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A Narrative Review of the Implementation of Civic Education in Southeast Asia

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a narrative review of civic education implementation in Southeast Asia, analyzing 27 studies from 2019 to 2025 sourced from major academic databases. Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines led in research output, while countries like Brunei, Cambodia, and Laos were underrepresented. Findings highlight key challenges such as fragmented curricula, inadequate teacher training, and limited digital citizenship education. However, best practices are emerging, including participatory teaching, multicultural integration, and early civic learning. Despite strong contextual insights, the literature suffers from methodological gaps, including limited empirical data and stakeholder perspectives. The study emphasizes the need for more diverse, data-driven approaches and cross-country collaboration to improve research quality. To address these, the study proposes an ASEAN Framework for Civic Education to promote democratic values, inclusivity, and regional identity. This framework aims to harmonize civic education efforts across Southeast Asia while respecting national and cultural differences.

Keywords: Civic Education, Southeast Asia, ASEAN, Policy, Digital Citizenship, Pedagogy

1. INTRODUCTION

Civic education plays a fundamental role in shaping responsible and active citizens, fostering democratic values, and strengthening national identity. In Southeast Asia, where diverse political systems, cultural backgrounds, and educational policies exist, the implementation of civic education varies significantly across countries. Understanding these differences and evaluating their effectiveness is essential for fostering informed and engaged citizens in the region.

Civic education aims to enhance students' understanding of their nation while instilling a sense of nationalism (Yuen, 2019). It is recognized as a crucial element in maintaining democracy and preparing future generations for active citizenship (Tolstenko, Baltovskij, & Radikov, 2019). In many democratic nations, such as the United States, schools serve as a platform for cultivating civic engagement and unifying citizens.

Within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), civic education has been promoted as a means to foster regional identity, democratic values, and active participation in governance. Several key studies, such as the International Comparative Study on Citizenship Education and Education for ASEANness, explore how civic education is implemented across ASEAN member states. Scholars such as Maulana and Milanti (2023) advocated for experiential learning approaches in civic engagement programs, while Warman (2017) highlighted the need for curricula that prioritize practical application and national consciousness. Additionally, Sarkadi and Fadhilah (2020) emphasized the importance of civic dispositions, including a commitment to justice, equality, and personal responsibility.

Each Southeast Asian country has established its own legal framework for civic education. In Indonesia, Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System mandated Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan (Civic Education) as a compulsory subject across all educational levels, underscoring the nation's commitment to fostering informed and responsible citizens. However, the curriculum has been criticized for its reliance on rote memorization rather than fostering critical thinking and active civic engagement.

Similarly, Myanmar's National Education Law of 2014 was promulgated to integrate democratic values into education but has faced criticism for centralizing government control, restricting academic freedom, and failing to acknowledge ethnic minority perspectives.

On the other hand, Malaysia's Education Act of 1996 (Act 550) grants the Ministry of Education authority to implement civic education through subjects like Moral Education and Islamic Studies, though it does not explicitly mandate a separate civic education curriculum.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, civic education is incorporated into the national curriculum through Republic Act No. 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001), Republic Act No. 7079 (Campus Journalism Act), and the National Service Training Program (NSTP) Act of 2001, ensuring that students receive civic instruction at both basic and tertiary levels. However, challenges persist in effectively engaging students in meaningful civic participation.

In addition, Thailand's National Education Act of 1999 mandated civic education through Social Studies and Morality Education, focusing on promoting Thai identity and good citizenship. Vietnam's Education Law of 2019 integrated civic education within Social Science subjects, but critics argued that the curriculum prioritizes government perspectives over independent critical analysis, potentially limiting the development of students' critical thinking skills. In Singapore, civic education is embedded within the Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) Policy, which emphasizes national identity, resilience, and social responsibility. However, some scholars argued that the curriculum's strong emphasis on national cohesion come at the expense of fostering open discussions on social and political issues.

Despite the presence of legal frameworks supporting civic education across Southeast Asian nations, a significant gap remains between policy and practice. One of the key research gaps is the effectiveness of civic education in fostering active civic engagement. While many countries integrate civic education into their curricula, studies indicated that students often demonstrate low levels of civic participation and critical thinking. Many educational programs emphasized memorization rather than experiential learning—such as service learning and participatory citizenship programs—which could enhance student engagement. Further research is needed to assess alternative pedagogical approaches that encourage active citizenship.

Another gap is the extent to which civic education curricula promote democratic principles versus state-led narratives. In countries such as Vietnam and Singapore, concerns have been raised that civic education prioritizes state perspectives over independent critical analysis, limiting students' ability to engage critically with governance and social issues. Comparative studies analyzing curriculum content and instructional methodologies across Southeast Asian nations are needed to determine the extent of ideological influence in civic education programs.

However, ethnic and cultural inclusivity in civic education remains underexplored. Myanmar's National Education Law (2014) has been criticized for failing to recognize ethnic minority perspectives, while Malaysia's civic education framework has been linked to ethnic polarization in schools. Further studies are needed to evaluate how civic education policies across Southeast Asia address multiculturalism and minority representation in national narratives.

Furthermore, teacher preparedness and institutional support for civic education remain insufficiently studied. Countries such as Thailand and the Philippines face challenges related to teacher training, pedagogical effectiveness, and the availability of resources for civic education (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016; PIDS, 2023). Empirical studies analyzing the impact of teacher training programs on civic learning outcomes are needed to determine best practices for enhancing civic education instruction in the region.

This sought to narrative review address this research gap by a systematic review of the implementation of civic education across Southeast Asian countries. By assessing the current state of civic education, challenges and best practices in implementing civic education and policy effectiveness, this study aimed to provide insights into how civic education can be improved to foster active, informed, and engaged citizens in the region.

1.1 Research Questions

The study aimed to synthesize the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions.

1. What is the current state of civic education in Southeast Asia based on the date of publication, countries and research design?
2. What are the common challenges and best practices in the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia?
3. What are the strengths and limitations of the existing studies on civic education in Southeast Asia?
4. Based on the findings of the study, what recommendations can be made to improve the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study employed the systematic narrative review approach to examine the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia. The meta-analysis integrates and synthesized the findings from multiple published studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The systematic literature review (SLR) methodology, ensured a structured and transparent process of identifying, evaluating, and analyzing relevant literature.

Data and evidences were collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, policy papers, and other credible academic sources that discuss the implementation, effectiveness, and challenges of the implementation of civic education across Southeast Asian countries. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure the relevance and reliability of the selected studies.

2.2 Literature Sources

The primary data sources were scholarly articles retrieved from six major databases—Elsevier, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, JSTOR, Taylor & Francis, and ERIC—with Google Scholar used as a supplementary search engine. Relevant studies were selected using a systematic search strategy based on predefined inclusion criteria. To qualify, studies had to (a) focus on civic education in Southeast Asia, (b) be empirical, systematic reviews, or

policy analyses, (c) be published between 2019–2025, and (d) appear in peer-reviewed journals, academic theses, book chapters, or conference proceedings. Only studies meeting these criteria were included to ensure a rigorous and relevant review.

2.3 Research Instrument

To ensure transparency and rigor, the study utilized the StArt (State of the Art through Systematic Review) tool to guide all phases of the systematic literature review, including study selection, data extraction, and synthesis. This ensured a structured and reliable process. A range of AI-assisted tools—such as ChatPDF, ChatGPT Plus, Claude AI, Perplexity AI, Bard AI, Scite AI, Research Rabbit, Connected Papers, and Semantic Scholar—were also used to enhance literature retrieval, analysis, and validation. These tools collectively strengthened the narrative review and supported a comprehensive assessment of civic education implementation in Southeast Asia.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings and results of the systematic review of the implementation of civic education.

1. What is the current state of civic education in Southeast Asia based on the date of publications, countries and research study design?

As a result of the preliminary search 27 papers across the databases were identified. Table 1 presents the distribution of the papers by publication year, along with the number of papers that met the inclusion criteria following the screening process.

Table 1. Distribution of Papers by Years

Publication Year	Papers Identified	Papers Screened by Title and Abstract	Eligible Papers inclusion of criteria
2019	23	10	2
2020	345	10	2
2021	366	25	4
2022	210	21	6
2023	250	25	6
2024	98	20	6
2025	30	4	1
Total	1,322	105	27

Table 1 presents the distribution of papers published from 2019 to 2025, focusing on research related to the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia. A total of 1,322 papers were initially identified through the database searches. After screening by title and abstract, 105 papers were retained for full-text review, resulting in 27 papers that met the inclusion criteria.

The annual distribution of eligible papers is as follows: two (2) papers from 2019, two (2) from 2020, four (4) from 2021, six (6) from 2022, six (6) from 2023, six (6) from 2024, and one (1) from 2025. While there are some fluctuations, a general upward trend in the number of eligible publications can be observed from 2019 to 2024, suggesting a growing academic interest in the topic over recent years.

To address Problem one (1), the country affiliation of the corresponding author for each eligible paper was reviewed. The findings are summarized in Table 2. Table 2 presents the distribution of papers by countries in Southeast Asia in the implementation of civic education.

Table 2. Distribution of Papers by Countries

Countries	Identified Papers
Brunei	1
Cambodia	1
Indonesia	8
Laos	1
Malaysia	6
Myanmar	1
Philippines	3

Singapore	1
Thailand	3
Timor Leste	1
Vietnam	1
Total	27

Table 2 illustrates the distribution of identified papers by country within Southeast Asia, focusing on the implementation of civic education. A total of 27 papers were identified across 11 countries in the region.

Indonesia leads with the highest number of publications eight (8) suggesting a relatively strong research focus and academic interest in civic education within the country. This reflects Indonesia's ongoing efforts to strengthen democratic values, national identity, and civic engagement through its education system.

Malaysia follows with six (6) identified papers, indicating a significant level of scholarly engagement in civic education initiatives, likely tied to national education reforms and policies emphasizing character development and responsible citizenship.

The Philippines and Thailand each contributed three (3) papers, suggesting moderate academic attention to the topic. These contributions reflect regional priorities in promoting active citizenship, social responsibility, and democratic participation, which are key themes in both countries' educational frameworks.

Countries such as Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore, Timor Leste, and Vietnam had one (1) identified paper. This limited representation points to several factors, such as a smaller research community, limited publication in international journals, or varying levels of emphasis placed on civic education within national education policies.

Table 3 presents the distribution of papers by research design on the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia.

Table 3. Distribution of Papers by Research Design

Research Design	(f)	%
Case Study Approach	2	7%
Content Analysis	3	11%
Quantitative Approach	6	22%
Qualitative Approach	10	37%
Online Research Methods	1	4%
Literature Review Approach	3	11%
Experimental Research Design	1	4%
Mixed Methods	1	4%

Table 3 outlines the distribution of research designs employed in studies examining the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia. A total of 27 studies were reviewed, utilizing a variety of methodological approaches.

The qualitative approach emerged as the most commonly used design, representing 37% (n=10) of the studies. This prevalence reflects the complex, socio-political, and context-specific nature of civic education, which often requires researchers to explore participants' experiences, beliefs, and practices in-depth. This aligns with the nature of many studies reviewed in your dissertation, which emphasized themes such as civic identity formation, cultural diversity, and national values—areas best explored through interpretive methods.

Thus, quantitative approach, used in 22% (n=6) of the studies, highlights efforts to measure civic education outcomes such as students' knowledge, attitudes, or civic engagement levels. While quantitative research offers valuable data on trends and correlations, it may be constrained in explaining deeper contextual factors influencing civic education—hence, its less dominant but still significant presence.

In connection to this, both content analysis and literature review approaches appeared in 11% (n=3) of the studies. These designs provided systematic syntheses of existing knowledge and policy documents, helping researchers understand how civic education is framed within curricula or across national education systems.

Moreover, the case study approach, used in only 7% (n=2), focused on localized, real-world contexts such as individual schools or community programs. The relatively lower use of this method may be attributed to its time-intensive nature and limited generalizability, despite its strength in offering rich, contextual insights.

Likewise, less frequently employed are online research methods, experimental research design, and mixed methods, each representing just 4% (n=1). Several reasons may account for the limited use of these designs.

First, experimental designs require controlled conditions and ethical clearance, which are difficult to establish in real-world educational settings—especially in diverse and often resource-constrained Southeast Asian countries. Civic education, being deeply tied to values, identity, and national policy, is not easily subjected to randomized experimentation without raising ethical or cultural sensitivities.

Second, mixed methods research, while powerful in combining the strengths of qualitative and quantitative data, demands significant time, expertise, and funding. Many Southeast Asian research institutions may face limitations in training, resources, or access to advanced methodologies, reducing their capacity to carry out such designs.

Lastly, online research methods have only recently gained traction, likely influenced by the pandemic. However, their limited application in the reviewed studies may stem from digital divide issues, varying levels of ICT integration in schools, and the inherent challenge of fostering meaningful civic discourse through online-only platforms.

These underutilized methodologies represent important opportunities for future research. Given the growing digitalization of education and the complexity of civic learning, future studies could benefit from integrative, experimental, and technology-enhanced designs to explore both the effectiveness and innovation in civic education delivery across the region.

2. What are the common challenges and best practices in the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia?

Table 4 presents the common challenges in the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia. It presents its common themes that civic education posits challenges on its implementation.

Table 4. Synthesis of common challenges in implementing Civic Education

Authors	Year of Publication	Paper	Challenges	Conclusion
Eugenio, D. G.	2025	Burden and Responsibility: Perceptions of Social Science Teachers in Teaching Civic Education to College Students	Need for ongoing teacher training and curriculum development to effectively deliver meaningful civic education and keep up with evolving societal needs.	Civic education plays a crucial role in shaping responsible, democratic citizens, and its success relies on innovative pedagogy and continued support for educators.
Abdullah, N. A. T., Aziz, A. N. B.	2024	Being Malaysian: The Role and Challenges of Citizenship Education	A major challenge in Malaysian citizenship education is addressing the fragmented and sometimes conflicting “nations-of-intent” that reflect differing visions of what it means to be Malaysian, often resulting in exclusion, cultural bias, and lack of shared identity.	Citizenship education in Malaysia must evolve into a platform for dialogue and redefinition of national identity, enabling all citizens—regardless of ethnicity—to engage meaningfully in nation-building and coexist within a shared, inclusive Malaysian identity.

Anindya, S., Yani, M. & Harmanto	2024	Examining Civic Education: A Comparative Perspective of Indonesian and Malaysian Multiculturalism	One key challenge in both Indonesia and Malaysia is ensuring the consistent integration of multicultural values across all levels of civic education, where Indonesia stages multicultural content developmentally, while Malaysia implements it evenly at all stages.	Both Indonesia and Malaysia successfully incorporate multiculturalism in civic education, but their contrasting strategies—developmental phasing versus uniform integration—offer unique models for cultivating tolerant and civic-minded citizens.
IGE, O., & Jita, T.	2024	Using a blended learning instructional strategy to support students' civic knowledge and social skills: A strategy to support rural schools in East Timor.	Teachers in rural Timor-Leste face significant difficulties with teaching civic education due to limited resources, training, and support—despite post-independence reforms and international aid.	Blended learning shows strong potential for improving civic education in rural schools, but more research is needed to adapt and optimize this approach in Timor-Leste and similar developing contexts.
Japar, M., Casmana, A. R., Adha, M. M., & Fadhillah, D. N.	2024	Students' perspectives on civic education through digital citizenship in the virtual era.	Limited awareness and application of digital citizenship skills, especially regarding ethical responsibilities in the virtual environment among university students.	Universities must actively develop IT-based learning environments to foster students' digital literacy and ethical conduct, ensuring responsible and informed digital citizenship.
Poli, Julia & Samsuri, S.	2024	Strengthening Student Nationalism Through Civic Education at Timor University.	Strengthening student nationalism at Timor University faces key obstacles such as complex cultural identities, limited learning facilities, and rapid technological developments, especially in the border region with Timor Leste.	To reinforce student nationalism in border areas, civic education must be contextually adapted through engaging strategies and continuous support to overcome cultural and infrastructural challenges.
Van, P.	2024	Global Citizenship Education: International Experience and Suggestions for Global Citizenship Education in Vietnam's Current Civic Education Subject	Despite strong emphasis on global citizenship education, countries like Vietnam still face weaknesses in effectively integrating global competencies across their curriculum.	By drawing lessons from other nations, Vietnam can enhance its global citizenship education through strategic curriculum reforms that align with international standards and future global demands.

Usmia, R. & Samsuri	2023	The Innovation of Civic Education Studies in Indonesia: A Theoretical Review of Global Citizenship Education	Indonesia's civic education curriculum lacks integration of global citizenship education (GCE), limiting students' preparedness to face transnational issues like poverty, climate change, racism, and extremism in a globalized world.	Civic education in Indonesia must evolve to incorporate global citizenship education to produce globally competent citizens—socially connected, ethically responsible, and actively engaged in solving local and global problems.
Rosli, M. Jamaludin, K.A	2023	Integration of Civic Education in Primary School: Challenges Faced by Teachers.	Teachers face difficulties integrating civic education into English subjects due to limited awareness, heavy curriculum demands, and inadequate training.	Strengthening teacher training and curriculum support is essential to effectively integrate civic education in primary English instruction and beyond, promoting active and responsible citizenship.
Maulana, B., Marsela, D., Uzzahra, N. & Wahyuningsih, S.	2023	The Role of Civic Education in the Formation of National Identity and Awareness of the Indonesian Nation in the Era of Globalization	The younger generation's declining sense of nationalism and patriotism due to globalization, Western cultural influence, and lack of effective role models in family and society.	Civic education is essential for developing a generation that is knowledgeable, skilled, and proud of their national identity, enabling them to face globalization while preserving Indonesian values and unity.
Jacaban, J. O.	2023	Larger than Themselves: A Latent Content Analysis of Students' Success Stories Journals toward Civic Identity	Cultivating civic identity among students can be difficult without structured opportunities for real-world engagement that develop commitment, adaptability, and responsibility.	Authentic community involvement enables students to internalize civic values, demonstrating that experiential learning is key to nurturing strong civic identity among youth.
Inui, M. & Heuangkeo, S.	2023	Citizenship Education in Lao PDR: Developing Increased Awareness for ASEAN Toward Globalization	Citizenship education in Laos struggles with developing students' practical skills and fostering international awareness, particularly regarding ASEAN and foreign languages, despite students demonstrating strong theoretical understanding.	For Laos to cultivate globally aware citizens, it must build a balanced citizenship curriculum that emphasizes both knowledge and practical skills, alongside investing in robust teacher training programs.
Ginting R. and Brutu, L.M.	2023	The Role of Civic Education in Building Character in the Younger Generation	Lack of integration and teacher preparedness: The curriculum is not fully integrated, and many teachers lack proper understanding and training in character education through Civic Education (PKN).	Civic Education is crucial for character formation: When well-implemented, it helps students develop into responsible, ethical, and active citizens, making it essential to prioritize PKN in education policy and practice.
Dizon, A.	2022	Citizenship Education in the K to 12 Junior High School Economics Curriculum in the Philippines: A Content Analysis	Civic-oriented outcomes such as tax responsibility and bayanihan are not explicitly stated in the learning competencies, risking their omission during teaching.	While the Economics curriculum integrates key citizenship concepts, clear articulation of civic outcomes is necessary to strengthen the impact of citizenship education.

Fortuna, R. and Khadir, A.	2022	The Role of Civic Education in the Integration of the Indonesian Nation	The decline in students' moral values due to insufficient character and religious education, influenced by family, school, and globalization.	Civic education is vital for developing responsible, ethical citizens and promoting national unity through moral and value-based education.
Hagai, S.	2022	Citizenship Education in Cambodia: National and Regional ASEAN Citizenship Education in Post-Conflict Contexts. In: Hirata, T. (eds) Citizenship Education in the ASEAN Community.	Addressing the traumatic legacy of conflict and genocide in Cambodia while introducing democratic and human rights principles through citizenship education.	Cambodia's approach to citizenship education reflects a unique post-conflict adaptation, blending national recovery with ASEAN's broader civic identity goals, though further institutional entrenchment and public understanding remain needed.
Kampeeraparb, S., Suzuki, K., Chanbanchong, C., Thongthaw, S., Boonsombuti, S., Sangnapaboworn, W.	2022	Citizenship Education in Thailand: From the Persistence of Traditional Citizenship to the Next Step	Thailand's citizenship education faces the challenge of balancing the need for global, regional, and universal competencies—such as ASEAN literacy—with the preservation of Thai identity at local and national levels, amid rapid societal change since globalization.	To remain globally competitive yet culturally rooted, Thailand must continue to strengthen its citizenship education by incrementally integrating ASEAN-related knowledge and skills while preserving Thai cultural values, ensuring that its youth are well-prepared for both local challenges and international engagement.
Zhang, W., Chen, Z., Chia, Y.-T., & Neoh, J. Y.	2022	Rethinking civic education in the digital era: How media, school, and youth negotiate the meaning of citizenship	In Singapore, young people's civic learning is challenged by digital exposure to diverse and conflicting views, which creates confusion, political disengagement, and highlights the limited role of schools in guiding online civic discourse.	To strengthen civic education in the digital age, Singapore must bridge the gap between formal education and social media influence, equipping youth with critical thinking skills to navigate civic issues amid a flood of diverse perspectives.
Balakrishnan, V.	2021	Civics education in Malaysia: a clash between ethics, religion and cultural norms	Balancing ethics, religion, and cultural norms in Civics education within a multicultural society.	Continuous collaboration among educators, families, and communities is essential to promote responsible and inclusive digital citizenship.
Boontinand, V.	2021	Educating for citizenship in a fragile democracy: interrogating civic agenda in Thai higher education.	In Thai universities, civic/citizenship education is depoliticized and shaped more by state ideology, market demands, and institutional branding than by fostering critical democratic engagement, especially amid democratic backsliding.	While higher education in Thailand plays a growing role in citizenship learning, it must move beyond depoliticized frameworks and institutional interests to genuinely empower students as active, critically engaged democratic citizens.

Salleh, S., Yunus, A. M., & Embong, R.	2021	The Framework of Integrated Civic Education for Fostering Multicultural Tolerance	Limited enthusiasm and inconsistent understanding among teachers regarding civic education hinder its effective implementation, leading to gaps between intended curriculum goals and classroom practices.	To foster unity in Malaysia's diverse society, civic education must holistically address curriculum content, teaching approaches, and teacher competency to instill multicultural tolerance from an early age.
Siregar, C., Pane, M. M., Lake, S. & Fios, F.	2021	The Effectiveness of Learning Together Based on The Culture "Tok Tabua" and "Meup Tabua" in Learning Civic Education Class 6 Elementary School North Central Timor District	Limited learning media and hybrid (online-onsite) formats during the COVID-19 pandemic led to decreased student motivation and academic performance in North Central Timor (TTU).	The LT approach is an effective and culturally responsive strategy that significantly improves student motivation and academic achievement in civic education, especially in resource-limited rural settings like TTU.
Sripokangkul, S.	2021	The teaching of royalist-nationalist civic education and history in Thai schools: Education for the production of 'docile subjects'.	Thai civic and history education is criticized for promoting state ideology that molds students into passive, ultra-royalist, and ultra-nationalist citizens, rather than fostering critical thinking and democratic engagement.	To cultivate democratic citizenship, Thailand must re-evaluate its civic education approach, shifting from ideological indoctrination to fostering critical, participatory, and pluralistic values in students.
Rachmadtullah, R., Syofyan, H., Rasmitadila	2020	The Role of Civic Education Teachers in Implementing Multicultural Education in Elementary School Students	Indonesia's rich diversity in ethnicity, religion, race, and group identity can lead to national disunity if not managed properly.	The role of civic education teachers is essential in elementary schools to help children understand, appreciate, and respect diversity, fostering harmony and unity from a young age.
Rusmin, L., Hasan, Rabani, L., Mansyur, M. and Suardika, K.	2020	The Role of Civic Education in the Student Moral Development in Elementary School: A Descriptive Study	Moral decline among students due to lack of emphasis on affective aspects in education, resulting in behaviors like dishonesty, disrespect, and lack of discipline.	Civic education is crucial for moral development, helping students grow into disciplined, respectful, and responsible individuals when supported by schools, teachers, and families through a holistic and consistent approach.
Ismail et. Al	2019	Nation-Building Among Youths in Malaysia: The Civic Education Approach	Limited emphasis on democratic values and practical civic participation in Malaysia's civic education, with a stronger focus on patriotism and loyalty rather than democratic engagement and critical discourse.	Civic education has positively shaped civic consciousness among Malaysian youth, contributing to national unity and identity, but it must evolve to include broader democratic principles to fully support nation-building.

Roberts, A., Nganga, L. & James, J.	2019	Citizenship and Civic Education in Costa Rica, Myanmar, and the United States.	Variability in civic education approaches across countries—from textbook-heavy methods in Myanmar to more critical, participatory approaches in the U.S.—highlights the difficulty of creating universally applicable civic education practices.	An ethnographic transnational approach reveals the value of culturally responsive civic education, emphasizing that effective citizenship teaching must be rooted in local contexts while contributing to global democratic understanding.
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Based on the synthesis of 27 studies on civic education in Southeast Asia, several common challenges and best practices emerged. Among the common challenges, six (6) key themes were identified.

Figure 4 presents the key themes on the common challenges in the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia.



Figure 4. Key Themes on the Challenges in Implementing Civic Education

Several key challenges hinder civic education in Southeast Asia. First, many countries face curriculum gaps with vague content, especially on multiculturalism and global citizenship. Second, limited teacher training weakens content delivery and pedagogy. Third, political and ideological influences restrict open discourse and critical thinking. Fourth, accessibility issues in marginalized areas—due to resource scarcity—worsen educational inequality. Fifth, there is a lack of digital citizenship education, leaving students unprepared for civic life in a digital world. Sixth, tensions between globalization and national identity complicate efforts to balance global awareness with local values.

Studies reflect these gaps: Ding, Lei, and Guo (2023) emphasized vocational education's role in civic engagement, while Rosli and Jamaludin (2023) noted challenges in primary schools, such as teacher preparedness and curriculum constraints. Table 5 summarizes the frequency of these challenges across publication databases, offering a quantitative view of recurring issues.

Table 5. Emerging Challenges in Civic Education Implementation by Database

Database	Frequency	Percentage
Google Scholar	18	66.7
Scopus	5	18.5
Springer	2	7.4
Taylor & Francis	2	7.4
Total	27	100%

Table 5 provides a simplified view based solely on the source database of each study that identified implementation challenges. Of the 27 studies included in the synthesis, 66.7% were sourced from Google Scholar, 18.5% from Scopus, 11.1% from Springer, and 7.4% from Taylor & Francis. This breakdown

demonstrates that the majority of studies reporting civic education implementation challenges were retrieved from Google Scholar, indicating its central role in capturing region-specific, empirical concerns across Southeast Asia. The data confirm that the databases indeed provide varying levels of insight into implementation challenges and justifies the use of frequency-based analysis by source.

Civic education in Southeast Asia faces challenges such as limited trained educators, inadequate facilities, and weak curriculum integration (Maisog, 2023). Best practices include experiential learning, cross-sector collaboration, and the promotion of civic values and democratic engagement across subjects (Ding, Lei, & Guo, 2023; White, Dong, Campbell, & Lee, 2023). Effective strategies involve involving families, schools, and communities, fostering civic identity, and utilizing problem-solving toolkits to deepen understanding of democratic principles. Moreover, data-driven implementation and continuous evaluation of civic programs help address gaps and ensure relevance to students' diverse lives and sociopolitical contexts (Maisog, 2023).

Table 6 presents the synthesis of the best practices in the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia.

Table 6. Synthesis of the best practices in the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia

Authors	Year of Publication	Paper	Best Practices
Eugenio, D. G.	2025	Burden and Responsibility: Perceptions of Social Science Teachers in Teaching Civic Education to College Students	Use of student-centered teaching strategies such as debates, role-playing, and community projects to foster engagement, critical thinking, and active citizenship.
Abdullah, N. A. T., Aziz, A. N. B.	2024	Being Malaysian: The Role and Challenges of Citizenship Education	Promoting an inclusive national identity through educational policies that embrace diversity and encourage democratic dialogue fosters empathy, mutual respect, and shared values among multicultural communities.
Anindya, S., Yani, M. & Harmanto	2024	Examining Civic Education: A Comparative Perspective of Indonesian and Malaysian Multiculturalism	Malaysia's approach of embedding four core multicultural indicators—love, respect, responsibility, and joy—across all educational levels ensures early and continuous exposure to diversity and inclusivity.
IGE, O., & Jita, T.	2024	Using a blended learning instructional strategy to support students' civic knowledge and social skills: A strategy to support rural schools in East Timor.	Blended learning instructional strategy (combining conventional and computer-assisted methods) effectively enhances civic knowledge and social skills, especially in resource-constrained rural settings.
Japar, M., Casmana, A. R., Adha, M. M., & Fadhillah, D. N.	2024	Students' perspectives on civic education through digital citizenship in the virtual era.	Promoting digital ethics through discussions on privacy, misinformation, and respect for online communities helps students better understand and apply their rights and responsibilities in cyberspace.
Poli, Julia & Samsuri, S.	2024	Strengthening Student Nationalism Through Civic Education at Timor University.	Implementing innovative and interactive civic education methods—like project-based learning, discussions, and empowerment programs—effectively fosters nationalism among students.
Van, P.	2024	Global Citizenship Education: International Experience and Suggestions for Global Citizenship Education in Vietnam's Current Civic Education Subject	Countries such as Singapore and South Korea have proactively embedded global citizenship into their general education systems, ensuring students gain the skills to thrive in a globalized world.
Ginting R. and Brutu, L.M.	2023	The Role of Civic Education in Building Character in the Younger Generation	Interactive and participatory learning methods: Using discussions, simulations, real projects, and community activities effectively enhances students' critical thinking, collaboration, and social responsibility.

Inui, M. & Heuangkeo, S.	2023	Citizenship Education in Lao PDR: Developing Increased Awareness for ASEAN Toward Globalization	Using tools like Delphi surveys to assess current competencies and forecast future educational needs helps identify gaps and guide targeted curriculum development.
Jacaban, J. O.	2023	Larger than Themselves: A Latent Content Analysis of Students' Success Stories Journals toward Civic Identity	The "drawing-from-the-well" model, grounded in students' actual civic engagement, effectively fosters civic identity by integrating values of commitment, adaptability, and responsibility in project-based initiatives.
Maulana, B., Marsela, D., Uzzahra, N. & Wahyuningsih, S.	2023	The Role of Civic Education in the Formation of National Identity and Awareness of the Indonesian Nation in the Era of Globalization	Strengthening civic education to instill national values, character, and pride in Indonesian culture, while filtering foreign cultural influences and promoting critical thinking and responsible citizenship.
Rosli, M. Jamaludin, K.A	2023	Integration of Civic Education in Primary School: Challenges Faced by Teachers.	Utilizing a mixed-methods approach (surveys + interviews) helps reveal both systemic issues and on-the-ground teacher experiences, guiding more effective support strategies.
Usmia, R. & Samsuri	2023	The Innovation of Civic Education Studies in Indonesia: A Theoretical Review of Global Citizenship Education	Develop civic education through a conceptual framework of global citizenship competence that includes: Knowledge and understanding (e.g., social justice, globalization, diversity), values and attitudes (e.g., empathy, environmental concern, respect for diversity), skills (e.g., critical thinking, cooperation, conflict resolution).
Dizon, A.	2022	Citizenship Education in the K to 12 Junior High School Economics Curriculum in the Philippines: A Content Analysis	Conducting content analysis of curriculum guides helps identify gaps and ensure alignment with both liberal individualist and civic republican citizenship ideals.
Fortuna, R. and Khadir, A.	2022	The Role of Civic Education in the Integration of the Indonesian Nation	Integrating civic education early to instill values of tolerance, respect for diversity, and Pancasila-based character development.
Hagai, S.	2022	Citizenship Education in Cambodia: National and Regional ASEAN Citizenship Education in Post-Conflict Contexts. In: Hirata, T. (eds) Citizenship Education in the ASEAN Community.	Integration of democracy and human rights education into the national curriculum post-1993, reflecting a deliberate shift toward peacebuilding and regional (ASEAN) citizenship values.
Kampeeraparb, S., Suzuki, K., Chanbanchong, C., Thongthaw, S., Boonsombuti, S., Sangnapaboworn, W.	2022	Citizenship Education in Thailand: From the Persistence of Traditional Citizenship to the Next Step	The integration of citizenship education into multiple learning areas—such as Social Studies, Religion, Culture, and Thai Language—within the Basic Education Core Curriculum, along with targeted efforts (e.g., the Delphi survey and structured questionnaires) to gauge and adapt to students' and experts' insights, demonstrates a strategic, evidence-based approach to curriculum development.

Zhang, W., Chen, Z., Chia, Y.-T., & Neoh, J. Y.	2022	Rethinking civic education in the digital era: How media, school, and youth negotiate the meaning of citizenship	The study underscores the importance of recognizing the roles of families, peers, and especially social media in shaping civic understanding, suggesting a broader, multi-contextual approach to civic education.
Balakrishnan, V.	2021	Civics education in Malaysia: a clash between ethics, religion and cultural norms	Applying Ribble & Bailey's nine elements of digital citizenship to guide values-based teaching.
Boontinand, V.	2021	Educating for citizenship in a fragile democracy: interrogating civic agenda in Thai higher education.	Universities utilize civic/citizenship education to promote values like responsibility and adaptability, aligning students with both societal expectations and labor market needs.
Salleh, S., Yunus, A. M., & Embong, R.	2021	The Framework of Integrated Civic Education for Fostering Multicultural Tolerance	Integrating civic values across multiple subjects and incorporating both classroom and co-curricular activities enhances civic literacy and promotes real-life application of multicultural tolerance.
Siregar, C., Pane, M. M., Lake, S. & Fios, F.	2021	The Effectiveness of Learning Together Based on The Culture "Tok Tabua" and "Meup Tabua" in Learning Civic Education Class 6 Elementary School North Central Timor District	Using the Learning Together (LT) approach grounded in local culture ("Tok Tabua" and "Meup Tabua") effectively boosted both cognitive and affective learning outcomes among Grade 6 Civic Education students.
Sripokangkul, S.	2021	The teaching of royalist-nationalist civic education and history in Thai schools: Education for the production of 'docile subjects'.	The integration of civic education with Thai 'core values' and royalist-nationalist history reflects a deliberate strategy to instill loyalty and patriotism, aimed at preserving the monarchy-centered national identity.
Rachmadtullah, R., Syofyan, H., Rasmitadila	2020	The Role of Civic Education Teachers in Implementing Multicultural Education in Elementary School Students	Civic education teachers play a key role in promoting multicultural education by teaching tolerance, respect, gender sensitivity, and anti-discrimination, and by integrating lessons on diversity and social problem-solving.
Rusmin, L., Hasan, Rabani, L., Mansyur, M. and Suardika, K.	2020	The Role of Civic Education in the Student Moral Development in Elementary School: A Descriptive Study	Integration of moral values in civic education through various school programs such as routine activities, spontaneous reinforcement, teacher role-modeling, classroom integration, and extracurricular.
Ismail et. Al	2019	Nation-Building Among Youths in Malaysia: The Civic Education Approach	Integration of civic education across all educational levels and subjects, from primary to tertiary education, including extracurricular and community activities, which strengthens civic knowledge, skills, and values.
Roberts, A., Nganga, L. & James, J.	2019	Citizenship and Civic Education in Costa Rica, Myanmar, and the United States.	Contextualized teaching strategies, such as incorporating multiple perspectives (U.S.) and linking civic learning to real-life improvements (Costa Rica), ensure that civic education remains relevant and meaningful to students.

The synthesis of study highlights several interconnected themes central to civic and citizenship education within Southeast Asia, particularly in multicultural societies. Six (6) key themes are identified: Promoting Inclusivity and Multiculturalism, Balancing Traditional Cultural Norms with Democratic Values, Developing Active Participation and Critical Thinking Skills, Strategies and Pedagogical Innovations in Civic Education, Civic Education in Fragile or Post-Conflict Contexts, Integration of Technology and Innovative Methods.

Figure 5 presents the key themes on the best practices in implementing civic education in southeast Asia.



Figure 5. Key Themes on the Best Practices in Implementing Civic Education

A key theme in civic education is promoting inclusivity and multiculturalism by embedding values like respect, love, and responsibility into the curriculum. This fosters early exposure to diversity and strengthens social cohesion. Balancing traditional norms with democratic values is also essential, with curricula integrating religious and regional identities to encourage tolerance and preserve cultural integrity.

Another core focus is developing active participation and critical thinking through community projects, discussions, and digital citizenship initiatives. In resource-limited areas, blended learning expands access and engagement. Participatory and experiential teaching methods help ensure relevance and impact, especially in post-conflict contexts where civic education supports peacebuilding and social healing.

The integration of technology promotes flexible, inclusive learning and enhances digital literacy, making civic education more accessible and adaptive to diverse learners.

Studies by DiGiacomo et al. (2021) and Kaufman (2020) emphasize tailored civic education that responds to political polarization and media challenges. Their findings support strategies like discussions and media literacy activities to foster critical thinking, open-mindedness, and informed democratic participation.

Table 7 presents the best practices on the implementation of civic education in identified databases.

Table 7. Distribution of Reviewed Best Practices in Civic Education Studies by Database Source

Database	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Google Scholar	19	65.52%
Scopus	5	17.24%
Springer	3	10.34%
Taylor & Francis	2	6.9%

Note: Some studies reported multiple best practices. A total of 29 best practices were identified across the 27 reviewed studies.

The analysis of database sources from which best practices in civic education were derived reveals a diverse yet concentrated distribution of academic contributions. As reflected in Table 7, a total of 29 best practices were identified from 27 reviewed studies, with some studies reporting multiple practices. The majority of these best practices, or 65.52%, were sourced from Google Scholar, indicating the platform's dominance as an accessible and inclusive repository of civic education literature. This suggests that many civic education initiatives, especially those from Southeast Asian countries, are disseminated through open-access channels, making research more attainable for educators and scholars with limited access to subscription-based databases. Scopus accounted for 17.24% of the identified best practices, signifying its role in contributing high-quality, peer-reviewed research that often presents theoretically grounded and empirically validated approaches. Springer followed with 10.34%, offering specialized and contextualized insights, particularly in areas of regional integration, post-conflict education, and curriculum reform. Lastly, Taylor & Francis contributed 6.90% of the best practices, highlighting targeted research on democratic pedagogy and curriculum strategies, particularly in higher education contexts. This distribution underscores both the accessibility of diverse research sources and the critical value of peer-reviewed platforms in shaping and legitimizing civic education discourse.

3. What are the strengths and limitations of the existing studies on civic education in Southeast Asia?

Table 9 presents a synthesized summary of the strengths and limitations identified in the existing studies on civic education across Southeast Asia, highlighting methodological rigor, thematic focus, and regional relevance.

Table 9. Summary of Strengths and Limitations on Civic Education

Authors	Year of Publication	Paper	Strength	Limitation
Eugenio, D. G.	2025	Burden and Responsibility: Perceptions of Social Science Teachers in Teaching Civic Education to College Students	The study provides valuable insights into the perceptions of social science teachers regarding the teaching of civic education to college students, highlighting the challenges and responsibilities they face in fostering civic engagement and social responsibility among learners.	The research focuses solely on the perspectives of social science teachers, potentially overlooking the viewpoints of students and other stakeholders involved in civic education, which may limit the comprehensiveness of the findings.
Abdullah, N. A. T., Aziz, A. N. B.	2024	Being Malaysian: The Role and Challenges of Citizenship Education	The article offers a comprehensive exploration of the complex relationship between citizenship education and national identity in Malaysia, highlighting the importance of inclusivity in representing diverse cultural narratives.	The study focuses primarily on the Malaysian context, which may limit the generalizability of its findings to other multicultural nations with different educational structures and citizenship concepts.
Anindya, S., Yani, M. & Harmanto	2024	Examining Civic Education: A Comparative Perspective of Indonesian and Malaysian Multiculturalism	The article provides a comparative analysis of civic education in two multicultural nations, offering insights into how each system incorporates multicultural values and addresses cultural diversity.	The study focuses on a comparative analysis between Indonesia and Malaysia, which may limit its applicability to other multicultural contexts with different educational frameworks and cultural dynamics.
IGE, O., & Jita, T.	2024	Using a blended learning instructional strategy to support students' civic knowledge and social skills: A strategy to support rural schools in East Timor.	The study employs a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design to assess the effectiveness of blended learning in enhancing civic knowledge and social skills, with implications for improving education in rural Nigeria and supporting Timor Leste.	The research focuses solely on a Nigerian context, which may limit the applicability of its findings to other educational settings, including Timor Leste, with different cultural and infrastructural backgrounds.

Japar, M., Casmana, A. R., Adha, M. M., & Fadhillah, D. N.	2024	Students' perspectives on civic education through digital citizenship in the virtual era.	The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, to assess Indonesian students' perspectives on digital citizenship skills, providing a comprehensive understanding of their digital literacy needs.	The research focuses solely on university students, which may not fully represent the broader youth population's experiences and perspectives on digital citizenship.
Poli, Julia & Samsuri, S.	2024	Strengthening Student Nationalism Through Civic Education at Timor University.	The study employs a qualitative case study approach to explore how Timor University strengthens student nationalism through civic education, highlighting innovative teaching methods and community engagement.	The research is context-specific to Timor University, which may limit the generalizability of its findings to other educational settings.
Van, P.	2024	Global Citizenship Education: International Experience and Suggestions for Global Citizenship Education in Vietnam's Current Civic Education Subject	Compares global citizenship and civic education across four countries, offering valuable insights.	Lacks in-depth analysis of specific challenges within each country's civic education program.
Ginting R. and Brutu, L.M.	2023	The Role of Civic Education in Building Character in the Younger Generation	The article provides insights into the role of civic education in character development, emphasizing its importance in shaping responsible and engaged individuals.	The study's findings may be limited by its focus on specific educational contexts or populations, potentially affecting the generalizability of its conclusions.
Inui, M. & Heuangkeo, S.	2023	Citizenship Education in Lao PDR: Developing Increased Awareness for ASEAN Toward Globalization	Uses a Delphi survey to assess citizenship education awareness in Lao PDR, showing areas for improvement.	Focuses mainly on student perceptions, lacking educator and policymaker insights.
Jacaban, J. O.	2023	Larger than Themselves: A Latent Content Analysis of Students' Success Stories Journals toward Civic Identity	Utilizes latent content analysis of students' success story journals to uncover a "drawing-from-the-well" model of civic identity development, highlighting themes of commitment, adaptability, and responsibility.	Based on a small sample of 16 students from a single institution, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.
Maulana, B., Marsela, D., Uzzahra, N. & Wahyuningsih, S.	2023	The Role of Civic Education in the Formation of National Identity and Awareness of the Indonesian Nation in the Era of Globalization	Examines how citizenship education promotes national identity among Indonesian youth.	Lacks empirical data, limiting practical applicability.

Rosli, M. Jamaludin, K.A	2023	Integration of Civic Education in Primary School: Challenges Faced by Teachers.	Employs a mixed-methods approach to identify challenges faced by teachers in integrating civic education into primary school English subjects in Malaysia.	Focuses solely on primary school teachers, which may not capture challenges at other educational levels.
Usmia, R. & Samsuri	2023	The Innovation of Civic Education Studies in Indonesia: A Theoretical Review of Global Citizenship Education	Highlights the importance of global citizenship education in shaping proactive, globally aware citizens in Indonesia, offering a conceptual framework for its integration into civic education.	Uses a literature-based approach, which may lack empirical data or practical insights into the actual implementation of the proposed framework.
Dizon, A.	2022	Citizenship Education in the K to 12 Junior High School Economics Curriculum in the Philippines: A Content Analysis	The study offers a comprehensive content analysis of the K to 12 Junior High School Economics curriculum in the Philippines, highlighting its integration of liberal individualist and civic republican conceptions of citizenship. This provides valuable insights into how economic education can promote civic engagement and national identity.	The research focuses solely on the Economics curriculum, potentially overlooking the broader Social Studies framework. This narrow scope may limit the understanding of how other subjects contribute to citizenship education within the K to 12 program.
Fortuna, R. and Khadir, A.	2022	The Role of Civic Education in the Integration of the Indonesian Nation	The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of civic education in promoting national integration in Indonesia, emphasizing the importance of fostering a unified national identity through inclusive and participatory educational practices.	The study primarily focuses on theoretical perspectives and may benefit from empirical data to assess the practical implementation and effectiveness of civic education programs in diverse Indonesian contexts.
Hagai, S.	2022	Citizenship Education in Cambodia: National and Regional ASEAN Citizenship Education in Post-Conflict Contexts. In: Hirata, T. (eds) Citizenship Education in the ASEAN Community.	Offers a comprehensive analysis of citizenship education in Cambodia's post-conflict context.	Relies mainly on surveys, limiting qualitative depth.
Kampeeraparb, S., Suzuki, K., Chanbanchong, C., Thongthaw, S., Boonsombuti, S., Sangnapaboworn, W.	2022	Citizenship Education in Thailand: From the Persistence of Traditional Citizenship to the Next Step	Analyzes Singapore's citizenship education policies, focusing on Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) and ASEAN awareness.	Lacks empirical data from students or educators on the effectiveness of these policies.

Zhang, W., Chen, Z., Chia, Y.-T., & Neoh, J. Y.	2022	Rethinking civic education in the digital era: How media, school, and youth negotiate the meaning of citizenship	Investigates the evolving role of civic education in the digital age, focusing on Singaporean youth's views and the influence of schools, families, and social media.	Focuses only on Singaporean youth, which may limit the applicability of findings to other cultural contexts.
Balakrishnan, V.	2021	Civics education in Malaysia: a clash between ethics, religion and cultural norms	The article provides a nuanced analysis of the interplay between ethics, religion, and cultural norms in Malaysian civics education, highlighting the complexities of integrating digital citizenship in a multicultural society.	The case study approach, while offering in-depth insights, may limit the generalizability of findings to broader educational contexts beyond Malaysia.
Boontinand, V.	2021	Educating for citizenship in a fragile democracy: interrogating civic agenda in Thai higher education.	The study offers a critical examination of civic education in Thai higher education, revealing how it serves multiple functions: reinforcing state ideology, preparing students for the labor market, and enhancing institutional branding. This multifaceted analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the role of civic education in a fragile democracy	The research is based on in-depth interviews with leadership from only five public universities in Thailand, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other institutions or regions within the country.
Salleh, S., Yunus, A. M., & Embong, R.	2021	The Framework of Integrated Civic Education for Fostering Multicultural Tolerance	Proposes an integrated civic education framework encompassing curriculum, teaching methods, and teacher competency to foster multicultural tolerance in Malaysia.	Theoretical in nature, lacking empirical data to validate the proposed framework's effectiveness.
Siregar, C., Pane, M. M., Lake, S. & Fios, F.	2021	The Effectiveness of Learning Together Based on The Culture "Tok Tabua" and "Meup Tabua" in Learning Civic Education Class 6 Elementary School North Central Timor District	The study employs a mixed-methods approach to identify challenges faced by teachers in integrating civic education into primary school English subjects in Indonesia.	Focuses solely on primary school teachers, which may not capture challenges at other educational levels
Sripokangkul, S.	2021	The teaching of royalist-nationalist civic education and history in Thai schools: Education for the production of 'docile subjects'.	Analyzes the impact of civic education and history curricula in shaping Thai students into idealized citizens aligned with state ideology, offering a critical perspective on the influence of royalist-nationalist narratives in education.	Focuses primarily on curriculum analysis, without incorporating student or teacher perspectives on the actual impact of these teachings in the classroom.

Rachmadtullah, R., Syofyan, H., Rasmitadila	2020	The Role of Civic Education Teachers in Implementing Multicultural Education in Elementary School Students	Highlights the role of civic education teachers in promoting multiculturalism in Indonesian schools.	Focuses on a specific Indonesian context, limiting generalizability.
Rusmin, L., Hasan, Rabani, L., Mansyur, M. and Suardika, K.	2020	The Role of Civic Education in the Student Moral Development in Elementary School: A Descriptive Study	Investigates how civic education influences moral development in elementary school students in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, providing insights into character-building through education.	Focuses on a specific region, which may limit the applicability of findings to broader contexts.
Ismail et. Al	2019	Nation-Building Among Youths in Malaysia: The Civic Education Approach	The study employs a quantitative approach using surveys to assess the effectiveness of civic education in fostering national unity among Malaysian youths, providing empirical evidence of its impact.	The research focuses solely on university students, which may not fully represent the broader youth population's experiences and perspectives on civic education.
Roberts, A., Nganga, L. & James, J.	2019	Citizenship and Civic Education in Costa Rica, Myanmar, and the United States.	Conducts a transnational ethnographic study comparing civic education practices in Costa Rica, Myanmar, and the United States, highlighting diverse pedagogical approaches and curriculum emphases.	Focuses on middle and high school educators, potentially overlooking perspectives from other educational levels or stakeholders

The narrative review of 27 studies on civic education in Southeast Asia highlights key strengths and limitations. Strengths include strong contextual analysis (15 studies), innovative or mixed-methods designs (12), focus on multiculturalism and digital citizenship (10), and stakeholder-specific insights (8).

However, common limitations emerged: limited generalizability due to small scopes (18), lack of empirical data (14), narrow focus on single stakeholder groups (10), weak methodologies (9), and insufficient engagement with digital or global citizenship (6). These findings reveal the field's depth but stress the need for broader, data-driven, and inclusive research.

Notably, Van (2024) underscored the need to improve global citizenship education in Vietnam and other countries, while Japar et al. (2024) emphasized digital literacy's importance, highlighting students' concerns about privacy, misinformation, and ethical online behavior.

4. Based on the findings of the study, what recommendation can be made to improve the implementation of civic education in Southeast Asia?

Based on the analysis of 27 studies, this research proposes the ASEAN Civic Education Framework tailored to the Philippine context. Grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the framework bridges ASEAN ideals with classroom realities through a multi-layered, localized approach.

It promotes inclusive, participatory, and culturally responsive pedagogy that fosters national identity, democracy, multiculturalism, and global citizenship. It integrates regional best practices—like character formation and digital citizenship—while addressing gaps in contextualization, evidence, and student engagement.

As the study's main output, the framework serves as both a conceptual guide and practical model for policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators, aiming to embed ASEAN civic values in a sustainable and actionable way. It highlights how learners interact with family, school, community, and state systems to shape civic identity. Figure 10 illustrates this multi-systemic structure.

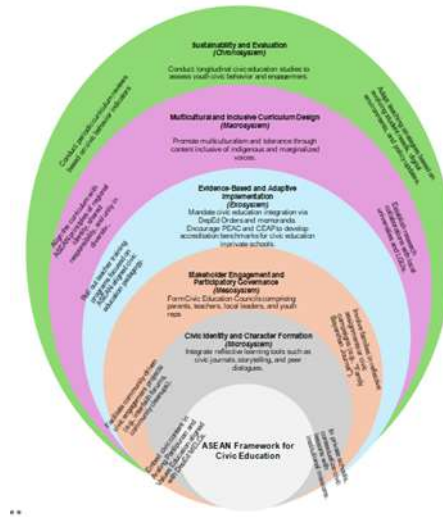


Figure 10. Ecological System Framework of ASEAN Civic Education

To contextualize civic education in Philippine public and private schools, this study adopts Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as a structural guide for implementing the ASEAN Civic Education Framework. At the microsystem level, civic identity is built through lesson plans focused on democratic values, empathy, and justice—integrated into Araling Panlipunan and Values Education using reflective practices like storytelling and journals.

The mesosystem strengthens school-home-community ties through initiatives like Civic Education Councils and projects such as *Family Bayanihan Journals*, fostering active civic engagement. In the exosystem, networks like PEAC and CEAP can promote civic education standards, training, and collaboration with local institutions to tailor content and programs.

At the macrosystem level, curricula should reflect multicultural and ASEAN-aligned values such as unity in diversity and participatory governance through activities like *ASEAN Day*. The chronosystem ensures long-term sustainability by tracking civic behavior and adapting to generational and policy changes using digital tools and student-led platforms.

This framework forms the basis for a regional civic education research agenda, focusing on areas such as the impact of reflective practices, stakeholder collaboration, and student identity development. It supports policy advocacy, teacher training, and curriculum innovation, especially in under-researched Southeast Asian contexts. By promoting cross-national collaboration and culturally grounded inquiry, the agenda aims to build inclusive, future-ready civic education systems that align with ASEAN goals.

Table 10 presents the research agenda of Southeast Asia, an inclusive, future-ready civic education.

Table 10. Southeast Asia Research Agenda

Focus Area	Research Topics
Civic Identity and Character Formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of students' civic identity through reflective classroom practices - Impact of character-focused activities on responsibility and behavior
Multicultural and Inclusive Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration of cultural and ethnic diversity in civic education content - Representation of indigenous and minority voices in learning materials
Multi-level Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vertical alignment of civic education competencies across K–12 levels - Effectiveness of cross-curricular integration of civic education
ASEAN Citizenship and Global Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of ASEAN identity and regional solidarity through curriculum - Development of global citizenship competencies through classroom instruction
Teacher Capacity and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact of teacher training on culturally responsive and inclusive civic teaching - Barriers to adopting participatory and reflective civic pedagogies
Digital Civic Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration of digital platforms in civic learning- Influence of social media on youth civic engagement - Offline digital tools for rural classrooms

The proposed research agenda for Southeast Asia identifies key areas to develop an inclusive, future-ready civic education system tailored to the region's social, cultural, and political contexts. Central themes include civic identity and character formation, emphasizing reflective practices like storytelling and journaling to foster responsibility, ethics, and national pride.

The agenda promotes a multicultural and inclusive curriculum, integrating indigenous and marginalized voices to ensure equity. It also calls for K–12 curriculum integration, examining how civic competencies can be vertically aligned and embedded across subjects beyond Social Studies.

A key focus is nurturing ASEAN citizenship and global awareness, encouraging research on intercultural skills, peace-building, and regional identity. Supporting these goals, the agenda stresses teacher training, culturally responsive pedagogy, and the use of digital tools for civic learning—especially in underserved areas.

Together, these priorities offer a strategic guide for educators, policymakers, and researchers to build relevant, participatory, and digitally adaptive civic education systems across Southeast Asia.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

Based on the study's findings, the following conclusions are drawn.

The narrative review highlights a growing academic focus on civic education in Southeast Asia between 2019 and 2025, though research remains unevenly distributed across countries. Indonesia and Malaysia lead in scholarly output; the dominance of qualitative methods and limited use of experimental and mixed-method designs point to a need for more diverse and rigorous methodologies in future research to deepen and broaden understanding of civic education in the region.

Civic education in Southeast Asia faces challenges such as unclear curricula and limited resources; however, emerging best practices, including inclusive teaching, early integration, and a focus on digital citizenship, signal a shift toward more holistic and responsive approaches.

The review of civic education in Southeast Asia shows strengths in contextual analysis and relevant themes. Still, it is limited by methodological weaknesses, a lack of empirical data, and a narrow focus. Future research should be more inclusive, data-driven, and comprehensive.

An ASEAN Framework for civic education, specifically designed for the Philippines, is supported by a research agenda tailored to Southeast Asia, aiming to strengthen civic responsibility and awareness while guiding future research across diverse national contexts.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are offered for consideration.

Department of Education. It is essential to revise and clarify the civic education curriculum, ensuring it addresses content gaps and aligns with national identity, democracy, multiculturalism, and ASEAN goals. Additionally, DepEd may advocate for better resource allocation, such as updated textbooks and digital tools, to enhance the effectiveness of civic education in schools.

Policymakers. It is crucial to ensure the consistent implementation of civic education policies, emphasizing inclusivity and alignment with ASEAN goals. Standardizing policies across the region will help bridge execution gaps. Policymakers should also support the development of localized civic education content that reflects each region's socio-political context while maintaining national and ASEAN identities.

Government Officials. Foster collaboration between ASEAN member states in the development of civic education frameworks is essential, allowing the sharing of best practices for policy implementation. It is also crucial to ensure that civic education policies are implemented with minimal political influence, thereby promoting a balanced and unbiased education.

Civic Organizations. Ensure that the civic education curriculum reflects both local and global perspectives, fostering critical thinking on national identity, democracy, and globalization. Introducing mixed-methods and experimental approaches will enhance research and teaching methodologies, broadening the scope and depth of civic education.

Teachers. They may contribute to civic education by updating the curriculum to include inclusive, multicultural, and participatory methods that promote national identity, democracy, and digital citizenship. They may engage in continuous professional development to adopt innovative teaching strategies and integrate digital citizenship into lessons.

Education Institutions. They may establish research and development teams to create curricula that are responsive to local needs while aligning with broader ASEAN objectives.

Brunei. They may institutionalize civic education more explicitly within its national curriculum and support this initiative with research focused on student participation, civic identity, and curriculum integration, as current literature on civic education in the country remains limited.

Cambodia. They need to embed civic education more deeply into their educational framework and promote research that explores how civic learning contributes to post-conflict peacebuilding, democratic development, and national unity—areas that still lack a substantial academic focus.

Laos. It may strengthen its civic education curriculum by ensuring its integration at all educational levels and commissioning research on how civic values are taught, practiced, and understood by students and educators, addressing the country's notable gap in civic education scholarship.

Timor-Leste. They may prioritize the formal integration of civic education across all schooling levels and invest in foundational research to guide its development, particularly focusing on civic learning in rural and post-conflict communities where both practice and scholarship are limited.

Future Researchers. They are encouraged to conduct in-depth, country-specific studies that explore the implementation, effectiveness, and contextual relevance of civic education in underrepresented Southeast Asian nations such as Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Singapore, and Timor-Leste to address existing research gaps and support evidence-based policy development.

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