

Research Article

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Civic Education Through Military-Civil Collaboration: A Communication Strategy Model by Kodim 0317/TBK for Senior High School Students in Indonesia

Budianto Hamdani Damanik^{ID}, Humaizi^{ID}, Iskandar Zulkarnain^{ID}, Lusiana Andriani Lubis^{ID}

Abstract

Background/purpose. This study aims to formulate an effective communication strategy model implemented by Kodim 0317/TBK in instilling national awareness among senior high school students in Karimun Regency. The research addresses the need for adaptive, culturally contextualised civic education strategies in response to the vulnerability of students in border areas to external ideological influences.

Materials/methods. A qualitative approach was adopted to explore the interaction dynamics between Babinsa (village supervisory non-commissioned officers) as military actors and students as strategic targets of civic education. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participatory observation, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis. The data were analysed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana technique, supported by source and methodological triangulation.

Results. The findings show that the success of Kodim 0317/TBK's communication strategy relies on seven key components: (1) integration of theory and practice, (2) contextual local adaptation, (3) use of digital and social media, (4) participatory educational methodology, (5) dynamic evaluation, (6) capacity building for Babinsa, and (7) a scientifically structured implementation phase. Activities such as group discussions, military drills, educational videos, and community projects enabled students to not only understand but actively internalise national values.

Conclusion. This study contributes to the development of a more humanistic, inclusive, and evidence-based military-civil communication model. It highlights the importance of symbolic communication, cultural adaptation, and student participation in shaping a resilient national identity amid globalisation challenges.

1. Introduction

Civic education is a critical foundation for cultivating a democratic, tolerant, and competitive national character (Sanjaya, 2021; Sokol, 2021). It reinforces awareness of citizens' rights and responsibilities, especially the duty to preserve the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). However, in the era of globalisation and rapid technological advancement, maintaining a strong national identity among young people has become increasingly difficult due to the proliferation of transnational values often misaligned with Indonesia's nationalist ideals (Antrobus & West, 2022; Haduong, 2024; Temerbayeva, 2023).

The Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), particularly through Military Operations Other Than War (OMSP) as mandated by Law No. 34 of 2004, has assumed a pivotal role in promoting civic education. This includes ideological development and national insight programs, especially by units such as Kodim 0317/Tanjung Balai Karimun (TBK). The TNI's involvement marks a transformative shift in civil-military relations, evolving from authoritarian to more collaborative and dialogical frameworks (Fernandez-Miro, 2024; Miron, 2024; Varpio, 2021).

One key mechanism in this approach is Territorial Development (Binter), where Babinsa (village supervisory non-commissioned officers) act as communicators who connect defence values with community life. Their presence in everyday civic settings enables them not only to safeguard security but to serve as change agents promoting patriotism, tolerance, and national commitment among youth (Ateş, 2024).

In border regions such as Karimun Regency—adjacent to Singapore and Malaysia—senior high school students are a strategically important demographic. At a critical stage of identity development, these students face heightened vulnerability to external ideological influences. Challenges such as low civic literacy, shallow understanding of Pancasila, and rising juvenile delinquency underscore the need for targeted interventions in civic education (Sautereau, 2023).

Moreover, Karimun's proximity to international borders increases exposure to economic and cultural influences that prioritise individualism and pragmatism. These dynamics threaten students' nationalist orientation and demand communication strategies that are both contextually sensitive and educationally engaging (Chen, 2023; Cole, 2021; Deimel, 2024). Adaptive civic programmes must therefore be developed to counterbalance these external pressures.

Kodim 0317/TBK's response includes a military-civil civic education programme implemented through symbolic and participatory communication. Activities such as scouting, martial arts, mangrove planting, and media-based learning form the basis of a new strategy. Babinsa deliver this programme with the guidance of Danramil, tailoring their approach to the unique characteristics of students and their communities (Errenst, 2023; Luo, 2022).

The programme is shifting from an instructive model to a communicative-participatory approach, in line with the constructivist paradigm. Interaction now takes the form of student-led discussions, roleplay, and group projects that emphasise experiential and emotional engagement (Estrada, 2024; Wong, 2022a; Wong, 2022b). This transition demonstrates a move toward value internalisation rather than top-down indoctrination.

Previous research on civic education has predominantly focused on classroom-based pedagogical models and cultural content integration. Anderson (2023) highlights the role of civic education in cultivating democratic citizenship, but acknowledges institutional limitations in practice implementation. Finkel (2021), through a field experiment in the Democratic Republic of Congo, demonstrates how civic education influences political behaviour, yet this study centres on demand-supply models within post-conflict democracies. Lee (2021) presents evidence from Holocaust education in Arkansas, revealing its impact on adolescent civic values, though the context remains

historically and culturally distinct. Sanjaya (2021) underscores the effectiveness of folklore-based civic education in Indonesia, particularly in reinforcing character values through local narratives. While these studies show the diverse potential of civic education, they largely remain focused on formal school settings or cultural pedagogy.

What remains underexplored is how military actors—particularly in developing or hybrid civil-military democracies like Indonesia—engage symbolically with youth to instil civic values beyond conventional classroom methods. The specific dynamics of symbolic communication, contextual adaptation in border areas, and the role of Babinsa in promoting civic awareness have not been sufficiently addressed in existing literature. This study seeks to fill that gap by developing a communication strategy model grounded in symbolic interactionism, focusing on military-civil collaboration in civic education targeting high school students in Karimun Regency.

Amid these developments, information technology plays a central role in shaping how students engage with national narratives. Communication strategies must align with digital sensibilities without compromising ideological integrity (Kim, 2021; Ou, 2024; Yang, 2024). Therefore, this study aims to formulate a symbolic interactionism-based communication strategy model used by Kodim 0317/TBK, with the goal of building replicable, adaptive, and participatory civic education models suited for vulnerable border regions.

Given the transformative role of Kodim 0317/TBK in civic education through military-civil collaboration, this study seeks to address two key research questions: (1) How is the communication strategy of Kodim 0317/TBK implemented in fostering civic values among senior high school students in Karimun Regency? and (2) What model of military-civil communication strategy can be formulated to strengthen civic education in a context marked by ideological vulnerability and digital socialisation? These questions aim to uncover not only the operational practices of Babinsa but also the broader symbolic framework shaping student engagement with national identity.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study focuses on examining the strategic role of communication in fostering synergy between military institutions (particularly the Indonesian Army through Kodim 0317/TBK) and civilian communities (schools and students) in instilling national values. Communication in this context is not merely perceived as a tool for message delivery, but as a social development strategy involving message engineering, media selection, and intersectoral actor relations. The literature review in this research explores various strategic communication approaches, civil-military relations, and literature on civic education and the ideological challenges faced by students in border areas.

This research adopts Symbolic Interactionism as its primary theoretical foundation to understand the dynamics of communication between military personnel and students in the national awareness programme led by Kodim 0317/TBK. This theory, formulated by George Herbert Mead and further developed by Herbert Blumer, emphasises that social meaning is constructed through symbolic interaction influenced by perception and social experience (Mead, 2014). In this context, symbols such as military uniforms, Babinsa's communication style, and collaborative activities like training, podcasts, and social engagements become arenas of meaning construction that shape students' perception of national identity.

2.2. Previous Research

This study reviewed 1,000 previous studies on military education and civic education using the Publish or Perish software, which sourced data from Google Scholar. To ensure relevance and academic rigour, only peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2010 and 2024 were

included. Exclusion criteria encompassed non-English publications, duplicates, and articles lacking empirical or theoretical engagement with civic or military education. The selected publications were then processed through VOSviewer to conduct network and density visualisations, enabling the identification of recurring themes, research clusters, and underexplored intersections. This analytical mapping provided a clearer view of dominant trends—such as the prevalence of school-based civic education and leadership formation in military settings—while also revealing gaps in symbolic, interactive, and context-sensitive approaches, particularly in border regions and civil-military collaborations.

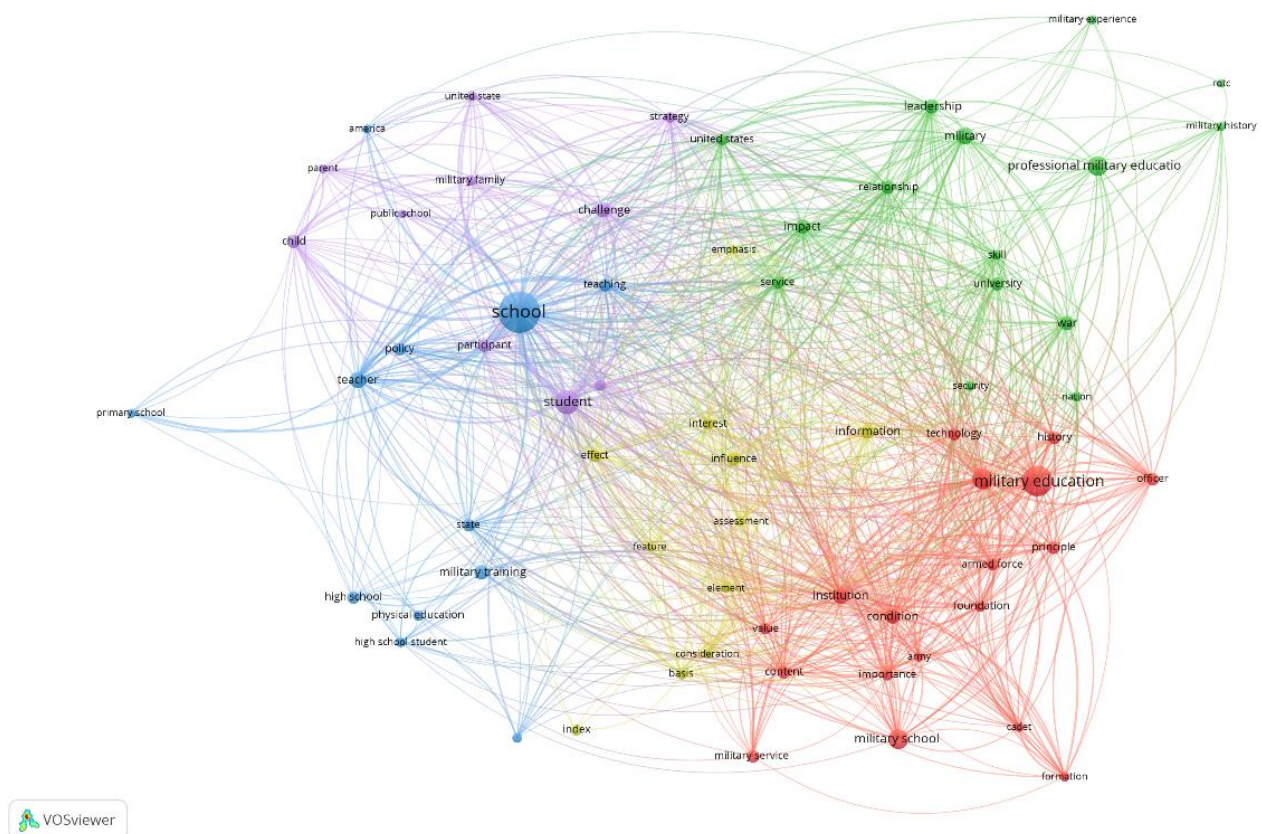


Figure 1. Network Analysis of Previous Studies

The figure above illustrates the network analysis results of 1,000 academic publications that reflect conceptual interconnections among dominant themes in the literature on education, technology, and the military. This visualisation reveals main clusters such as “school” and “military education” as network density hubs, indicating the dominance of these two themes in academic discourse. The connections between nodes such as “student” and “teacher” show the integration of military values in formal education, particularly in character and leadership development. These findings reaffirm the relevance of this dissertation in bridging military education and public schooling through effective communication strategies, while also identifying underexplored research gaps, especially in border areas and student communities.

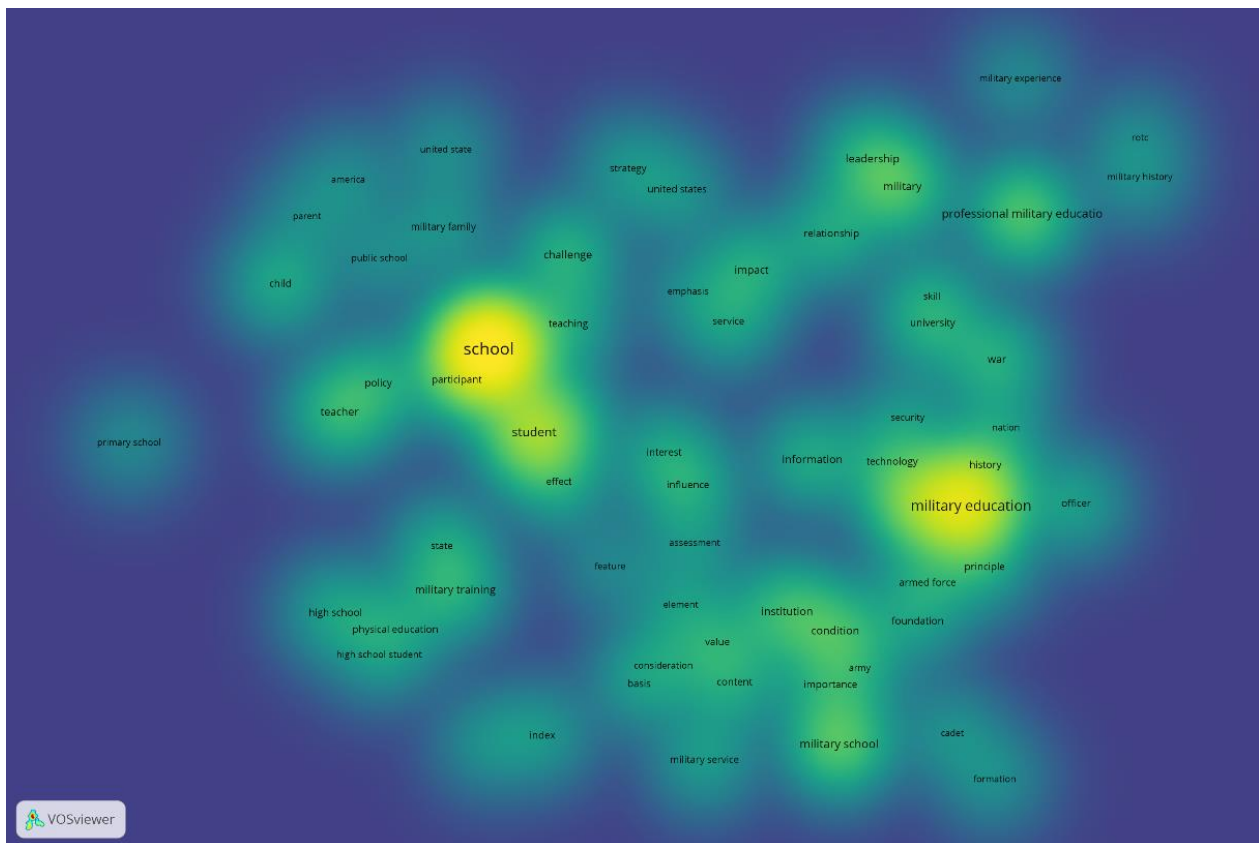


Figure 2. Density Analysis of Previous Studies

The figure represents a density and overlay analysis of the same 1,000 studies, mapping the linkages between the themes “school” and “military education,” with colour intensity indicating the degree of exploration in global literature. The “school” area shows the highest density, signalling the dominance of research on general education issues, while “military education” emerges as a developing topic that remains underexplored. The connection between both via nodes like “leadership,” “technology,” and “professional military education” demonstrates a trend of integrating military values into formal education, although pedagogical and cultural adaptation of military practices in schools still faces gaps. These findings provide a critical foundation for this dissertation to address these gaps by analysing the effectiveness of military communication strategies in civic education, and to assess how military approaches can be accommodated without compromising the humanistic and inclusive principles of civil education. In addition to the above analyses, the author critically compares several previous relevant studies as follows:

The study by Agbedahin and Agbedahin (2020) reveals the strategic role of the South African military in delivering public education during the COVID-19 health crisis. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the study shows that the military not only fulfilled security and logistical functions but also became a key communication actor in disseminating health information, countering misinformation, and building public trust—especially in remote communities. These findings highlight the military's potential as an educational agent in emergency contexts. However, this study focused on a health crisis in South Africa, whereas the present research examines military communication strategies in the socio-political and civic education context in Indonesia, with special emphasis on intercultural communication and social harmony.

The research by Alenezi, Zeilani, and Othman (2022) employed a quantitative approach to evaluate nurses' attitudes towards end-of-life care in Kuwaiti hospitals. Their findings indicate that such attitudes are influenced by educational background, clinical experience, and professional training. While the study contributes to understanding the role of education in shaping professional

attitudes, it holds no direct relevance to military domains or public communication strategies. Its focus lies primarily in healthcare services and does not engage with institutional communication, which is the core of this research.

The article by Antrobus and West (2022) underscores the importance of developing critical thinking within professional military education. In their literature review, they critique the rigidity of military education systems and advocate for more reflective approaches to help soldiers better navigate the complexities of contemporary conflicts. Although this research provides key insights into internal reforms in military education, it does not address military interaction with civilian society. In contrast, the current study focuses on external strategic communication conducted by military institutions in civic contexts, particularly with students in border regions.

The study by Ateş (2024) offers a historical analysis of civil-military relations in Türkiye through elite military education. It highlights the importance of reforming military education to produce officers who are not only militarily proficient but also uphold democratic values and civil control. This study presents a valuable context regarding power dynamics and institutional transformation within the military. However, its focus is more on internal structures and historical power dynamics, unlike the present research, which concentrates on the practical implementation of community programmes and military communication strategies in the context of civic education in Indonesia.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Approach and Design

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to obtain a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the military communication strategies employed within the national awareness programme led by Kodim 0317/TBK (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2020; Weyant, 2022). The qualitative design was chosen to capture symbolic, subjective, and interpretative meanings that arise from the interactions between military personnel—particularly Babinsa—and senior high school students in Karimun Regency. This design aligns with the symbolic interactionism framework, which emphasises meaning-making through social interaction.

3.2. Participants and Sampling

The research site was purposively selected based on its geographical and geopolitical relevance, as Karimun Regency represents a border area with heightened ideological vulnerability. Participants were chosen through purposive sampling, targeting individuals directly involved in the civic education programme. These included the Danramil (Military Rayon Commander), Babinsa (village supervisory NCOs), senior high school students, school principals, and community leaders. Selection criteria were based on appropriateness and informational richness, ensuring a diverse representation of perspectives from both implementers and beneficiaries.

3.3. Data Collection Instrument and Procedures

Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Primary data were obtained through in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with key informants, as well as participant observations conducted during field activities. Observation and interview protocols were developed based on Creswell's (2018) qualitative inquiry framework. Secondary data included official documents from Kodim 0317/TBK, programme planning reports, statistical records from the Central Bureau of Statistics, and related materials from the Karimun District Government. Audio-visual artefacts were also examined to enrich the contextual understanding of communication activities. Instrument reliability was ensured by pilot testing the interview guide and revising ambiguous items, while validity was reinforced by aligning questions with the theoretical framework.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data were analysed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2020) interactive model, comprising four stages: (1) data collection, (2) data condensation and categorisation, (3) data display, and (4) conclusion drawing and verification. This method was appropriate for managing complex and layered data derived from interactions and symbolic practices. Triangulation was used to ensure data credibility—source triangulation involved cross-checking information from school principals and community figures, while methodological triangulation combined interviews, FGDs, and observations. This layered approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of the communication dynamics under study (Flick, 2022).

3.5. Ethical Considerations

The study complied with ethical standards for qualitative research. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms and restricted access to sensitive data. Ethical approval was secured through the university's research ethics board, and all fieldwork adhered to principles of non-harm and respect for community norms and institutional protocols.

4. Results

4.1. Implementation of Kodim 0317/TBK's Communication Strategy in the Civic Education Programme for Senior High School Students

In its efforts to instil national awareness among senior high school students in Karimun Regency, Kodim 0317/TBK has formulated and implemented a comprehensive communication strategy. This strategy is designed not only to convey the values of patriotism and love for the homeland but also to facilitate meaningful interactions between the military and students, fostering a strong understanding of citizenship and national identity. Based on the interviews conducted, the findings are as follows:

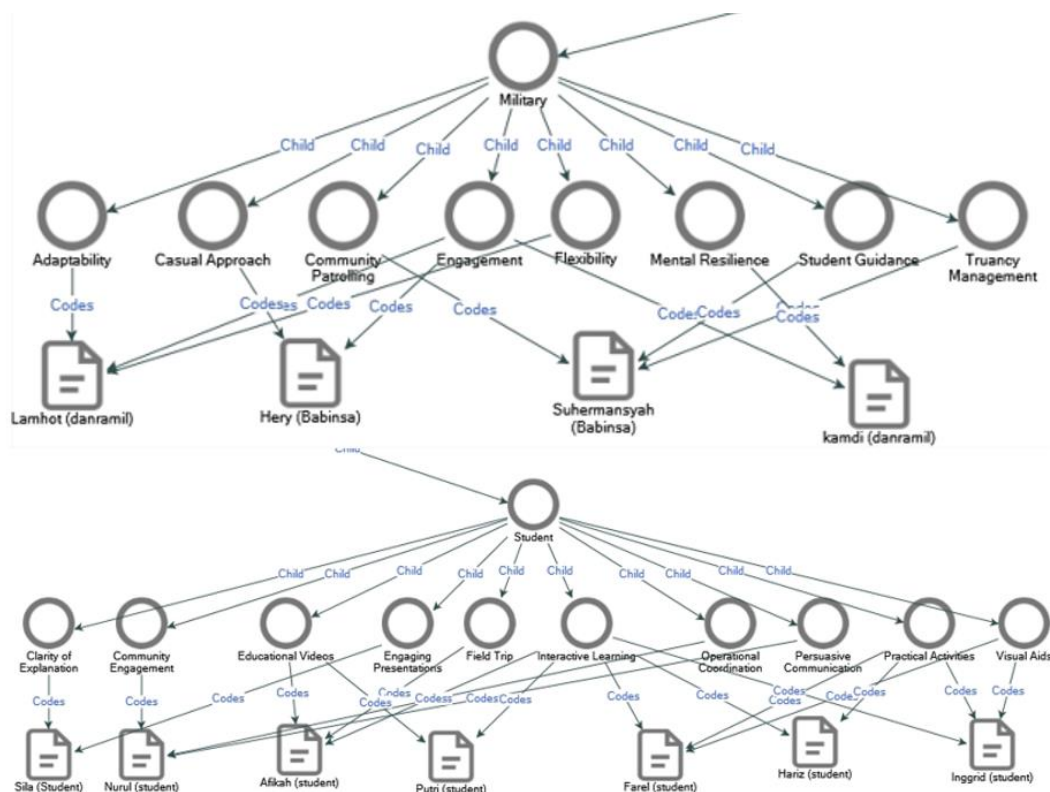


Figure 3. Interview Map of Communication Strategy Implementation

This interview map provides a detailed overview of the structure and mechanisms of the communication strategy implementation by Kodim 0317/TBK in its civic education programme targeting senior high school students in Karimun Regency. The structure illustrates the complex interaction between military personnel and students, showing how each component of the communication strategy is interconnected and influenced by other actors in this network (Rausch & Buning, 2024).

At the top of the hierarchy, “Implementation of Communication Strategy” represents the focal point from which all activities are verified and controlled. This connection highlights the importance of an integrated and coherent communication strategy in achieving national education objectives, ensuring that all initiatives and activities align with a broader vision.

Within the “Military” branch, subdivisions include “Adaptability,” “Casual Approach,” “Community Patrolling,” “Engagement,” “Flexibility,” and “Mental Resilience.” Each subcategory represents the expected characteristics of Babinsa in their daily interactions with the community. “Adaptability” and “Flexibility” emphasise Babinsa’s ability to adjust their approach based on local dynamics and student responses. “Casual Approach” and “Community Patrolling” indicate more relaxed yet effective strategies in building community relationships, while “Engagement” and “Mental Resilience” reflect the need for active involvement and the capacity to address psychological challenges in the process.

In the “Students” branch, the focus is on “Truancy Management,” “Student Guidance,” “Clarity of Explanation,” “Community Engagement,” “Educational Videos,” “Engaging Presentations,” “Field Trip,” “Interactive Learning,” “Operational Coordination,” “Persuasive Communication,” “Practical Activities,” and “Visual Aids.” These areas highlight critical aspects of Babinsa’s educational approach. “Truancy Management” and “Student Guidance” denote the mentoring and supervisory roles of Babinsa, while “Clarity of Explanation” and “Persuasive Communication” stress the importance of effective and persuasive communication in conveying national values (Su et al., 2022).

“Community Engagement” and “Interactive Learning” stress the importance of making the learning process two-way, where students are active participants rather than passive recipients. “Educational Videos,” “Engaging Presentations,” and “Visual Aids” point to the use of visual media to strengthen messages and enhance comprehension, while “Field Trip” and “Practical Activities” illustrate the practical application of theoretical content.

The overall structure presents a dynamic system of communication and education in which Babinsa acts not only as an instructor but also as a facilitator, mentor, and effective communicator. Their direct involvement in various aspects of students’ lives and use of diverse tools and teaching methods reflect a genuine effort to build strong and sustainable national awareness among students (Beerens, 2022; He et al., 2023).

Through the analysis of this interview map, it becomes evident that the success of this programme depends heavily on Babinsa’s ability to synchronise strategic planning with flexible and responsive implementation, demonstrating the importance of adaptability and a deep understanding of the local context in the design and execution of national education programmes.



Figure 4. Word Cloud from Interview Results

This word cloud summarises the essential elements of the communication and educational approaches employed by Babinsa in instilling national awareness among senior high school students in Karimun Regency. Prominent words such as “students,” “school,” “engaging,” “videos,” and “Babinsa” reflect the core focus and key actors in this educational process. This visual interpretation enables deeper analysis of how these elements interact and influence students’ learning experiences.

The prominence of “students” and “school” suggests that the programme is specifically designed to integrate civic activities into the school environment, where the primary interactions between Babinsa and students take place. This indicates a strategy centred on educational institutions as the main arena for promoting national values and educating the younger generation about citizenship (Sattarov et al., 2021).

“Engaging” and “videos” together highlight the chosen method of delivering educational content. The use of videos as a learning tool reflects adaptation to the learning preferences of today’s visually oriented and interactive youth. The presence of these terms indicates that Babinsa uses content that is not only informative but also engaging, thus maintaining student attention and improving understanding (Mosteanu, 2021).

The dominance of the term “Babinsa” confirms their central role in all these initiatives. As figures who serve not only as educators but also as symbols of authority and patriotism, Babinsa are key to communicating and instilling national values. Their role goes beyond delivering information—they guide, motivate, and sometimes inspire students through direct interaction.

The word “community” also stands out in the cloud, indicating that the programme extends beyond students and schools to involve the wider community. This represents a holistic approach that includes families and local citizens in the civic education process, recognising that understanding and support from the community can reinforce the messages conveyed to students (Jiang & Zhu, 2022; Pyhältö et al., 2024).

The words “explanations” and “clarity” refer to the quality of communication in the programme. Babinsa are expected to possess not only extensive knowledge but also the ability to explain complex concepts in a way that is easy to understand. This is essential in education, especially when addressing weighty subjects like national awareness, which require deep comprehension and sensitivity to diverse perspectives and backgrounds (Setiawan et al., 2020; Wignjosasono, 2023).

Overall, the word cloud depicts a comprehensive picture of the dynamics and components in Babinsa’s national awareness education programme. Through engaging visuals, deep interaction, and community integration, Babinsa aim to cultivate robust national understanding among senior high school students in Karimun Regency. In doing so, they go beyond knowledge transfer to nurture a well-informed generation committed to national values.

The implementation of the communication strategy by Kodim 0317/TBK in the civic education programme for senior high school students in Karimun Regency integrates the principles of symbolic interactionism theory. This theory emphasises that individuals develop and understand meaning through social interaction (Husin et al., 2021). In this programme, Babinsa plays a crucial role in facilitating dialogue and discussion among students, enabling them to actively engage in the construction of national values. Through activities such as Q&A sessions and group projects, students are encouraged not only to learn about national values but also to question, explore, and ultimately internalise them as part of their identity.

4.2. Military-Civil Communication Strategy Model of Kodim 0317/TBK in Strengthening Civic Education

In its strategic effort to instil national awareness among senior high school students in Karimun Regency, Kodim 0317/TBK has systematically developed and implemented an effective communication strategy model. This model is designed not only to deliver national values in an informative manner but also to foster active participation and deep understanding among students through adaptive approaches and interactive learning methods. These approaches involve interpersonal communication, digital media usage, and direct student engagement in experiential educational activities (Ferrer Valencia et al., 2023; Ortmeyer et al., 2022). The following presents the author’s interview findings regarding the effective communication strategy model in the civic education programme:

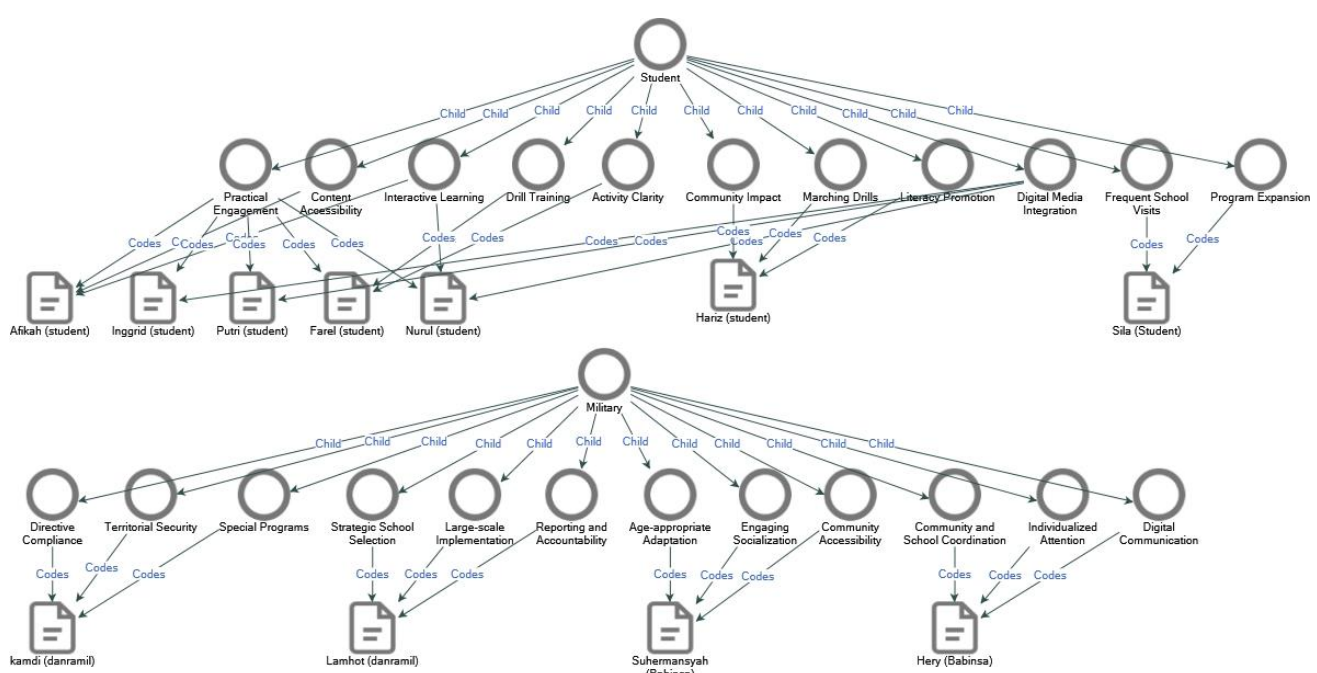


Figure 5. Interview Map on the Model of National Awareness Communication

The interview map details the structure of interactions and activities related to the implementation of Kodim 0317/TBK's communication strategy in instilling national awareness among high school students in Karimun Regency. The map distinguishes between two main segments: student-specific activities (top) and military-led operations (bottom), reflecting strategic collaboration between educational and security elements in the context of nationalism.

At the top, the student segment comprises activities aimed at enhancing student engagement and understanding of national awareness. “Interactive Learning” and “Drill Training” reflect the hands-on approach used to instil discipline and in-depth comprehension of national values. This shows that the programme not only focuses on theoretical aspects but also applies values practically through leadership and teamwork-building activities (En, 2023; Yu et al., 2023).

“Digital Media Integration” and “Frequent School Visits” highlight the use of technology and ongoing interaction as part of the communication strategy. Digital media aims to reach students within their familiar environments, while regular school visits by Babinsa strengthen the bond between the military and educational institutions, ensuring consistent reinforcement of national messages.

The focus on “Content Accessibility” and “Practical Engagement” ensures that educational materials are accessible and relevant to students’ daily experiences. This is crucial for making content both available and engaging, enhancing the likelihood of effective comprehension and internalisation (Lytvynova, 2022; Pareira et al., 2023).

In the military segment, “Directive Compliance” and “Territorial Security” emphasise discipline and adherence to strategic directives, as well as Babinsa’s role in securing territorial safety as part of the national programme. This indicates that national awareness efforts are also tied to carefully coordinated security operations.

“Special Programmes” and “Strategic School Selection” reflect a targeted and selective implementation approach, where specific schools and programmes are chosen based on local needs and contextual relevance, aiming for maximum impact.

“Reporting and Accountability” and “Age-appropriate Adaptation” underline the importance of programme monitoring, evaluation, and age-sensitive content adjustment. These are essential to ensure the programme’s effectiveness, ethical integrity, and developmental appropriateness (Ilechukwu et al., 2021; Rodgers et al., 2022).

“Engaging Socialisation” and “Community Accessibility” illustrate the military's efforts to become more integrated into local communities, making national security and education more accessible and accepted. This suggests that the programme is not merely top-down but also includes community feedback and participation (Bremer et al., 2022; Fedeli, 2022; Pannekoeke et al., 2023).

Overall, this interview map depicts a complex and dynamic programme wherein education and security—two key aspects of national awareness—are deeply integrated. The collaboration between Babinsa and educational institutions reflects a joint commitment to cultivating a generation not only knowledgeable about national values but also prepared to contribute positively to society.

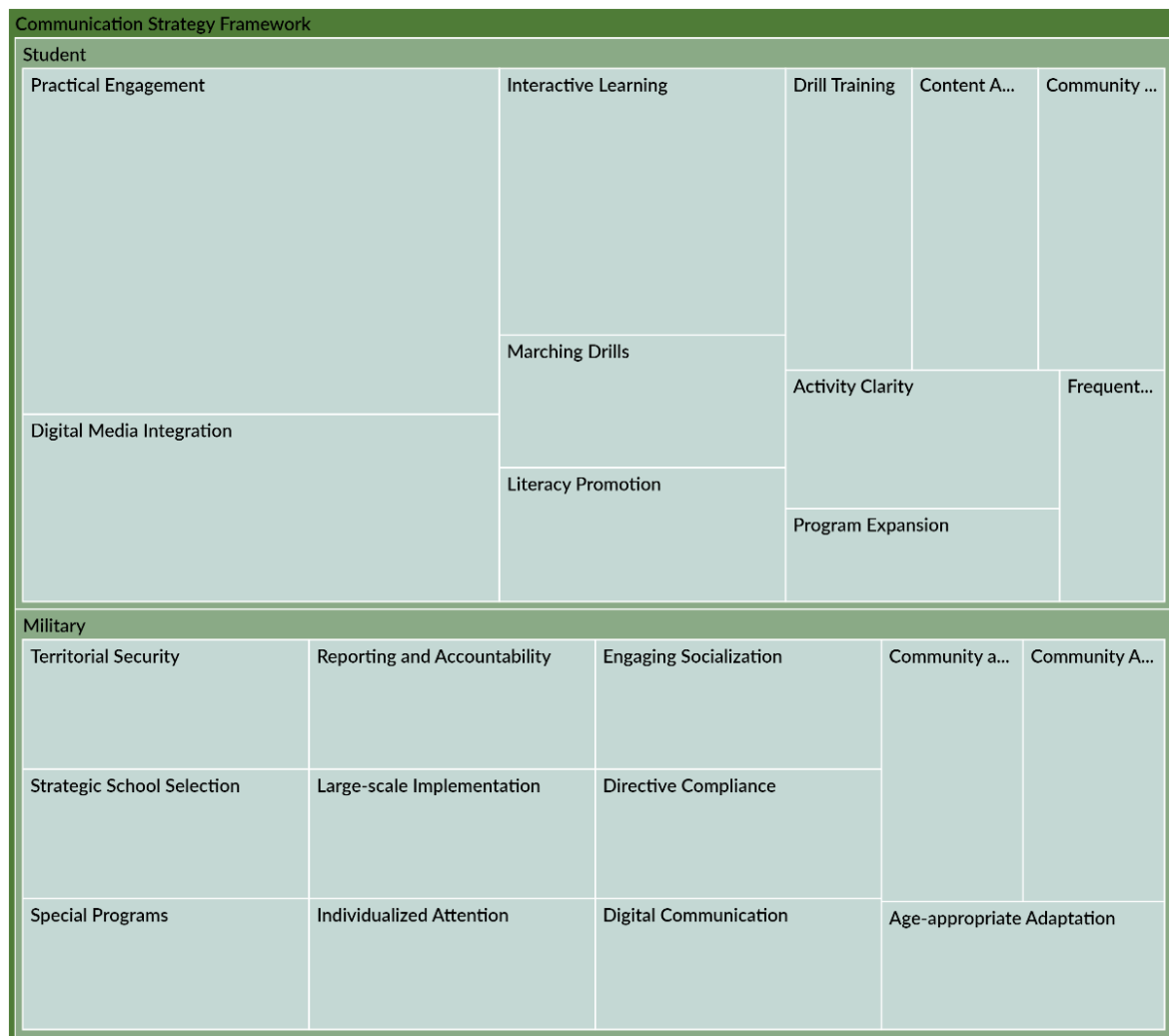


Figure 6. Hierarchical Analysis of the National Awareness Communication Model

The hierarchy diagram shown illustrates the distinction between student-focused activities and responsibilities under military oversight within the civic education programme in Karimun Regency. This reflects a systematic methodology for integrating civic education, combining direct student education with security operations and coordination managed by Babinsa.

Within the “Student” layer, activities such as “Practical Engagement,” “Interactive Learning,” “Drill Training,” and “Marching Drills” aim to foster discipline, cooperation, and physical fitness—core elements of national doctrine. “Digital Media Integration” and “Literacy Promotion” emphasise the importance of modern media and literacy skills in the learning process, showing the programme’s adaptation to current technologies to make content more accessible and engaging (Herman et al., 2022; Lushchyk et al., 2024).

“Activity Clarity” and “Content Accessibility” highlight the importance of transparency and the ease of information access for students. These strategies stress the importance of presenting content that is not only understandable but also relevant to students’ local contexts and needs. This approach ensures that the messages resonate and significantly shape students’ national identities (Thahir et al., 2023).

In the “Military” layer, “Territorial Security” and “Strategic School Selection” reflect the strategic role of the military in ensuring a safe learning environment and selecting key schools for programme implementation. This shows a focus on maintaining educational security and targeting locations with the greatest potential impact (Alkhaza’leh et al., 2023). “Reporting and Accountability” denotes the military’s responsibility to report progress and maintain transparency, while “Engaging Socialisation”

and “Community Accessibility” emphasise efforts to integrate with the public and enhance accessibility.

“Digital Communication” and “Individualised Attention” represent personalised communication and mentoring approaches. The use of digital platforms enables Babinsa to reach wider audiences while providing individualised support, tailoring methods and messages to maximise learning effectiveness (Firat & Koyuncu, 2022; Rizvi, 2023).

Overall, this communication strategy framework demonstrates a holistic approach that goes beyond transmitting national values to fostering positive military-civil relationships, using modern technology, and adapting programmes to student needs and local contexts. It recognises the complexities and challenges of aligning civic education objectives with operational realities and student expectations.

Within the framework of the communication strategy implemented by Kodim 0317/TBK, the application of symbolic interactionism theory is highly relevant to explain how national values and norms are communicated and received by high school students in Karimun Regency. Symbolic interactionism, which focuses on meaning construction through social interaction and symbol usage, illustrates how Babinsa uses national symbols in educational activities to create and communicate profound meanings of national identity. Activities such as “Interactive Learning” and “Marching Drills” serve as moments where students do not merely receive knowledge passively but, through active participation, begin to understand and interpret these values within their own context (Asimakopoulos, 2022).

5. Discussion

The communication strategy implemented by Kodim 0317/TBK in the civic education programme for high school students in Karimun Regency can be analysed through the lens of Symbolic Interactionism Theory, as developed by Herbert Blumer (1986). This theory emphasises that social meanings are constructed through interaction, and that individuals act based on the meanings they assign to symbols in social life. In this context, symbols such as the Babinsa uniform, ceremonial rituals, national historical narratives, and digital media use function as symbolic elements carrying values of nationalism. The interaction between Babinsa and students not only conveys substantive messages but also forms new symbolic realities about national identity.

The success of Kodim 0317/TBK’s communication programme lies in a deep understanding of the importance of symbols in constructing shared meaning between military personnel and students. Symbols such as independence-themed drama, live-action roleplay (LARP), and citizen journalism videos are not merely observed but experienced by students. This aligns with findings by Foster et al. (2020) and Idawati & Handayani (2020), who argue that symbolically contextualised civic education reinforces the construction of nationalism within students' cognitive frameworks.

The interaction facilitated by Babinsa is not unidirectional but rather a reciprocal symbolic relation where students also respond and co-construct meaning from the messages they receive. This is evident in the feedback gathered from surveys and programme evaluations, which show that students are not merely objects of socialisation, but subjects who reshape their understanding of Indonesia. This concept aligns with Blumer’s notion that meaning is not static, but continuously negotiated through social interaction within specific contexts (Štemberger & Konrad, 2021).

In this framework, symbols such as unity-themed videos or dramatizations of historical events become crucial. Students do not passively consume them but interpret them based on their personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and held values. Symbolic interactionism thus encourages us to view military communication not merely as doctrinal delivery but as a dialogical space rich in symbolic

meaning, which—if well-managed—fosters loyalty and a sense of belonging toward national identity (Awobamise et al., 2021; Moreno-Cabanillas et al., 2024).

The findings of this study resonate with Agbedahin and Agbedahin (2020), who demonstrated the strategic potential of military actors as communicators and educators during crisis situations. Similar to the role of the South African military in disseminating public health information, Kodim 0317/TBK also positions its personnel—Babinsa—not merely as enforcers of discipline but as facilitators of knowledge and symbolic actors who mediate civic values. However, unlike Agbedahin's crisis-centric context, this study expands the function of military communication to peacetime civic education within politically sensitive border areas, integrating cultural sensitivity and intergenerational learning through participatory formats.

Contrasting with Antrobus and West (2022) and Ateş (2024), whose works focus on internal reforms and elite-level military education, this study explores outward-facing communication practices between the military and civilian youth. While Antrobus and West criticise the rigidity of military pedagogy, the present research illustrates how Kodim 0317/TBK adopts flexible and contextualised communication strategies, such as roleplay and digital media integration, to engage students. Furthermore, while Ateş (2024) offers a macro-historical analysis of institutional transformation, this study zooms in on micro-level interactions that reveal how military personnel can act as symbolic partners in co-constructing national identity. These distinctions underscore the unique contribution of this study in bridging civil-military relations through culturally rooted and dialogically constructed civic education.

The diverse backgrounds of students in Karimun Regency also influence the interpretation of nationalist symbols. According to symbolic interactionism, symbols can bear different meanings depending on social context and individual experience. Therefore, Kodim 0317/TBK's adaptive and feedback-based strategy proves relevant. The use of hybrid approaches, influencer collaboration, and gamified civic learning represent flexible symbolic communication tailored to the dynamic needs and expectations of today's youth (Bouw et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2023).

Thus, symbolic interactionism provides a strong theoretical basis for understanding how Kodim 0317/TBK's communication strategy helps build and reinforce national awareness among students. These symbol-laden interactions create a space for the construction of a new social identity that bridges military and educational values. Communication becomes not merely instructional but a dialogical process that enables meaningful and voluntary internalisation of national values among the younger generation.

Table 1. Table Styles Available in the Word Template

No.	Component of Novelty		Innovative Description
1.	Integration of Theory and Practice		The model combines symbolic interactionism theory with persuasive military communication strategies to foster meaningful dialogue that can be internalised by students.
2.	Contextual Adaptation	Local	Communication strategies are adapted to the local socio-cultural values of Karimun Regency, including familiar language, symbols, and narratives for students.
3.	Use of Social and Digital Media		Optimisation of popular media (YouTube, podcasts, vlogs, and social media) as educational and interactive tools aligned with youth preferences.

No.	Component of Novelty	Innovative Description
4.	Participatory Educational Methodology	Implementation of active learning through activities such as discussions, live action roleplay, and community projects to encourage engagement and experiential learning.
5.	Dynamic and Responsive Evaluation	A continuous evaluation system based on feedback from students and teachers enables adaptive adjustment of strategies.
6.	Capacity Building for Babinsa	Babinsa are positioned as competent civic education facilitators through ongoing training in communication, pedagogy, and educational technology.
7.	Scientifically Structured Implementation Phases	The model is developed in three structured phases (Planning, Implementation, Evaluation), grounded in scientific principles and evidence-based practices.

The novelty of this research lies in the development of an effective communication model that integrates symbolic interactionism theory with military communication strategies in the context of civic education among high school students. This integration of theoretical and practical approaches aims to create communication that is not only informative but symbolically meaningful, allowing students to internalise nationalist values through direct interactions and contextually relevant symbols. Additionally, the model emphasises contextual adaptation, which involves adjusting communication strategies based on local socio-cultural contexts, including the use of language, symbols, and narratives that resonate with students' everyday lives in Karimun Regency.

This model also introduces the use of digital platforms such as YouTube, podcasts, and social media as vehicles for civic messaging that are more appealing and relatable to younger audiences. The educational approach used is participatory in nature, incorporating activities like role-playing (live-action roleplay), group discussions, and community projects to foster active engagement and experiential learning. Furthermore, the model features a dynamic, feedback-based evaluation system from students and teachers, allowing for continuous strategic adjustments to maintain its effectiveness.

As frontline implementers, Babinsa also receive capacity-building through continuous training in communication, pedagogy, and educational technologies, enabling them to act professionally as facilitators of civic education. The entire strategy is designed around three structured phases—planning, implementation, and evaluation—rooted in scientific principles and evidence-based practice. This model is not only an innovation in military-civil communication but also contributes to strengthening national identity and civic consciousness among youth in a systematic and sustainable manner.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of Kodim 0317/TBK's communication strategy in civic education demonstrates a transition from conventional one-way indoctrination toward a more dialogical and participatory model. Babinsa officers serve not only as security personnel but as civic facilitators who co-construct meanings of nationalism with students through experiential methods, symbolic engagement, and culturally resonant communication practices. This implementation reflects an adaptive approach that acknowledges students' digital behaviour, ideological vulnerability, and local sociocultural contexts, particularly in border regions like Karimun Regency.

Moreover, the study formulates a strategic communication model that integrates symbolic interactionism theory with military-civil collaboration principles. The model is structured across three scientific phases—planning, implementation, and evaluation—and includes elements such as digital media use, interactive learning, local cultural symbols, and continuous feedback mechanisms. By positioning Babinsa as trained communicators, the model enhances the military's civic role and strengthens national identity among youth in a sustainable, meaningful, and context-sensitive manner. These findings offer a replicable framework for other Kodim units aiming to reinforce civic education in Indonesia's peripheral regions.

7. Suggestion

It is recommended that similar civil-military collaborative models be implemented and replicated in other border regions of Indonesia, particularly to safeguard national values among the youth. Future programmes should continue to emphasise the role of Babinsa as facilitators of civic education by providing ongoing training in pedagogy, digital literacy, and cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, policymakers and education stakeholders are encouraged to integrate this model into the national civic education agenda to promote a more inclusive, dialogic, and participatory approach to shaping students' national character.

Declarations

Author Contributions. The development of the conceptual framework and research design was led by BHD and HH, ensuring a solid foundation for the study. IZ and LAB collaboratively formulated the methodology and conducted an extensive review of relevant literature. BHD played a key role in gathering policy documents and sourcing pertinent research materials. Meanwhile, HH was responsible for synthesizing the findings and performing an in-depth theoretical analysis. Each author actively participated in refining the manuscript, providing critical input, and giving final approval for its publication.

Conflicts of Interest. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval. I affirm that I have secured all necessary consents as required by applicable laws for the publication of any personal details or images of research subjects or other individuals. I also agree to provide the EDUPIJ with copies of the consent or evidence of such consent upon request

Data Availability Statement. The data supporting the findings of this study are openly available at the Open Journal System of EDUPIJ and can be accessed via the following DOI/link

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