Rethinking Classroom Climates: Exploring Civic Education in Indonesia Using Data from the International Civic and Citizenship Study

Ryan T. Knowles[1(✉)] and Lingga A. Suganda[1,2]

[1] School of Teacher Education and Leadership, Utah State University, Utah, USA
Ryan.Knowles@usu.edu
[2] English Education Department, Universitas Sriwijaya, Palembang, Indonesia

Abstract. This study utilizes data from the International Civic and Citizenship study to analyse responses from Indonesian eighth graders. The paper tests the implications of students' perceptions of an open classroom climate for discussion. Findings show that an increase in students' perception of an open classroom climate is positively related to increases in support for gender and ethnic rights, civic knowledge, democratic values, and civic self-efficacy. In addition, the presence of an open classroom climate a stronger relationship for Female teachers in regards to civic self-efficacy, and for male students in civic knowledge. The findings of this study have implications for civic education within Indonesia. However, more research and scholarship is needed to understand presence and implications of an open classroom climate in Indonesia.

Keywords: Democracy · Education · Indonesia · Social-emotional Competence · Teacher Education

1 Introduction

Indonesia's long colonial history and its great cultural diversity define all its developmental aspects, including its nationally standardized education system as Frederick and Worden [1] described that "The character of Indonesia's education system reflects the country's diverse religious heritage, its struggle for a national identity, and the challenge of resource allocation in a poor but developing archipelagic nation" (p. 150). According to Indonesian statistics in 2010, there are around 1340 different ethnic groups in Indonesia. The majority of Indonesians—40% Javanese and 15% Sundanese—are indigenous Indonesians, making up about 95 percent of the population. The remaining 5%, however, are non-native Indonesians with heritage from other countries, such as China, Arab, India, and Dutch. The freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution of Indonesia, a secular democratic nation. Indonesia has six official religions: Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Protestantism, and Catholicism. The majority of Indonesians

are Muslims, making Indonesia the nation with the biggest Muslim population in the world.

Given the complexity and global role of Indonesia, researchers should have particular interest in the state of civic education within the country. In 2009 Indonesia participated in the International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS), which is an international assessment exploring eighth grade students' civic knowledge and a variety of non-cognitive attitudes such as expected political participation, attitudes towards women and ethnic minorities, and perceptions of classroom climate. Ample research has been conducted using secondary analysis of ICCS data to inform civic education across a variety of countries [2, 3]. However, the Indonesia data was under explored in international scholarship. Reviewing the literature, only two peer reviewed publications were found that included analysis of ICCS data from Indonesia. First, Chow and Kennedy [4] analysed Asian students' conceptions of future political participation. They found that Indonesian eighth graders were labelled active participators at a higher level in comparison to students in Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Thailand. This indicates, that Indonesia students were more likely to focus on a variety of types of political participation rather than focusing on a single type. The second study, conducted by Kennedy, Kuang, and Chow [5] explored Asian students' relationship to civic knowledge and civic participation. This study found that among Indonesian eighth grade students, civic knowledge was positively related to measures such as rejection of authoritarianism, rejection of obedience to authority, preservation of traditional culture, rejection of corruption, and attitudes toward personal morality of politicians. These findings suggest the importance of civic education, focusing on civic knowledge, to help students contend with anti-democratic aspects of society.

Taken together, the two studies outlined above represent valuable contributions to the literature on civic education. However, there are a variety of studies that could have been conducted to inform Indonesian civic education. Particularly, these studies do not address the relationships between classroom variables and positive civic outcomes. ICCS research in other countries has consistently found a relationship between classrooms that allow the free flow of ideas and discussion, open classroom climates, and positive civic outcomes. In other words the presence of an open classroom climate has been positively associated with civic knowledge, support for gender and ethnic rights, expected political participation, active notions of citizenship, and students sense of civic self-efficacy [3]. However, this relationship remains unexplored within the Indonesian context. The present study works to address this limitation by testing the connection between open classroom climate and positive civic outcomes within Indonesia using the 2009 ICCS dataset. Hopefully this analysis will encourage future studies that are concerned with improving civic education in Indonesia.

2   Literature Review

The review of literature below begins by providing context to the Indonesian educational system with a focus on civic education. Subsequently, we review the existing research on open classroom climate and positive civic outcomes. This builds the context to test the similarities between Indonesia and other countries regarding the relationship between open classroom climate and civic education.

2.1 Civic Education in Indonesia

Currently in the Indonesian Law on the National Education System No. 20, 2003, education is defined as "a planned effort to establish the learning environment and educational process so that students can actively develop their potential in religious and spiritual level, consciousness, personality, intelligence, behaviour, and creativity to themselves, the society, and the nation." This law and policy were published by the government to assist the development and implementation of the decentralized and multicultural education system and to uphold Indonesia's democratic environment. Referring to the same Law, the notion of multiculturalism is found in Chapter 3, article 4, verse 1 stating that "Education is conducted democratically, equally and non-discriminatorily based on human rights, religious values, cultural values, and national pluralism." Additionally, the notion of decentralization in Indonesian education system from the national government to the local provincial and district governments can be located in Chapter 14, article 50, verse 4 and 5.

However, power dynamic and segregation are part of the issues of democratic education in Indonesia. "The enactment of the law still reflects the government's position in considering the vital role of education for the country and its people's well-being" [6] indicates the government's role and policy representing the power dynamic atmosphere. Meanwhile, "the secular and nationalist emphasis in public schools has been resisted by some of the Muslim majority" [1]. Also, some concerns related to the public school quality cause some parents choose to send their children to pesantren and/or private schools. This phenomenon is the example of segregation issue in the democratic society in Indonesia.

The power dynamic within the structure of politics, economic, religion, and social culture creates certain "impossibility" to make the concept of "democracy" function ideally in the education context. "Gramsci saw education as lying at the heart of the entire processes of hegemony, while, for Freire, the idea that education is political and not neutral is the basic maxim of his philosophy" [7]. Apple [8] wrote that hegemony refers to "an organized assemblage of meanings and practices, central effective and dominant system of meanings, values and actions which are lived" (p. 5), and is embedded in social relationships and actions. "[The] totalizing quality of hegemony privileges dominant thoughts, relationships, and actions as commonsense and neutral" [9].

In this paper, the idea of democratic education in Indonesia is discussed within three aspects: decentralization, multiculturalism, and quality. First, the idea of democracy in education occurs within the idea of decentralization – the elimination of the hierarchical relationship between the central and local governments giving greater authority, political power, and financial resources directly to local districts. The decentralization in education is entwined with larger ideas of participatory democracy and power relations. Bjork's ethnographic study [10] found that due to Indonesia's history of top-down authoritarian rule, the translation and implementation of educational decentralization demonstrates a lack of action by local actors and links this immobility to deeply ingrained beliefs about the function of the Indonesian teacher within the school and the state. Teachers are given the responsibility of translating policy into practice within the decentralized democratic education system, but the inconsistencies between policies and practices happen due to incapable awareness from the decision makers and teachers [10, 11]. "As a result,

Indonesian teachers generally coordinate their behavior to fall in line with the state's expectations" [10].

Second, democratic education in Indonesia is in connection with the concept of multicultural education - an inclusive concept within school practices, programs, and material designed and focused on the creation of school and its environment as a place for students from various backgrounds of race, culture, religion, gender and class to experience equally good quality education [12]. Raihani [11] found that in the context of Indonesia, multicultural education goes beyond just addressing cultural difficulties to include inclusive discussions of religion as a significant source of moral guidance and identity markers. Additionally, Harjatanaya and Hoon [13] argued that in classroom context,

> Teachers tend to employ different approaches to promote inter-ethnic relations based on the subject they teach, which include content integration, prejudice reduction, knowledge construction and empowering culture. […] However, such efforts still mostly centre around maximising intergroup contact and setting a multicultural 'habitus', and less on engaging students in activities that challenge the existing power relations and address systematic inequalities that take place in society (p. 33).

Finally, the democratic education in Indonesia is discussed in relation to its education system quality in implementing the decentralized and multicultural education system. Although some scholars argued that Indonesia's biggest challenge regarding education is no longer improving access but improving quality [6, 14], the common issues, such as the lack of funding, infrastructure, and teachers' competencies are mostly found in Indonesian educational context. The funding and infrastructure development are not equally spread between the rural and urban areas. Additionally, numerous assessments of the country's education performance showed that the learning results for students are poor, there is a gap between graduate skills and the needs of employers, and many Indonesian instructors and lecturers lack the necessary subject knowledge and pedagogical abilities to be effective educators [14].

However, Rosser [14] argued that the low public spending on education, a lack of adequate human resources, unfavorable incentive structures, and subpar management are not the only factors contributing to Indonesia's poor educational performance. At its core, it has always been a political and power issue. He found that Indonesia has been unable to create a high-quality educational system that produces effective learning outcomes due to political and power issues of political, corporate, and bureaucratic elites' domination during the New Order and their ongoing control of the state infrastructure after it, including the bureaucracy in charge of education and public educational institutions. There is limited room for teachers to be innovative in their instruction because schools are politically run, the curriculum is not developed in consultation with teachers, and school policies are mandated by the school administration. Additionally, Rosser noticed "Public groups such as progressive NGOs and parent, teacher, and student groups who have had greater opportunity to participate in education policymaking since the fall of the New Order, making reform more difficult" (p. 19). Although basically these groups' policy concerns with positive education system, such as ensuring equality and building

character education for students, their expansion also influences government policy by removing key obstacles to political organisation, opening up new entry points into the process of policymaking that sometimes creates personal benefits for certain politicians' electoral reasons.

2.2 Open Classroom Climates and Civic Education

An open classroom climate can be understood in relation to more general school climate research, which finds that a sustained, positive school climate includes norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe and that these dimensions of school experience foster youth development and learning [15, 16]. By narrowing the focus to open classroom climates this article considers an aspect of the educational context that teachers can influence by fostering authentic discussion and respectful dissent among students.

Six items were used to measure students' sense of an open classroom climate. They were asked to indicate how often teachers engaged them in each activity on a scale of never, rarely, sometimes and often. The items include, encouraging students to make up their own minds, express their opinions, discuss current political events, expressing opinions that may be different than other students, discuss issues across differences, and exploring several sides of the issue. Like the majority of research using ICCS data, this study utilizes summary variable derived from these individual items through IRT scaling and provided within the dataset [17]. These scales were designed primarily to make comparisons between countries and they meet high psychometric standards such as alpha reliabilities. Some researchers have used these scales, however other have employed simpler scaling with largely the same results. The value of these scales is that discussion of political and social issues within an open classroom climate appears to have the potential to relatively closely mirror cross-cutting political talk that the students are likely to experience outside of school and in the future (during higher education or as adults). Moreover, a skilled teacher can facilitate discussions across ideological divisions in a manner that promotes mutual respect and complex understandings between students who hold different beliefs.

As the introduction briefly mentioned scales formed from students' responses to the items measuring students' perceptions of open classroom climates have positive associations with a variety of desirable outcomes. For example, research has found consistent associations between open classroom climate and civic knowledge [17, 18]. In addition to civic knowledge, Maiello, Oser, & Biderman [19] found that students' perceptions of open classroom climates are positively associated with intended political participation, including expectations of voting in 28 countries. Other studies have demonstrated associations between classroom climate and expected political participation beyond voting [20–23]. Additional studies found associations between open classroom climate and support for gender rights, positive attitudes towards immigrants, and support for ethnic group rights [24, 25]. Moreover, open classroom climates are positively associated with trust in government institutions, schools, and in other people. Finally, Campbell [20] found that an open classroom climate has a more positive impact among low-SES students compared to their more privileged peers. Taken together, and with others listed in the appendix, these studies reveal the substantial value of open classroom climates

in promoting civic knowledge, political participation, positive social attitudes, among a variety of student populations and contexts.

2.2.1   What is Important in Implementing an Open Classroom Climate?

Research suggests that the implementation of an open classroom climates could support and strengthen other instructional strategies. Analyzing students from the United States with the 1999 study, Gainous and Martens [26] tested four teaching approaches implemented by teachers including traditional teaching, active learning, video teaching, and fostering an open classroom climate. Their analysis compared different combinations of these approaches and found that the combination of open classroom climate with any other strategy was more effective at promoting civic knowledge, political self-efficacy, and intention to vote. All of the combinations that omitted open classroom climate were less effective. The use of open classroom climates enhanced the efficacy of lectures in promoting civic knowledge, positive attitudinal and participatory outcomes. Gainous and Martens [26] summarized their work in a later study: "the unmistakable conclusion to be drawn from our research is that fostering an open classroom climate is the surest way to improve the democratic capacity of America's youth" (p. 18). These analyses suggest that implementing an open classroom climate does not necessarily require a teacher to make dramatic changes to their practice. Instead, an open classroom climate can potentially enhance current methods and can be used in a variety of civic-related subjects.

Several practical models of teaching identify methods of increasing open classroom climates by focusing on political and social issues in the classroom [27–29]. Focusing on partisanship, Hess and McAvoy [30] presented a model of democratic education that directly acknowledges the divisiveness of contemporary society, instructs students to respectfully listen to their peers, make arguments, and collectively make decisions about how we ought to live together. The work of Walter Parker [31–34] consistently establishes the efficacy of teaching with and for discussion to enlarge understandings of issues and problem solving among students. Related classroom level research conducted by Levy [35] found that a course on civic advocacy designed to develop students' basic knowledge, communication, skills in evaluating sources, vision-building, and reflecting led to higher political efficacy and persistence in comparison to a control class. Finally, Alviar-Martin [36] implemented a model of citizenship education that asked students to define varying conceptions of citizenship, consider varying identities within contemporary society, and reconcile the differences between these through discussion around creating a more just and equitable society. Taken together, these works demonstrate the importance of a skilled teacher to implement controversial issue discussions as a major goal within democratic education.

3   Method

In 1971, IEA conducted a cross-national civic education study including measures of content knowledge and of attitudes such as trust in government, support for women's political rights, and participatory behaviour [37]. Civic education was one of the six subject areas tested and surveyed, along with science education (continued more recently in

the IEA TIMSS studies). Results from this early civic education study (which included samples from the United States) indicated that an open classroom climate for discussion was a key predictor of civic knowledge and civic engagement. This finding was brought to the attention of social studies educators in the 1991 Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning [32]. Renewed interests found additional support for open classroom climates when the IEA launched the 1999 CIVED study. Data were collected from approximately 90,000 14-year-olds from 28 countries in 1999 and from samples of teachers of civic-related subjects [18]. In 2009 IEA launched ICCS [38], which elaborated the preceding study's frameworks. Many but not all of the same measures were part of the questionnaires. The dimension of an open classroom climate had been established as an important aspect of schooling and was included. This study included data from more than 140,000 eighth graders in 38 countries and surveyed principals and a random sample of teachers (from a variety of subject areas) in students' schools. These opportunities were further expanded with the release of the data from the 2016 IEA International Civic and Citizenship Study [38].

Data from this secondary analysis focuses on the Indonesia dataset that has been underutilized. Particularly, the study is interested in the relationship between an open classroom climate and positive civic outcome composite measures including civic knowledge, democratic values, civic self-efficacy, and support for ethnic and gender rights. The dataset contains responses from 4,913 Indonesian 8th graders across 142 classrooms. The variables used in the study are composite measures calculated by the survey developers and are available within the dataset. Each composite measure is scaled from a series of individual survey items using Rasch IRT modelling. For more information regarding the individual items for each composite measures refer to the 2009 ICCS international report [39].

Data analysis includes a series of steps to evaluate the relationship between an open classroom climate and positive civic outcomes. First, students perceptions of an open classroom climate were divided into eight quantiles. Means for each positive civic outcome were calculated for each of the eight quantiles. This will replicate a similar table presented by Knowles and McCafferty-Wright [41]. Subsequently, a regression analysis was carried out to predict each of the five positive civic outcomes. The independent variables in each model included the student's socio-economic statues, gender (coded $0 = $ Male, $1 = $ Female), and open classroom climate. Appropriate replicate weights suggested by the ICCS technical report were used to calculate both the means and the regression results [17]. Finally, we present two figures that demonstrate the interaction between gender and the relationship between open classroom climate, civic knowledge, and civic-self efficacy.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The first step in analysing the role of an open classroom climate and positive civic outcomes was conducted by calculating weighted means for gender rights, civic knowledge, democratic values, and civic self-efficacy and ethnic rights across eight quantiles of civic
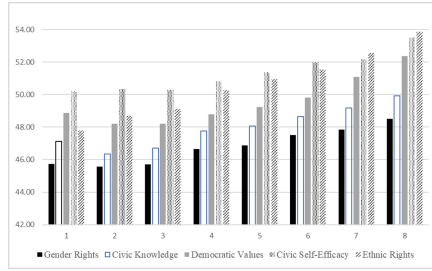
Fig. 1. Positive Civic Outcomes Across Eight Levels of Open Classroom Climate

Table 1. Regression models predicting positive civic outcomes with students' perceptions of an open classroom climate

	Democratic Values		Gender Rights		Ethnic Rights		Civic Self-Efficacy		Civic Knowledge	
	Beta	S.E.	Beta	S.E.	Beta	S.E.	Beta	S.E.	Beta	S.E.
Open Classroom Climate	0.19*	0.02	0.01*	0.01	0.16*	0.01	0.06*	0.02	1.63*	0.14
SES	1.12*	0.19	0.71*	0.17	0.74*	0.14	0.03	0.21	14.31*	2.47
Gender	0.16	0.28	2.18*	0.19	0.29	0.28	-2.49*	0.33	14.67*	2.80
Intercept	37.56*	0.95	35.80*	0.55	41.39*	0.81	49.18*	0.85	336.45*	7.81
R2		0.06		0.08		0.06		0.02		0.12

*p<.05

Fig. 2. Regression models predicting positive civic outcomes with student's perception of an open classroom climate.

self-efficacy. The results clearly demonstrate that as open classroom climate increases, so does the level of each positive civic outcome. These results are displayed in Fig. 1.

Subsequently, a regression analysis was conducted using open classroom climate, student socioeconomic status, and gender to predict each of the five positive civic outcomes. The results clearly show that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between open classroom climate and democratic values, gender rights, ethnic rights, civic self-efficacy, and civic knowledge. Additionally, a positive and statistically significant relationship was found between socioeconomic status and democratic values, ethnic rights, and civic knowledge. This indicates that the wealthier students were higher in each of these values. Finally, students' gender was also a significant predictor. Female students were shown to be higher in support for gender rights and civic knowledge. Male students were indicated higher support for civic self-efficacy.

In addition to the regression analysis, we considered whether the relationship between open classroom climate and positive civic outcomes varied by gender. Figure 2 and Fig. 3 present the results of this analysis. These figures present the relationship between open classroom climate and both civic self-efficacy and civic knowledge. Figure 2 demonstrates a stronger slope for female students, which indicates that an open classroom climate has a stronger relationship among female students compared to male students. Inversely, Fig. 3 demonstrates a stronger relationship for male students compared to female students when comparing the connection between open classroom climate and civic knowledge. This provides evidence that an open classroom climate has a stronger relationship on civic knowledge for male students (Fig. 4).

4.2 Discussion

This study draws attention to the value of open classroom climate in relation to student learning in general and civic development in particular. It also appears that that implementing such an environment can be both powerful and practical when combined
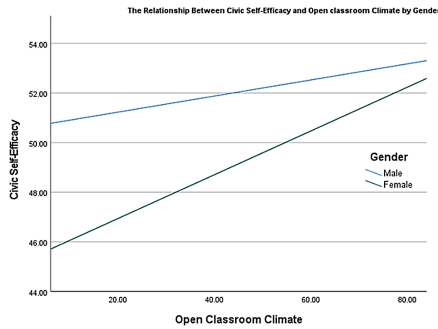
Fig. 3. The relationship between open classroom climate and civic self-efficacy by gender.
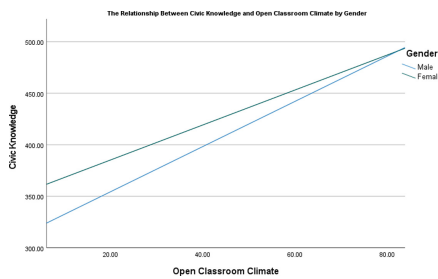

Fig. 4. The relationship between open classroom climate and civic knowledge by gender.

with pre-existing teaching strategies [26]. Moreover, existing models exist for educators looking to enhance their practice by promoting open and respectful climates within their classrooms. Particularly, the study finds that Indonesian students fit similar patterns found elsewhere across other studies outlined by the review of research conducted by Knowles, Torney-Purta, and Barber [3]. The key takeaway from this study is that an open classroom climate is positively associated with a variety of positive civic outcomes. However, more research is needed to understand how open classroom climates fit within the Indonesian context. While success at changing education policy and teaching may be difficult, the current political climate necessitates teachers to be equipped with skills to facilitate discussions around social and political issues.

We suggest three avenues to promote increased understandings and implementation of open classroom climates within public education. First, organizations interested in education should discuss and consider ways to enhance students' experience of open classroom climates as a major policy goal. Organizations such as the National Council for the Social Studies may be a natural fit. However, given current political climates other organizations may have a stake, such as the American Educational Research Association. Within Indonesia, organizations exist that can serve to promote civic education. These include generally the Indonesian Teachers Union (PGRI) that serves as the leading institution for teacher representation and the Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP) as another common local association for teachers, and specifically the Association of Indonesian Pancasila and Citizenship Education Professionals (AP3KnI) as the

nationally recognized forum for civic education professionals. Secondly, these research organizations, individual researchers, and advocates for education could engage as individuals or groups with local school boards and departments of education. The additional efforts could delineate the characteristics of open classroom climates within revised state education standards. Finally, teachers and teacher educators could work to develop and draw attention to professional development materials to give teachers' practical skills at implementing open classroom climates in a diversity of classrooms.

4.2.1 Teachers' Social Emotional Skills and Teacher Education Program

The practice happening within the school and classroom context in Indonesia mostly depends on the role of the classroom teachers because "the government did not exert a powerful influence on the faculty and teachers, [teachers] acted out of a sense of duty to students and parents, guided by their own commitment to education" [10]. Teachers have the authority to put the national standard curriculum into practices by modifying their instructional strategies based on their students' needs. For example, teachers can integrate the concept of democracy, social justice, equity, and solidarity in their classroom by providing collaborative activity and/or discussion to enhance democratic atmosphere in their classroom. Therefore, in a populous, geographically distributed, and culturally varied nation like Indonesia, the crucial role that teachers play in enhancing the education system is particularly apparent [42].

However, in Indonesia schools are either run by the state (public schools) or by private organizations (private schools). The recruitment process is where the primary distinction lies. Private schools, whose curricula typically go beyond the minimum standards outlined in the national curriculum, have their own authority and laws for the hiring of teachers. Meanwhile, teachers in public schools are mostly civil servants recruited by the central government, and they "are expected to faithfully transmit the national curriculum rather than to develop close personal ties to students or to inspire them to make great intellectual strides [because they] are subject to the civil service disciplinary regulations" [10]. Therefore, their loyalty and obedience are stressed more than their skills and ability in the classroom. This supports Apple's [8] statement that "Education was not a neutral enterprise, that, by the very nature of the institution, the educator was involved, whether he or she was conscious of it or not, in a political act" (p. 1), which is to support the hegemony within the system. "School cultures in Indonesia indicate the government control over the curriculum, salaries, in-service training, evaluation, and even the teachers' union" [10].

Additionally, Rosser [14] noticed that the better funding, better teacher training programs, policies supporting institutional autonomy and decentralizing managerial responsibility, as well as a fundamental shift in the underlying political and social relationships that have characterized Indonesia's political economy and influenced the development of its educational system are all necessary for Indonesia to achieve higher levels of educational quality and learning outcomes. Rosser's critical democratic argument stressed that "In the absence of such [fundamental] shift, interventions aimed at promoting educational quality are likely to be stymied by political and social forces opposed to reform, for either ideological or material reasons" [14].

However, in school context one of the big concerns should be put in the teachers' role in the classroom. Counts [43] stated that "teachers are under heavy social obligation to protect and further the common and abiding interests of the people" (p. 30). He further described about teachers and the power they have, in which "Teachers should deliberately reach for power and then make the most of their conquest" (p. 29). Although "the position of educator is neutral neither in the forms of cultural capital distributed and employed by schools nor in the economic and cultural outcomes of the schooling enterprise itself" [8], there is always hope if the teachers have the "positive" ideological democratic perspectives as their main value and students' needs are always their biggest concern.

Cochran-Smith [44] highlighted that "The purpose of education in a democratic society is not simply assimilating all schoolchildren into the mainstream or preparing the nation's workforce to preserve the place of […] the dominant power in a global society, but to prepare a thoughtful citizenry". Teachers have professional obligations to the students with whom they work [45], including to support the implementation of democratic curriculum by using "deliberative discussions as a powerful and humanizing mechanism that can spread ideas and inform decision" [46] and fashioning "the curriculum and the procedures of the school, they will definitely and positively influence the social attitudes, ideals, and behavior of the coming generation" [43].

Therefore, teachers should first be provided awareness of the democratic ideology. They should be given the opportunity to grow into self- and group-disciplined individuals who possess the depth of knowledge, intellectual rigor, critical thinking skills, social conscience, and dialogical/participatory mindset required to play the part of social actors [10]. Then, teachers can model and provide students with the critical skills that will allow them to participate fully in the democracy regardless of their status in society. Teachers should be able to change the educational setting to give both students and themselves the chance to participate in the genuine evaluation of attempts through participatory process, such as in observation, discussion and reflection.

5   Conclusion and Implications

The education system in Indonesia is integrated in broader concepts of participatory democracy and the allocation of power. "Indonesia's history of top-down authoritarian control does not provide a fertile setting for reforms that aim to enlarge the circle of actors involved in the management of public services". This paper provides a brief overview of the Indonesian education history, sociopolitical changes, and efforts to improve the education system in Indonesia, in which the discussion about its qualified democratic education has been an endless circle with not yet "better" solution to appear. The findings of this study demonstrate that an open classroom climate can support civic education in Indonesia.

Teachers have an important role in taking responsibility within the curriculum. However, "what should not be forgotten is the transfer of understanding of the curriculum to the educators who are the perpetrators, because many educators could not understand the applicable curriculum and what they should do with it", including the democratic curriculum implied in the idea of decentralization and multicultural education in Indonesian

education context. Reforming the education system necessitates a degree of change in the way teachers think and act. Having social and emotional competence might support teachers and students to involve in a meaningful relationship within classroom context. Promoting self-awareness, social awareness, and responsible decision making during discussion and reflection in the classroom open spaces for students to involve actively in the real democratic environment. Moreover, how teacher education department prepare future teachers to foster democratic values and skills must be acknowledged as a major part of the "problem of teacher education" if it aims is to maintain a healthy democracy. This paper demonstrates the evidence to support the teacher educators' efforts to enhance Indonesian teachers' social emotional development for building better teacher-student relationship in the practice of democratic education system in school context. Therefore, this paper recommends that prioritizing the social emotional development within the role of teachers and teacher educators in the democratic classroom curriculum and practice provides hope for supporting the idea of democracy for all students.

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