



## Developing Teachers' Social Competence Based on *Civic Engagement* in Pohuwato District (Case Study on Polaris Community)

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the development of teachers' social competence in the aspects of attitude, communicating effectively, empathically, and politely, adapting to the task, and communicating orally and in writing based on *civic engagement* in the Polaris community of Pohuwato Regency. The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach with a case study research type. The data collection techniques used were observation, interview and documentation. The data sources were principals and teachers who are members of the Polaris learning community. Data were analyzed using data reduction, data presentation and verification. The results showed: (1) the development of teachers' social competence in the aspect of *civic engagement-based* attitude is carried out through being inclusive, objective and non-discriminatory; (2) the development of teachers' social competence in the aspect of effective, empathic, and polite *civic engagement-based* is carried out through communicating with fellow teachers, communicating with education personnel, communicating with parents, and communicating with the community; (3) the development of Teachers' Social Competence in the Aspect of Adapting to the New Place of Duty based on *Civic Engagement* is carried out through accepting situations and changes in the new workplace both the school environment and curriculum and technology developments; (4) the development of Teachers' Social Competence in the Aspect of Communicating Orally and in Writing based on *Civic Engagement* in the Polaris Community in Pohuwato Regency which is carried out through communicating with the professional community itself, and communicating with other professions in improving their social competence in the Polaris community.

Keywords: *Social Competence, Civic Engagement*

### Introduction

The development of social competence is carried out to build and maintain close relationships that are able to fulfill communal needs (needs that are social or interpersonal in nature such as the need for affection or love, intimacy, friendship support, nurturing, pleasure, and sexual) and agentic needs (needs that are individual in nature, such as the need for achievement, power, recognition or status, acceptance, autonomy, identity and *self esteem*) (Idrus, 2020: 31).

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology develops teachers' social competence through various innovative activities. In the era of the independent curriculum, the government is trying to improve teachers' social competence through learning communities on education units and also through various technology platforms such as the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM), belajar.id account, education report card, Arkas, SIPLah, and tanyaBOS.

The learning community and technology platform become a medium for teachers to develop their social competence in interacting with principals, fellow teachers, parents, students and the community. Teachers can utilize these learning communities and technology platforms to hone their social attitudes in interacting, communicating, cooperating and other forms.

Pohuwato district in developing teachers' social competence formed a learning community called Pohuwato Belajar dan Berinovasi (Polaris). This community is a medium for teachers to develop their social competence in improving the quality of education. Teachers can share good practices, share real actions and even become resource persons at scientific activities organized by the community.

Based on the results of observations carried out in Pohuwato Regency, especially in the Polaris community, that members of this community come from teachers at the elementary / equivalent, junior / equivalent, senior / equivalent high school levels. The committee in this community is taken from existing members to organize scientific activities both in the form of webinars sharing good practices, real action and other teacher competency development.

Polaris members mostly come from elementary schools with 60 teachers or 41.66%, junior high schools with 45 teachers or 31.25%, senior high schools with 24 teachers or 16.67% and vocational high schools with 15 teachers or 10.10%.

The Polaris community is expected to be a platform for members to participate as resource persons or other forms in improving the quality of education in Pohuwato district. However, in reality, not all teachers are willing to become resource persons, facilitators, instructors or participate in other forms. This can be seen from the fact that members who often become resource persons in various activities organized are the same people.

This condition indicates that teachers' social competence has not developed optimally. Based on the results of interviews with community members on January 4, 2024, most teachers do not have high self-confidence when assigned as resource persons to share good practices. In addition, teachers are less able to convey ideas and ideas appropriately. Teachers' communication skills are still low, which affects the interactions in the community. Furthermore, there are teachers who have not been able to control their emotions when facing a problem or conflict that occurs. Teachers have not been able to structure, guide, regulate, and direct behavior towards positive consequences, including in dealing with conflicts that exist in the environment. On the other hand, teachers have not been able to operate information technology devices in the form of technology platforms developed by the ministries of education, culture, research and technology.

With these problems, it is necessary to have a forum for developing teacher competence so that the implementation of the independent curriculum is optimally carried out. The Polaris learning community was formed, the real purpose was to discuss educational issues, but over time the Polaris learning community had a positive impact on teachers in Pohuwato Regency. One of the activities that has been carried out without being realized by the manager is the application of *civic engagement* as a basis for developing teacher competence. This activity is an activity to involve teachers in social and community activities. Teachers are given opportunities to engage in real-world experiences that can improve their understanding of social issues, leadership skills and adaptability.

*Civic engagement* includes activities such as participation in social projects, community service, membership in community organizations, and more. Through *civic engagement* teachers have the opportunity to enrich their understanding of social issues and interpersonal skills to become socially competent teachers.

Teachers' active involvement in these activities will develop their social competencies, especially in: (1) being inclusive, acting objectively, and not discriminating due to considerations of gender, religion, race, physical condition, family background, and socio-economic status; (2) communicating effectively, empathetically, and politely with fellow educators, education personnel, parents, and the community; (3) adapting to the place of duty throughout the territory of the Republic of Indonesia which has socio-cultural diversity; (4). Communicate with their own professional community and other professions orally and in writing or other forms (Permendiknas No. 16 of 2007).

Teachers' involvement in social life is a hope to realize quality schools. *Civic Engagement* is one of the main concepts in *Community Civics* to be able to participate in public life. Jacoby & Associates (2019: 97) suggest that *civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community*. The opinion explains that teacher engagement includes actions where individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community. Teacher engagement has been defined as the process of believing that one can and should make a difference in improving their community. To improve social competence, a teacher needs the knowledge, skills and values needed to make a difference. The possession and demonstration of such knowledge, skills and values are expressed through attitudes and behaviors.

In *civic engagement*, every teacher is obliged and responsible for maintaining the school ecosystem with their knowledge. *Environmental citizenship involves empowering people to have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to identify their values and goals with respect to the environment and to act accordingly, based on the best knowledge of choices and consequences* (Berkowitz and Brewer, 2020: 227). The opinion explains that empowering the school environment involves teachers having knowledge, skills, and attitudes in identifying the values and goals of educational institutions about choices and consequences.

Implementing *civic engagement-based* empowerment in the Polaris community, teachers will have good social competence. Teachers will not only be involved in organizing community activities, but will also be responsible both personally and in groups for the failure and success of the activities carried out. In addition, teachers will develop innovations in improving the quality of education in Pohuwato District.

Teachers who are directly involved in the process of becoming organizers, resource persons, facilitators, instructors or other forms of roles will have knowledge, attitudes and actions that will lead to better social competence. Teachers will be able to understand their role as educators and facilitators in the learning process and become innovators in the world of education.

Based on the above background, the author formulates several problems, namely as follows: How is the development of teachers' social competence based on *civic engagement* in the Polaris community in Pohuwato Regency?

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## Research Objectives

The general purpose of this research is to analyze the development of teachers' social competence based on *civic engagement* in the Polaris community in Pohuwato District.

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## Theory Review

### 1. Social Competence

Teacher social competence is an ability that supports the implementation of his daily duties. This is because functionally the task of teaching is a task that relates to humans not goods or materials that are static. As stated in the Teacher and Lecturer Law No. 14 of 2005 article 10 paragraph 1 social competence is the teacher's ability to communicate and interact effectively with students, fellow educators, education personnel, parents of students and the surrounding community (Zaini and Mahtarom, 2015: 1-2).

Social competence relates to the ability of educators as part of the community to communicate and associate effectively with students, fellow educators, education personnel, parents/guardians of students, and the surrounding community. Social competence is very important for a teacher to have, because after all, the impact of the education process will be felt not only by the students themselves but also by the people who receive and interpret their graduates.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the social competence of teachers is the ability of a teacher to communicate and interact when delivering material in the learning process to students, in addition to students, teachers are also able to communicate and associate effectively with fellow educators, education personnel, parents / guardians of students, and the surrounding community.

## 2. Community

According to Ramdani in Ariani (2020: 139) the community is "A group of people who have an excessive sense of caring, where in a community there are personal relationships between members of the community due to common interests or values. For example, the need for confidence, intention, suitability, talent, hobbies, and other similarities". Meanwhile, according to Marc Iver in Ali (2020: 1), says that the community is a fellowship that lives in the meaning of a group where its characteristics are the level of kinship between groups with one another. The things that shape the existence of the community are locality and sentiment community.

Based on the opinions described above, it can be seen that the community is a group of community organizations that have common goals or interests that uphold the meaning of solidarity and loyalty and in which social interactions occur in order to establish kinship on the basis of similar opinions, hobbies, beliefs and so on where this is intertwined due to communication that provides a psychological bond and influence.

## 3. Civic Engagement

Adler and Goggin (2015:236) defined *civic engagement* as follows. *Civic engagement refers to the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future.* Or translated as active civic engagement refers to the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community to improve conditions for others in order to build a better future.

Ehrlich (in Rusnaini, 2018: 43)) as follows. *Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation that make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and nonpolitical processes.* Or translated as active citizen involvement is an activity to make changes in the lives of citizens or communities and combine aspects of knowledge, attitudes, skills, values and motivation to make these changes. This active citizen involvement is an effort to improve the quality of life of the community through both political and non-political processes.

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## Research Methodology

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach with a *case study* method with a descriptive type of research. The data in this study consisted of two types, namely data sourced from humans and data sourced from non-humans and data collected related to the focus of research categorized as sourced from primary and secondary data.

Data were collected through observation, interviews and documentation which were analyzed by data reduction, data display, and *Conclusion Drawing/Verification*. While checking the validity of the data is done through credibility test, transferability test, and dependability test.

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## Research Results and Discussion

Based on the results of research conducted through observation, interviews and documentation, the objectives to be achieved in this study are: (1) the development of teachers' social competence in the aspect of attitude through the *civic engagement* approach in the Polaris community of Pohuwato Regency; (2) the development of teachers' social competence in the aspect of communicating effectively, empathetically, and politely through the *civic engagement* approach in the Polaris community of Pohuwato Regency, (3) the development of teachers' social competence in the aspect of adapting to the place of duty through the *civic engagement* approach in the Polaris community of Pohuwato Regency, (4) the development of teachers' social competence in the aspect of communicating orally and in writing through the *civic engagement* approach in the Polaris community of Pohuwato Regency.

1. Development of teachers' social competence in the aspect of attitude through a *civic engagement* approach in the Polaris community of Pohuwato District.

The results showed that teachers have developed their social competence in the aspect of attitude through the *civic engagement* approach in the Polaris community. The teachers attitude includes being inclusive, being objective and being non-discriminatory. To develop these social competencies, teachers are directly involved in Polaris community activities.

Teachers in carrying out the communication process with students are expected to be able to integrate the ability to behave, speak, and think so that this will realize good communication between teachers and students. In this study, the authors only focus on the discussion of the teacher's social competence from the aspect of attitude, namely the teacher's ability to be inclusive in the classroom.

The attitude shown by teachers towards their students is important and can affect the continuity of the learning process in the classroom, because it is one of the factors determining the level of student learning motivation. By showing a good attitude towards students, the teacher will be respected and become a role model for students. However, if the opposite happens, of course, this will allow several problems to occur, the negative attitude shown by the teacher to his students can cause students to hate their teachers so that the learning atmosphere becomes disharmonious. Therefore, in order to create a harmonious learning atmosphere, a teacher should have a humble attitude, respect students, and be fair to students, which is a manifestation of an inclusive attitude.

Thus, *civic engagement* in the Polaris learning community increases social competence in the aspect of attitude which is carried out through social interaction. Social interaction is a dynamic relationship that involves relationships between individuals, between human groups, and between individuals and human groups. Social interaction is the main condition for social activities to occur. In the learning process between educators and students there must be interaction. Education is basically an interaction between educators (teachers) and learners (students), to achieve educational goals, which take place in a certain environment (Inah, 2015: 54). In this case, the teacher's social interaction in Civics learning at school is evident in his good interactions with students, fellow teachers, principals and parents.

Teachers can be developed in attitude and behavior through real activities by utilizing civic engagement in the learning community. It is realized that the more real and active teachers play a role in the community the better their attitude. This is because civic engagement will shape teacher awareness and participation that is initiative and sincere without coercion from others.

## 2. Development of teachers' social competence in the aspects of communicating effectively, empathically, and politely through a *civic engagement* approach in the Polaris community of Pohuwato District

Based on the results of the study, teachers' social competence in the aspects of effective, empathic and polite communication has developed through their involvement or using the *civic engagement* approach in the Polaris community in Pohuwato District. Teachers are actively involved in communicating in the community both in organizing activities collectively and individually.

This is in line with the opinion that social competence consists of sub-competencies (1) understanding and appreciating differences (respect) and having the ability to manage conflicts and conflicts; (2) carrying out harmonious cooperation with peers, principals and vice principals, and other related parties; (3) building teamwork that is compact, smart, dynamic and agile; (4) communicate (oral, written, pictorial) effectively and pleasantly to all school members, parents of learners, with full awareness that each has a role and responsibility for the progress of learning; (5) have the ability to understand and internalize environmental changes that affect their duties; (6) have the ability to place themselves in the value system that applies in the surrounding community; (7) implement the principles of good governance (e.g. participation, transparency, accountability, law enforcement, and professionalism) (Bego, 2016: 4)

A teacher should try to develop communication with the parents of learners so that there is continuous two-way communication. With two-way communication, students can be monitored better and can develop their character more effectively. Social competence must be possessed by a teacher, who must have the ability to communicate with students, fellow teachers, principals, and the surrounding community.

Effective communication is communication that aims for the communicant or student to understand the message conveyed by the communicator or teacher and the communicant provides feedback in accordance with the message. Feedback in accordance with the message is not always in the form of approval. Communicants can give feedback in the form of disagreement with the message, the most important thing is that the communicator understands the message correctly and the communicator gets feedback indicating that the message has been understood by the communicator.

Communicating effectively, among others, can be done by teachers using simple language that is easily understood by students. Commands and prohibitions are conveyed clearly and easily understood so that students can carry them out easily. Teachers must also be good at making specific words in explaining a concept to students. In addition, the process is carried out in an interesting and fun way for students.

Empathic communication can be understood from the word empathy. Empathy is a person's ability to know what another person is experiencing at a particular moment, from that other person's point of view and perspective. So, empathic communication can be a means to establish mutual understanding between two parties, namely teachers and students. If the teacher succeeds in developing empathic communication, it is hoped that students can understand that the purpose of delivering the task is so that students can complete their responsibilities more effectively.

Based on the above understanding, polite communication can be interpreted as communication that is carried out smoothly, well and politely both concerning language and behavior. When communicating in the learning process, teachers must pay attention to politeness both in the form of attitude and language used. The language used is good and correct and in accordance with the prevailing cultural norms.

## 3. Development of teacher social competence in the aspect of adapting to the place of duty through a *civic engagement* approach in the Polaris community of Pohuwato District

The results showed that teachers who were appointed and accepted as teachers adapted to the school environment where they were assigned. This was also the case with teachers who were transferred from one school to another. This indicates that teachers have good social competence.

Through the learning community in Polaris, teachers from various schools come together to solve educational problems, and in this community teachers also interact with each other who are from different schools. This certainly makes it easier for teachers who change assignments to adjust quickly because they are used to communicating and relating both behaviorally and otherwise.

According to Suparlan (2018: 66), adaptation is a person's ability to interact appropriately and effectively and thoroughly with the reality of their environment, interact with others, and communicate with others. At first, self-adjustment was interpreted as the same as adaptation adaptation, even though this adaptation generally refers more to self-adjustment in a physical, physiological, or biological sense. Self-adjustment is also known as adjustment or personal adjustment.

Furthermore, Suparlan (2018: 67) divides self-adjustment into three points of view, namely: 1) Self-adjustment as adaptation *adaptation*, 2) Self-adjustment as a form of *conformity conformity*, 3) Self-adjustment as an attempt at *mastery mastery*.

In the *civic engagement* approach, teachers must also adapt their teaching methods. The development of the times has also changed the mindset of students. The information received by students is not limited to school. Through the internet, students can access a million information related to a topic. This distinguishes the mindset of students in the past and today. There are teachers who have been able to adapt. Although not evenly distributed throughout the country, some teachers have been able to adapt to the times. There are teachers who are able to make a stellarium from used goods as an astronomy teaching aid (Gerintya, 2019: 81).

The government must support teacher adaptation. The gap in access to information between big cities and remote areas has contributed to the differences in teachers' adaptability. This also has an impact on students' understanding of teaching materials. As the party that has the authority and ability to equalize education, the government should encourage teachers to adapt quickly.

Adaptation does not only have to be done because of a change of assignment or because of an incident. All advances that occur both in the field of technology or social society that encourage change must get a reaction from teachers to keep up with the times so that they are not *out of date*. Adaptation in pandemic situations and also any situation requires a way for teachers to adapt easily because not everyone has the ease of adapting.

4. Development of teachers' social competence in the aspect of communicating orally and in writing through a *civic engagement* approach in the Polaris community of Pohuwato District.

The results showed that teacher competence in the aspect of communicating orally and in writing through the civic engagement approach in the Polaris community in Gorontalo Regency is well developed. Teachers always communicate both directly and indirectly and through social media and forums.

This is in line with Purwanto's opinion (2019: 77) that *oral communication skills* are a person's ability to communicate through speaking and *feedback* can be given directly. Oral communication skills include the ability in job interviews, seminars, workshops, public speaking, formal speeches and presentations. Meanwhile, *written communication skill* is a person's ability to create messages in writing in various forms, such as memos, letters, proposals, and reports. The advantage of written communication skills is that the writer has the opportunity to plan and control the messages created.

According to Menrisal (2018: 45-47) that in civic engagement, an effective speaker is required to have adequate skills or abilities. It does not have to be very smart, but it is sufficient in several ways, including the ability to express thoughts briefly, clearly, but densely so that it can convince listeners or students easily. The ability to defend thoughts or opinions, in a meeting forum that is dialogic or two-way communication such as in discussions or seminars, the ability to coordinate and combine appropriately verbal and nonverbal communication. indicators of the sympathetic appearance of a teacher or speaker can be detected through the intensity of a smile, eye contact, friendliness of attitude, openness of appearance, and cheerfulness of the face. For a speaker who shows his face, it is not too difficult for him to be sympathetic.

The message conveyed by the teacher to the learners must also be effective, meaning that the use of terms that are interpreted the same between the sender and the recipient of the message is a basic rule for achieving effective communication. The messages that are exchanged must be specific. That is, the message must be clear so that the recipient of the message can receive and repeat it correctly. The message must develop logically and must not be cut off. The message should be as concise and original as possible and should try to eliminate irrelevant words.

With messages conveyed effectively, it is hoped that students can be able to understand and understand what is explained. However, communication can also be said to be successful if the recipient of the message understands and does what is contained in the content of the message. The measure of success in delivering information is whether the communicant himself understands the message conveyed. At this time the concept of audience refers to a group of children or learners who are formed as a result of communication activities carried out in large numbers. There are those who do not know each other and with mixed characteristics. In this case, the level of understanding of a person can be different depending on the delivery factors and skills. Therefore, there must still be cooperation between students to create a conducive atmosphere so that communication in learning can be as effective as possible.

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## Conclusion

The conclusions of this study are: (1) The development of teachers' social competence in the aspect of attitude through the *civic engagement* approach is implemented through being inclusive, objective and non-discriminatory. Teachers are directly involved in developing these social competencies by being directly involved in the activities of the Polaris community, (2) Development of teacher social competence in the aspects of effective, empathic, and polite through the *civic engagement* approach is carried out through communicating with fellow teachers, communicating with education personnel,

communicating with parents, and communicating with the community. (3) Development of Teacher Social Competence on the Aspect of Adapting to a new place of work through the *Civic Engagement* Approach is carried out through accepting situations and changes in the new workplace both the school environment and curriculum and technology developments (5) Development of Teacher Social Competence on the Aspect of Communicating Orally and in Writing through the *Civic Engagement* Approach in the Polaris Community in Pohuwato Regency which is carried out through communicating with the professional community itself, and communicating with other professions in improving their social competence in the Polaris community.

Based on the conclusions, the suggestions of this study are: (1) Principals should encourage and motivate teachers continuously to be actively involved in the Polaris learning community both as members of the organization and play a role in webinar activities or other scientific activities both as participants and as resource persons. (2) Teachers always develop their social competence through the Polaris learning community by being directly involved in the development of the learning community and implementing it in the implementation of learning at school, (3) Teachers should carry out good practices and compile them in a learning product that can be emulated by other teachers in improving the quality of learning, (4) *Civic engagement* should be carried out continuously so that communication and collaboration between teachers are established in developing learning communities and teacher social competence.

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