

EDUCATION AS A SPACE OF INTERNALIZATION OF LEGAL VALUES: A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

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Abstract. Education has a strategic role in shaping the legal awareness and character of students as the foundation of the life of the nation and state. However, the current educational reality still shows a gap between the mastery of legal knowledge and the internalization of legal values in the real behavior of learners. This study aims to analyze conceptually how education can function as a space for internalization of legal values through a pedagogical approach in character formation. This research uses the design of literature studies with a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to scientific articles, academic books, and reputable publications relevant to education, legal values, pedagogy, and character education, especially the last five years. The analysis was carried out thematically and conceptually to identify patterns, pedagogical approaches, as well as the implications of the internalization of legal values in educational practice. The results showed that the internalization of legal values in education is effective when done through reflective, contextual, and participatory pedagogical approaches, such as character education, critical pedagogy, and experiential learning. Legal values such as Justice, responsibility, honesty, and respect for the rights of others are proven to contribute significantly to the formation of the character of learners when consistently integrated in the curriculum, learning practices, and school culture. This study confirms that education not only serves as a means of transmitting knowledge, but also as a space for moral and social transformation in building the legal character of the younger generation.

Keywords: Education, Legal values, Character formation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental social and pedagogical process in the formation of personality, values, and morals of learners [1,2]. In the context of a democratic country such as Indonesia, education is not only interpreted as the transfer of cognitive knowledge, but also as a medium to form legal values, social ethics, and strong moral character [3]. Legal awareness in students becomes an important element in creating citizens who are aware of their rights, obligations, and responsibilities in the social and legal order of the State [4]. This kind of educational narrative is relevant because globalization, digitalization, and contemporary cultural changes have had a significant impact on the morals and ethics of the younger generation. This condition often shows the disharmony between formal values taught in schools and real legal behavior in everyday life, causing an urgency to strengthen the internalization of legal values through a systematic pedagogical approach.

In the practice of formal education, subjects such as Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) are often positioned as the main forum for conveying aspects of law and citizenship [5,6]. Nevertheless, studies show that the learning of law in education is often normative and theoretical without reaching the realm of the learners' real experience. This has the potential to result in a superficial understanding of the law as well as the lack of active involvement of students in internalizing legal values into concrete actions. The modern pedagogical perspective, based on the theories of Constructivism and contextual learning, asserts that meaningful understanding can only occur when learners actively relate theoretical concepts to their own life experiences [7]. Therefore, education as a space of internalization of legal values needs to be designed not only as a transmission of norms, but also as a pedagogical experience that facilitates the formation of a legally insightful character.

The theory of the character of education becomes an important foundation in understanding the relationship between legal education and the moral formation of students. According to character education theory, character education not only conveys a list of moral values, but involves an integrative process that includes the knowledge (knowing), feeling (feeling), and action (doing) of learners in school and community life [8,9]. This approach emphasizes the need for learning experiences that provide students with opportunities to think reflectively, make ethical decisions, and practice legal values in real situations. In this framework, a pedagogical approach that combines formal learning, habituation of attitudes, as well as the example of teachers and the school environment is crucial. Strengthening character through holistic internalization of legal values will be more effective when learners experience for themselves the consequences of moral decisions and actions that are in accordance with the rule of law.

The condition of education in the current digital era presents its own challenges in the internalization of legal values and character. Learners are currently exposed to a variety of digital content that is not always in line with expected legal and moral values. As a result, the phenomenon of unethical behavior, violation of school rules, up to a lack of understanding of the rights and obligations of a citizen [10,11] arises. This situation requires educational curricula and learning processes to be more responsive to contemporary social dynamics. Character education, especially related to law, should not stop at theoretical activities in the classroom; it should be part of school culture and the experience of learners, both in interpersonal relationships, habituation processes, and active participation in social life at school.

Recent studies show a variety of value internalization approaches that are relevant to the theme of education and character. For example, the study of Febiola Br Sembiring [12] on the internalization of civic values in the formation of orderly traffic behavior in junior high school students shows that internalization of values through direct experience, PPKn learning, and teacher examples is able to form students' legal awareness gradually. These findings underscore those real experiences with regard to legal consequences can reinforce a deeper internalization of legal values among learners. This kind of research emphasizes the importance of the link between legal values and concrete experiences in students' lives, not just conceptual learning.

In addition, the research of Zamzam Mustafa et al [13] on the internalization and actualization of disciplinary culture shows that routine activities in schools can be an effective pedagogical medium in instilling values such as discipline, responsibility, religiosity, and leadership. The study also found that internalization of character values takes place through everyday pedagogical interactions between teachers, learners, and school culture, rather than merely formal policy programs. This is relevant to the idea that the internalization of legal values should be a continuous practice in school life, involving all pedagogical, cultural and social aspects.

The research of Muhammad Agiel Dwi Putra et al [14] shows that the integration of the value of character education in learning not only occurs in the realm of citizenship, but also in other fields such as moral education. This study describes the process of internalization of values through religious learning, strategies applied, and supporting and inhibiting factors in the formation of the character of learners. These findings suggest that the internalization of legal values can be enriched by a cross-disciplinary approach that includes interrelated religious, moral, and social ethics in the lives of learners.

In addition to empirical research, the theoretical study of character education as a moral foundation in the digital age confirms the urgency of value education to face the challenges of globalization and the ever-evolving digital culture [15]. This Article underlines that character education is not only important in the traditional moral context, but also as a force to form citizens who are able to think critically, act ethically, and apply legal values in various situations of modern life. This approach fits the needs of legal education that is integrative, contextual, and relevant to the social realities of today's learners.

Through these studies, it becomes clear that the internalization of legal values in education cannot be separated from the process of character formation. This demands a pedagogical approach that relies not only on the mere transfer of knowledge, but also on experience that allows learners to understand and apply the value of law contextually. Learning theories such as experiential learning and constructivism theory emphasize that learning takes place through active experience, reflection, and construction of learners' meanings of social reality [16]. When learners are given the space to experience the consequences of moral decisions and ethical behavior, character building based on legal values can be more effective and durable.

In addition, the theory of sociocultural learning emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the formation of knowledge and values. In the school context, teachers, peers, and the school environment become agents of socialization of legal values. The teacher's example plays a major role in providing a real representation of how the value of the law is implemented in everyday life. Education as a space for internalizing legal values is thus not only a matter of what is taught, but also how teachers, the environment, and school culture bring these values into the daily experiences of learners. Faced with various contemporary social phenomena, legal education through a holistic pedagogical approach has become an urgent need. Efforts to internalize legal values must be carried out systematically through diverse learning strategies, contextual experiences, and habituation to values in school life. Character education based on the internalization of legal values will not only form rule-abiding learners, but also responsible, empathic, and critical citizens in making moral decisions.

Thus, it is important for current educational practices including on the subjects of Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) and other school activities to position education as the primary space where legal values are not only taught theoretically, but also experienced, practiced, and reflectively internalized by learners. This pedagogical process is the path to realizing a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also morally and legally mature in social life.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach to the design of Library research [17] with the approach of systematic Literature Review (SLR) [18,19]. The literature study was chosen because the research aims to analyze in depth the concepts, theories, and findings of previous research related to education as a space for internalization of legal values through a pedagogical approach in character formation. This study does not involve the collection of field data, but rather focuses on the search, review, and critical analysis of relevant written sources. The design of the literature study allows researchers to build a comprehensive conceptual understanding of the relationship between education, legal values, and character formation, as well as identify current trends in thinking and scientific findings in the context of contemporary education. The source of data in this study consists of primary and secondary library materials.

Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques searching for relevant literature using keywords such as character education, internalization of legal values, pedagogical approaches, and legal awareness of learners, and identifying and selecting literature sources that have a direct relationship with the focus of research. Data analysis in this study was conducted in a qualitative descriptive-analytical

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study were prepared based on a systematic analysis of scientific literature that discusses education as a space for internalization of legal values through a pedagogical approach in character formation. From the process of selection and analysis of the literature, a number of key findings were

obtained, which were grouped into several major themes that represent conceptual patterns and trends in Contemporary Educational Studies.

Table 1. Synthesis of research results of literature studies on education as a space for internalization of legal values

No.	Literature Review Focus	Main Findings	Pedagogical Implications	Key References
1	Education as a space for value internalization	Education is positioned as a primary social space for the continuous socialization and internalization of legal values	Schools should be understood not merely as academic institutions, but as ecosystems for value and character formation	[20] [21]
2	Concept of legal value internalization	The internalization of legal values occurs through cognitive, affective, and behavioral stages	Learning should integrate legal knowledge, moral reflection, and real-life practice	[22] [23] [24]
3	Dominant pedagogical approaches	Legal value education practices are still dominated by normative and cognitive approaches	A shift toward contextual and participatory pedagogical approaches is required	[25] [26]
4	Alternative pedagogical approaches	Experiential learning, case discussions, and reflective learning are more effective in developing legal awareness	Teachers need to develop experiential and real-world problem-based learning strategies	[27] [28]
5	Character education and legal values	Legal values directly contribute to the formation of character traits such as discipline, responsibility, and justice	Character education should be explicitly integrated with legal values	[29] [30]
6	Role of teachers	Teacher role modeling is a key factor in the internalization of legal values	Teachers act as moral models and agents of value internalization, not merely as instructors	[31] [26]
7	School culture	Consistent school culture strengthens the internalization of legal values	School rules should be implemented fairly, consistently, and educationally	[32] [33]
8	Relationship between rules and character	School rules are effective when understood as tools for moral learning rather than mere control mechanisms	Discipline enforcement should be accompanied by dialogue and ethical reflection	[34]
9	Contemporary educational c			

Education as a Space for the Socialization and Internalization of Legal Values

The findings of the literature review indicate that education is consistently regarded as a primary social space for the socialization and internalization of legal values. Numerous studies emphasize that school’s function not only as academic institutions but also as normative environments that shape students’ understanding of rules, justice, responsibility, and the rights and obligations of citizenship. The reviewed literature demonstrates that the internalization of legal values occurs through a gradual process, beginning with norm awareness (*norm knowing*), followed by value acceptance (*norm accepting*), and culminating in behavioral habituation (*norm practicing*). This process does not occur instantaneously; rather, it requires a consistent and sustainable educational environment supported by meaningful pedagogical interactions. These findings reinforce the view that education serves as a strategic medium for fostering legal awareness from an early age.

The Dominance of Normative Approaches in Legal Value Education

The analysis also reveals that most practices of legal value education in schools remain dominated by normative and cognitive approaches. Legal values are often taught in the form of written rules, legal provisions, or abstract concepts, with an emphasis on memorization and theoretical understanding. Such approaches tend to position students as passive recipients of knowledge, resulting in limited engagement with the affective and psychomotor domains of learning. Several studies reviewed indicate that a purely normative approach may create a gap between students' legal understanding and their actual behavior. While students may be aware of legal rules, they do not necessarily internalize or apply these values in their daily lives. This finding highlights the need for a pedagogical paradigm shift from the mere transmission of norms toward contextual, experiential, and reflective learning processes.

The Role of Pedagogical Approaches in Law-Based Character Formation

The literature review demonstrates that contextual, participatory, and reflective pedagogical approaches make a significant contribution to the internalization of legal values and character development. Approaches such as experiential learning, case-based discussions, problem-based learning, and value habituation through school culture are considered more effective than lecture-centered methods. The literature emphasizes that the internalization of legal values becomes more meaningful when students are directly involved in situations that require moral decision-making, conflict resolution, and ethical reflection. Such pedagogical approaches enable students not only to understand legal rules but also to internalize values such as justice, responsibility, and discipline as integral components of their personal character.

Teacher Role Modeling and School Culture as Key Factors

Another important finding concerns the strong influence of teacher role modeling and school culture in the process of legal value internalization. The literature indicates that teachers' behavior, their consistency in enforcing rules, and the alignment between their words and actions serve as primary references for students in interpreting legal values. Schools characterized by cultures of discipline, fairness, and open dialogue tend to be more successful in fostering students' legal awareness and character development. Conversely, inconsistency in rule enforcement and weak role modeling may undermine the internalization process. These findings underscore that legal value education extends beyond classroom instruction and is reflected throughout the broader school ecosystem.

Challenges in the Internalization of Legal Values in Contemporary Education

The review also identifies several challenges to the internalization of legal values in contemporary educational contexts. These challenges include the influence of digital culture, the limited integration of values within the curriculum, and the predominance of academically oriented educational practices. The literature suggests that excessive emphasis on cognitive outcomes often diverts educators' attention from character and value formation. Moreover, rapid social change has led to the perception of legal values as constraints on individual freedom rather than as shared guidelines for social coexistence. This condition calls for more dialogical and reflective pedagogical approaches that enable students to understand legal values as social necessities rather than merely formal obligations.

Conceptual Synthesis: Education as a Space for Legal Value Internalization

Based on the analysis of the literature, it can be synthesized that effective education for the internalization of legal values must be understood as a holistic pedagogical space encompassing instruction, habituation, role modeling, and school culture. Legal values should not merely be taught but should be enacted through consistent and meaningful pedagogical practices. This synthesis emphasizes that law-based character formation requires the integration of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of learning. Educational practices that position students as active subjects, provide opportunities for reflection, and emphasize authentic experiences are more likely to foster legally aware, responsible, and ethical individuals.

Discussion

The results of the systematic analysis of the literature indicate that education is no longer understood merely as a space for the transmission of cognitive knowledge, but rather as a social, moral, and cultural arena in which legal values are continuously internalized. These findings reinforce the view that law, within the educational context, is not simply a set of formal and coercive norms, but constitutes *living values* that must be experienced, interpreted, and practiced by students in their everyday lives. Accordingly, education functions as a strategic medium for bridging the gap between written legal norms and the legal behavior of

citizens. Recent literature emphasizes that crises of legal compliance, low levels of legal awareness, and the prevalence of deviant behavior among students cannot be resolved solely through repressive law enforcement measures [42]. Instead, preventive and educational approaches are required approaches that position education as the primary foundation for the formation of legal character. Within this framework, education serves as a space for value internalization rather than merely a site of normative socialization. Internalization demands deep, reflective, and contextual pedagogical processes so that legal values do not remain at the level of knowledge alone, but are embodied in attitudes and actions.

Pedagogical Approaches as Instruments for the Internalization of Legal Values

Based on the literature synthesis table, the dominant pedagogical approaches employed in the internalization of legal values include character education, critical pedagogy, reflective learning, and experiential learning. These approaches emphasize students’ active engagement in the learning process, value-based dialogue, and ethical reflection on the socio-legal realities they encounter. Progressive pedagogical approaches position students as moral subjects capable of critical thinking and ethical decision-making. In this context, teachers no longer function as the sole normative authorities, but rather as facilitators of values and guides for reflection.

Legal values such as justice, responsibility, equality, and respect for the rights of others are cultivated through case discussions, simulations of social conflicts, and reflections on real-life experiences within school and community settings. The literature also indicates that the internalization of legal values becomes more effective when pedagogical approaches are connected to students’ lived experiences. Contextual legal education enables students to recognize the relevance of legal values within their social realities, thereby fostering intrinsic legal awareness rather than compliance driven by external coercion [43].

Internalization of Legal Values and Student Character Formation

Research findings demonstrate a strong relationship between the internalization of legal values and the formation of students’ character. Traits such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, empathy, and a sense of justice represent concrete manifestations of well-internalized legal values. Consequently, legal education cannot be separated from character education, as the two are mutually reinforcing. The literature emphasizes that legal character is not formed instantaneously, but through a long-term process involving habituation, role modeling, and moral reflection [44]. Schools, as educational institutions, play a strategic role in providing a value ecosystem that is consistent across formal rules, pedagogical practices, and school culture. Inconsistencies between the values taught and the practices experienced by students may weaken the internalization of legal values. Within this context, character formation based on legal values requires alignment among the curriculum, school policies, and educators’ behavior. Teachers are not merely transmitters of values, but also representations of legal values themselves, demonstrated through fairness, transparency, and responsibility in their professional conduct.

Challenges in Implementing the Internalization of Legal Values in Education

Despite the literature’s emphasis on the urgency of education as a space for legal value internalization, the review also reveals various challenges in its implementation. One of the primary challenges is the dominance of cognitive-oriented approaches within educational systems that continue to prioritize academic achievement as the main indicator of learning success. As a result, affective and moral dimensions are often marginalized. In addition, teachers’ limited understanding of value pedagogy and legal education constitutes a significant barrier. Many educators lack adequate pedagogical competencies to integrate legal values in a reflective and contextual manner within the learning process [45]. This challenge is further exacerbated by administrative burdens and curriculum achievement pressures, which leave limited space for value-based dialogue and moral reflection. Another challenge arises from social environments that contradict the legal values taught in schools. When students observe injustice, legal violations, or inconsistent law enforcement in society, the internalization of legal values in schools may experience moral dissonance. Therefore, education as a space for legal value internalization cannot operate in isolation; it must be supported by a conducive social ecosystem.

Education as a Space for the Transformation of Legal Awareness

This discussion affirms that education holds transformative potential in shaping students’ legal awareness. Legal awareness, in this sense, goes beyond mere knowledge of rules and encompasses ethical consciousness that encourages voluntary compliance with the law. Education plays a crucial role in fostering the understanding that law exists to protect human dignity and promote social justice [46]. Conceptual

literature suggests that legal awareness emerging from reflective pedagogical processes tends to be more enduring and contextually grounded. Students who actively engage in value discussions and ethical reflection are more likely to internalize legal values as part of their moral identity. Consequently, education contributes directly to the formation of responsible and ethically grounded citizens.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the findings of this discussion strengthen the paradigm of education as a value-laden social and cultural practice. Legal education cannot be separated from constructivist learning theory, theories of value internalization, and character education theory. Integrating educational and legal perspectives opens avenues for the development of more holistic and interdisciplinary pedagogical models. Practically, these findings imply the need for a reorientation of educational policies toward greater emphasis on value and character dimensions. Curricula should be designed integratively by embedding legal values across subjects rather than confining them to specific courses. Furthermore, teacher professional development should include training in value pedagogy and contextual legal education. Schools must also cultivate consistent legal cultures through fair, participatory, and educational rules. When students experience just legal practices within school life, the internalization of legal values occurs naturally and meaningfully.

Overall, this discussion underscores that education constitutes a strategic and essential space for the internalization of legal values through reflective and contextual pedagogical approaches. Education does not merely produce academically competent individuals, but also citizens endowed with legal character and moral awareness. By positioning education as a space for the internalization of legal values, educational systems contribute directly to the development of a just and sustainable legal culture.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that education constitutes a strategic and fundamental space in the process of internalizing legal values through appropriate pedagogical approaches. The internalization of legal values cannot be optimally achieved if education focuses solely on cognitive and normative aspects without addressing affective, reflective, and contextual dimensions. The results of the literature review indicate that pedagogical approaches oriented toward character education, critical pedagogy, and experiential learning are capable of encouraging students to understand, internalize, and practice legal values in their daily lives. The formation of student character grounded in legal values such as justice, responsibility, honesty, and respect for the rights of others requires consistency among the curriculum, instructional practices, teacher role modeling, and school culture. Education that functions as a space for the internalization of legal values contributes directly to the development of intrinsic and sustainable legal awareness. Therefore, education should be positioned as a preventive and transformative instrument in fostering a just legal culture. These findings underscore the importance of reorienting educational policies and practices to place greater emphasis on value and character dimensions as integral components of national education objectives.

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