

Project Citizen: A Catalyst for Enhancing Legal Awareness in Vocational Education Students

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ABSTRACT

The study was motivated by the low legal awareness of vocational students caused by the dominance of conventional teacher-centered learning methods, the delivery of material tends to be theoretical, and students' habits still often violate school rules. This study aims to increase legal awareness in Pancasila Education learning through the project citizen learning model for class X TKR 4 students of SMK Negeri 2 Probolinggo, and to see how much the increase in students' legal awareness after the implementation of the project citizen learning model. The study was conducted using a qualitative approach with the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method in two cycles on 34 class X TKR 4 students of SMK Negeri 2 Probolinggo. Data were collected through legal awareness knowledge tests, observations, student worksheets, and field notes. The results of the study showed an increase in students' legal awareness knowledge through the project citizen learning model through an increase in posttest results with an average class score reaching 78 and learning completeness of 84.38%, an increase in learning implementation from 76.47% to 94.12%, and high student participation in group discussions during the project implementation. This study concludes that the application of the project citizen learning model in Pancasila Education subjects is effective in improving the quality of learning, changing passive students into active ones, and achieving the expected learning objectives.

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Pendidikan
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ABSTRAK

Kajian dilatar belakangi oleh rendahnya kesadaran hukum siswa vokasi yang disebabkan oleh dominasi penggunaan metode pembelajaran konvensional yang berpusat pada guru, penyampaian materi cenderung teoritis, kebiasaan siswa masih sering melakukan pelanggaran terhadap aturan sekolah. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kesadaran taat hukum pada pembelajaran Pendidikan Pancasila melalui model pembelajaran project citizen pada siswa kelas X TKR 4 SMK Negeri 2 Probolinggo, serta melihat seberapa besar peningkatan kesadaran hukum siswa setelah diterapkan model pembelajaran project citizen. Kajian dilakukan dengan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) dalam dua siklus pada 34 peserta didik kelas X TKR 4 SMK Negeri 2 Probolinggo. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes pengetahuan kesadaran hukum, observasi, lembar kerja peserta didik, serta catatan di lapangan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan pengetahuan kesadaran hukum siswa melalui model pembelajaran project citizen melalui peningkatan hasil posttest dengan rata-rata nilai kelas mencapai 78 dan ketuntasan belajar sebesar 84,38%, peningkatan keterlaksanaan pembelajaran dari 76,47% menjadi 94,12%, serta tingginya partisipasi peserta didik dalam diskusi kelompok selama pelaksanaan project. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penerapan model pembelajaran project citizen pada mata pelajaran Pendidikan Pancasila efektif meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran, mengubah siswa pasif menjadi aktif, serta mencapai tujuan pembelajaran yang diharapkan.

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1. Introduction

Legal awareness plays an important role in social life because it is related to order and social regularity. Legal awareness is understood as the attitude of individuals or groups to always comply with and obey the law. Individual compliance with applicable rules is not only influenced by the existence of the law, but also by the level of awareness in understanding and obeying those rules [1]. The level of individual compliance with norms and rules reflects the extent to which a person realizes the importance of rules as a guide for acting in a social environment. School is a strategic space for instilling legal awareness values, because schools cannot be separated from rules that must be fully obeyed. Thus, legal awareness in the school environment is reflected in the behavior of school members when interacting with school rules. Compliance with school regulations, punctuality, and responsibility in participating in learning determine the creation of an orderly and conducive learning atmosphere [2], [3], [4]. Strengthening legal awareness will shape the character of graduates who are competent and disciplined as preparation for entering the world of work.

Vocational education or vocational training is an educational program that prepares students to enter the world of work. Article 15 of National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 states that vocational education is secondary education that prepares students to work in certain fields. The main characteristic of vocational education is that it emphasizes practices based on its field, such as business, agriculture, industry, carpentry, and so on [5], [6]. As a demand of the world of work, vocational education graduates must not only possess technical skills, but also be able to demonstrate discipline, responsibility, and compliance with rules. These attitudes play an important role in the workplace, because violations of rules will affect both work quality and work safety. Therefore, the habit of obeying rules needs to be instilled during the educational process.

The habituation of obedience to rules, particularly within vocational education, positions teachers as key actors in building a strong foundation in the teaching and learning process. This aims to ensure that students possess discipline and responsibility as preparation for the working world. Teachers play a role in delivering learning materials while also providing guidance to understand and apply the applicable rules. Teachers' attitudes and behavior serve as real models for students [7], [8], [9], [10]. Such exemplary conduct becomes the basis for instilling values of compliance with rules, which can be internalized through Pancasila Education learning.

Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article 37 paragraph (1), states that the objective of the Pancasila Education subject is to shape students into individuals who possess a sense of nationality and love for their homeland. Pancasila Education plays an important role in forming moral values and social responsibility in individuals. Pancasila Education is also part of character education because it directs the process of shaping students' attitudes and behavior [11], [12],

[13], [14], [15]. This explanation emphasizes that Pancasila Education learning is not merely theoretical, but also directs students to have character, attitudes, and behavior in accordance with the noble values of the nation.

Project Citizen is a learning model that empowers students to exercise their civic rights and responsibilities through a portfolio based on real issues around them [13], [16]. Various previous studies have shown that the implementation of *Project Citizen* is able to increase students' active engagement, because it is student-centered and prepares graduates who have high-quality skills and become part of a modern society [17], [18], [19], [20]. In its implementation, knowledge is not only transferred through the teacher's explanation, but also directed toward solving problems and relating them to real life [21], [22]. The learning steps include problem identification, problem selection, information gathering, developing and presenting a portfolio, and reflection. Through this learning model, students are guided to develop legal awareness through active involvement in understanding and applying the applicable rules.

The *Project Citizen* learning model supports HOTS learning through improving students' thinking skills. This is in line with the research of Apriliani et al., (2025) & Sari, (2024), which has proven that the implementation of *Project Citizen* can improve cultural literacy, learning engagement, foster a sense of responsibility, enhance critical thinking, and encourage the courage to express opinions [20], [23]. *Project Citizen* learning is also able to improve the quality of learning at the tertiary and vocational levels [24], [25], [26], [27], [28], [29]. Based on the research findings of Fithry, (2021), *Project Citizen* has also been shown to be more effective in improving students' understanding when measured against other learning models [30]. These findings indicate that applying the *Project Citizen* model in Pancasila Education is effective in developing higher-order thinking skills and also has implications for the formation of legal awareness as a manifestation of the internalization of Pancasila values in everyday life.

Nevertheless, in practice there are still conditions indicating that students' awareness of rules is not yet fully consistent. Low legal awareness is influenced, among other things, by Pancasila Education learning methods that are still conventional in nature. Kusumawati et al., (2021) state that in Pancasila Education learning, the teacher has a large degree of involvement accompanied by giving students assignments to study independently [31]. Research by Pipit Widiatmaka, 2016 and Rahayu et al., 2025 states that Pancasila Education learning still seems monotonous because it is rote-based [32], [33]. As a result, Pancasila Education learning becomes less attractive to students, as seen from the low attention and enthusiasm toward the teacher's explanations [34]. Research conducted by Adilla & Ulfatun, 2022; Baehaqi & Andriyani, 2023 also proves that Pancasila Education learning is still carried out conventionally through one-way lectures [35], [36].

Based on the pre-survey activities, students had

received material on legal awareness, yet they had not applied it in everyday life. Interviews with teachers indicated that there were still students who violated school discipline rules, such as arriving late, not wearing the prescribed uniform, littering, being undisciplined in completing assignments, and even frequent conflicts between classes. This situation shows that legal awareness is still very low. This is where the role of Pancasila Education teachers is greatly needed to build students' legal awareness in the school environment. However, the reality shows that learning is dominated by the lecture method focused on textbooks. Assignments are generally limited to written questions, memorization, and summaries. The competence that Pancasila Education teachers must possess, in addition to educating students, is also the ability to guide students from being undisciplined to becoming disciplined students.

Low legal awareness among vocational students hinders the formation of disciplined and responsible attitudes as preparation for facing the working world. Various learning efforts have been made to instill legal awareness, integrating it with the role-playing learning model (Damayanti & Martiani, 2025), the importance of Pancasila Education teachers in fostering students' legal compliance (Rizal et al., 2020), and the formation of disciplined character for the younger generation (Sadar et al., 2025), but no study has examined the improvement of students' legal awareness in the context of vocational education. Based on this problem, this study discusses the application of Project Citizen in improving the legal awareness of class X TKR 4 students at SMK Negeri 2 Probolinggo, as well as determining the magnitude of the increase in legal awareness after the learning was implemented. The novelty of this study lies in the application of the Project Citizen model integrated with the creation of a digital campaign through Canva to address the low internalization of legal awareness among vocational education students, which has so far been overlooked in similar studies.

2. Methods

Classroom Action Research (CAR) was the approach used in this study. The research was carried out in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of the three stages sequentially. The subjects of this study were students of class X TKR 4 at SMK Negeri 2, totaling 32 students, with the material on Law-Abiding Behavior delivered using the project citizen learning model. Cycle I was conducted on 12 November 2024 and Cycle II was conducted on 19 November 2024, each with an allocation of time from 07.00 to 08.40 WIB.

The instruments used in this study were a legal awareness knowledge test, an observation checklist sheet, and a project assessment. The legal awareness knowledge test was a pretest given before the implementation of the project citizen model and a posttest given after the two learning cycles were completed. This test was used to measure the increase in students' knowledge of legal awareness material with a minimum mastery criterion of 75. The learning implementation observation

checklist sheet was completed by the observer in each cycle. This sheet contained 17 aspects of the teacher's actions during the implementation of the project citizen learning process, with yes or no answer options. The project assessment instrument was used to evaluate the poster products created by students in groups in Cycle II. The project assessment covered three aspects, namely participation in group discussions with a weight of 50, product content with a weight of 25, and product aesthetics with a weight of 25. In addition to these three instruments, field notes and open observation sheets were also used as qualitative supporting data to describe the dynamics of learning that took place in the classroom.

The collected data were then analyzed descriptively. Knowledge data were analyzed using the mean, mastery level, and pretest and posttest results. Learning implementation observation data were analyzed by calculating the percentage of aspects implemented out of the total 17 aspects in each cycle. Project assessment data were analyzed based on the distribution of students' score categories according to the predetermined assessment rubric, with the category Very Skilled for scores of 86 to 100, Skilled for scores of 76 to 85, Fairly Skilled for scores of 66 to 75, Less Skilled for scores of 56 to 65, and Very Less Skilled for scores below 55

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Legal Awareness Knowledge Test

Before the implementation of project citizen, the pretest results showed that most students had not yet achieved the minimum mastery criterion. After the two learning cycles were carried out, the students were given a posttest again to measure the changes that occurred. A comparison of the two results is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Results of the Legal Awareness Knowledge Test for Students of Class X TKR 4 SMK Negeri 2 Probolinggo

Description	Pretest	Posttest
Class average score	63	78
Number of students achieving mastery (≥ 75)	10 students	27 students
Mastery percentage	31,25%	84,38%
Number of students not achieving mastery	22 students	5 students
Percentage not achieving mastery	68,75%	15,63%

Based on Table 1, during the pretest the class average score only reached 63, with 10 students meeting the mastery criterion or 31.25% of the total 32 students. This means that 22 students or 68.75% had not yet achieved the minimum mastery score set at ≥ 75 . This situation reflects that students' initial understanding of legal awareness material was still relatively low before the learning intervention was carried out. Firmansyah, (2023) in his study at SMK Negeri 4 Bandung found a similar

condition, namely that vocational high school students generally knew that rules existed but had not fully understood and internalized them in their daily behavior, so violations of school regulations such as lateness and the use of inappropriate attributes still often occurred [37]. The condition found in class X TKR 4 at SMK Negeri 2 Probolinggo before the study was also consistent with this, in that the students had received legal awareness material but were not yet able to apply it consistently.

After the implementation of two learning cycles using the project citizen model, the posttest results showed a significant increase to 78 and the mastery percentage rose sharply to 84.38%, with a mastery increase difference of 53.13 percentage points. This increase is consistent with Fithry, (2021), who compared the project citizen model with the cooperative script model in the context of legal norms, and proved that the average score of students using project citizen reached 80.26, higher than the group using another model at 75.13 [30]. Prima et al., (2022) also proved through an F-test that the project citizen model had a significant effect on students' learning outcomes in Civics education subjects with a Sig. value of $0.02 < 0.05$ [38].

The pattern of improvement that occurred in this study is in line with the research of Naja et al., (2025), who implemented project citizen in a two-cycle CAR on norm material in class V of MIN 4 Langkat. The average score increased from 66.07 to 75.18 in Cycle I and then to 85.54 in Cycle II, with mastery reaching 92.86% [39]. Deing & Rumiati, (2024), who developed the project citizen model in vocational high schools, also reported an increase in mastery from 65.63% in the first trial to 93.75% in the second trial, indicating that this model is consistently effective in vocational education contexts [40]. The success of the project citizen model in improving students' knowledge occurs because the model does not merely transfer knowledge through lectures, but encourages students to identify real problems in the school environment, discuss them in groups, and develop solutions directly related to their lives [41].

3.2 Observation of Learning Implementation

In addition to test data, the learning implementation in each cycle was also observed using a checklist sheet consisting of 17 aspects of teacher actions. The observation was carried out by an observer in each cycle. The results of the observations in the two cycles are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Results of Observation of Learning Implementation by the Teacher in Cycle I and Cycle II

Description	Cycle I	Cycle II
Number of aspects implemented (Yes)	13 aspects	16 aspects
Number of aspects not implemented (No)	4 aspects	1 aspect
Implementation percentage	76,47%	94,12%

Based on Table 2, in Cycle I the teacher successfully

implemented 13 of the 17 observed aspects, so the learning implementation percentage reached 76.47%. There were 4 aspects that had not yet been implemented, namely the delivery of the project-making schedule, monitoring of students' activeness during project creation, providing responses and rewards to students who presented the project results, and directly assessing the evaluation sheet. This condition shows that in the first cycle, the teacher's mastery of all stages of project citizen was still not comprehensive. This is understandable considering that the project citizen model requires more complex learning management than conventional learning, because the teacher must act simultaneously as a facilitator, instructor, and active monitor who moves around to accompany each group [37].

In Cycle II, there was a fairly significant increase, with the implementation percentage reaching 94.12% and 16 of the 17 aspects successfully implemented. The one aspect that still had not been implemented was directly assessing the evaluation sheet in the classroom. This increase shows that the reflection carried out after Cycle I was able to encourage real improvements in the implementation of learning. This finding is in line with the basic principles of classroom action research developed by Kurt Lewin, namely that each cycle consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection is designed to produce continuous improvement [42]. The teacher's active involvement as a facilitator in each stage of project citizen, from problem identification to reflection, is positively correlated with students' civic engagement outcomes, which include citizenship knowledge, skills, and dispositions [41].

The increase in implementation from 76.47% to 94.12% also reflects that the teacher became increasingly capable of managing the classroom dynamics that emerged during the learning process. Field notes from Cycle I recorded a classroom condition that was somewhat difficult to manage when group division took place because some students felt uncomfortable with group members they did not know. Meanwhile, in Cycle II, the students were already more orderly and enthusiastic from the beginning, as evidenced by the groups' ability to immediately discuss and design poster messages without needing much repeated direction from the teacher. A civics teacher who is able to create a contextual and participatory learning atmosphere will encourage changes in students' attitudes toward rules more effectively than one-way learning [43].

3.3 Project Assessment Results

In Cycle II, students worked in groups to produce a poster calling for compliance with school rules, created using the Canva application. The project was assessed based on three aspects, namely participation in group discussion (weight 50), product content (weight 25), and product aesthetics (weight 25). The results of the project assessment for all students are presented in Table 3 below

Table 3 Project Poster Assessment Results

Student Name	Final Score	Category	RPF	100	Very Skilled
MRME	90	Very Skilled	RAP	90	Very Skilled
MRN	80	Skilled	RMA	90	Highly Skilled
MRR	90	Very Skilled	RF	64	Less Skilled
MR	90	Very Skilled	RJY	100	Highly Skilled
MSM	100	Very Skilled	RAN	100	Highly Skilled
MSR	88	Very Skilled	SD	100	Highly Skilled
MY	64	Less Skilled	SAO	80	Skilled
NRRM	90	Very Skilled	VBB	80	Skilled
NA	80	Skilled	WZS	90	Highly Skilled
NRR	72	Quite Skilled	YSD	80	Skilled
NN	90	Very Skilled	YJLP	90	Highly Skilled
PAK	88	Very Skilled	YA	80	Skilled
RDI	90	Very Skilled	ZA	90	Highly Skilled
RD	90	Very Skilled	ZMP	100	Highly Skilled
RRF	90	Very Skilled			
RDS	100	Very Skilled			
RAPS	70	Quite Skilled			

Based on Table 3, the distribution of students' project assessment categories can be summarized as follows. A total of 22 students obtained the Highly Skilled category (86–100), 6 students obtained the Skilled category (76–85), 2 students obtained the Fairly Skilled category (66–75), and 2 students obtained the Less Skilled category (56–65). No students were in the Highly Unskilled category. Thus, 28 of 32 students, or 87.5% of the students, were in the Skilled category or above, indicating that most students were able to complete the poster project well in terms of participation, product content, and aesthetics.

The high achievement in the group discussion

participation aspect indicates that the *project citizen* process successfully encouraged active student involvement in collaboration. Each group was required to discuss the main message to be conveyed in the poster based on the problems they had identified and the information they had collected in Cycle I. This process trained students to listen to one another, share tasks, and take responsibility for their respective contributions within the group. The implementation of *project citizen in PPKn* consistently fostered the character of mutual cooperation, as reflected in students' ability to actively participate in completing group tasks, maintain their work spirit until the project was finished, and carry out their respective roles in accordance with the group's agreement [44].

In terms of product content, most of the posters produced contained appeals relevant to real problems at school, conveyed messages that were easy to understand, and reflected discipline values in line with the indicators of legal awareness. The topics raised included appeals to dispose of waste properly, reminders of the importance of dressing according to school rules, and encouragement to arrive on time. This shows that students were able to connect their conceptual understanding of legal awareness with concrete actions in the form of products intended for the broader school community. Project-based activities such as creating campaigns themed on legal awareness displayed in the school environment have proven effective in internalizing legal values into students' real behavior, because students not only understand the law conceptually but also feel a social responsibility to communicate it to others [43].

The implementation of this project also utilized the Canva application as a medium for creating digital posters, which made the group collaboration process easier because all members could contribute directly. The enthusiasm of the students was seen to increase during Cycle II, as recorded in field notes that the students actively shared tasks: some wrote the text, others selected images, and others arranged the design layout. The activity of displaying the poster on the school bulletin board after it was printed also strengthened the meaningfulness of the project for the students because their work could be seen and could influence the entire *school* community. The project citizen model excels over other learning models precisely because of its ability to provide real and contextual learning experiences, in which students not only learn to understand concepts but also develop skills to solve problems and propose solutions that can be implemented in their environment [30].

4. Conclusion

The level of legal awareness of students in class X TKR 4 at SMK Negeri 2 Probolinggo improved through the project citizen learning model. Through this model, students were able to show active involvement in working together to complete tasks through discussion activities to determine the main message of the poster based on the problems and information that had been collected. Students were required to

express opinions and contribute to the completion of the project. In addition, the pretest and posttest results showed an increase in students' legal awareness, with the class average rising to 78. The increase in learning implementation from 76.47% to 94.12% also supports the conclusion that the project citizen learning process was carried out more effectively. Therefore, the project citizen learning model can increase the legal awareness of vocational students

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