

Democratic participation of Indonesian high school students through student councils: A systematic literature review

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Abstract: Strengthening democratic values among the younger generation is a crucial mandate of civic education, and the Intra-School Student Organization (OSIS) serves as a primary vehicle for facilitating student participation in school life. However, the effectiveness of OSIS as an authentic democratic learning arena remains understudied. This study aims to synthesize empirical evidence on the forms of student democratic participation, the factors that facilitate and hinder engagement, and the impact of participation on the development of civic competencies. The method used was a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following PRISMA guidelines. A search of ERIC, Scopus, Scilit, Google Scholar, and Garuda databases yielded 804 records. After a multi-layered selection process, 32 studies met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed using a thematic synthesis approach. The synthesis results indicate that student democratic participation through OSIS is multidimensional, encompassing electoral, deliberative, collaborative, social, and digital participation. Factors facilitating participation include support from supervising teachers and the principal, a democratic school climate, providing space for student voice, and leadership training. Meanwhile, key obstacles include a hierarchical school culture, teacher dominance in decision-making, low levels of democratic literacy, and varying student motivation. Cross-study findings indicate that student council involvement significantly contributes to the development of civic competencies, such as leadership, self-confidence, self-efficacy, critical thinking, discipline, and political literacy. Overall, student council (OSIS) has strong potential as a laboratory of democracy in Indonesian secondary schools. However, optimizing its role requires expanding the space for meaningful participation and redistributing authority that gives students substantive influence in the decision-making process.

Keywords: Civic Competence, Democratic Participation, Indonesian Students, Middle School, OSIS/Student Council.

Introduction

Democratic education is a crucial component in developing knowledgeable, participatory, and responsible young citizens. The Government of the Republic of Indonesia (2003) affirmed this mandate through Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which positions schools as a strategic arena for fostering democratic values. In this context, schools not only perform academic functions but also serve as miniature societies where students can experience the practices of democratic life firsthand (Biesta, 2015).

As an official institution within the school ecosystem, the Intra-School Student Organization (OSIS) has great potential to become a vehicle for

authentic democratic participation. Through the process of selecting administrators, formulating programs, and making collective decisions, OSIS can develop student competencies in collaboration, deliberation, and leadership (Agustin & Dewi, 2021; Aulawi & Srinawati, 2019; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). However, the effectiveness of OSIS in carrying out these ideal functions remains far from consistent.

Several studies have shown a significant gap between normative expectations and actual student council (OSIS) practices in various schools. Empirical studies have revealed that OSIS activities are often focused on administrative and ceremonial functions, limiting the space for students to express ideas or influence school policy direction

(Maryanah et al., 2022; Sukarna & Suherman, 2025) . In many cases, student participation is at a tokenistic level, as described in the participation model (Hart, 1992) , where students appear to be involved but lack substantive influence on important decisions. This situation indicates the lack of authentic student voice, where students are not only heard but also given the mandate to influence processes and outcomes (Hall, 2017) .

Structural and cultural barriers exacerbate the situation. Findings by Reeve et al. (2020) suggest that excessive control from supervising teachers reduces students' autonomy and initiative. Furthermore, the persistent hierarchical and patriarchal culture in Indonesian schools, as noted by Sudarso et al. (2019) and Patty et al. (2024) , hinders the development of an egalitarian climate for participation. While the literature on student participation and student councils (OSIS) has been growing, the findings are generally fragmented and do not provide a comprehensive picture of how students participate, the factors that influence it, and its impact on citizenship competency.

To date, there has been no systematic literature review specifically synthesizing empirical evidence on the practice of democratic participation of students in Indonesia through the Student Council (OSIS). Therefore, this study conducted a systematic literature review to identify, evaluate, and synthesize current findings related to this issue. This study focuses on three research questions: (1) what forms of democratic participation are manifested by students?; (2) what factors facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of OSIS as a means of authentic participation?; and (3) what impact does such participation have on the development of students' civic competence?

By consolidating scattered evidence, this review aims to provide both conceptual and practical contributions. For academics, this synthesis clarifies the research landscape on student participation in Indonesia and identifies an agenda for further research. For education practitioners, these findings can serve as a basis for reflection on strengthening the role of the Student Council (OSIS) in democratic learning. More broadly, the results of this study can support policy formulation that encourages a more participatory and democratic school culture.

Materials and Methods

This study used the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, which aims to identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant research findings. The SLR process in this study follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, as developed by Page et al., (2021) . The main focus of this study is to analyze the democratic participation of high school students in Indonesia through student organizations, namely the student councils (OSIS). This SLR approach was strategically chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of OSIS as an important tool in the learning and practice of democracy in the school environment.

Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria established for selecting articles covered key aspects relevant to the research topic. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are presented in Table 1.

Table 1Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Access	Full Access (Full article available)	Abstract only or no full access
Publish Year	2016-2025	Before 2016 or after 2025
Language	English and Indonesian	Besides English and Indonesian
Publication Type	Journal Articles	Books, book chapters, proceedings, reports, editorials, opinions, grey literature
Context	Formal education High school	Non-formal education Secondary school
Focus	Discusses the forms of democratic participation, the factors that facilitate and hinder the	It does not discuss the forms of democratic participation, the factors that facilitate and hinder

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
	effectiveness of the Student Council, the impact of participation on the development of students' citizenship competencies.	the effectiveness of the Student Council, the impact of participation on the development of students' citizenship competencies.

Information Sources

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across various academic databases to ensure broad and inclusive research coverage. The databases used in this search included ERIC, Scopus, Scilit, Google Scholar, and Garuda. The entire literature search process was completed, with the final search date recorded as November 14, 2025.

Search Strategy

A literature search strategy was carefully designed using a specific set of keywords and Boolean

operators to identify relevant articles. The keywords used included terms in English and Indonesian, such as "student council," "student organization," 'OSIS,' 'MPK,' "democratic participation," 'partisipasi,' "secondary school," "middle school," "high school," "sekolah tinggi," and 'Indonesia.' These keyword combinations were applied using Boolean operators (AND/OR) and filters tailored to the specific features of each database. A detailed search string for each database is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Literature search strategy.

Database	String
ERIC	"student council" OR "student organization" AND "participation"
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("student council") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Student Organization") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("participation"))
Scilit	"student council" OR "student organization" AND "participation"
Google Scholar	allintitle: OSIS Participation
Garuda	OSIS, Participation

Selection Process

The selection process for sources of evidence in this study was conducted systematically and transparently to ensure that only relevant and high-quality research was included in the review. This procedure refers to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. The initial stage involved a literature search in several academic databases, namely Eric, Scopus, Scilit, Google Scholar, and Garuda, using a combination of predetermined keywords. Boolean operators (AND/OR) were used to narrow the search results and improve accuracy. Two independent reviewers [Luluk Siti Jariyah ¹] and [Endah Binti Munawaroh ²] conducted the review process using predetermined inclusion-exclusion criteria. Differences in assessment between reviewers were resolved through discussion, and if necessary, a third reviewer

[Idang Ramadhan ³] was involved as an arbitrator. All articles obtained were then screened based on title and abstract to assess their relevance to the research focus, namely student democratic participation through the OSIS organization in Indonesian secondary schools. Duplicate articles were removed at this stage. The next stage is a full-text review to ensure that the article complies with the established inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Data Collection Process

Data from selected studies were extracted using a standard extraction form developed by the research team. Two independent reviewers performed data extraction in parallel to minimize bias. Extracted data included: (1) authors and year; (2) educational level; (3) research methods; (3) forms of democratic participation; (4) facilitating and inhibiting factors; (5) impacts of participation;

and (6) key findings. If any data were ambiguous or incomplete, the researchers clarified the findings by double-checking the original text or contacting the study authors (if possible). Extraction results were verified through cross-checking between reviewers. No automation tools were used in the data collection process; all steps were performed manually by the reviewers.

Data Items

The data collected includes two main groups: (1) Main Outcomes, which consist of the form of student democratic participation, supporting and inhibiting factors for participation, and the impact on citizenship competence; and (2) Additional Variables, which consist of educational level, research methods, and key findings.

Synthesis Methods

We identified eligible studies for narrative synthesis by reviewing their topic, population, and focus for their relevance to the review question. Studies were grouped based on key themes emerging from the initial analysis, such as concept definitions, curriculum elements, and pedagogical approaches. Data extracted from each study were standardized by standardizing terms and categories for consistency. The study results are

presented in tables summarizing the characteristics of each study. To support interpretation, we used thematic diagrams to demonstrate the relationships between categories.

Results and Discussion

Study Selection

Initial study identification was conducted through five databases: ERIC, Scopus, Scilit, Google Scholar, and Garuda. This search resulted in a total of 804 records being identified. After removal of duplicate records (n=14) and exclusion of records due to missing (n=23), unlisted (n=6), unavailable full text (n=1), and not open access (n=3), 757 records passed the screening stage. Of the 757 records screened, 682 were excluded for not meeting the inclusion criteria based on title and abstract assessment. Next, 85 full reports were searched for eligibility. All reports (n=85) were successfully retrieved and fully assessed (full-text assessment). After eligibility assessment, a total of 53 reports were excluded because 29 studies did not focus on secondary school level, 22 studies were irrelevant, and 2 studies could not be located. Finally, 32 studies met all inclusion criteria and were included in this systematic review.

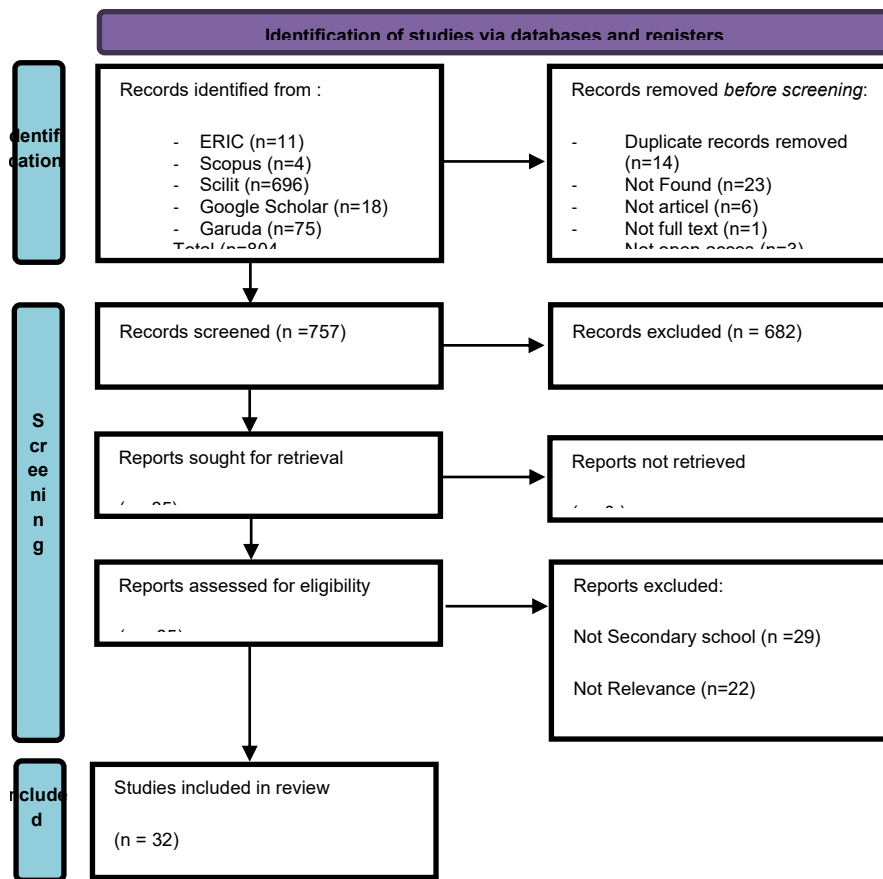


Figure 1. PRISMA flow chart.

Study Characteristics

A total of 32 studies were analyzed in this review, with publication years ranging from 2017 to 2025. These studies were conducted in various regions in Indonesia. Methodologically, the studies were dominated by qualitative approaches. The details of the methods used include: 23 studies used qualitative methods, 5 studies used quantitative methods, 3 studies used community service, 2 studies used mixed methods, and 1 study used research and development. The research participants were spread across various levels of secondary education. The majority of studies focused on high school students (25 studies), followed by junior high school (4 studies), vocational high school (3 studies), and Islamic high

school (2 studies). In addition, there were studies involving a combination of levels, such as high school/vocational high school/Islamic high school (1 study) and junior high school/Islamic junior high school (1 study).

Results of Individual Studies

This section presents the main results of each study included in this review. For each study, a summary of the study characteristics, key findings relevant to the research question, and methodological information supporting the interpretation of the results are presented. Individual study data are systematically presented in Table 4 to ensure transparency and consistency in the synthesis process.

Table 3. Included studies.

Author and Year	Educational level	Research methods	Forms of democratic participation	Facilitating and inhibiting factors	Impact of participation	Key Findings
(Andiyan et al., 2025)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical presence during voting. - Cognitive and affective engagement (understanding the vision, discussing options, evaluating the program). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating: Improving leadership and critical thinking skills. - Obstacles: The challenge of integrating Pancasila values into the election process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving students' character and democratic responsibility. - Cultivate active engagement and critical thinking. 	The OSIS election process significantly enhances students' civic knowledge and democratic values, fostering critical thinking, self-confidence, and leadership skills.
(Fadillah & Kurnisar, 2025)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Quantitative	OSIS's participatory and democratic leadership style in a way positive influence efficacy self student .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating : Engagement active in OSIS in general significant increase efficacy self student . - Obstruction : Students who do not participate tend own efficacy a better self low . 	Participation in OSIS has an impact significant to efficacy self students . Improve skills leadership and trust self .	Participation in the student council (OSIS) in general significant increase efficacy self students (grades significance 0.003).
(Ningsih & Paramitha, 2025)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	Student in a way direct choose leader through system collection voice open .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating : Support from environment school . - Inhibits : Motivation individual and understanding the role of OSIS as a non-formal learning medium . 	Increase competence civil (thought critical , communication , decision making wise decision) . Grow understanding more Good about rights and responsibilities answer as citizen .	Participation student in OSIS activities in general significant contribute to development values citizenship (leadership , decision making) decisions , work same , tolerance) .
(Putra & Rifa'i, 2023)	Vocational School	Qualitative	Student collaborate For reach objective together and involved in activity school .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating : Facilities participation in various activities inside both inside and outside school . - Inhibits : Suboptimal performance of OSIS in implement work programs . 	Participation in activity training leadership (LDK) has a big impact For develop character and quality leadership . Forum for collaboration and strength driver For	Decline character students (violations regulation school), shows the need initiative development enhanced characters .

Author and Year	Educational level	Research methods	Forms of democratic participation	Facilitating and inhibiting factors	Impact of participation	Key Findings
(Kartikasari et al., 2022)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	Student Study For campaigning and seeking support , involvement in the democratic process miniature . Students give bait come back through online questionnaire .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating : Availability source power and level skills beginning student . - Inhibits : Limitations in stability device soft education and challenges apply education political in a way effective . 	activity school . Participation active in organization school help student develop behavior and responsibility answer ethical politics . Impact participation significant in form knowledgeable and responsible citizens answer .	Learning methods mixed (offline and online) has implemented effective in some school For increase education politics .
(Warjoto et al., 2021)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Community service	Student disclose pleasure and knowledge new , involvement they in the educational process .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate : Train student school medium in recycling repeat waste organic become fertilizer organic liquid . - Inhibits : Lack of awareness management waste in various level public . 	Increase awareness to problem environment and practice management waste . Growing leadership among students . Creating impact more positive widespread in society .	Lack of awareness management waste in various level public .
(Widya et al., 2020)	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	Facilitating development character through OSIS activities , including implementation of 18 values character and participation in a structured program . Students in a way active promote compliance they to regulation school .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating : Implementation of 18 values character and participation in a structured program such as LKDS. - Inhibits : Lack of trust oneself in between OSIS members . 	Increase character and discipline students , contribute positive for development them in school and society .	Character values applied through OSIS activities at SMP Negeri 6 Singaraja in harmony with 18 values character .
(Juwito et al., 2022)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Community service	Student speaking in front of general and personal branding training . Expressing ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating : Training programs that combine speaking in front of general can 	Participation in a way significant increase trust self students .	Findings main show develop skills speaking in front of general and personal

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			and developing trust self .	facilitate level trust self . - Inhibits : Lack of trust self , which causes shame , doubt , and anxiety .	Help student overcoming fear try things new .	branding for manager organization student .
(Ramaditya et al., 2020)	High School and Vocational School	Qualitative	Participant involved in group small , discussion , and study case . Participants can foster an environment where opinions and insights they can contribute to practice leadership .	- Facilitating : Effective leadership , interpersonal skills , discipline , and honesty . - Inhibits : Ambiguity and complexity environment modern business .	Increase skills motivation leadership they . Have ability For respond challenge organization in a way effective .	Successful future leaders must own vision , courage , and humility heart , emphasize importance learning sustainability and intelligence emotional .
(Widiawati et al., 2025)	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	Through discussion groups and collaboration in taking decisions , such as election leaders and representatives of the student council (OSIS).	- Facilitating : Activities practical , relevant curriculum , and support from head schools and teachers. - Inhibiting : Attitude apathetic students and differences character individual .	Create environment democratic learning and the existence of freedom express .	Underline the need improvement involvement students and implementation values effective democracy .
(Sulisanti et al., 2024)	MAN	Qualitative	Involvement active in campaigns , debates , and committees OSIS elections .	- Facilitating : The role of Guidance and Counseling (BK) as facilitator . - Inhibits : The effectiveness of BK in promote democracy Still Not yet explored .	Improvement trust themselves among the candidates .	Election process No only produce leader new but also form a generation of young people who are ready face challenge democracy .
(Wibawa , 2020)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	Interaction student during student council election (OSIS) as form participation democrats .	- Facilitating : Socialization awareness politics in schools and society For voters first time. - Inhibits : Low awareness and understanding about rights	Growing awareness among student as voters first time.	Election the chairman of the OSIS functions as activity important For grow awareness democracy among student .

Author and Year	Educational level	Research methods	Forms of democratic participation	Facilitating and inhibiting factors	Impact of participation	Key Findings
			democracy .	and harmful online behavior .		negative .
(Shalihudin & Hermantoro, 2021)	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	Retrieval decision , implementation , decision making benefits , evaluation , and attitudes social among OSIS members .	- Facilitating : School has give understanding about values democracy and education politics . - Inhibits : Implementation education political in grow attitude democracy Not yet maximized .	Participation active in taking decisions , implementation , and evaluation contribute to the effectiveness of OSIS and foster a sense of responsibility and solidarity .	Implementation education political Not yet fully optimized , shows room For repair .
(Salsabila et al., 2025)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	Election open For the chairman of the student council through collection voice confidential .	- Facilitating : Support school , provision facilities , and awareness will values democracy . - Inhibits : Participation low student achievement , biased gender perceptions , and barriers time .	Growing values like freedom opinion , tolerance , and trust self .	The Student Council of SMAN 10 Padang has succeed apply culture democracy through election general open , taking decision deliberative and participatory active member .
(Adla et al., 2025)	MAN	Qualitative	Choose in election , involved in discussion politics , participating in activity campaign , forming group interests , and communicate with officials politics .	- Facilitating : P5 Program, which enhances understanding values democracy and encourage involvement active . - Inhibits : Lack of interest from a number of students , feelings bored during discussion long .	Increase participation political student with push they For involved in various activity politics .	Findings underline role important initiative education like P5 in form awareness and involvement political student .
(Rafdhil & Rafliy, 2024)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Research & Development	Election OSIS leadership that was carried out in a way democratic with involving all over student in the nomination and voting process voice .	- Facilitating : Introduction Android- based E-voting application . - Inhibiting : Difficulty in manage a number of big voters , consumption time	Increase participation student in election the chairman of the student council, so that increase involvement democratic .	Android based e-voting application for OSIS elections significant increase participation student .

Author and Year	Educational level	Research methods	Forms of democratic participation	Facilitating and inhibiting factors	Impact of participation	Key Findings
(Nggilu et al., 2025)	Vocational School	Community Service	Through various activity extracurricular , fostering leadership and responsibility answer social .	<p>in calculation voice .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating : Support active from school and involvement direct students and lecturers . Inhibits : Low participation student in OSIS activities . 	Improvement significant in understanding they about function organization .	Intervention systematic that combines knowledge academic with experience practical is very important For revitalize role of OSIS.
(Indiriani et al., 2025)	Junior High School	Qualitative	Involvement active in various activities , fostering the environment in which students can disclose their opinions and suggestions .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating : Cooperation between Schools and OSIS through various academic and non- academic programs . - Inhibits : Lack of communication and commitment among OSIS administrators . 	Participation student in OSIS activities have an impact positive on discipline they .	OSIS plays role important in implant discipline among student through a designed work program Work The same with administration school .
(Mufidah, 2017)	Vocational School	Qualitative	Participation democratic in OSIS involves discussion open . Includes involvement student in various activity like ceremony flags and religious events .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating : Alignment curriculum , vision school , dedicated , and teacher support . - Inhibits : Moral qualities . 	Growing enthusiasm and support from the teacher in carry out moral education .	Combination various activity education in a way effective form behavior student .
(Hiariej et al., 2025)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Community Service	Covers involvement student active in election school , such as election leader class and OSIS leaders .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating : Response positive from head school . - Inhibits : Lack of training management finance structured and limited participation non- OSIS members . 	Improvement understanding they about principles transparency and accountability in management OSIS finances .	Involvement active in training management finance can grow culture transparency and accountability .
(Zalukhu et al., 2025)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	The role of the leader as facilitator who encourages participation active among	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating : The role of the leader as facilitator . Implementation Civil Knowledge . - Inhibitors : 	Growing skills leadership , responsibility answer , work team , and moral values .	OSIS functions as a training platform direct for student For learn not quite enough answer , work team , and

Author and Year	Educational level	Research methods	Forms of democratic participation	Facilitating and inhibiting factors	Impact of participation	Key Findings
			member .	Internal challenges such as difference opinion , communication that is not ineffective , and weak coordination .		effective communication .
(Falaq et al., 2022)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	Through implementation practice democracy in schools , such as election president of OSIS (Student Council).	- Facilitating : Commitment For report fraud elections . Inhibitors : Internal factors such as interest students , talents , motivation , and attitudes in a way significant contribute to the low level participation .	Participation student in OSIS is very important For grow values democracy .	Internal factors such as interest students , talents , motivation , and attitudes in a way significant contribute to the low level participation in OSIS elections .
(Darman & Syahrin, 2024)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	Covers involvement student active in election school , such as election leader class and OSIS leaders .	- Facilitating : Dissemination accurate information , involvement critical with issues controversial , and commitment For report fraud elections .	Increase understanding they about principles democracy and improve motivation they .	P5 program is working as an effective model For promote participation students at school .
(Irawan & Pigome, 2025)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Mixed Method	Survey pre-activity disclose various level participation in previous OSIS activities .	- Facilitating : Participation active from all students are very important For effectiveness of the OSIS program. - Inhibits : Lack of experience and understanding previously among the new OSIS administrators .	In a way significant influence ability they For promote activity in a way effective , improve involvement students and participation .	Training for OSIS administrators successful complete they with marketing strategies and skills application computer .
(Bektisiwi & Listyani ngsih, 2018)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	OSIS management shows participation democratic with finish problems and planning	- Facilitating : Character education in OSIS at SMAN 1 Mantup Lamongan	OSIS participation strengthens values characters that have owned	Educational methods characters used by families and schools basically similar , utilizing

Author and Year	Educational level	Research methods	Forms of democratic participation	Facilitating and inhibiting factors	Impact of participation	Key Findings
			activity through meetings and discussions .	covering role family . - Inhibiting : Responsible answer the weight placed on the OSIS members , which can cause stress .	student from parenting family they .	modeling , suggestions, and routine activities .
(Asmaro ini & Utami, 2017)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Qualitative	Discussion class , election leader class , election OSIS leadership , and discussion group .	- Facilitating : School middle school in the Regency Ponorogo provide a very conducive environment that allows student For apply values democracy .	Student in a way active involved in various practice democracy , including discussion group , expressing opinion , and deliberation .	main purpose from education This is For prepare student For behave and act in a way democratic .
(Al-Ra'zie et al., 2025)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Mixed Method	Form participation democratic including collection voice , involvement community , and involvement active in discussions and activities politics .	- Facilitating : Implementation activity devotion to community (PkM) which includes discussion and simulation . - Inhibits : Political education that is not inadequate in school and dependence on social media without filter.	Impact participation political for individual including chance For express opinion and advocacy interest they .	Students at SMAN 1 Padarincang own limited understanding about draft politics .
(Dewi et al., 2024)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Quantitative	Student participation is characterized by active mental and emotional involvement in group activities, often facilitated by organizations such as OSIS	- Lack of Enthusiasm and Attendance. - Students who are given the opportunity to become members of OSIS get the opportunity to improve their leadership skills.	Student participation is at the "Very Good" level.	The study found a moderate correlation (r=0.439) between student participation in OSIS activities and student leadership attitudes.

Result of Synthesis

Of the 32 studies analyzed, the majority were from senior high schools (SMA) and vocational high schools (SMK), with a few from junior high schools

(SMP) and Islamic junior high schools (MAN). Most studies used a qualitative approach (±75%), allowing for in-depth exploration of students' experiences in student councils (OSIS). A small

number used quantitative or mixed methods, primarily to measure the relationship between student council participation and psychological variables such as self-efficacy, leadership, discipline, or political literacy. In general, the studies demonstrated adequate reporting quality. However, some community service studies and activity reports tended to have more limited methodological descriptions, such as not mentioning triangulation processes or data validity techniques. Nevertheless, all studies were deemed relevant to the research questions and worthy of inclusion in the synthesis.

Observed Forms of Democratic Participation

The most common form of participation found is electoral participation, particularly through the election of the OSIS chairman which involves nomination activities, campaigns, debates, presentation of visions and missions, and voting that reflect the national election system. Many studies confirm that students are actively involved as voters and candidates, practicing open election processes and secret ballots as found in the studies of Andiyani et al. (2025) , Ningsih & Paramitha (2025) , Salsabila et al. (2025) , and Falaq et al. (2022) . In addition, student participation is also seen through deliberative involvement, such as group discussions, class deliberations, collective decision-making, and evaluation of OSIS work programs, as reported by Putra & Rifa'i (2023) , Asmaroini & Utami (2017) , and Widiawati et al. (2025) . In addition, students are also involved in collaborative and organizational participation, such as activity planning, event coordination, leadership training, and teamwork. Meanwhile, several studies have shown that participation also occurs in social and civic activities, such as waste management, issue-based campaigns, and community service, for example, Warjoto et al. (2021) and Adla et al. (2025) . More sophisticated forms of democratic participation are also evident through the use of e-voting in student council elections, which expands access to participation and increases the transparency of the election process (Rafdhi & Rafliy, 2024) . Overall, these studies demonstrate that students' democratic participation in schools is multidimensional,

encompassing electoral, deliberative, organizational, social, and digital practices.

Factors Facilitating Participation

Many studies have shown that support from the supervising teacher, guidance counselor, and principal is the most consistent factor in strengthening student participation, as demonstrated by Sulisanti et al. (2024) and Widiawati et al. (2025) . This support includes providing space for opinions, empowering students through guidance, and creating a school climate conducive to democratic engagement. Furthermore, several studies emphasize the importance of a democratic school environment, namely schools that provide opportunities for students to express themselves, discuss, and lead, as reflected in the studies of Asmaroini & Utami (2017) , Bektisiwi & Listyaningsih (2018) , and Kartikasari et al. (2022) . Other factors that facilitate participation are training and capacity building, including LDK (Student Activity Group), LDKS (Student Activity Group), public speaking training, personal branding, and organizational management training, which have been shown to increase students' self-confidence, speaking skills, and leadership (Juwito et al., 2022; Ramaditya et al., 2020) . Equally important is technological infrastructure, such as the use of e-voting applications in student council elections, which simplify the voting process while increasing transparency (Rafdhi & Rafliy, 2024) . Several studies also highlight the role of the Civics and Student Affairs (PPKn) and P5 curricula in strengthening democratic education and students' political literacy (Adla et al., 2025; Darmawan & Syahrin, 2024) . Overall, these facilitating factors indicate that student participation thrives when schools provide structural support, authentic experiences, leadership training opportunities, and adequate access to technology.

Factors Inhibiting Participation

The synthesis results show that students' democratic participation is often hampered by both internal and external factors. One of the most common barriers is a lack of self-confidence, social anxiety, and low student motivation, which results

in minimal involvement in OSIS activities. This was found in studies by Juwito et al. (2022) , Simorangkir et al. (2025) , and Salsabila et al. (2025) , which showed that shyness, fear of public speaking, or indifference can reduce participation. The second barrier relates to low understanding and literacy of democracy, including minimal knowledge of rights and responsibilities as citizens, as reported by Wibawa (2020) , Stevinova & Permatasari (2025) , and Widya et al. (2020) . Furthermore, many studies identify hierarchical school cultures, overly dominant teacher involvement, and a lack of deliberative space as barriers to substantial student participation. Other structural barriers include a lack of facilities, weak student council coordination, lack of software stability, and limited time and resources, as noted in studies by Kartikasari et al. (2022) , Indiriani et al. (2025) , and Putra & Rifa'i (2023) . Several studies also highlight gender bias, apathy, and individual character differences that hinder democratic participation (Salsabila et al., 2025; Widiawati et al., 2025) . In general, these barriers indicate that students' democratic participation is influenced not only by personal capacity but also by power structures and school cultures that are not yet fully democratic.

The Impact of Democratic Participation on Citizenship Competence

The impact of student council participation on the development of students' civic competence is very consistent and predominantly positive. Many studies show that participation in elections, deliberations, discussions, and various student council activities improves civic competence, such as understanding of rights and responsibilities, decision-making skills, and political literacy (Adla et al., 2025; Ningsih & Paramitha, 2025; Widya et al., 2020) . Participation also encourages the development of leadership skills, including self-efficacy, self-confidence, courage, and the ability to motivate others. A study by Fadillah & Kurnisar (2025) showed that students involved in student council have higher self-efficacy than those who are not involved. Many studies also report that student council strengthens democratic character traits, such as discipline, tolerance, responsibility,

justice, and social concern, as found by Putra & Rifa'i (2023) , Bektisiwi & Listyaningsih (2018) , and Salsabila et al. (2025) . Furthermore, democratic participation provides a space for students to develop 21st-century soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and public speaking (Juwito et al., 2022; Ramaditya et al., 2020) . Another impact that emerges is an increase in early political awareness and a tendency to engage in society, as reflected in studies by Stevinova & Permatasari (2025) and Darmawan & Syahrin (2024) . Overall, democratic participation through the Student Council (OSIS) contributes significantly to the formation of competent, critical, ethical, and empowered young citizens.

Discussion

The synthesis of findings indicates that the Student Council (OSIS) plays a significant role as an arena for democratic learning, where students experience forms of participation that include electoral, deliberative, collaborative, social, and digital processes. These results are consistent with the global literature on school-based democratic participation, which emphasizes that direct experience (experiential civic learning) is a strong predictor of the emergence of civic competence in adolescents (Hess & McAvoy, 2014; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; Wong et al., 2022) . International studies have shown that directly experienced democratic practices in schools correlate with strengthened civic agency, political interest, and self-efficacy (Damiani et al., 2024; Schulz et al., 2018; Torney-Purta et al., 2015) . These findings also align with the study by Sousa & Ferreira (2024) , which emphasized that student councils in various countries function as spaces for democratic learning through election processes, dialogue, and policy negotiations. Thus, the practice of OSIS in Indonesia further emphasizes the role of schools as miniature democratic societies, a framework widely recognized in global democratic education studies (Gonzalez et al., 2017; Strijbos & Engels, 2023) .

One important contribution of this synthesis is the identification of the multidimensional nature of student participation, a finding not always

apparent in individual studies. International literature shows that student participation is not a single entity, but encompasses electoral, deliberative, collaborative, digital, and social domains, all forming a complex spectrum of youth civic engagement (Gonzalez et al., 2017; Heid et al., 2023; Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022). This phenomenon parallels local findings demonstrating the role of the Student Council (OSIS) as a democratic learning ecosystem, not simply an administrative organization (Juwito et al., 2022; Rafdhi & Rafliy, 2024). Furthermore, global evidence on the effectiveness of an open classroom climate in improving political literacy and participatory skills (Alscher et al., 2022; Schulz et al., 2018) resonates with the finding that OSIS activities can strengthen students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral civic competencies. This impact is in line with international research on service learning and active-citizenship pedagogies, which shows improvements in students' decision-making skills, empathy, and deliberative abilities (Geier & Hasager, 2020; Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022).

Despite providing a comprehensive picture, the available evidence still has several limitations. First, most studies use qualitative approaches that focus on students' subjective experiences, so generalizations of findings should be made with caution. This limitation is also common in global research on youth participation in schools (Gonzalez et al., 2017), which emphasizes that qualitative research provides interpretive depth but does not allow for causal inference. Second, school contexts vary greatly, even in the international literature, where cultural factors, power structures, and teacher-student relationships have been shown to influence the intensity of student participation (Alscher et al., 2022; Schulz et al., 2018; Sousa & Ferreira, 2024). Third, many articles use limited methodologies such as reports of P5 programs or activities, paralleling global criticisms of low-rigor participatory education research (Al-Ansari et al., 2025). Furthermore, existing quantitative evidence in Indonesia is still limited, while international studies suggest that longitudinal civic studies are needed to map the impact of student participation

consistently over time (Wong et al., 2022). Thus, while the findings of this study are thematically robust, methodological strengthening is still needed to clarify causal claims.

This review process also has inherent limitations. First, this synthesis relies on published research, and therefore cannot completely avoid publication bias, a phenomenon also identified in international reviews (Sousa & Ferreira, 2024; Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022). Second, variations in the depth of data reporting lead to an imbalance of evidence across themes, an issue that also frequently arises in citizenship education SLRs (Alscher et al., 2022). Nevertheless, consistent thematic patterns, both in local data and supported by the international literature, provide a sufficient basis for drawing substantive conclusions in this study.

This synthesis yields important implications. Schools need to expand the space for meaningful participation by granting greater autonomy to the Student Council (OSIS), providing inclusive deliberative forums, and positioning teacher advisors as facilitators. These implications align with global recommendations on the importance of shared leadership and inclusive deliberation in strengthening school democracy (Gonzalez et al., 2017; Sousa & Ferreira, 2024; Strijbos & Engels, 2023). Future research in Indonesia should adopt a longitudinal design, mixed methods, and causal approach, as conducted in the ICCS, NAEP Civics, and global youth civic engagement research studies. Furthermore, studies on power relations, school culture, and digital democracy practices need to be expanded to understand the deeper dynamics of student participation in the OSIS.

Conclusions

This systematic review shows that student councils (OSIS) play a crucial role in building students' democratic experiences, particularly through electoral, deliberative, collaborative, social, and digital practices. These diverse forms of participation provide opportunities for students to directly practice democratic values, thereby strengthening civic competencies such as

leadership, critical thinking, self-efficacy, political literacy, and social responsibility. However, student participation is not yet fully authentic. A hierarchical school culture, teacher dominance in decision-making, and limited space for dialogue and autonomy mean that most participation remains tokenistic. Supporting factors such as support from mentor teachers, an open school climate, and collaborative learning practices play a crucial role in strengthening democratic participation. Overall, OSIS has great potential as a miniature democratic society, but optimizing its role requires restructuring its authority, expanding its deliberative forums, and developing a pedagogical design that encourages student voice and shared leadership. Future research should adopt longitudinal and mixed methods to map the long-term impact of OSIS participation on the development of competent young citizens.

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