



The Relationship of the Surabaya Diocese's Cadre Development Program within the Socio-Cultural Domain

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the relationship between the cadre program organized by the Diocese of Surabaya and the socio-cultural domain in Civic Education. This program not only honors spiritual and leadership aspects, but also instills civic values through community-based activities, social dialogue, and cross-cultural experiences, and aims to shape the character, leadership skills, and active participation of young Catholics in community life. The research approach used is descriptive qualitative with a case study method. Data collection techniques were conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis used triangulation techniques by comparing interviews, observation, and documentation data. The results of the study show that this program effectively instills civic values, such as leadership, communication, and integrity, which are closely related to civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic dispositions that result in civic engagement. This program contributes significantly to civic character education that is relevant to the needs of the times. This study recommends the importance of integrating socio-cultural citizenship practices into youth development programs.

Introduction

In recent years, Indonesia has faced increasing social complexity, marked by rampant political polarization, identity conflicts, intolerance, and declining trust among citizens (Rohman, 2018; Santoso, 2021; Wardani, 2025). Indonesia has faced various socio-political challenges in recent years, particularly in the lead-up to the 2019 elections, such as societal polarization and radicalism, such as the Ngagel bombings at three churches in Surabaya. The Diocese of Surabaya responded to these conditions by designing a cadre development program for Catholic Youth (OMK) as an effort to foster character and social leadership (Ngarawula & Roseli, 2025; Mayolla & Budiono, 2025; Gowasa & Famaugu, 2025).

The Surabaya Diocese's cadre development program is designed as a character-building strategy that integrates spirituality, leadership, and socio-cultural values. Through activities such as training camps, joint study sessions, social service, live-in sessions, and evaluations, cadres are equipped with social awareness and the ability to live in diversity (Widiastuti, 2023). This approach positions education as a transformative process involving direct experience and critical reflection, as proposed by Freire (2017).

In the context of Civic Education, there are three main domains: academic, curricular, and socio-cultural (Hasanah, 2024; Ouakrim-Soivio & Löfström, 2022; Bolatito, 2025). The socio-cultural domain emphasizes the application of civic values in social life, such as cross-cultural communication, tolerance, and social responsibility. However, research on the contribution of religious institutions in this domain is still very limited. Therefore, this article attempts to fill

this gap by examining how the Surabaya Diocese's cadre development program internalizes civic education values in the socio-cultural domain.

In the context of faith-based non-formal education, the Church has the potential to act as an agent of social change. A study by Wijaya (2018) shows that religious organizations can strengthen civic engagement through values-based education. This aligns with UNESCO's (2016) perspective, which emphasizes the importance of community-based education and local culture as the foundation for sustainable development (Abdul Aziz et al., 2023; Purnama & Artike, 2026; Pratama et al., 2026).

Although numerous studies have addressed youth participation and character education, studies specifically linking church cadre development programs to the socio-cultural domain are limited (Fahmi et al., 2026; Ikhsan et al., 2026; Nurdiana et al., 2026). Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the relationship between cadre development activities in the Diocese of Surabaya and the formation of citizens who are aware of their socio-cultural context (Irawan et al., 2025; Srisorn et al., 2022).

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study of the Surabaya Diocese's student cadre program from 2022 to 2025. Subjects included facilitators, participants, and alumni of the program. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. Data analysis was conducted thematically using the Miles and Huberman (2016) approach.

The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of a citizenship education model based on spiritual and cultural values, as well as provide input for religious and educational institutions to develop educational methods that are relevant to contemporary social realities.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen because the study aimed to examine in depth the relationship between the Surabaya Diocese's cadre development program and the socio-cultural domain of Civic Education. The case study design enabled the researcher to explore the implementation of the cadre program, the values internalized through each activity, and the way the program contributed to civic knowledge, civic skills, civic dispositions, and civic engagement.

The research was conducted in Surabaya and Kediri, which were the main locations for the implementation of the cadre development program. The object of this study was the Surabaya Diocese's cadre development program, which consisted of four main stages: Training Camp, Sinau or Learning Together, Direction Determination, and Live-in. These stages were analyzed because they contained learning activities, reflection, social interaction, interfaith experience, leadership training, and community-based engagement.

The research subjects consisted of facilitators, committee members, participants, and alumni of the cadre development program (Hall et al., 2026; Theresia et al., 2025; Nelson et al., 2025). The informants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the program and their ability to provide relevant information regarding the implementation, learning process, and impact of the program. Alumni were also included to identify the continuation of civic engagement after participating in the cadre development program.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with facilitators, committee members, participants, and alumni to obtain information about the objectives, learning process, values, and perceived impact of the program. Direct observation was carried out during several program activities,

including Training Camp, discussion sessions, exposure activities, debates, social observation, direction determination, and Live-in activities in diverse communities. Documentation data included program photos, activity reports, learning materials, reflection notes, and other supporting documents related to the cadre development program (Nelson et al., 2025; Kahfi et al., 2025; Kiwanuka et al., 2024).

The data analysis used the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and categorized data related to the forms of cadre activities and their connection with civic knowledge, civic skills, civic dispositions, and civic engagement. In the data display stage, the findings were presented in the form of descriptions, activity classifications, documentation, and a relationship table between the cadre development program and the socio-cultural domain. In the conclusion-drawing stage, the researcher interpreted the relationship between the cadre development activities and the strengthening of socio-cultural citizenship values (Shebalina et al., 2025; Aminulloh et al., 2026; Belkind et al., 2025)

To ensure data validity, this study used triangulation techniques by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Interview data were compared with direct observations of program activities and supported by documentation such as photos, activity materials, and program reports. This triangulation was used to ensure that the findings were not based on a single data source but were supported by multiple forms of evidence.

Results and Discussion

Surabaya Diocese Cadre Development Program

Based on the results of the researcher's observations when collecting data directly at the locations in Surabaya and Kediri, the researcher found that this cadre development program has four main forms:

Training Camp

This training camp program is conducted intensively for 2-3 days in Kediri, which aims to provide an initial introduction to the program that will be carried out. In this initial stage, participants are given several activities that train mental, physical, discipline, commitment, togetherness, and leadership through self-analysis, examination or reflection and journaling (inner examination) so that participants are expected to have the ability of discernment (the activity of sorting something in making decisions which is good and bad). This stage opens with several activities including;

Opening Mass

The opening Mass was held as a first step to ask for God's blessings and presence so that the entire series of cadre development programs can run smoothly, enthusiastically, and in accordance with His will. This Mass was attended by all participants, committee members, companions, and several Church figures as a form of spiritual unification of all components involved. In the homily, the priest emphasized the importance of building a spirit of service and a commitment to faith as the foundation for carrying out the cadre development process. The solemn and familial atmosphere felt during the Mass helped create a conducive initial atmosphere and encouraged participants to participate in activities with an open and responsible attitude.

Introduction

An introductory session was held after the opening mass to build familiarity and mutual trust among participants. This activity gave each participant the opportunity to share their name,

hometown, and motivation for participating in the program. The warm and interactive atmosphere made participants feel more comfortable and open.

Each participant who spoke was given full space without interruption, creating an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and respect for diverse backgrounds and perspectives. This attitude helped build emotional closeness and strengthened a sense of togetherness as a community ready to undergo the process of self-development together in the cadre development program.

Commitment

During the commitment presentation session, the committee outlined the rules and responsibilities that all participants must adhere to throughout the program. These commitments include time management, active participation, respect for others, and maintaining ethical conduct throughout the program. It was also stated that any violation of these commitments would be subject to sanctions according to the severity of the violation, ranging from a warning to possible expulsion from the program. After all commitments were explained, each participant was asked to personally and individually state their commitment to participate in the program seriously and comply with all agreed-upon provisions. This aimed to foster awareness of personal responsibility and maintain the integrity of the cadre development process.

Physical and mental training by carrying out exposure where we are divided into small groups containing 4 - 5 people and spread across various markets in Kediri from 5 to 10 am, without being given a penny of money or any supplies, and only given instructions to find work in the market, do not mention that you are participating in a cadre program, you are not allowed to demand to be paid after doing the work but if it is given and does not burden the owner who gives you it is not a problem and most of the participants get souvenirs in the form of food ingredients that will be processed together at our place in implementing the program, namely Wisma Bethlehem, Pohsarang, Kediri, this is certainly very outside the comfort zone of the participants.

Materials are provided about who you are, why you need others, what matters most to you, and so on. This activity takes place between midnight and 3 a.m., with participants blindfolded and taken outdoors barefoot.

The silent, dark atmosphere of the night, combined with the closed eyes and barefoot conditions, created a deeply reflective experience for the participants. In this environment, participants were encouraged to be more sensitive to their inner voice, to feel the presence of others inwardly, and to recognize their limitations as humans who cannot walk alone. The disconnection from physical comfort actually opened up an inner space for more honest reflection on self-identity, relationships with others, and the values that truly matter in life. This activity was a touching, quiet moment that awakened personal awareness spiritually and emotionally.

Must have an opinion and tell a story.

In each discussion and reflection session, participants are required to express their opinions and share their experiences openly. This obligation is intended to cultivate courage, critical thinking, and communication skills, which are essential components of the cadre development process. By encouraging each participant to share their stories and express their views, the activities become more lively, participatory, and create a space for mutual learning among participants.

Participants are trained to debate, taking a pro or con position on real-world issues. This training aims to develop critical thinking skills, develop logical arguments, and express

opinions constructively. Based on facts and reality, participants are encouraged to view issues more broadly and objectively, and learn to respect differing perspectives in the spirit of dialogue and social justice.

This initial phase allows the facilitators and committee to analyze the learning methods that will be used for this cohort, with the same core material for each cohort. At this stage, participants are also given the freedom to choose whether to continue with the program or not.

Sinau (Learning Together)

This meeting, held periodically, introduces us to social structures. Here, we're given material related to humans as social creatures. The topics covered include: 1). This analysis of the concrete social environment and direct analysis of markets in the Surabaya area involved observing how people interact with one another and attempting to gather social insights about the sellers and buyers in these markets. 2) Analysis of the social environment of reality in social media or cyberspace with media literacy, positive content creation and anti-hoax.

Material on social structure and social discourse is provided to equip participants with a critical understanding of various social issues emerging in society. Through this material, participants are encouraged to analyze social realities in depth, recognize injustice, and understand their role as cadres who are sensitive and responsive to societal issues. The presentation of the material is accompanied by concrete examples and shared reflections so that participants can connect faith values with concrete actions in their surroundings.

Direction Determination

This meeting is a personal development session where the facilitators and committee help participants become aware of their personal direction and goals. Participants are guided through self-evaluation, journaling, and face-to-face communication with the facilitators, who include pastors, psychologists, and church social activists.

Live-in

Live-in is one of the most anticipated series by the participants. The facilitators and committee hope that this live-in will enable participants to respond wisely when faced with concrete situations when faced with circumstances. This program is held to equip participants to gain experience that can be obtained outside the comfort zone of cadre participants. Participants here are sent to live with small or marginalized communities for 2 days and 1 night with various religious, cultural, and professional backgrounds. This includes living in interfaith communities that are inherently different from the participants' beliefs, for example, living and interacting with people in Islamic boarding schools, temples, adherents of the Sapta Darmo Faith, and so on. Living in communities with different professions, for example living with residents who work as scavengers, laborers, and some also live in orphanages.

This observation was conducted during the fifth live-in cohort, where participants demonstrated diverse responses and reflections during their time living with the community. Through direct observation of the dynamics that occurred, researchers were able to assess the extent to which participants were able to adapt, open up, and internalize the values of diversity and social empathy. This fifth cohort was chosen because it is considered representative of the characteristics of the current generation of cadres, who are expected to be able to address real-life challenges with an inclusive and critical attitude.

Live-in at Islamic Boarding School

Live-in activities are contextual learning programs aimed at introducing cadre participants to community life from diverse social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. In this research, the live-in took place at an Islamic boarding school located in an educational and religious area.

During the live-in period, based on our data, we found that the group was actively involved in various activities with the students and the community surrounding the Islamic boarding school. These activities include:

Teaching

Several members of our group have teaching skills. Seeing the need in Islamic boarding schools to improve the quality of learning, we took the initiative to contribute through teaching activities and mentoring students.

Activities are conducted informally outside of regular class hours, both individually and in small groups. The material covered general subjects such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as assistance with school assignments. Students demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm, especially when the learning approach is fun and interactive.

This activity aligns with the mission to improve the quality of education and create an active and supportive learning environment. With a patient and engaging approach, students more easily understand the material, are motivated to learn, and feel more confident in participating in class.

Participate in the daily activities of the students

Apart from teaching, our group also participates in various daily student activities, such as: 1) Religious studies (although we are observers, not active participants because we have different beliefs). 2) Evening study activities (murojaah). 3) Environmental cleaning activities (morning community service). 4) Casual discussion in the dormitory

Through this participation, we gained a deeper understanding of the disciplined, structured, and collaborative nature of Islamic boarding school life. The interactions we had not only broadened our horizons but also fostered a sense of mutual respect for diversity.

Eat Together and Live Together

Eating together is one of the moments that strengthens the emotional bonds between live-in participants and students. We enjoy simple, traditional Islamic boarding school dishes, according to the procedures and times set by the boarding school. Besides adapting to local culture, this experience teaches the values of simplicity, togetherness, and time management.

Participation in the English Village Program

During the live-in period, the Islamic boarding school is implementing the English Village program, which aims to familiarize students with using English in their daily lives. This program consists of various methods, such as: 1) English Day every certain day; 2) Vocabulary of the Day; 3) Outdoor speaking practice (speaking class); 4) Educational games in English.

We participated in these activities by assisting students in practice and helping them improve their pronunciation and grammar. This two-way interaction created a lively and enjoyable learning environment, and strengthened the students' motivation to learn a foreign language.

Live-in at Kenjeran Temple, Surabaya

Live-in activities are a contextual learning approach that provides participants with the opportunity to live together and experience firsthand the lives of people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. In this context, our group underwent a live-in at the Segara Kenjeran Temple in Surabaya, coinciding with the period leading up to Nyepi, a major Hindu religious holiday.

The atmosphere around the temple was very dynamic and lively, given the various spiritual and cultural preparations underway. We were warmly welcomed by the traditional leaders and the temple community, who even allowed us to actively participate in various preparatory activities leading up to the Nyepi celebration. This was a valuable experience in building cross-cultural understanding and strengthening interfaith tolerance.

During our several days living in the temple grounds, we participated in various activities, both religious and cultural. These activities included:

Preparation for the Melasti Ceremony

We witnessed and assisted in preparations for Melasti, a ritual of self-purification and the purification of nature held before Nyepi Day. Our duties included helping prepare offerings, tidying the ceremony site, and following the instructions of traditional leaders. Although we are not Hindu, we were permitted to observe and assist while respecting the established procedures.

Making and Practicing Ogoh-Ogoh

We helped create the ogoh-ogoh, giant statues representing evil spirits that will be paraded as a symbol of cleansing before Nyepi. In addition to assisting with the coloring and assembly, our group also had the opportunity to participate in a practice session on hoisting the ogoh-ogoh with local Hindu youth. This activity requires cooperation, teamwork, and mutual trust.

Dance and Musical Drama Practice

Our group was also involved in rehearsals for a musical drama and traditional dance that would be performed the night before Nyepi. We were involved in dialogue rehearsals, costume selection, and dance movement coordination. Some of us were even given the opportunity to paint stage decorations, enhancing the props with our own artistic touch.

Cooking with the Temple Mothers

One unforgettable experience was cooking with Hindu women in the temple's communal kitchen. We learned how to make Balinese dishes like lawar and urap, and we also learned about the philosophy of food in their traditions. This moment strengthened our emotional bonds and opened up a space for a relaxed yet meaningful exchange of cultural values.

Playing Gamelan and Interaction Between Youth

We were also invited to learn to play Balinese gamelan instruments, such as drums, gongs, and ceng-ceng. Although initially challenging, the Hindu youth patiently guided us. The interactions during music practice created a sense of togetherness and strengthened interfaith brotherhood.

Furthermore, we also had numerous discussions and shared stories with the younger generation there about teenage life, school, religious activities, and even views on tolerance. These conversations served as a reflective platform that enriched our spiritual and social experiences.

Live-in This event not only served as an introduction to Hindu culture and religion, but also provided a platform for self-reflection for participants to understand the importance of harmonious coexistence in a diverse society. The experience of living directly in a temple environment allowed us to see the spiritual values, discipline, and mutual cooperation practiced by Hindus in action, as well as how culture and religion are integrated into their daily lives.

Live-in at Sabta Dharmo Faith Adherents

Live-in is a form of participatory learning that provides participants with the opportunity to live and interact directly with communities with diverse cultures, belief systems, and ways of life. In this activity, our group experienced a live-in experience with a community of believers in the One Almighty God, Sabta Dharmo, known as one of the local spiritual traditions in Indonesia that still exists today.

The Sabta Dharmo faith is a teaching rooted in Nusantara spiritual values and emphasizes harmony between humans, nature, and God. During our live-in activities, we were warmly welcomed by the elders and community members. They welcomed us and allowed us to learn, ask questions, and participate directly in their activities, both spiritual, cultural, and social.

This experience enriched our insight into the diversity of beliefs in Indonesia and fostered an attitude of empathy and tolerance towards fellow citizens who embrace beliefs different from the official religions.

Activities to Do During Live-In:

Participate in the Regular Sabta Dharmo Ceremony

One of the main activities during the live-in was witnessing and participating in the Sabta Dharmo community's regular spiritual rituals and ceremonies. These ceremonies are typically held at a hermitage or place of worship, led by traditional elders, and accompanied by prayers, hymns, and communal meditation. We were taught that these rituals aim to align our inner energy with the power of God Almighty and maintain balance in our lives.

Even though we were only passive participants who observed, we were allowed to sit together and share in the solemn and sacred atmosphere of the ritual.

Discussion and Q&A on the Sabta Dharmo Teachings

During our live-in, we were given dedicated time to have direct discussions with the elders and religious leaders of Sabta Dharmo. In these discussions, we learned about the history of Sabta Dharmo's teachings, its core values, such as the seven principles of life (honesty, patience, sincerity, etc.), and their views on God, humanity, and nature.

This discussion provides a valuable space for open dialogue to build understanding and erode prejudices that may still exist in the general public towards adherents of local beliefs.

Socio-Cultural Domain

Sociocultural Domain according to (Ramadhan & Aditya Dewantara, 2025) By viewing citizens as active subjects in social life, not merely objects of state policy, this can build a future of Indonesian citizenship that is dignified, based on socio-cultural principles, and inclusive. Sapriya (2015) in (Aulia et al., 2020) He added that one of the domains of Civic Education is "socio-cultural," which is a Civics program that can keep up with current developments for citizens living in communities outside of academia. This is also discussed in the journal (Ashri et al., 2021) written by Jang & Jiemenez (2012) who said that sociocultural theory is closely related to social relations and how this theory produces an impact on the environment.

In forming good citizens in the community, research according to Maizul Habibah (2021) He stated that there are core components that can determine citizens' behavioral factors: civic literacy, which encompasses civic skills, civic knowledge, and civic dispositions. "These three components will form the foundation of civic engagement (active citizen participation in community and national life)." (Schulz et al., 2023).

The Relationship between the Surabaya Diocese's Cadre Development Program and the Socio-Cultural Domain

The overall cadre development program aligns with the objectives of the socio-cultural domain. Leadership training and self-reflection activities support the development of civic dispositions. Group study and debate activities foster civic knowledge and skills. Social services and live-in activities reflect concrete civic engagement practices within a diverse community.

So, with this program, researchers have created a table of cadre development programs with socio-cultural domains, below:

Activity	Social Connectedness	Cultural Interrelationships
Training Camp	Cultivating solidarity and cooperation	Internalizing Catholic values
Study Together	Critical and collaborative dialogue	Social and cultural literacy through reflection
Social Services	Empathy and cross-social care	Experience of local socio-cultural values
Live-in	Adaptation to a multicultural society	Strengthening tolerance and recognizing religious and cultural diversity
Reflection and Evaluation	Sustainable development in the community	Instilling contextual spiritual and social values

Analysis of the Relationship between the Surabaya Diocese Cadre Development Program and the Socio-Cultural Domain Based on Theory

The Surabaya Diocese's cadre development program is designed in four continuous stages: Training Camp, Study Together, Determining Direction, and Live-In. Each stage contains values and activities that support the strengthening of the socio-cultural domains of Civic Education: civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic dispositions.

Training Camp (Initial Training and Reflection)

This is the introductory stage, focused on developing self-awareness and understanding the importance of leadership, as well as reflection on the nation's social conditions. Participants engage in group dynamics, exposure sessions, and evening reflections. This is where civic skills and dispositions such as social skills, honesty, responsibility, and solidarity begin to be instilled.

Study Together (Deepening Social and Spiritual Values)

This stage is conducted both online and offline and includes thematic studies on social values, liberation theology, Pancasila, and societal realities. These materials equip participants with civic knowledge such as national insight, pluralism, and the rights and obligations of citizens (Hasanah, 2024).

Direction Determination

In this stage, participants are guided to reflect on life choices and social responsibilities as young Catholic leaders. They create personal goal-setting sessions and are guided to identify their potential and the social commitments they will undertake after their cadreship. This stage develops civic dispositions that lead to a moral civic identity (Rahmawati, 2021).

Live-In:

Live-in A culminating experience is one in which participants live with an interfaith community (e.g., an Islamic boarding school, a Hindu community, or a marginalized neighborhood). Through real-life interactions with the community, participants hone civic skills such as cross-cultural communication, social empathy, and tolerance. Live-in also strengthens reflective skills and sensitivity to humanitarian and social justice issues.

This program has proven effective in developing values-based leadership. Interviewed alumni reported active involvement in campus organizations, social communities, and church service activities. They described the cadre formation as a turning point in their understanding of their social roles as citizens and young Catholics. This demonstrates the synergy between values education, character development, and strengthening the socio-cultural domain in civic education (Kennedy, 2021; Schulz et al., 2023).

The research results show that alumni of the cadre formation program experienced increased participation in student organizations. Of the 12 alumni interviewed: 1) 75% are active in the Student Executive Board, Jarvis (Activist Network), UKM, or other social communities. 2) They become committee members, activity coordinators, and resource persons in student discussions. 3) Alumni demonstrate patterns of transformative leadership: not only being involved, but shaping the direction and culture of the organizations in which they are active.

This participation is not just a formality, but is based on values and awareness, as conveyed by the informant:

"I started to have the courage to speak up and take a stand after participating in the training. I felt a greater sense of responsibility, not only to the church but also to society."

This program directly develops civic awareness, including courage to express opinions, the ability to collaborate, and an orientation toward social service. Thus, the Surabaya Diocese's cadre development program not only develops internal church leaders but also active social actors in campus and community life.

Conclusion

The Surabaya Diocese's cadre development program is strongly linked to the socio-cultural domain of Civic Education. Through a values-based learning approach and hands-on practice, this program is able to internalize civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions, which will foster civic engagement among the younger generation.

This research confirms that civic character development is not solely the responsibility of formal educational institutions but can also be implemented by religious institutions. Further recommendations include the development of similar models in other dioceses and cross-sector collaboration in fostering inclusive civic character.

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