

Transformative Citizenship Education: Strengthening Civic Engagement to Empower People with Disabilities

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Abstract

Disability in Indonesia and globally remains closely associated with systemic discrimination, as legal protections alone have not been sufficient to dismantle stigma rooted in ableism, isolation, and exclusion. Citizenship education, when integrated with disability studies, offers a constructive framework for promoting inclusivity and civic participation in line with the social model of disability, which challenges the medical and charity models that perpetuate marginalization. This study aims to analyse how disability studies can be integrated into non-formal citizenship education to strengthen civic engagement that empowers people with disabilities and reflects transformative citizenship and civic empowerment. This research used a qualitative descriptive method with purposive and snowball sampling. Data were collected through interviews and observations with people with disabilities and their families, philanthropic communities, election officials, disability service units in higher education, and experts in citizenship education, health, public policy, and Pancasila studies. The findings show that empowerment initiatives—such as philanthropic programs, service learning, and inclusive election practices—are present but remain fragmented, ceremonial, and constrained by weak inter-sectoral collaboration. Nonetheless, the integration of service learning and pentahelix collaboration strengthens civic competence,

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youth leadership, and inclusive participation in communities. This study concludes that Indonesia's Pancasila citizenship model provides a strong normative foundation for embedding disability empowerment in citizenship education. Its contribution lies in expanding citizenship education theory through disability perspectives while offering practical strategies for cross-sectoral collaboration. The implication is the need for sustainable policies and civic practices to transform legal guarantees into inclusive social justice.

Keywords

Ableism, citizenship education, civic engagement, disability empowerment, pentahelix collaboration

Abstrak

Disabilitas di Indonesia maupun global masih terkait dengan diskriminasi sistemik, karena perlindungan hukum belum cukup untuk menghapus stigma yang berakar pada ableisme, isolasi, dan eksklususi. Pendidikan kewarganegaraan yang terintegrasi dengan kajian disabilitas menawarkan kerangka untuk memperkuat inklusivitas dan partisipasi kewargaan sesuai model sosial disabilitas, yang menolak model medis dan amal yang sering melanggengkan marginalisasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bagaimana kajian disabilitas dapat diintegrasikan ke dalam pendidikan kewarganegaraan non-formal untuk memperkuat keterlibatan kewargaan yang memberdayakan penyandang disabilitas serta merefleksikan kewargaan transformatif. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik purposive dan snowball sampling. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara dan observasi terhadap penyandang disabilitas dan keluarga, komunitas filantropi, penyelenggara pemilu, unit layanan disabilitas di perguruan tinggi, serta para ahli pendidikan kewarganegaraan, kesehatan, kebijakan publik, dan Pancasila. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa inisiatif pemberdayaan—seperti program filantropi, service learning, dan praktik pemilu inklusif—sudah ada, namun masih terfragmentasi, seremonial, dan terkendala lemahnya kolaborasi lintas sektor. Meski demikian, integrasi service learning dan kolaborasi pentahelix terbukti memperkuat kompetensi kewargaan, kepemimpinan pemuda, dan partisipasi inklusif di masyarakat. Kesimpulannya, model kewarganegaraan Pancasila memberi dasar normatif kuat untuk mengintegrasikan pemberdayaan disabilitas dalam pendidikan kewarganegaraan. Kontribusi penelitian

ini adalah memperluas teori pendidikan kewarganegaraan melalui perspektif disabilitas serta menawarkan strategi praktis kolaborasi lintas sektor. Implikasinya, diperlukan kebijakan berkelanjutan dan praktik kewargaan kolaboratif untuk mewujudkan keadilan sosial yang inklusif.

Kata-kata Kunci

Ableisme, disabilitas, kolaborasi pentahelix, keterlibatan warga, pendidikan kewarganegaraan

Introduction

Disability is often associated with entrenched social discrimination, largely due to the stigma of ableism that frames people with disabilities as powerless, burdensome, or even a disgrace to their families. Such perspectives persist in various domains, including education, where medical institutions and learning systems frequently fail to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals. In Indonesia, the urgency of addressing these issues is underscored by the steady increase in the population of people with disabilities, from 11.58 million in 2010 to 22.97 million in 2021 (Kementerian Sosial RI 2021).

The roots of ableist stigma can be traced to the dominance of the medical model of disability, which defines disability as a physical impairment or barrier to “normal” living, and the charity model, which depicts people with disabilities as objects of pity (Anggraini et al. 2022). These views reinforce exclusion rather than promote empowerment. Although legal guarantees exist in many contexts, they have not been sufficient to dismantle systemic discrimination. For instance, despite the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act in the United States, studies show that people with disabilities often remain second-class citizens, marginalized by social apathy and inaccessible public environments (Mladenov 2016; Trevisan 2020).

This highlights the need for civic engagement—grounded in respect, inclusivity, and active participation—as a complement to constitutional provisions. Research demonstrates that people with disabilities, particularly women and racial minorities, continue to experience heightened social isolation as a result of intersecting forms of discrimination (Tarvainen 2020). Similarly, education rights are not fully secured by legislation alone. The

limitations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in the United States illustrate that inclusive education requires collaboration among families, school communities, and governments to ensure meaningful civic participation (Rossetti et al. 2020; West et al. 2023).

Citizenship education thus emerges as a crucial vehicle for strengthening civic engagement and empowerment. It has been identified as a strategy to confront distorted minority representation and promote emancipation through inclusive learning (Addington 2016; Sant et al. 2022). In Indonesia, the passage of Law No. 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities created a legal basis for empowerment, including employment quotas of 2 percent in public institutions and 1 percent in private companies. However, implementation has been limited due to weak institutional commitment (Hidayat 2020; Widjaja et al. 2020). The integration of civic education into disability empowerment remains a largely unexplored approach, yet it offers significant potential to complement legal provisions.

Comparative perspectives further illustrate the limits of legislation without civic engagement. In Germany and France, employment quotas of 5 to 6 percent exist but must be supported by competency development and civic participation to be effective (Richard and Hennekam 2020). In Australia, anti-discrimination laws have not translated into leadership opportunities for people with disabilities, leaving many confined to subordinate roles (Harpur and Szucs 2023). These examples underscore that constitutional frameworks, while necessary, are insufficient without a cultural and civic shift that values inclusivity.

Within this context, the potential of civic education in Indonesia becomes evident. Citizenship education not only teaches democratic principles but also cultivates social sensitivity and inclusive values among students (Eidhof, de Ruyter, and Bram 2022). If integrated with disability studies, it can help dismantle the systemic barriers that persist despite legal protections, fostering a more inclusive civic culture. Law No. 8 of 2016 provides a comprehensive framework—guaranteeing equality before the law, access to public facilities, protection from discrimination, civil representation, and inheritance rights (Pemerintah Indonesia 2016)—but without civic engagement, these guarantees risk remaining symbolic. Strengthening civic education as a tool for empowerment offers a pathway to transform these constitutional promises into lived realities for people with disabilities.

Previous studies highlight that people with disabilities consistently face social discrimination, often rooted in weak individual claims and societal apathy. Within educational settings, this discrimination is particularly visible, where civic equity can be realized through civic education that promotes equality and inclusive learning for students with disabilities. Civic education has been shown to provide not only knowledge of equality but also practical experiences that foster respect for freedom and humanism, making schools a critical arena for challenging ableism and cultivating inclusive practices. Efforts to realize equality, however, cannot depend solely on government policies but must be supported by broader civic awareness that values the strengths and capacities of people with disabilities.

Despite these developments, gaps remain in both scholarship and practice. Much of the existing research has emphasized constitutional guarantees, legal frameworks, or school-based reforms in contexts such as the United States (Dispenza 2021; Voulgarides 2021). While these are important, they have not fully addressed how citizenship education in non-formal community settings can empower people with disabilities through civic engagement. Furthermore, although modern citizenship education emphasizes democracy and human rights, its implementation has often been limited, resembling traditional pedagogical models that struggle to innovate inclusively (Heggart et al. 2018). Research continues to call for approaches that go beyond top-down legal provisions or bottom-up social movements, toward integrative models that embed inclusive civic practices in everyday life (Lalvani and Bacon 2019). The integration of disability studies into civic education therefore remains underdeveloped, particularly in Indonesia, where the constitutional basis for inclusion has not been matched by effective civic strategies to overcome persistent discrimination.

Although inclusive legislation exists, people with disabilities continue to face systemic discrimination that restricts equal participation in education and society. The absence of disability-oriented frameworks within civic education has left a critical gap in efforts to foster inclusive citizenship and empower people with disabilities beyond formal policy provisions.

This study seeks to integrate disability studies into citizenship education in a non-formal manner to overcome complex social discrimination against

people with disabilities by emphasizing civic engagement as a foundation for empowerment. It aims to harmonize inclusive legal, political, and economic policies with participatory practices so that empowerment can be realized more effectively, while positioning community-based citizenship education as a new paradigm for reducing social discrimination.

This research makes both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it extends the field of citizenship education by incorporating disability perspectives, thereby deconstructing dominant ableist narratives and advancing concepts of civic engagement, transformative citizenship, and civic empowerment. Practically, it proposes the strengthening of non-formal citizenship education through service learning and pentahelix collaboration, offering actionable strategies for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders across sectors. By situating civic education at the intersection of disability rights and civil participation, the study underscores how inclusive civic practices can complement constitutional guarantees and encourage transformative citizenship in line with democratic values and Pancasila.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. A descriptive qualitative design is widely applied in educational, social, and technological research due to its ability to capture in-depth, contextualized, and practical insights (Matta 2022; Nassaji 2015). The qualitative characteristics of this study—naturalistic, elaborative, participatory, and interpretive—enabled the analysis to focus on holistic meaning (Lam et al. 2019; Trimbur 2017). In line with the nature of qualitative inquiry, the researcher served as the primary instrument, with data collected through interviews and observations. Interviews, as the core of qualitative research, were conducted with methodological rigor and supported by mastery of relevant social theories (Roulston 2010).

The selection of participants combined purposive and snowball techniques to ensure the inclusion of relevant and knowledgeable informants (Noy 2008; Robinson 2013). The subjects of this study included: (1) people with disabilities and their families (AG, AR, AZ, KN); (2) philanthropic communities, such as the Cahaya Inklusi Indonesia

Foundation (KT), Planet Kreatif Disabilitas (DR), and the Foundation for Disabled Children (TH); (3) state institutions, represented by the General Election Commission, including the Chairman of the KPU DKI (WD) and the Chairman of the West Java KPU (UW); (4) managers of disability service units at higher education institutions (NZ, YS); and (5) experts in citizenship education (SN), health (RN), Pancasila (GHW), and public policy (PB). This diverse range of informants was chosen to capture multiple perspectives on disability empowerment through civic engagement.

The analysis also examined the realization of the General Election Commission's inclusive policy to assess government efforts in empowering people with disabilities politically. Special attention was given to the philanthropic community, with a focus on modern philanthropic practices that emphasize empowerment based on potential rather than charity. Modern philanthropy in this context refers not to financial donations but to inclusive and innovative cross-sectoral actions that strengthen citizen participation, including that of people with disabilities (Goulden et al. 2023; Schuyt 2010).

The descriptive qualitative method was further applied to analyze the potential and role of civic engagement in reducing social discrimination through citizenship education. This flexible approach has been effectively employed in nursing, social sciences, and education research for addressing complex human issues (Kim et al. 2017; Mwita 2022). In this study, the emphasis was placed on the importance of motivation among people with disabilities to sustain participation and strengthen competence (Akoto et al. 2022; Kausik and Hussain 2023).

The theoretical framework guiding the analysis combined multiple perspectives: citizenship education through service learning and pentahelix collaboration, the social model of disability, the Pancasila citizenship model, civic empowerment, and transformative citizenship (Higgins 1999; Jerome 2012; Manik and Samsuri 2021; Nanggala 2023; Pickard 2021). This integrative framework allowed for a comprehensive interpretation of the field data, situating the experiences of people with disabilities within broader educational, civic, and policy contexts.

The Social Model of Disability as a Framework for Inclusion

The social model of disability emerged as a response to the individual or medical model, developed by Oliver (2010) in his *Basic Principles of Disability*. Unlike the medical model, which locates disability in the functional, psychological, or cognitive limitations of individuals, the social model asserts that disability is also rooted in external factors—namely, social structures that systematically oppress and discriminate against people with disabilities. Oliver emphasizes that the purpose of this model is to challenge and dismantle the dominance of the medical perspective by centring the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, addressing issues of marginalization, oppression, and discrimination, and condemning the barriers produced by hegemonic social and cultural institutions. At its core, the social model represents a vision of an inclusive, anti-ableist society built upon acceptance, participation, and equality.

Central to this model is the principle of disability equality, which highlights not only the right to inclusion but also the capacity of persons with disabilities to grow and contribute based on their potential (Gilliard et al. 2005; Riddle 2020). The inclusive character embedded in the model provides a foundation for civic engagement, positioning persons with disabilities as active participants in social life rather than passive recipients of care (Pickard 2021). Beyond an inclusive outlook, the model functions as a concrete mechanism for empowerment, enabling individuals to participate fully and develop their abilities.

Furthermore, the social model has played a transformative role in politicizing disability. By shifting the discourse away from individual deficits toward a human rights-based framework, it has influenced policy, reframed disability as a form of social oppression, and promoted the removal of structural barriers to equality. In doing so, it provides both a theoretical and practical basis for advancing civic engagement and inclusive citizenship for people with disabilities.

Transformative Citizenship: Civic Engagement and Civic Empowerment

Transformative citizenship emphasizes the role of citizens as active agents of change in building a just and equitable society. It highlights that every citizen must cultivate a transformative character rooted in human

rights, social justice, and equality to dismantle discrimination. Awareness of transformative citizenship enables individuals to break free from the constraints of the status quo and to support the realization of a democratic and humane civic life. This conception requires not only critical awareness but also participatory attitudes and concrete actions, encouraging citizens to act intelligently and responsibly in pursuit of social transformation.

Within this framework, civic engagement serves as the foundation of transformative citizenship. Emerging from civic awareness and participation, civic engagement reflects voluntary and collective initiatives to address social challenges. It encompasses community service, collective action for the common good, political involvement to address leadership-related issues, and efforts toward social change for a more capable future society (Adler and Goggin 2005). The realization of civic engagement, however, depends on both internal factors, such as citizens' civic competence, and external factors, such as institutional and policy support.

Equally important is civic empowerment, which underscores the inclusive development of citizens based on competence, independence, and social responsibility. Civic empowerment ensures that citizens possess the intelligence, skills, and attitudes necessary to exercise full social and political agency (Higgins 1999). It envisions individuals as competent and autonomous actors capable of sustaining their welfare while contributing to broader societal progress. In the context of civic education, civic empowerment has been institutionalized in schools, particularly in the United States, to strengthen competence and improve citizens' economic well-being. In essence, the substance of transformative citizenship integrates civic engagement and civic empowerment as interdependent pillars, enabling citizens to act inclusively, responsibly, and effectively in shaping a more equitable society.

Citizenship Education Based on Service Learning and Pentahelix Collaboration

Citizenship education, as a form of Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan (PKn), can be effectively realized through a service-learning approach that integrates academic study with active social involvement. Service learning enables students to think critically, evaluate issues, demonstrate care through concrete actions, and prepare to face future social challenges.

Closely connected with the aims and substance of Civic Education, service learning strengthens civic competence by directly engaging students in community realities (Nanggala and Suryadi 2021). It thus serves as a practical vehicle for enacting civil society values, fostering social responsibility, and addressing contemporary social challenges. Moreover, service learning develops social sensitivity while also empowering students with special needs by providing inclusive experiences that enhance their civic competence (Atkins et al. 2022).

To ensure sustainability, the practice of citizenship education requires support from broad-based collaboration. The pentahelix model provides such a framework by integrating the visions, policies, and work programs of multiple sectors—government, academia, community, private sector, and media—into a unified, collaborative, and sustainable effort (Nanggala 2023). This cross-sectoral partnership represents a concrete commitment to national development (Rahmi et al. 2022), while also enhancing youth capacity through the transfer of knowledge, skills, and civic values across domains.

When citizenship education is grounded in both service learning and pentahelix collaboration, it reflects not only a philanthropic spirit but also a deep sense of civic responsibility. Such an approach creates opportunities for people with disabilities to develop intelligence, civic dispositions, skills, political literacy, and ethical awareness. In turn, this empowers them to participate more fully and meaningfully in political and social life, contributing to the broader realization of an inclusive and democratic society (Nanggala et al. 2024).

Citizenship Education, Civic Engagement and the Empowerment of People with Disabilities

Our findings indicate that although social perspectives on disability in Indonesia have gradually improved, public apathy continues to hinder optimal empowerment. Respondents stressed that anti-ableism must evolve into a broader social movement to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy full citizenship rights and opportunities for transformative participation (interview with AG, June 11, 2024). Legal guarantees, such as Law No. 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, were recognized as important, but informants emphasized that implementation remains incomplete

without strong family and community involvement (interview with PB, June 22, 2024).

Persistent reliance on outdated terms such as *penyandang cacat* was identified as discriminatory and rooted in medical and charity models of disability that reinforce pity and dependency (interview with DR, August 6, 2024). Informants also observed that while Indonesia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through Law No. 19 of 2011, the law has not fully addressed issues of gender, education, employment, and disaster protection (interview with KT, June 26, 2024).

Participants linked the importance of non-formal citizenship education to inclusive empowerment, highlighting its potential to strengthen civic engagement at the community level (interview with SN, June 7, 2024). Disability philanthropic organizations such as the Foundation for Disabled Children provided concrete examples of empowerment through hydroponic training, catering, information technology, batik, and photography (interview with TH, June 26, 2024). However, other respondents noted that these initiatives remain fragmented due to the lack of sustained collaboration among schools, government agencies, families, and communities (interview with NZ, June 9, 2024).

In the political sphere, the West Java Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU; General Election Commission) reported efforts to empower people with disabilities by providing quotas for election organizers, braille facilities, and political education, though weak inter-sectoral communication remains a major obstacle (interview with UW, June 11, 2024). Similarly, the Jakarta KPU expressed commitment to inclusion but acknowledged that sustainable collaboration and civic engagement are essential for effective political empowerment (interview with WD, June 24, 2024). Informants also pointed out that empowerment is still constrained by pity-based attitudes, doubts about competence, and barriers related to economic and psychosocial conditions (interview with AR, June 12, 2024; interview with AZ, June 10, 2024).

Respondents consistently emphasized that Pancasila must serve as the foundation for disability-inclusive civic engagement. They highlighted philanthropic communities as important mediators in promoting civic virtue, volunteerism, and inclusive participation (interview with KN, June 11, 2024; interview with GHW, June 22, 2024; interview with YS, June 20, 2024).

Interviews revealed that civic engagement actions that empower people with disabilities are often initiated through philanthropic communities, but these require the support of inclusive social thinking among citizens to be effective (interview with KC, June 12, 2024). Respondents emphasized that service learning in citizenship education can provide non-formal opportunities to integrate students into real community practices and address discrimination (interview with NZ, June 9, 2024). Informants noted that empowerment efforts remain fragmented, with sectoral egos limiting collaboration (interview with AZ, June 10, 2024). Some also observed that existing initiatives are still ceremonial and lack integration across actors (interview with DR, August 6, 2024).

The findings also showed that philanthropic communities play a central role in providing empowerment training for people with disabilities, while youth engagement in these activities strengthens leadership skills and civic sensitivity (interview with YS, June 20, 2024). Informants described several barriers to effective collaboration, including limited communication between sectors and lack of holistic partnerships (interview with KT, June 26, 2024). Others emphasized the importance of voluntary partnerships between government, academia, community, private sector, and media in building inclusive disability empowerment (interview with TH, June 26, 2024).

Additional findings suggested that disability empowerment depends heavily on social support, motivation, and family involvement. Respondents stressed that civic engagement is essential to direct the movement of the disability community and ensure fulfilment of rights that are often neglected by the state (interview with RN, June 14, 2024; interview with DR, August 6, 2024). Informants also underscored the importance of student involvement in service-based citizenship education to develop inclusive and voluntary attitudes (interview with KT, June 26, 2024). Cross-sectoral awareness was seen as crucial to ensure equality and well-being for people with disabilities (interview with YS, June 20, 2024).

At the policy level, respondents argued that Pancasila should be the basis of citizenship education to ensure disability empowerment is rooted in civic virtue and collective responsibility (interview with GHW, June 22, 2024). They highlighted the need to integrate disability studies into non-formal civic education curricula and stressed that political empowerment must be accompanied by sustained citizen commitment (interview with

UW, June 11, 2024). Finally, interviews indicated that civic engagement reflects a cooperative, philanthropic spirit and must be extended to overcome broader social issues such as poverty and marginalization (interview with AG, June 11, 2024).

Interpreting the Role of Citizenship Education in Overcoming Disability Discrimination

In our analysis, the findings show that constitutional and legal frameworks, such as Law No. 8 of 2016 and Law No. 19 of 2011, remain insufficient to dismantle systemic discrimination. This aligns with research in other contexts, for example the United States, where the ADA and IDEA did not fully prevent discrimination in education or public life (Rivera and Tilcsik 2023). Respondents' accounts of persisting stigma linked to medical and charity models also echo scholarship identifying these frameworks as drivers of ableism and exclusion (Inayah 2019; Priya et al. 2021).

The gap between statutory guarantees and lived realities illustrates that empowerment cannot depend solely on conventions or legal protections. Similar critiques of CRPD implementation suggest that without integrative policies in education, employment, and disaster protection, disability empowerment risks remaining symbolic (Harahap and Bustanuddin 2015; Probosiwi 2013). Informants highlighted the role of community-based citizenship education, supporting arguments that civic learning is critical for fostering competence and inclusive participation (Joris et al. 2022).

Philanthropic initiatives demonstrate the potential of grassroots empowerment, consistent with research linking civic education to heightened social sensitivity and inclusivity (Atkins et al. 2022). However, respondents also pointed to persistent challenges of fragmented governance, reinforcing critiques that weak collaboration undermines empowerment (Anthony et al. 2023). Political participation findings further show that quotas and accessible facilities are in place but remain ineffective without stronger inter-sectoral cooperation, confirming arguments that true political inclusion requires civic engagement beyond elections (Ramadhan 2021; Nanggala and Suryadi 2024a).

The frequent references to Pancasila underline its normative role in guiding inclusive civic engagement. Respondents' views resonate with studies highlighting its values of humanity, unity, and social justice as

foundations for collaborative disability empowerment (Manik and Samsuri 2021; Egan-Simon 2022). Yet, as interviews revealed, pity-based attitudes persist, suggesting that legal and civic reforms must be accompanied by deeper cultural change and the cultivation of civic virtue (Ben-Porath 2007; Pennington et al. 2024).

The findings also affirm that service learning within citizenship education strengthens civic competence and social sensitivity among youth. This is consistent with studies showing service learning enhances participation, problem-solving, and responsibility (Burth 2016; Woodruff and Sinelnikov 2015). The UK's integration of service learning into citizenship education as a vehicle for community empowerment reflects parallels with Indonesia's emerging practices (Jerome 2012; Zahedi et al. 2023).

Respondents stressed the risks of ceremonial and fragmented programs, echoing scholarship on the need for collaborative civic education frameworks to build tolerance and responsibility (Convery and Kerr 2007; Spiteri 2012). Their emphasis on pentahelix collaboration demonstrates its potential to unite government, academia, community, private sector, and media into sustainable strategies (Nanggala 2023; Rahmi et al. 2022). Cross-sector engagement has been shown to enhance youth capacity through the transfer of knowledge, skills, and civic values (LeCompte et al. 2020).

Philanthropic communities also emerged as key sites of empowerment, consistent with studies that link civic philanthropy to social capital, civic virtue, and opportunities for marginalized groups (Goodley 2005). Respondents' concerns over weak partnerships confirm research stressing that effective disability empowerment requires robust collaboration beyond legal guarantees (Putra et al. 2021). Calls for integrating disability studies into citizenship education reinforce scholarly arguments for curriculum innovation to promote competence, welfare, and inclusivity (Komara 2017; Kunnath et al. 2023).

Taken together, these findings suggest that citizenship education—when combined with service learning and pentahelix collaboration—functions both as a theoretical framework and a practical mechanism for dismantling discrimination and empowering people with disabilities.

This study employed qualitative methods, primarily interviews and observations, which provided rich insights into lived experiences. However, reliance on purposive and snowball sampling means the findings may not represent the full diversity of disability experiences across Indonesia. The focus on certain communities and organizations makes the results more context-specific than nationally representative. Moreover, because interviews formed the main data source, the analysis is shaped by self-reported perceptions that may reflect subjectivity or bias.

Additionally, while examples of service learning and pentahelix collaboration were identified, many remain localized, fragmented, or pilot-scale, limiting the study's ability to generalize about their systematic effectiveness. Barriers such as sectoral egos, weak cross-sector communication, and enduring pity-based attitudes were acknowledged but not explored comparatively across provinces or policy contexts. As such, the findings should be read as indicative rather than conclusive, pointing to the need for broader, multi-site, and longitudinal studies on citizenship education and disability empowerment.

Conclusion

This study found that social discrimination against people with disabilities persists largely due to stereotypes of ableism, which remain reinforced by the medical and charity models of disability. Citizenship education, when aligned with the social model of disability, provides a relevant framework to counter these views and to promote inclusive participation. By embedding civic engagement within its practices, citizenship education fosters transformative citizenship and civic empowerment, enabling people with disabilities to claim their rights and participate meaningfully in society. The findings demonstrate that service learning enhances civic competence and leadership among youth, while pentahelix collaboration ensures that empowerment efforts involve government, academia, community, private sector, and media in a holistic and representative manner. Together, these approaches highlight the potential of integrating disability studies into non-formal citizenship education to strengthen empowerment and reduce discrimination.

However, the study is limited by its qualitative design and reliance on purposive and snowball sampling, which means the findings may not capture the full diversity of disability experiences across Indonesia. Moreover, many examples of service learning and pentahelix collaboration remain localized or fragmented, limiting the ability to generalize their effectiveness nationwide. These constraints suggest that while the findings are indicative, they are not exhaustive.

Future research should therefore expand the scope of inquiry by employing mixed methods and comparative studies across different provinces and policy contexts to examine how service learning and pentahelix collaboration can be scaled up. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable to evaluate the sustainability and long-term impact of citizenship education initiatives on disability empowerment. Such efforts can strengthen the evidence base for integrating disability studies into civic education curricula and guide policymakers, educators, and communities toward more inclusive practices that fulfil the ideals of Pancasila-based social justice.

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