attitude towards differences.

These findings show that the value of democracy is not understood by madrasah ibtidaiyah students as an abstract concept, but as an attitude formed through social interaction. This supports Biesta's view that democracy education is oriented towards the process of becoming, not just knowing. Thus, the learning of Civic Education plays a role as a social space that allows madrasah ibtidaiyah students to learn to live in diversity.

Students' Reflections (MI) on the Practice of Democracy in Learning

Based on the Reflection of the Experience of Madrasah ibtidaiyah Students on the Value of Democracy, several findings were obtained that can be used as material for the analysis of this research:

[36]Bambang Yuniarto, "Membangun Kesadaran Demokrasi Melalui Pendekatan Kontekstual Pada Pembelajaran Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan," *Edueksos Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial & Ekonomi* 9, no. 1 (2020),

[37] Ranti Nazmi dkk., *Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan: Kewarganegaraan yang Berbasis Hukum dan Demokrasi* (Jambi: PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2025).

Tebel 2. Reflections on the Experience of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Students on the Value of Democracy

No	Focus Reflection	Reflective Statement of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Students	Reflective Meaning
1.	Conflict of opinion	Madrasah ibtidaiyah students reflect that differences of opinion train emotional control and empathy	Democratic self-control
2.	Life outside the classroom	Civic Education Experience influences attitudes in organizations and associations	Internalization of value
3.	Respect for differences	Valuing differences is understood as a difficult but important process	Democracy as a process
4.	Self-awareness	Madrasah ibtidaiyah students are aware of their role as part of the group	Social responsibility

Source: Students' written reflections, 2025

The results of the reflection of the students' experiences at MIS Sultan Agung, Depok District, Sleman Regency show that there is a critical awareness of the democratic practices that they experience in learning Civic Education. Madrasah ibtidaiyah students not only recounted positive experiences, but also expressed their perceived limitations, such as the lack of speaking opportunities for all madrasah ibtidaiyah students or the dominance of some individuals in discussions. This reflection shows that madrasah ibtidaiyah students are able to critically assess the extent to which Civic Education learning has reflected the value of democracy in madrasah.

This reflective awareness is an important indicator in the formation of democratic character, because madrasah ibtidaiyah students not only passively accept experiences, but also interpret them actively. The reflection process allows madrasah ibtidaiyah students to associate the learning experience with broader democratic values, such as justice, equality, and shared responsibility.

From a phenomenological perspective, experiential reflection is the key to uncovering the deepest meaning of the learning experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students.[38] These findings corroborate Kolb's opinion that experiential learning becomes meaningful when accompanied by a reflection process that allows students to build a new understanding of their experiences.[39]

[38] Yosua Septerio Glorian Taran dan Yaya Sunarya, "Education in Phenomenological Perspective," *Al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (April 2025), https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v8i2.1366.

[39] Revi Handayani dkk., "Pengalaman Kebermaknaan Belajar Dalam Perspektif Fenomenologi Pendidikan Di Stkip Pesisir Selatan," *Jurnal Kepemimpinan Dan Pengurusan Sekolah* 10, no. 4 (Desember 2025), https://doi.org/10.34125/jkps.v10i4.987.

Implications of Civic Education Learning Experience on the Formation of Democratic Character

Overall, the results of the study show that the experience of students at MIS Sultan Agung, Depok District, Sleman Regency in Civic Education learning contributes to the formation of democratic character in madrasah, although with different intensities. Madrasah ibtidaiyah students who gain participatory, dialogical, and reflective learning experiences tend to interpret democracy as a value that is relevant to daily life. On the other hand, madrasah ibtidaiyah students who experience normative civic education learning in madrassas and one-way show an understanding of democracy that is more limited to conceptual aspects.

These findings confirm that the formation of democratic character cannot be separated from the quality of the learning experience experienced by madrasah ibtidaiyah students. Civic Education learning that only focuses on mastery of material has the potential to fail to form a democratic character as a whole. Therefore, Civic Education learning needs to be designed as a pedagogical process that provides space for experience, participation, and reflection in an ongoing manner in madrasah.

This discussion strengthens the argument in the background of the research that the experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students is a key dimension in civic education in madrasah.[40] The results of this study also expand the study of Civic Education by placing the subjective experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students as the main source of understanding about the effectiveness of learning in forming democratic character.[41]

[40] Dadi Mulyadi, Sapriya Sapriya, dan Rahmat Rahmat, "Kajian tentang Penumbuhan Karakter Jujur Peserta Didik sebagai Upaya Pengembangan Dimensi Budaya Kewarganegaraan (Civic Culture) di SMA Alfa Centauri Bandung," *MODELING: Jurnal Program Studi PGMI* 6, no. 2 (September 2019), https://doi.org/10.36835/modeling.v6i2.471.

[41] Nur Aisyah Aprianti Soltif, Sahirudin, dan Indri Anugrah Ramadhani, "Efektivitas Metode Pembelajaran Audio-Visual dalam Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Siswa Kelas IV Terhadap Mata Pelajaran PKn," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Flobamorata* 6, no. 4 (2025), https://doi.org/10.51494/jpdf.v6i4.2615.

Table 3. Phenomenological Synthesis of the Meaning of Democratic Values

No	Essential Theme (Selective Coding)	Description of the Essence of Experience	The Meaning of Democracy Interpreted
1.	Democratic Participation	Madrasah ibtidaiyah students experience the courage to express their opinions when they feel safe and appreciated in learning	Democracy as a space for participation
2.	Tolerance for Differences	Differences of opinion are understood as natural things that need to be addressed with mutual respect	Democracy as a reward for difference
3.	Collective Responsibility	Madrasah ibtidaiyah students learn to accept joint decisions even though they are not always according to personal desires	Democracy as a common decision
4.	Teachers as Facilitators	Teachers are perceived to play an important role in opening or limiting the space for democracy in the classroom	Democracy needs facilitation
5.	Awareness of Justice	Students of madrasah ibtidaiyah are aware of the inequality of participation and critically assess democratic practices	Democracy as a justice process
6.	Self-Reflection	Madrasah ibtidaiyah students interpret the democratic experience through a process of internal reflection	Democracy as a Learning Process
7.	Internalization of Value	The value of democracy is carried out outside the classroom and affects the social attitude of madrasah ibtidaiyah students	Democracy as a living practice

Source: Synthesis of in-depth interview results and reflections on students' experiences, 2025

The phenomenological synthesis of the results of in-depth interviews and reflections on the experiences of madrasah ibtidaiyah students shows that the learning of Civic Education in madrasah is interpreted as a process of learning democracy that is alive and experienced directly in the context of social interaction in the classroom. The experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students does not stop at the conceptual understanding of democracy, but develops into a process of meaning that is personal, reflective, and contextual. This confirms that democracy in civic education learning is understood as an experienced practice, not just learned knowledge.[42]

The theme of democratic participation emerged as the initial essence of the student experience. Madrasah ibtidaiyah The courage to express opinions grows when students of madrasah ibtidaiyah feel safe, appreciated, and given space in learning.[43] This experience shows that

[42] Delfiyan Widiyanto and Annisa Istiqomah, "Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Sebagai Wahana Pendidikan Demokrasi," *Jurnal Pendidikan* 32, no. 1 (2023).

[43] Reza Mulyana dkk., "Strategi Guru dalam Meningkatkan Keberanian Berpendapat Siswa," *Journal of Education, Cultural and Politics* 5, no. 1 (2025), https://doi.org/10.24036/jecco.v5i1.615.

participation does not arise naturally, but rather is shaped by a democratic learning climate. In this context, democracy is interpreted by students of madrasah ibtidaiyah as a space of participation that allows each individual to voice their views without fear or pressure.[44]

Furthermore, tolerance for differences is an important essence in the democratic experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students. Differences of opinion are understood as an inseparable reality of the process of discussion and dialogue in the learning of Civic Education. Through the experience of interacting with diverse views, students of madrasah ibtidaiyah learn that democracy requires mutual respect and a willingness to accept diverse perspectives. This meaning is in line with the view that democracy education aims to form citizens who are able to live together in differences peacefully and constructively.[45]

The experience of accepting a shared decision, even if it is not always in accordance with personal interests, leads to the formation of an awareness of collective responsibility. Madrasah ibtidaiyah students interpret democracy as a joint decision-making process that prioritizes the interests of groups. This essence shows that the learning of Civic Education in madrassas provides concrete experience regarding the importance of commitment to the results of deliberations and the willingness to put common interests above individual interests.[46]

The role of teachers as facilitators emerged as a determining factor in the quality of democratic experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students. Teachers are perceived to have the power to open or even limit the democratic space in learning. When teachers are open, dialogical, and provide equal opportunities, students of madrasah ibtidaiyah experience a more meaningful experience of democracy in madrasah. On the contrary, the dominance of teachers in learning is understood as an obstacle to democratic practice. These findings confirm the importance of the pedagogical role of teachers in building a democratic learning climate.[47]

Awareness of process justice is also part of the essence of the experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students. Students of madrasah ibtidaiyah show reflective skills by realizing the inequality of participation in discussions, such as dominance by certain individuals. This critical awareness shows that madrasah ibtidaiyah students are not only passive subjects, but are able to

[44] Silvia Nurwanci, Tatang Muhtar, dan Yusuf Tri Herlambang, "Demokrasi Pendidikan dalam Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka, Studi Kritis dalam Tinjauan Pedagogik," *Ideguru: Jurnal Karya Ilmiah Guru* 10, no. 1 (2024), https://doi.org/10.51169/ideguru.v10i1.1324.

[45] Tiffany Shahnaz Rusli dkk., *Konsep Dasar PKN: Menjadi Warga Negara Cerdas dan Berkarakter* (Jambi: PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2025).

[46] M. E. Anni Yuliah dkk., *Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan* (Yogyakarta: PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2025).

[47] Irnawati dkk., *Pendidikan Multikultural: Teori, Praktik, dan Transformasi Sosial* (Pekalongan: Penerbit NEM, 2025).

assess the democratic practices they experience. From the perspective of civic education, this ability is an important indicator of the development of a critical and responsible democratic character.[48]

The process of self-reflection deepens the meaning of madrasah ibtidaiyah students to the democratic experience experienced. Through reflection, madrasah ibtidaiyah students associate the learning experience with broader democratic values, such as empathy, self-control, and social responsibility. Democracy is understood as a continuous learning process, not a condition that has been achieved. This view is in line with an experiential learning approach that emphasizes reflection as the key to the formation of meaning.

Finally, the internalization of democratic values becomes the essence that shows the sustainability of the learning experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students outside the classroom context. Values such as openness, tolerance, and willingness to listen to the opinions of others are carried over into the daily social lives of students.[49] Democracy is interpreted as a living practice that is relevant to their social reality, not just a subject matter in madrasah.[50] This emphasizes that Civic Education learning has strategic potential in shaping democratic character if it is designed based on meaningful experiences.

Overall, this phenomenological synthesis shows that the experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students in learning Civic Education shapes the understanding of democracy as a participatory, reflective, and contextual process. Democracy is interpreted as the practice of living together in differences that continues to be learned through experience, dialogue, and reflection. These findings strengthen the argument that the learning of Civic Education which is oriented to the experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students is an important foundation in the formation of democratic character.

CONCLUSION

The quality of the learning experience of students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Prista (MIS) Sultan Agung, Depok District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta Province is greatly influenced by the learning climate and the role of teachers. Teachers who act as facilitators of dialogue and provide equal participation space encourage the development of attitudes of openness, tolerance, collective responsibility and awareness of process justice. On the other hand, learning that is still one-way and lacks dialogue has the potential to limit the internalization of democratic

[48] M. Khoiri dkk., "Penerapan Critical Pendagogy Dalam Mengembangkan Kesadaran Sosial Dan Politik Peserta Didik Melalui Pendidikan Ilmu Sosial," *EDUKASI* 13, no. 1 (2025), https://doi.org/10.61672/judek.v13i1.2955.

[49] Elis Teti Rusmiati, "Penanaman Nilai-Nilai Toleransi Pada Anak Usia Dini," *ABDI MOESTOPO: Jurnal Pengabdian Pada Masyarakat* 6, no. 2 (2023).

[50] F. Budi Hardiman, *Demokrasi Deliberatif: Menimbang Negara Hukum dan Ruang Publik dalam Teori Diskursus Jürgen Habermas* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2009).

values. This emphasizes that the formation of democratic character cannot be separated from the pedagogical practice experienced in real life by students of madrasah ibtidayah.

In general, this study relies that Civic Education Learning which is oriented to the experience of madrasah ibtidayah students as well as the learning context at MIS Sultan Agung, Depok District, Sleman Regency, is an important foundation for the development of democratic character in madrasah. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers and madrasah design civic education learning that emphasizes active participation, open dialogue, and reflection on the democratic experience of madrasah ibtidaiyah students in the context of different levels of education or integrate democracy in the digital era as part of the civic learning experience in madrasah.

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