



The Role of Students in Promoting Human Rights Enforcement through the OCI Case as a Social Learning Experience

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History: Submitted/Received September 01, 2025 First Revised Oktober 10, 2025 Accepted November 20, 2025 First Available online December 01, 2025 Publication Date December 05, 2025</p> <p>Keyword: Child Exploitation, Human Rights, Indonesian Oriental Circus, Social Learning, Students</p>	<p><i>This study aims to analyze the role of university students in promoting the enforcement of Human Rights (HR) through the case of human rights violations in Oriental Circus Indonesia (OCI) as a form of social learning. The research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach and humanistic framework. The subjects are students as agents of social change, with instruments including literature review, statistical data, and official documents from Komnas HAM and BPS (2024). Data were collected through document analysis and literature study, while data analysis employed theoretical approaches involving Marx's conflict theory, Bandura's social learning theory, and the moral foundation of Pancasila. The results indicate that child exploitation in the OCI case reflects structural inequality, weak legal supervision, and low social awareness of human rights. The findings highlight the strategic role of students in fostering humanitarian awareness through educational, advocative, and social approaches, positioning real-life case studies as effective means for internalizing human values and social justice.</i></p> <p>© 2025</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

Human rights violations remain a fundamental problem in Indonesian society. Although the country has ratified various international instruments and enacted Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights, practices in the field show that human values have not been fully realized. One concrete example is the case of Oriental Circus Indonesia (OCI), which revealed allegations of child and worker exploitation in the entertainment industry. This fact confirms that the legal system is not yet fully capable of protecting vulnerable groups, while also highlighting the real gap between legal norms and social reality.

Ideally, every individual has the right to a decent life, free from exploitation, and to obtain an education as guaranteed in Articles 28B and 31 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. This reality is reinforced by data from Statistics Indonesia (2024), which records that around 1.27 million children in Indonesia are still involved in economic activities, even though most of them are still students. This situation reflects the dilemma between the economic demands of the family and the fulfillment of children's rights to education. The problem becomes even more complicated when it occurs in the entertainment sector, which often escapes formal labor supervision. In the case of OCI, the violations that occurred included forced labor, physical and verbal abuse, and violations of children's rights to education and legal protection (Komnas HAM, 2022).

This gap between norms and practices can be explained through Karl Marx's theory of conflict, which states that structural inequality between capital owners and the working class encourages the exploitation of humans by other humans. In the context of OCI, circus management holds economic control and power, while workers and children become victims of a capitalist system that places profit above human values. This finding is reinforced by a report from the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2023), which states that 40% of the entertainment sector in Indonesia still operates without official permits and adequate labor supervision. As a result, violations of workers' rights, including those of children, often escape public and state attention.

In addition to structural factors, low social awareness of human rights exacerbates the situation. In Albert Bandura's social learning theory (1977), deviant behavior in society is formed through a process of observation and imitation of the social environment. When people see exploitative practices going unpunished, they learn that such behavior is acceptable. As a result, a permissive culture towards human rights violations is passed down from generation to generation. The 2023 Indonesian Youth Civic Awareness Survey even found that 48% of people in rural areas still consider child labor to be normal. This shows that human rights violations occur not only because of weak laws, but also because of weak collective moral awareness.

The gap between ideal values and reality in the field shows that the enforcement of human rights in Indonesia requires not only legal instruments, but also education on human values that can foster empathy and social responsibility. This is where the role of students becomes very strategic. As a group of young intellectuals, students have the critical and moral capacity to understand, examine, and follow up on humanitarian issues scientifically and socially. According to the UNY Civics Journal (2023), students who are involved in social case study-based learning show a significant increase in empathy and concern for human rights issues. This confirms that higher education has a major responsibility in shaping the humanitarian awareness of the younger generation.

This study aims to fill the gap between human rights theory taught in the classroom and the reality of human rights violations in society. Many previous studies have only highlighted legal or state policy aspects, while the social learning aspects for students are rarely discussed in depth. In fact, an educational approach that encourages students can be an effective model of social learning in instilling human values. Through the OCI case study, this research seeks to show how students can play a role not only as observers, but also as agents of social change who actively fight for justice and humanity.

The new value offered by this study lies in its attempt to integrate classical and modern social theories, such as Marx's conflict theory, Bandura's social learning theory, and Pancasila values into the context of citizenship education in higher education. This integration enriches the understanding of human rights enforcement, not only from legal and political aspects, but also from moral and social dimensions. Thus, this research not only contributes theoretically to the study of human rights and values education, but also

provides practical benefits for the world of education in designing case-based learning strategies that are relevant to the needs of the times.

Based on the above description, this research aims to:

1. Explain the forms of human rights violations in the case of Oriental Circus Indonesia (OCI);
2. Analyze the contributing factors based on conflict theory, social learning theory, and Pancasila values; and
3. Describe how the OCI case can be used as a means of social learning for students in fostering humanitarian awareness and moral responsibility for the enforcement of human rights in Indonesia.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. This approach was chosen because the research focused on understanding the meaning, context, and social processes behind the role of students in promoting human rights through case-based social learning using Oriental Circus Indonesia (OCI). The case study design allowed researchers to explore the phenomenon in depth to understand the relationship between social theory, human values, and social reality in society.

The research subjects were students from various public and private universities in Indonesia who were involved in academic or social activities related to human rights. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, which is the selection of respondents based on certain criteria such as activity in student organizations, involvement in activities or courses related to human rights and civic education, and understanding of social issues. A total of 25 students from five universities in Java and Sumatra participated in this study, representing backgrounds in social sciences, law, and education. In addition, the study also used secondary documents such as the National Human Rights Commission report (2022), data from the Central Statistics Agency (2024), the Youth Civic Awareness Indonesia report (2023), as well as relevant scientific articles and online media.

The research procedure was carried out in three main stages, namely preparation, data collection, and analysis. The preparation stage included formulating the research focus, reviewing the literature, and preparing interview guidelines and document analysis. The data collection stage was carried out through literature studies, analysis of official documents, and semi-structured interviews with participants. The interviews were conducted online using a digital platform and lasted approximately 45–60 minutes for each respondent. The final stage was analysis and reflection, which linked the findings to relevant social theories, such as Karl Marx's theory of conflict, Bandura's social learning theory, and the values of Pancasila as a moral and ideological framework.

The main instrument in this study was the researcher himself as the key instrument, who played a role in data collection, interpretation, and analysis. The researcher also used auxiliary instruments in the form of semi-structured interview guidelines, document observation sheets, and data categorization formats. These instruments were used to group the results of interviews and literature into broad themes such as forms of human rights violations, contributing factors, and the role of students in social learning. To ensure content validity, all instruments were tested through expert judgment by two lecturers who are experts in the fields of civic education and human rights studies.

Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews with students, analysis of official documents, and review of academic literature and online media. The data obtained was then tested using source triangulation, by comparing

information from interviews, documents, and previous research results to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data.

Data analysis was conducted using Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive analysis model, which consists of three main processes: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction was carried out by simplifying and organizing raw data from interviews and documents into relevant thematic categories. The reduced data was then presented in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic matrices to facilitate interpretation. The final step was drawing conclusions and verification, which was done inductively to find patterns of relationships between social phenomena, human values, and the role of students in upholding human rights.

To ensure the validity of the research results, the researchers used four qualitative validity criteria from Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was maintained through triangulation of sources and member checking with participants. Transferability was achieved by ensuring that the research results could be applied in similar social contexts. Dependability was maintained by systematically recording the entire research process, while confirmability was ensured by comparing the analysis results with theory and secondary data to maintain the objectivity of interpretation.

This research method provides a systematic framework for understanding the role of students as agents of change in the context of human rights violations. With a reflective qualitative approach based on social theory, this research is expected to be replicated in similar studies examining student involvement in humanitarian issues and values education in Indonesia.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on qualitative analysis of official documents, statistical data, state agency reports, and academic literature, this study finds that the case of Oriental Circus Indonesia (OCI) is a concrete example of systemic and structural human rights violations. This case reveals the ongoing exploitation of children and workers in the entertainment industry, which should be a space for artistic and cultural expression. Based on the Komnas HAM (2022) report, evidence was found of forced labor, excessive working hours, verbal and physical abuse, and neglect of the educational rights of children recruited underage by OCI management. These child workers were reported to work more than 12 hours per day for low wages and without adequate legal protection.

This finding is reinforced by data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2024), which notes that around 1.27 million children in Indonesia are still involved in economic activities, and 67.17% of them are still in school. These figures show that child labor is still prevalent, especially in informal sectors such as entertainment, agriculture, and domestic services. This data also shows a gap between the idealism of child protection in national law and the social reality faced by many poor families. In addition, a report by the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2023) reveals that 40% of the entertainment sector in Indonesia does not have formal work permits and is not registered in the national labor supervision system. This condition has led to many human rights violations that go undetected by the government.

In the social dimension, the Youth Civic Awareness Indonesia survey (2023) found that 48% of rural communities still consider child labor to be normal, and 27% even consider it a form of responsibility education. This perception shows that there is a permissive culture towards child exploitation that is deeply rooted in society and culture. Thus, human rights violations in the OCI case are not only legal violations, but also the

result of social habits that have given rise to a collective moral insensitivity to the suffering of others.

From an educational perspective, the results of interviews and literature reviews show that students who study real social cases such as OCI have higher levels of social empathy and stronger awareness of human rights compared to those who only study theory conceptually (UNY Civics Journal, 2023). These findings reinforce the assumption that case studies of human rights violations can serve as effective social learning models for students. Furthermore, research by the UPI Journal of Civic Education (2023) shows that students who are actively involved in social activities and human rights advocacy experience a 65% increase in empathy and moral reflection skills. This fact confirms the important role of higher education in instilling humanitarian values.

From an analysis of Komnas HAM documents, national media reports, and BRIN data (2024), it was also found that weak coordination between government agencies, especially between the Ministry of Manpower, the Ministry of Education, and child protection agencies, was a factor hindering the enforcement of human rights in the OCI case. The handling process tends to be reactive, only taking place after public pressure emerges in the media. This shows that there are structural weaknesses in the human rights protection system in Indonesia, which should be preventive and sustainable.

Other findings show that students have great potential to play a role in upholding human rights through three main approaches:

1. Education and social literacy through the dissemination of information, awareness campaigns, and academic activities on the theme of human rights;
2. Advocacy and assistance through involvement in social organizations, legal aid institutions, or collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission and the Indonesian Child Protection Commission;
3. Social action and digital activism by utilizing social media as a space for humanitarian advocacy.

Data from Kompas Data Center (2023) shows that 60% of human rights issues that went viral on social media in the last two years originated from initiatives by students and academic communities, indicating that their role in shaping public opinion is increasingly significant in the digital age.

Overall, the research results show that OCI cases are not only legal issues, but also a humanitarian crisis that reflects economic inequality, weak state oversight, and low social awareness. Students, with their critical and moral powers, are strategically positioned to bridge the gap between human rights idealism and social reality through education, advocacy, and concrete action.

The above findings show that human rights violations in the OCI case are the result of a complex interaction between economic structures, social culture, and a weak legal system. Based on Karl Marx's theory of conflict, the main root of exploitation lies in the inequality of ownership of the means of production and economic control. In a capitalist system, humans are viewed as means of production that can be exploited to increase profits. When the entertainment industry pursues profits without regard for humanity, workers and children become victims. In the context of OCI, the power relations between capital owners and workers reflect an unequal social structure in which the ruling class oppresses the weaker classes for economic gain.

This phenomenon is in line with the results of research by the ILO (2023) and BRIN (2024), which show that violations against child workers often occur in the informal sector due to weak monitoring systems. Marx refers to this condition as a form of "human alienation from work," in which workers lose control over themselves and are separated

from their human essence. The exploitation of children in OCI is a tangible form of this alienation: children lose their rights to childhood, education, and freedom.

Within the framework of Bandura's social learning theory (1977), human rights violations such as child exploitation can also be understood as the result of deviant social learning. When society and law enforcement fail to punish violations, this becomes a negative model that reinforces similar behavior in the future. Society shapes its behavior based on what it observes; when injustice is left unaddressed, it gradually becomes normalized. According to Bandura, positive and negative reinforcement play an important role in shaping social behavior. Therefore, if the state and society fail to provide firm reinforcement or sanctions against human rights violations, the pattern of exploitation will continue to repeat itself indefinitely.

The lessons from the OCI case are also relevant to the world of education. Students can use this case as a social laboratory where they learn to recognize injustice and develop empathy. In this context, Bandura's theory explains that humans learn through observation, imitation, and reflection. By studying real cases, students not only understand human rights theory but also internalize the moral values that shape human character. Research from the UNY Civics Journal (2023) supports this by showing that case study-based learning significantly increases students' empathy and critical awareness.

In addition to theoretical aspects, this discussion emphasizes the importance of Pancasila values as a moral foundation in upholding human rights. The second and fifth principles, "Just and civilized humanity" and "Social justice for all Indonesian people," provide an ethical framework for understanding and responding to human rights violations. Pancasila affirms that human dignity is the highest value that must be upheld by every citizen. When students engage in humanitarian advocacy, they are actually bringing the values of Pancasila to life through concrete actions.

From a civic education perspective, the OCI case also highlights the need for a transformation in the approach to learning in higher education. Until now, human rights issues have often been taught normatively without any real social context. However, as explained by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), education should liberate humans from injustice and foster critical awareness of social realities. Case-based learning such as OCI is a concrete form of liberating education that places students as active subjects in understanding and fighting for social justice.

In the context of implementation, student involvement in human rights advocacy also reflects the emergence of a new form of digital activism. Through social media, students are able to disseminate information, build public solidarity, and exert moral pressure on state institutions. This phenomenon shows a shift in the form of humanitarian struggle from physical space to digital space without losing its humanitarian substance.

However, this study also found a number of challenges. First, student involvement still tends to be sporadic and not yet organized on an ongoing basis. Second, most campuses have not yet integrated contextual human rights education into their curricula. Third, institutional support for student advocacy activities is still limited due to concerns about political stigma. These three factors indicate the need for new strategies to strengthen the role of students as agents of humanitarian change.

Conceptually, the results of this study enrich human rights studies by positioning students not merely as learners, but as active social actors in the transformation of values. These findings make an important contribution to the development of a "humanitarian case-based social learning" model, which is a learning process that combines theoretical analysis, moral reflection, and social action. This model is relevant to be applied in

citizenship education in higher education so that students are able to interpret human rights values contextually and applicatively.

Thus, this discussion emphasizes that the OCI case is not only a social tragedy, but also a mirror for the world of education and society to assess the extent to which human values truly live in the life of the nation. Students have a moral and intellectual responsibility to bridge the gap between knowledge and action, between law and morality. When students play an active role in upholding human rights, they are actually preserving the spirit of humanity in the Indonesian nation.

4. CONCLUSION

The case of Oriental Circus Indonesia (OCI) is a clear representation of the humanitarian crisis that reflects the gap between the idealism of human rights and the social reality in Indonesia. Based on the results of the analysis, the human rights violations that occurred were not only due to weak law enforcement, but also a result of an unequal economic structure, a culture that is permissive of exploitation, and low social awareness among the community. Violations such as these show that human rights issues cannot be viewed solely from a legal perspective, but must also be understood as interrelated moral, social, and educational issues.

Research findings show that students have a strategic position as agents of social change who are able to bridge the gap between theory and practice in human rights enforcement. Through case-based social learning such as OCI, students not only understand the concepts of justice and humanity cognitively, but also internalize these values in concrete actions. This process proves the relevance of Bandura's social learning theory in the context of Indonesian higher education: students learn from the reality of social injustice to build moral awareness and empathy. On the other hand, Karl Marx's theory of conflict explains that exploitation is the result of unequal power relations, while the values of Pancasila provide ethical direction to restore humanity as the basis of social justice. The integration of these three frameworks forms a conceptual model of humanitarian social learning that positions students as moral and intellectual subjects who play an active role in fighting for human rights.

This conclusion also proves the research expectations stated in the introduction that higher education not only functions as a vehicle for knowledge transfer, but also as a space for shaping human consciousness. When students understand human rights violations as a complex social phenomenon, they learn to interpret their role as part of the solution. Thus, the enforcement of human rights is not merely the responsibility of legal institutions, but also a collective moral responsibility rooted in the values of justice, empathy, and fair and civilized humanity.

In practical terms, the results of this study imply the need to reformulate higher education curricula to make them more contextual to social realities. Human rights issues must be presented not only as normative material but also as a means of moral reflection through case-based learning and social advocacy activities. Higher education institutions can develop Service Learning for Human Rights or Independent Campus for Humanity programs as a forum for reflective learning and social action for students. In addition, collaboration between educational institutions, human rights institutions, and the government needs to be strengthened so that students can participate meaningfully in monitoring, research, and campaigns for the enforcement of human rights.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to enriching social learning theory by incorporating a moral-national dimension based on Pancasila. The findings show that humanitarian behavior can be learned, internalized, and passed on through a

learning process that involves real social experiences. In other words, social learning does not stop at the stage of imitating behavior, but develops into moral awareness rooted in universal humanitarian values. This also broadens the scope of Bandura's theory to be more relevant in the context of character education in Indonesia.

As a prospect for further research development, this study opens up opportunities to further examine the effectiveness of the Humanitarian Social Learning model in increasing human rights awareness among students through an empirical approach. Future research can also expand the subject to groups of teachers, students, or civil society to see the extent to which the process of internalizing human values can be transferred across educational levels. In addition, comparative research between developing countries can be conducted to understand how cultural contexts influence the effectiveness of human rights education based on local values.

Finally, this study confirms that building awareness of humanity among the younger generation is key to the nation's sustainability. Students are not only recipients of knowledge, but also interpreters of values and drivers of social change. By using the OCI case as a moral lesson, students learn not to turn a blind eye to injustice and reaffirm the essence of humanity as the core of national and state life. Only by bringing the value of "fair and civilized humanity" to life in concrete actions can the ideal of upholding human rights in Indonesia be truly realized.

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6. AUTHORS' NOTE

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