

## *Innovative Civic Education Pedagogy for Strengthening Democracy and Character Formation: A Systematic Review (2017–2026)*

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### Abstract

*This study addresses the growing concern over democratic fragility and the need for innovative civic education capable of strengthening democratic participation and character formation. The urgency of this research lies in responding to fragmented pedagogical approaches that often separate civic engagement, digital literacy, curriculum reform, and character development. This research employs a Systematic Literature Review guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework, analyzing 20 empirical journal articles published between 2017 and 2026 indexed in Scopus. The findings reveal four dominant pedagogical clusters: participatory and deliberative models, digital citizenship integration, curriculum and institutional reform, and character-integrated civic learning. Evidence indicates that experiential and dialogic approaches generate stronger democratic outcomes than knowledge-transmission models. The study concludes that democratic resilience is most effectively cultivated through an integrated pedagogical framework combining participation, ethical reflection, institutional support, and digital engagement.*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh meningkatnya kerapuhan demokrasi dan kebutuhan akan inovasi pedagogis dalam Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan untuk memperkuat partisipasi demokratis serta pembentukan karakter. Urgensi penelitian ini terletak pada fragmentasi pendekatan pembelajaran yang sering memisahkan dimensi partisipasi, literasi digital, reformasi kurikulum, dan penguatan karakter. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode Systematic Literature Review dengan panduan PRISMA 2020 terhadap 20 artikel jurnal empiris terindeks Scopus periode 2017–2026. Hasil penelitian mengidentifikasi empat klaster utama inovasi pedagogis, yaitu model partisipatif dan deliberatif, integrasi kewarganegaraan digital, reformasi kurikulum dan institusi, serta pembelajaran kewarganegaraan berbasis karakter. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan berbasis pengalaman dan dialog lebih efektif dibandingkan model transmisi pengetahuan. Simpulan penelitian menegaskan bahwa penguatan demokrasi memerlukan kerangka pedagogis terintegrasi yang menggabungkan partisipasi, refleksi etis, dukungan institusional, dan literasi digital.



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## A. INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background

Contemporary democracies are experiencing structural pressures that threaten their long-term stability (Rebell, 2018). Increasing political polarization, declining public trust in democratic institutions, and shrinking civic participation have become defining features of democratic crises across diverse contexts. These developments are not confined to a single region but reflect a broader global pattern in which citizens demonstrate weakening democratic orientations and limited engagement in collective civic life. The erosion of deliberative norms and the spread of misinformation further intensify these challenges (Stitzlein, 2022). Younger generations frequently display ambivalent relationships with formal political institutions, often disengaging from conventional participation while engaging selectively in issue-based activism (Zhang et al., 2022). In mediatized societies, civic practices have become increasingly stratified, privileging groups with access to legitimate civic capital while marginalizing others (Sivertsen & Hartley, 2023). These dynamics underscore the urgency of systematic educational responses capable of strengthening democratic resilience.

Within this context, civic education occupies a strategic position as a foundational democratic infrastructure. Civic learning extends beyond the transmission of governmental knowledge and encompasses the cultivation of civic understanding, participatory skills, and democratic dispositions necessary for meaningful engagement. Ely et al. (2023) demonstrate that students exposed to high-quality civic education are more likely to develop political tolerance, institutional trust, and active civic participation. When schools fail to prepare students for capable citizenship, democratic institutions weaken over time (Rebell, 2018). Romero-Amaya (2023) further emphasizes that civic education functions as a mechanism through which democratic continuity is sustained across generations. The effectiveness of civic education therefore depends fundamentally on pedagogical design, raising critical questions about how instructional innovation contributes to democratic strengthening and character formation.

Despite broad recognition of its importance, dominant pedagogical approaches in civic education have revealed substantial limitations. Traditional models frequently emphasize factual knowledge about constitutional structures and political institutions while neglecting critical thinking, deliberative engagement, and participatory practice (Egan-Simon, 2022). Instruction that relies heavily on normative transmission often

presents citizenship as an abstract ideal detached from students' lived realities. Sorial & Peterson (2019) show that although educators endorse civic participation rhetorically, classroom practice often prioritizes knowledge acquisition over authentic engagement. Without participatory experiences, democratic principles remain theoretical rather than internalized dispositions (Ely et al., 2023). Instructional approaches that overlook students' sociopolitical contexts also restrict their capacity to understand how democracy operates and how they might influence it (Smith et al., 2022). Consequently, civic education frequently aspires to democratic outcomes but lacks pedagogical mechanisms capable of realizing them.

In response to these shortcomings, the past decade has witnessed significant pedagogical innovation within civic education. Emerging approaches emphasize deliberative dialogue, project-based learning, digital citizenship, and character-integrated instruction. Chan (2024) illustrates how structured deliberation on controversial public issues enables students to cultivate democratic reasoning and respectful engagement with diverse perspectives. Project-based civic learning and action-oriented curricula connect conceptual knowledge with community participation and public problem solving (Akirav, 2024).

Digital citizenship frameworks address the transformation of civic participation in technologically mediated environments, highlighting both opportunities and challenges associated with online engagement (Zhang et al., 2022). Character-integrated approaches recognize that democratic systems rely on personal values such as honesty, tolerance, and commitment to the common good (Stitzlein, 2023). Haduong et al. (2023) argue that democratic character must be developed through reflective engagement rather than abstract moral instruction. Collectively, these innovations seek to bridge the gap between normative democratic ideals and experiential civic practice.

However, scholarship on these pedagogical innovations remains fragmented across disciplinary boundaries. Research on democratic engagement, character development, digital citizenship, and deliberative pedagogy often evolves within separate analytical frameworks, limiting cumulative theoretical integration. Previous studies have demonstrated that civic identity can be strengthened through cognitive scaffolding and reflective dialogue (Smith et al., 2022). Yet these approaches are frequently examined in isolation from digital pedagogical competencies that increasingly shape contemporary civic participation.

In response to this gap, Isnaini (2025) argues that teacher digital literacy

constitutes a critical pedagogical capacity enabling the meaningful integration of technology into civic learning environments. Rather than functioning merely as a technical skill, digital literacy influences how educators design participatory tasks, facilitate deliberative dialogue, and guide students in navigating digitally mediated public spheres. When embedded within coherent instructional design, digital competence supports the development of democratic reasoning, critical evaluation of information, and responsible civic participation. The absence of integrative frameworks that connect these dimensions contributes to ongoing conceptual fragmentation within contemporary civic education research.

This fragmentation reflects a broader systematic gap in the literature. First, rigorous systematic literature reviews specifically focused on innovative civic education pedagogy during the contemporary democratic crisis remain limited. Many existing syntheses are narrative in scope and do not apply transparent inclusion and exclusion criteria. Second, there is no comprehensive review that explicitly integrates democratic outcomes and character development within a unified analytical lens. Democratic participation without ethical grounding risks susceptibility to populist distortion, while character formation without participatory practice remains detached from civic realities (Haduong et al., 2023). Third, the period between 2017 and 2026 has not been systematically mapped despite rapid technological transformation and renewed global concern for democratic resilience. These gaps collectively signal the need for a structured synthesis capable of identifying cross-cutting patterns across empirical studies.

This study addresses these limitations by conducting a systematic literature review of empirical research on innovative civic education pedagogy published between 2017 and 2026. Transparent selection procedures were applied to identify 20 journal articles that met predefined inclusion criteria. The review integrates deliberative models, digital citizenship, curriculum reform, and character-integrated learning within a unified analytical framework. By synthesizing findings across diverse contexts, the study advances a comprehensive understanding of how pedagogical innovation contributes to democratic strengthening and character formation. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative scope, its temporal focus on a transformative decade, and its emphasis on the interdependence between participatory practice and ethical development.

This study therefore aims to identify and classify pedagogical innovations in civic education between 2017 and 2026, evaluate their effectiveness in strengthening democratic knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and analyze the relationship between

democratic participation and character formation. The guiding research questions are as follows: What pedagogical innovations have emerged in contemporary civic education literature? To what extent do these innovations contribute to measurable democratic and character outcomes? How are digital citizenship, deliberative models, and character-integrated approaches interconnected within effective civic education frameworks? Preliminary synthesis reveals four dominant thematic clusters consisting of participatory and deliberative models, digital citizenship integration, curriculum reform, and character-based approaches. Experiential and participatory pedagogies demonstrate the most consistent positive democratic outcomes, while digital tools prove effective only when embedded within coherent instructional design. Character development appears strongest when linked to authentic civic engagement rather than abstract moral instruction. These findings suggest that innovative civic education capable of strengthening democracy must integrate participatory practice, ethical grounding, and digital literacy within a coherent pedagogical architecture.

## **2. Problem Formulation**

Based on the background outlined above, this study formulates the research problem around the need to systematically understand how pedagogical innovation in civic education contributes to democratic strengthening and character formation. The fragmentation of existing scholarship, the absence of integrative systematic mapping between 2017 and 2026, and the lack of analytical synthesis connecting participatory, digital, curricular, and character-based approaches necessitate a structured set of guiding questions.

Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research questions:

- a. What forms of innovative pedagogical approaches in civic education have been empirically identified in the literature published between 2017 and 2026?
- b. To what extent do these pedagogical innovations contribute to the development of democratic knowledge, skills, and dispositions among learners?
- c. How is character formation conceptually and empirically integrated within innovative civic education pedagogy?
- d. What patterns, convergences, and gaps can be identified across empirical studies concerning the relationship between participatory models, digital citizenship, curriculum reform, and character-integrated learning?

These research questions establish the analytical direction of the subsequent sections by structuring the synthesis of evidence, enabling thematic classification, and

providing a coherent framework for evaluating the effectiveness and limitations of innovative civic education pedagogy.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework to ensure that the processes of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and synthesis are conducted systematically, transparently, and replicably. The SLR approach was selected because the objective of this research is to synthesize empirical evidence concerning innovative civic education pedagogy and its contribution to strengthening democracy and character formation. Given the fragmentation identified in the introductory section, a structured review method is necessary to map patterns across studies, minimize selection bias, and generate an integrative analytical framework.

Data were collected from the Scopus database. Scopus was selected due to its international indexing standards, coverage of peer-reviewed journals, and comprehensive representation of educational research across diverse national contexts. The publication period was restricted to 2017–2026 in order to capture contemporary pedagogical innovations emerging during intensified global democratic challenges, the rapid expansion of digital technologies, and renewed scholarly attention to democratic resilience and character education. The search strategy was developed using combinations of the following keywords: “civic education” OR “citizenship education” combined with democracy, civic engagement, participation, curriculum, pedagogy, learning, and character. Boolean operators were used to ensure conceptual breadth while maintaining thematic relevance. The initial search yielded 557 records.

To ensure methodological rigor, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Articles were included if they met the following conditions: (1) published as journal articles; (2) published between 2017 and 2026; (3) explicitly focused on civic education or citizenship education; (4) employed empirical research designs, including qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method approaches; (5) examined pedagogical innovation, instructional intervention, or curriculum implementation; and (6) demonstrated implications for democratic participation, civic engagement, or character formation. Studies were excluded if they were editorials, literature reviews, conference proceedings, book chapters, or purely conceptual papers without empirical data. Articles were also excluded if they were not situated within an educational context or did not present clear pedagogical implications.

The study selection procedure was conducted systematically using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure methodological rigor and transparency. The overall process and numerical progression across each stage are presented in Figure 1.

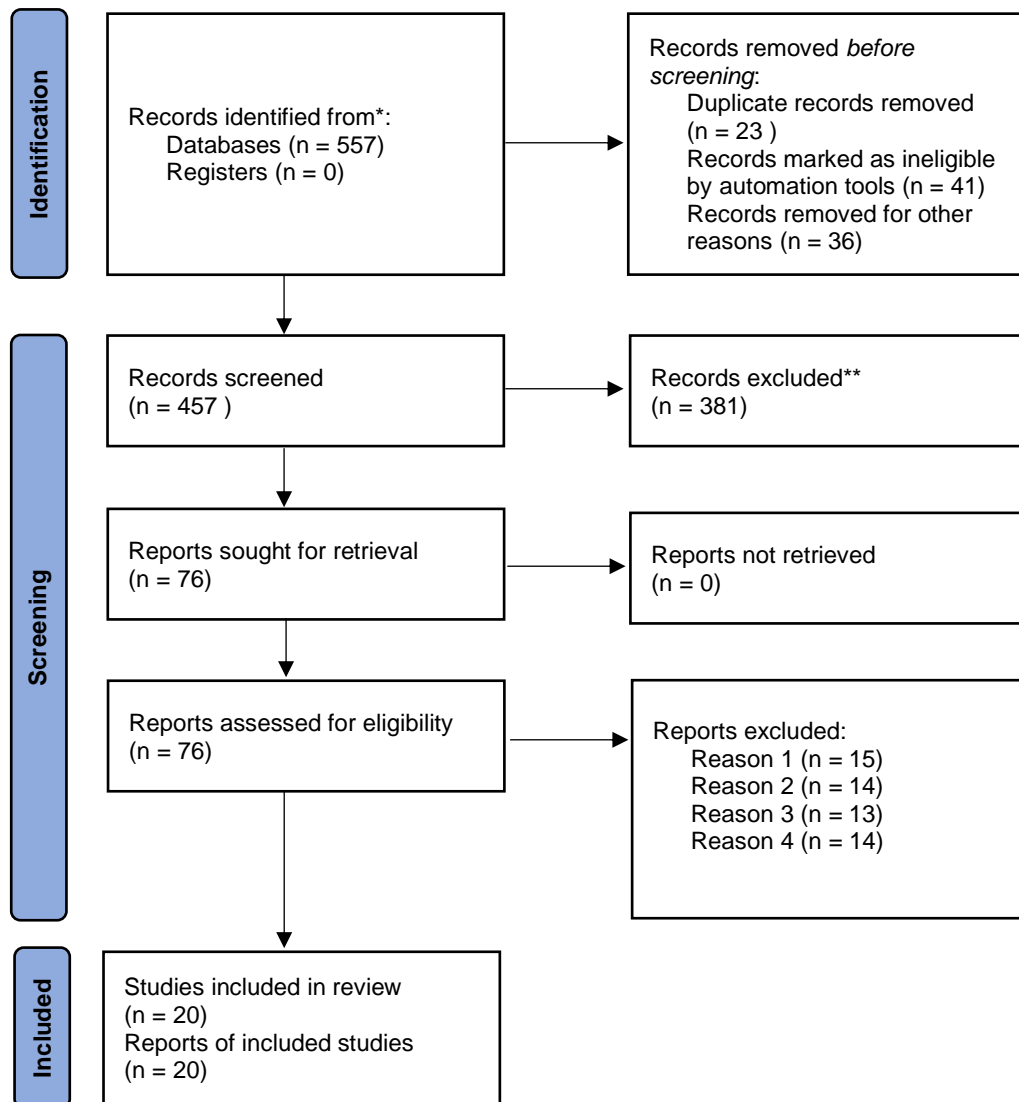


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram of the study selection process

During the identification stage, 557 records were retrieved from the Scopus database. Prior to screening, 100 records were removed. These consisted of 23 duplicate records, 41 records marked as ineligible by automation tools due to document type, and 36 records removed for other reasons, including language and non-article formats. After these removals, 457 records proceeded to the screening stage.

In the screening phase, titles and abstracts of the 457 records were assessed for thematic relevance. A total of 381 records were excluded because they did not directly address innovative civic education pedagogy, lacked empirical evidence, or did not demonstrate explicit connections to democratic participation or character formation.

This stage resulted in 76 reports being sought for full-text retrieval. All 76 reports were successfully retrieved, with no records categorized as not retrieved.

The eligibility stage involved full-text assessment of the 76 reports. At this stage, 56 reports were excluded for specific and predefined reasons. Fifteen studies were excluded because they did not present empirical data despite referencing civic education. Fourteen studies were removed due to the absence of clearly identifiable pedagogical innovation. Thirteen studies were excluded because their outcomes were not explicitly linked to democratic participation or character development. An additional fourteen studies were excluded due to limited relevance to formal educational contexts. After applying these criteria, 20 empirical journal articles met all inclusion requirements.

The final inclusion stage therefore comprised 20 studies, with 20 corresponding reports included in the review. The PRISMA flow diagram presented in Figure 1 visually summarizes this multistage selection procedure and demonstrates the numerical consistency across all phases of the review process. The structured elimination and justification at each stage ensure that the final corpus is analytically coherent and directly aligned with the research objectives.

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic synthesis approach. First, each selected study was systematically coded to identify the type of pedagogical innovation implemented. Second, innovations were grouped into broader analytical categories based on conceptual similarities. Third, the democratic and character-related outcomes reported in each study were examined to assess patterns of effectiveness. Fourth, cross-study comparisons were performed to identify convergences, divergences, and gaps in the literature. This analytical procedure enabled the construction of four thematic clusters representing the dominant strands of innovative civic education pedagogy during the review period. The integration of the PRISMA selection framework with thematic synthesis strengthens the methodological credibility of this study and supports the validity of the conclusions drawn in subsequent sections.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

The findings of this systematic literature review demonstrate that innovative civic education pedagogy between 2017 and 2026 reflects a substantial transformation in how democratic learning and character formation are conceptualized and implemented. Rather than positioning civic education as a knowledge-centered subject focused primarily on constitutional literacy, the analyzed studies collectively reveal a movement

toward participatory, experiential, digitally mediated, and ethically grounded pedagogical frameworks. This section elaborates the findings in alignment with the research questions and situates them within contemporary debates on democratic resilience, civic engagement, and character development.

### 1. Mapping Innovative Pedagogical Approaches in Civic Education

The first research question sought to identify and classify pedagogical innovations emerging in civic education during the review period. The thematic synthesis of 20 empirical journal articles reveals four dominant clusters: participatory and deliberative models, digital citizenship integration, curriculum and institutional reform, and character-integrated civic learning. These clusters are not isolated categories but overlapping pedagogical tendencies that collectively redefine civic learning as an active and socially embedded process. The empirical distribution of studies within this orientation is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Participatory and Deliberative Civic Education Models (2017–2026)**

No	Author (Year)	Country	Design	Intervention	Outcome	Key Finding
1	Knowles & R.T (2018)	USA	Qualitative	Teacher civic identity reflection	Civic identity	Teacher identity shapes the quality of democratic instruction
2	Donbavand et al. (2021)	Europe	Quantitative	Civic education	Political engagement	Increases students' political participation
3	Komalasari et al. (2018)	Indonesia	Experimental	Living Values-based learning	Democratic attitude	Improves students' democratic attitudes
4	Nelsen & M.D. (2021)	USA	Quantitative	Race-focused civic instruction	Political behavior	Strengthens political awareness and behavior
5	Deimel et al. (2024)	Germany	Quantitative	Social interaction in civic learning	Civic participation	Enhances democratic participation

As shown in Table 1, participatory and deliberative approaches consistently

emphasize structured dialogue, social interaction, and identity formation. Donbavand et al. (2021) demonstrate that civic engagement pedagogy significantly predicts political participation among adolescents, suggesting that structured participation during schooling has measurable civic consequences. Similarly, Deimel et al. (2024) provide quantitative evidence that classroom interaction enhances civic participation, indicating that democratic competencies are strengthened through collaborative learning environments. These findings align with arguments that democratic dispositions develop through engagement with plural perspectives and structured deliberation rather than passive reception of political information (Nelsen & M.D., 2021). Komalasari et al. (2018) further show that values-based participatory instruction improves democratic attitudes, reinforcing the idea that interaction and reflection operate simultaneously in strengthening civic identity.

Transitioning from deliberative engagement to technologically mediated participation, the second cluster highlights digital citizenship as a growing domain within civic education. Table 2 maps the empirical studies examining technology-integrated civic learning and digital citizenship practices.

**Table 2. Digital Citizenship and Technology-Integrated Civic Education**

No	Author (Year)	Country	Design	Intervention	Outcome	Key Finding
1	Bowyer et al. (2020)	USA	Quantitative	Digital media-based civic education	Digital civic engagement	Increases online civic participation
2	Ige et al. (2017)	South Africa	Experimental	Computer-aided civic instruction	Civic learning outcome	Blended learning improves civic understanding
3	Murdiono et al. (2020)	Indonesia	R&D	Android-based civic application	Civic competence	Digital media enhances civic competence
4	Japar et al. (2023)	Indonesia	Survey	Digital literacy-based civic learning	Multicultural civic awareness	Digital literacy strengthens multicultural awareness
5	Ghebru et al. (2020)	Africa	Qualitative	Contextualized citizenship education	Civic understanding	Contextual approach broadens

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The evidence presented in Table 2 indicates that digital tools expand opportunities for civic expression and engagement when embedded within intentional pedagogical design. Bowyer et al. (2020) show that digital civic media practices correlate with increased online civic participation, suggesting that digital environments can function as entry points into broader democratic engagement. However, Ige et al. (2017) emphasize that technological effectiveness depends on structured instructional integration rather than mere exposure to digital platforms. Japar et al. (2023) further demonstrate that digital literacy models enhance multicultural awareness, indicating that technology-mediated civic education can promote tolerance when accompanied by critical reflection. Collectively, these findings confirm that digital citizenship must be grounded in pedagogical intentionality to produce democratic outcomes. The third cluster addresses curriculum reform and institutional mediation of civic learning. The institutional and curricular dimensions of civic innovation are synthesized in Table 3.

**Table 3. Curriculum Reform and Institutional Civic Learning**

No	Author (Year)	Country	Design	Intervention	Outcome	Key Finding
1	Alscher et al. (2022)	Germany	Quantitative	Teaching quality in civic education	Willingness to participate	Higher teaching quality increases willingness to participate
2	Bergersen et al. (2019)	Norway & Zambia	Qualitative	Civic teacher education	Democratic competence	Teacher education strengthens democratic competence
3	Zhao & W. (2019)	China	Qualitative	Observation-based civic pedagogy	Civic values	Observational pedagogy fosters civic values
4	Bartlett & Schugurensky (2024)	Canada	Qualitative	School democracy model	Democratic participation	School democracy enhances student participation

5	Hillygus et al. (2023)	USA	Quantitative	Civic skill development focus	Civic skills & engagement	Civic skills predict political participation
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The studies summarized in Table 3 demonstrate that curriculum reform becomes impactful only when supported by teaching quality and institutional democratic culture. Alscher et al. (2022) show that instructional quality significantly predicts students' willingness to participate politically, indicating that pedagogy mediates curricular objectives. Hillygus et al. (2023) further confirm that civic skill development correlates with political action, reinforcing the importance of applied competence rather than theoretical familiarity. Bartlett & Schugurensky (2024) argue that schools functioning as democratic spaces cultivate agency by modeling participatory governance internally. These findings collectively suggest that institutional design and pedagogical consistency are critical to translating curriculum into democratic practice. The fourth cluster focuses on character-integrated civic education. Table 4 synthesizes studies that explicitly connect ethical formation with democratic engagement.

**Table 4. Character Formation and Civic Values**

No	Author (Year)	Country	Design	Intervention	Outcome	Key Finding
1	MacMullen & I. (2018)	USA	Conceptual-analytical	Civic education & public reason	Civic reasoning	Civic education should be grounded in public reason
2	Ubaedillah & A. (2018)	Indonesia	Qualitative	Civic education for Muslim students	Civic identity	Strengthens inclusive civic identity
3	Candra et al. (2020)	Indonesia	Meta-analysis	Constructivist civic learning	Civic achievement	Constructivist approach improves civic achievement
4	Sanjaya et al. (2021)	Indonesia	Experimental	Folklore-based civic education	Character development	Local culture integration strengthens character
5	Weinberg & J. (2022)	UK	Analytical-quantitative	Civic education & inequality	Civic equality	Civic education reduces participation

Table 4 illustrates that character formation is most effective when embedded within experiential civic contexts. MacMullen & I. (2018) emphasizes that public reasoning fosters ethical deliberation necessary for democratic life. Sanjaya et al. (2021) demonstrate that culturally grounded civic instruction reinforces character development by linking local values to democratic participation. Weinberg & J. (2022) shows that inequality-focused civic education reduces participation gaps, indicating that ethical framing influences structural democratic inclusion. These studies collectively indicate that character formation and democratic participation are interdependent processes.

## **2. Effectiveness of Innovative Pedagogy for Democratic Strengthening**

Across all four clusters, participatory and experiential models demonstrate the most consistent positive democratic outcomes. Quantitative evidence indicates that structured engagement enhances political efficacy and civic participation (Donbavand et al., 2021). Curriculum reforms show measurable impact only when combined with interactive teaching practices (Alscher et al., 2022). Digital interventions amplify engagement when embedded in guided learning environments (Bowyer et al., 2020). The convergence of findings suggests that democratic strengthening is mediated primarily by opportunities for authentic civic practice rather than content accumulation.

## **3. Integration of Character Formation and Democratic Participation**

The synthesis further reveals that democratic competence cannot be disentangled from ethical development. Character education models that remain abstract produce limited behavioral change, whereas participatory models grounded in ethical reflection foster sustained civic identity (Sanjaya et al., 2021). Weinberg & J. (2022) indicates that ethical framing reduces structural inequalities in civic participation, demonstrating that character formation has distributive democratic implications. Thus, democratic resilience depends on integrating civic skills with moral reasoning.

## **4. Interrelationship Among Participatory, Digital, Curriculum, and Character Models**

Cross-cluster analysis indicates that participatory pedagogy functions as the structural core linking digital innovation, curriculum reform, and character integration. Digital platforms operate as mediating tools, curriculum provides institutional structure, and character education supplies normative orientation. When integrated, these elements form a coherent civic learning architecture capable of strengthening democratic

resilience across diverse contexts.

## **5. Research Gaps and Future Directions**

Despite robust findings, several gaps remain evident. Longitudinal research examining sustained civic behavior beyond schooling remains limited. Comparative research in Global South contexts requires further expansion to avoid overgeneralization from Western settings. Future studies should integrate culturally grounded civic values with global democratic frameworks to ensure contextual relevance. Strengthening methodological diversity and expanding cross-national comparative analysis will enhance the explanatory power of civic education scholarship.

In conclusion, the integration of participatory engagement, digital literacy, institutional support, and ethical development represents the most promising direction for innovative civic education between 2017 and 2026. Democratic strengthening emerges most consistently when civic pedagogy operates as an experiential, dialogic, and character-integrated practice rather than a knowledge-transmission model. This integrative synthesis provides theoretical clarification and practical guidance for educators and policymakers seeking to reinforce democracy through transformative civic education.

## **C. CONCLUSION**

This systematic review identifies four dominant forms of pedagogical innovation in civic education between 2017 and 2026, namely participatory and deliberative models, digital citizenship integration, curriculum and institutional reform, and character-integrated civic learning. These findings directly address the research questions by demonstrating that pedagogical innovation in civic education is not singular but clustered across interrelated domains. Empirical evidence across the reviewed studies indicates that participatory and experiential approaches consistently produce stronger outcomes in terms of democratic knowledge, civic skills, and participatory dispositions compared to knowledge-transmission models. Furthermore, character formation is most effective when embedded within authentic civic engagement, while digital tools contribute meaningfully only when supported by coherent instructional design.

The synthesis of these findings highlights that participatory pedagogy functions as the structural core that connects digital innovation, curriculum reform, and character development within a unified civic education framework. This study contributes to the literature by providing an integrative analytical model that bridges previously

fragmented domains of civic education research. By systematically mapping empirical evidence from 2017 to 2026, this review advances theoretical understanding of how democratic participation and character formation operate as interdependent constructs rather than separate educational outcomes. In doing so, it moves beyond descriptive categorization toward a more coherent explanation of how pedagogical design shapes democratic resilience.

These findings carry important implications for both educational practice and future research. For educators and policymakers, the results suggest the need to reorient civic education toward experiential, dialogic, and ethically grounded learning environments that integrate participation, reflection, and digital engagement. Curriculum design should prioritize authentic civic practices rather than abstract knowledge transmission, while teacher capacity, particularly in facilitating deliberation and integrating digital literacy, must be strengthened. Future research should address the current limitations identified in this review, including the lack of longitudinal evidence, limited representation of Global South contexts, and the need for more methodologically diverse studies. Strengthening these areas will be critical for developing a more comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of civic education in addressing contemporary democratic challenges.

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