

ORIGINAL

Project-Based Political Education Model: A Study of the Pancasila Student Profile Project with the Theme “Suara Demokrasi”

Modelo de Educación Política Basado en Proyectos: Un Estudio del Proyecto de Perfil Estudiantil de Pancasila con el Tema “Suara Demokrasi”

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ABSTRACT

Political education is crucial for fostering a critical and democratically responsible young generation. In Indonesia, the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), with the theme “Suara Demokrasi” aims to improve students’ political literacy in secondary schools. This study focuses on designing a valid and practical political education model to address challenges in P5 implementation. Using the ADDIE development model within a Research and Development (R&D) framework, the study involved expert validation and limited trials with six teachers and thirty students. Expert validation averaged 3,5 or 87 %, categorizing the model as very valid, while practicality scores were 85 % from teachers and 82 % from students. These results directly demonstrate that the Inclusive Democracy Education Model (In-DEMO), which integrates Project-Based, Meaningful, and Transformative Learning, is effective and ready for classroom application. Thus, this research advances a contextual and inclusive political education model that supports the Merdeka Curriculum’s goals of enhancing students’ civic literacy.

Keywords: Civic Literacy; Democracy; Pancasila Student Profile; Political Education; Project-Based Learning.

RESUMEN

La educación política es crucial para fomentar una generación joven crítica y democráticamente responsable. En Indonesia, el Proyecto de Fortalecimiento del Perfil Estudiantil de Pancasila (P5), con el tema “Suara Demokrasi”, busca mejorar la alfabetización política de los estudiantes de secundaria. Este estudio se centra en el diseño de un modelo de educación política válido y práctico para abordar los desafíos en la implementación del P5. Utilizando el modelo de desarrollo ADDIE en un marco de Investigación y Desarrollo (I+D), el estudio incluyó la validación por expertos y ensayos limitados con seis docentes y treinta estudiantes. La validación por expertos obtuvo un promedio de 3,5 (87 %), categorizando el modelo como muy válido, mientras que las puntuaciones de practicidad fueron del 85 % para los docentes y del 82 % para los estudiantes. Estos resultados demuestran directamente que el Modelo de Educación para la Democracia Inclusiva (In-DEMO), que integra el Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos, Significativo y Transformador, es eficaz y está listo para su aplicación en el aula. Por lo tanto, esta investigación promueve un modelo de educación política contextual e inclusiva que respalda los objetivos del Currículo Merdeka de mejorar la alfabetización cívica de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Alfabetización Cívica; Democracia; Perfil del Estudiante de Pancasila; Educación Política; Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos.

INTRODUCTION

Low political literacy among young people is a significant obstacle to democratic consolidation, often associated with the lack of relevant political education since school.^(1,2) In Indonesia, the quality of democracy has declined as reflected in the report of The Economist Intelligence Unit,⁽³⁾ which placed Indonesia in the category of flawed democracy with a score of 6,44, down from the previous year and ranked 59th out of 167 countries. Low scores on political culture and civil liberties indicators indicate weak critical citizen engagement. Katadata⁽⁴⁾ survey also revealed that while 59,8 % of young people are interested in political issues, only 28,9 % are interested in directly participating in the election process. This finding reflects the symptoms of standby citizenship, namely, passive and unorganized political participation.⁽²⁾ In this context, secondary schools strategically develop students' political literacy through good political education.^(5,6)

In response to these needs, the Indonesian Government, through the Independent Curriculum, introduced the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) as part of co-curricular learning that aims to build six main character dimensions: faith and devotion to God Almighty, critical reasoning, independence, creativity, cooperation, and global diversity.⁽⁷⁾ One of the main themes of P5 is *Suara Demokrasi*, which is designed to foster students' understanding of their rights and obligations as citizens and enhance their participatory skills in democratic life. Global studies show that integrating civic education into the school curriculum, particularly through project-based learning and hands-on experiences, can enhance students' civic engagement, political literacy, and deliberative capacity.⁽⁸⁾ Other research also emphasizes that participatory and contextual school projects can build strong political efficacy and civic identity among students.⁽⁹⁾

Previous studies have shown that political education through schools plays a significant role in shaping political awareness and increasing young voter participation. Formal education has a long-term impact on voting behavior.⁽¹⁰⁾ Meanwhile, participatory, project-based citizenship learning that includes election simulations has been proven effective in increasing students' political literacy.^(11,12,13,14,15,16,17) Systematic studies confirm that pedagogical strategies, resource availability, and local context significantly influence the success of voter education.^(18,19) In addition, the level of education is directly proportional to political involvement.^(20,21) And digital approaches such as gamification are starting to be adopted to attract the interest of the younger generation.⁽²²⁾

In Indonesia, the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) with the theme *Suara Demokrasi* has been studied, but most studies are still descriptive.⁽²³⁾ Noted that there was active student participation in the project implementation, but a validity test of the learning tools had not been conducted.⁽²⁴⁾ found that P5 can reinforce students' critical reasoning, while ⁽²⁵⁾ examining the obstacles to implementing P5 with findings of minimal teacher training and limited modules. These findings indicate an urgent need to develop valid, practical, project-based political education designs to enhance students' political literacy.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to develop a valid and practical project-based political education design integrated into the *Suara Demokrasi* theme in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project at the high school level. This study uses a research and development approach with the ADDIE development model. To this stage, it has completed three main phases: needs analysis, design planning, and initial product development.

METHOD

Type, Time, and Location of Research

This research uses a Research and Development (R&D) approach with the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) development model, which is commonly used in learning design based on student needs and school context.⁽²⁶⁾ This study applies explicitly the three initial stages of ADDIE: analysis, design, and development, to develop a valid and practical learning module on the theme "*Suara Demokrasi*" for high school level. The ADDIE model is combined with the Educational Design Research (EDR) framework to ensure that the development process addresses practical field issues and enriches the conceptual approach to political education in schools.⁽²⁷⁾ The product developed is a Political Education Model based on Project-Based Learning (PjBL). The research activities took place from July to November 2024 at SMA Negeri 7 Padang, Indonesia.

Population and Sample

The research population included teachers and students at SMA Negeri 7 Padang. The practicality test was conducted on six senior teachers: the vice principal for curriculum, the P5 *Suara Demokrasi* coordinator, a Sociology teacher, a Pancasila and Civics teacher, and an Indonesian language teacher. Additionally, 30 11th-grade students aged 17, meeting the voter criteria in the Indonesian General Election, participated in the product's practicality test.

Research Instrument

Three main instruments were used in this study:

- The expert validation instrument is a scoring rubric using a 4-point scale, with the following categories: 1 = very invalid, 2 = less valid, 3 = valid, and 4 = very valid. This rubric covers four primary constructs: (a) content accuracy, (b) pedagogical appropriateness, (c) language clarity, and (d) material design and presentation.
- The teacher questionnaire was structured on a 5-point Likert scale with the categories: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. This questionnaire consisted of 12 items to assess the model's practicality, including ease of use, time efficiency, clarity of instructions, and teacher perceptions of student engagement in the learning process.
- The student questionnaire also used a 5-point Likert scale with 10 items. This instrument is designed to measure students' perceptions of the clarity of the material, the attractiveness of the activities, the level of engagement during learning, and the relevance of the teaching to the theme of democracy raised in the project.

Focus Group Discussion Procedures

Two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted, involving three teachers in each group. The researcher facilitated the discussions as moderator, using a guideline with five main questions that emphasized clarity of the activity flow, relevance of the material, implementation barriers, and suggestions for development. The FGDs were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically to strengthen the quantitative findings.

Expert Validation

Three experts with high academic authority were involved to validate the instrument and product. They have been lecturers and researchers in the field of civic education for over 25 years. They are: Prof. Suryanef., M.Sc. (citizenship education expert), Prof. Maria Montessori., M.Ed., M.Sc. (curriculum and pedagogy expert), and Prof. Azwar Ananda., M.A. (learning practice expert). The credibility of these three validators provides strong academic legitimacy to the reliability of the validation results, ensuring that the content, pedagogical, and practical aspects have been comprehensively tested.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Validation data were obtained from rubric scores, which were analyzed by calculating the average and percentage validity. Practicality data from teachers and students were analyzed using descriptive statistics (average and percentage) to determine response categories. Qualitative data from the focus group discussions (FGDs) were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques through transcription, categorization, and extraction of central themes.

- The analysis phase was conducted through a literature study, a review of curriculum documents, and in-depth interviews with six P5 implementing teachers at SMA Negeri 7 Padang. Informants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and the Suara Demokrasi theme.
- The design phase included developing learning objectives, planning project syntax, developing authentic assessments, and strategies for contextually integrating democratic values into students' learning experiences.
- The development phase involved two main procedures: (1) three experts in civics, curriculum, and school learning practices validated the module's content and structure. Assessments were conducted using a four-scale rubric-based instrument. (2) Practicality testing, conducted through a limited trial at a public high school in Padang City. Six teachers and thirty students were involved as subjects to assess ease of use, clarity of activities, and the relevance of the module's content to the theme of democracy. Assessments were conducted through closed-ended questionnaires and focus group discussions guided by the researcher. All data from the validation and practicality process were analyzed descriptively and quantitatively (for validity and practicality scores) and qualitatively (for user responses and recommendations), focusing on content feasibility, structural clarity, and implementation readiness. The results of this stage became the basis for development

Research ethics

This research received ethical approval and funding from the Institute for Research and Community Service, Universitas Negeri Padang, based on Rector's Decree Number 394/UN35/LT/2024 concerning the determination of research proposals funded in 2024. All teachers and students provided informed consent to participate. This legal and administrative basis confirms that the research is feasible and meets ethical and scientific standards.

RESULTS

Implementation and Constraints of P5 Theme “Suara Demokrasi”

The research results indicate that implementing the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) with the theme “Suara Demokrasi” at SMA Negeri 7 Padang has not been optimal. Three main issues identified through in-depth interviews with six implementing teachers and one vice principal were: (1) low teacher competency, (2) gaps in student participation, and (3) weak program implementation management.

Regarding competency, most teachers stated that the training they received was general and did not address thematic implementation aspects. Teacher 1 stated, “We were given general training regarding P5, but there was no clear guidance on how to link it to political themes.” Teacher 2 added, “The training material emphasized technical administrative aspects; we do not even know how to design a good P5.” Teacher 3 admitted that “we only got designs from the internet.” This limitation resulted in a weak participatory pedagogical approach. In line with Torney-Purta et al.⁽²⁸⁾ and Schulz et al.,⁽²⁹⁾ Teacher capacity is vital in determining the success of reflective and contextual democratic education.

On the other hand, student participation is also uneven. Activities such as debates and election simulations only involve a small proportion of students with strong communication skills. Teacher 4 stated, “Most students are just passive spectators during the activities.” Teacher 3 added, “The activities are too dense in a short time, students get bored and feel like it is just extra homework.” These findings reflect a participation gap that contradicts the principle of inclusivity in democratic education,⁽³⁰⁾ emphasizes that democratic education needs to open up space for active participation and direct experience for all students.

The management aspect is also a serious challenge. The assignment of P5 teachers is more based on administrative considerations. The vice principal stated, “The appointment of P5 teachers is based on rotation and lack of teaching hours.” Teacher 5 added, “The assignment does not consider the teacher’s interest or understanding of democracy issues.” This shows weak human resource planning and task allocation that is not based on competency. This finding is supported by previous literature,^(31,32) which emphasizes the importance of expertise-based assignments for the effectiveness of program implementation. In the perspective of educational management theory⁽³³⁾ and human resource alignment,⁽³⁴⁾ inappropriate allocation of human resources can reduce organizational performance and teacher motivation.

Based on these findings, a project-based political learning design responsive to the school context is needed. The development focus should be on more applicable teacher training, expanding student participation through varied methods, and program governance that prioritizes competency and interest. This way, students can internalize the values of democracy and Pancasila in a more meaningful and transformative way.

P5 Implementation Model Design Theme “Suara Demokrasi”

Based on the findings that the implementation of the “Suara Demokrasi” theme (P5) in secondary schools has not been optimal, this study developed a learning model called In-DEMO (Inclusive Democracy Education Model). The learning model is a systematic conceptual framework that guides the learning process through syntax, social systems, reaction principles, support systems, and expected instructional and accompanying impacts.⁽³⁵⁾ Models structure the flow of learning activities and function as a bridge between educational theory and classroom practice.^(36,37) In-DEMO is designed to provide systematic project implementation direction that encourages active student involvement in understanding and internalizing democratic values meaningfully.⁽³⁸⁾

Theoretical of the In-DEMO Model

The In-DEMO model integrates three main approaches: Project-Based Learning (PjBL), Meaningful Learning, and Transformative Learning. PjBL was chosen because it encourages contextual, collaborative, and reflective student engagement in democratic learning and supports the development of 21st-century.^(9,39) Ausubel’s Meaningful Learning Principles reinforce the relevance of learning through activities such as election simulations and digital campaigns, which link new information to students’ experiences.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Meanwhile, Freire’s Transformative Learning approach emphasizes the importance of learning that builds critical awareness and encourages social action.⁽⁴¹⁾ These three approaches are contextualized in the Independent Curriculum, which provides space for interdisciplinary learning and character building by the Pancasila Student Profile.⁽⁷⁾ With this foundation, In-DEMO becomes a transformative, applicable, and sustainable model of democratic learning.

In-DEMO Model Input

The successful implementation of the In-DEMO model depends on four main components: teachers, students, curriculum, and school management. Teachers need to participate in thematic application training to design contextual and collaborative democracy-themed PjBL learning.⁽⁹⁾ According to the principles of Meaningful Learning, students are positioned as active and reflective participants, with relevant and meaningful learning experiences.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The curriculum must be supported by a digital module themed “Suara Demokrasi” that integrates activities such as election simulations and digital campaigns. From an institutional perspective,

teacher assignments must be competency-based, not merely administrative, and must be in line with the principle of human resource alignment.⁽⁴⁰⁾ These four aspects form the foundation of an effective and sustainable democratic learning ecosystem.

Components of the In-DEMO Learning Model

The In-DEMO (Inclusive Democracy Education Model) model was developed by integrating the main components of learning according to Joyce, Weil, and Calhoun, namely: learning syntax, social system, reaction principle, support system, instructional impact, and accompanying impact.⁽³⁵⁾ This model addresses the challenges of implementing P5 on the theme “Suara Demokrasi” more contextually and effectively at the secondary school level.

Table 1. Dates

Component	In-DEMO Model Description
Syntax	The model syntax consists of nine structured stages in one project block with a total time allocation of 108 JP. Each stage is designed based on the principles of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and Meaningful Learning, including: (1) Opening & Initial Assessment; (2) Group Formation & Design; (3) Democracy Seminar Preparation; (4) Seminar Implementation; (5) Evaluation & Visit Planning; (6) Visit to KPU/BAWASLU; (7) “Smart Young Voters” Campaign Design; (8) Campaign Product Finalization; and (9) Campaign Exhibition & Reflection.
Social Systems	The model fosters a democratic and collaborative atmosphere in the classroom. The teacher is a facilitator, while students form heterogeneous groups and actively participate in every project stage. Cross-subject collaboration and institutional support from the school are also essential components of the social system.
Reaction Principles	Teachers must provide constructive, dialogue-based responses and encourage student reflection and argumentation. Emphasis is placed on valuing critical thinking, active engagement, and inclusive attitudes in all activities.
Support System	The successful implementation of the model is supported by various tools and policies, such as: (a) PjBL-based digital modules and teaching materials with the theme “Suara Demokrasi”; (b) teacher training focused on facilitating democratic learning; (c) flexible time structures in the Merdeka Curriculum; and (d) collaboration with external institutions such as the KPU and Bawaslu in the form of visits and mentoring.
Instructional Impact (OUTPUT)	Directly, this model produces learning outcomes in the form of: (a) student understanding of the democratic system and the role of citizens; (b) critical thinking and argumentative communication skills; (c) cross-group collaboration skills; and (d) increased teacher competence in designing and facilitating project-based thematic learning.
Companion Impact (OUTCOME)	In the medium to long term, the In-DEMO model contributes to: (a) the formation of a democratic culture in schools; (b) increasing students’ political awareness and social responsibility; (c) strengthening the character of the Pancasila Student Profile, such as critical thinking, mutual cooperation, and global diversity; and (d) increasing the effectiveness of collaboration between teachers and the capacity of school management in implementing the Independent Curriculum thematically and across disciplines..

Validation and Practicality of In-DEMO Model

To ensure the feasibility of implementing the In-DEMO model in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) with the theme “Suara Demokrasi”, an expert validation process and practicality test were conducted. Validation aims to assess the feasibility of the model’s content and structure, as well as its compliance with the Merdeka Curriculum policy. Practicality measures the extent to which the model can be implemented in real life by teachers and accepted by students in the classroom. Expert validation was conducted by three experts in civic education, curriculum, and school practitioners. The validation results showed that the In-DEMO model was highly valid with an average score of 3,5 (87 %). Aspects such as compliance with the objectives of democratic education, clarity of syntax, and integration of components received high scores. The results of the expert validation of the In-DEMO model are presented in detail in table 2.

Table 2. Expert Validation Results of the In-DEMO Model

No.	Rated aspect	Average Score (1-4)	Percentage (%)	Qualification
1	Conformity to the goals of democratic education	3,6	90 %	Very Valid
2	Clarity of model syntax	3,5	87,5 %	Very Valid
3	Integration of model components	3,4	85 %	Very Valid
4	Relevance to the Independent Curriculum	3,5	87,5 %	Very Valid
5	Feasibility of implementation in schools	3,5	87,5 %	Very Valid
	Total Average	3,5	87 %	Very Valid

The practicality test was conducted in a limited trial at a public high school in Padang City. Six teachers and 30 students were involved to assess the model's practicality. The results showed that the In-DEMO model received a very positive response, with an average score of 85 % from teachers and 82 % from students. All aspects were deemed practical or very practical, particularly regarding the clarity of the activity flow and the relevance of the activities to the topic of democracy. The results of the In-DEMO model practicality test from the perspective of teachers and students can be seen in table 3.

No.	Practicality Aspect	Teachers (%)	Students (%)	Qualifications
1	Ease of understanding the implementation guide	85 %	80 %	Practical
2	Clarity of objectives and flow of activities	88 %	83 %	Practical
3	Relevance of activities to the topic of democracy	87 %	84 %	Very Practical
4	Participant involvement in the project	82 %	83 %	Practical
5	Possible adaptation by school	84 %	*	Practical
	Total Average	85 %	82 %	Very Practical

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), specifically with the theme “Suara Demokrasi,” at SMA Negeri 7 Padang still faces various challenges reflecting the gap between central-level policy objectives and the reality of implementation in schools. The three most prominent systemic barriers are limited teacher competency, low student participation, and weak program management.

Regarding teacher competency, the research results indicate that the training provided is still general and does not address thematic pedagogical aspects, particularly those related to democracy education. This limitation impacts teachers' limited ability to design participatory and reflective learning. This finding aligns with Anderson⁽⁴²⁾ and Schulz et al.,⁽⁴³⁾ who emphasize that the effectiveness of civics education is determined not by the delivery of material alone, but by the teacher's capacity to facilitate students' critical engagement.

Regarding student participation, involvement in the project is primarily dominated by students with strong communication skills, while most students remain passive observers. Activities such as debates and election simulations tend to be elitist and non-inclusive. This contradicts the principles of participatory democracy, which emphasize the importance of direct and equitable experiences for all students.⁽³⁰⁾ Furthermore, the short implementation time and lack of integration of activities into the daily curriculum led some students to view the project as an additional burden. This situation risks turning democratic education into a mere formality, as criticized by Biesta⁽⁴⁴⁾ through the concept of learnification, where education becomes mired in activities without meaningful value engagement.

Program management at the school level has also been ineffective. Teacher assignments for the P5 project are often based on administrative considerations such as rotation systems or vacant teaching hours rather than thematic competencies or pedagogical readiness. This mismatch results in low motivation and low effectiveness of project implementation. These findings support the arguments of Gomez et al.⁽⁴⁵⁾ and Human Resource Alignment theory,⁽⁴⁶⁾ that the success of educational reform depends heavily on the alignment between individual competencies and assigned assignments.

In response to these challenges, this research developed the Inclusive Democracy Education Model (In-DEMO). This conceptual framework integrates three complementary learning approaches: Project-Based Learning (PjBL), Ausubel's Meaningful Learning, and Freire's Transformative Learning. The PjBL approach encourages active student participation through collaborative engagement on real-world civic issues.⁽⁹⁾ Meanwhile, the Meaningful Learning principle enables students to construct new understandings by linking learning experiences to existing knowledge structures,⁽⁴⁰⁾ such as through election simulations, visits to the General Elections Commission (KPU), and digital campaigns. The Transformative Learning approach encourages critical awareness and social action, enabling students not only to understand the concept of democracy theoretically but also to actively reflect on their socio-political conditions.^(38,47)

Integrating these three approaches within the Merdeka Curriculum framework results in a contextual and flexible learning model, oriented toward strengthening student character per the Pancasila Student profile. This approach aligns with the views of Darling-Hammond et al.,⁽⁴⁸⁾ which states that curriculum decentralization will only be effective if accompanied by strengthening teacher professional capacity and an adaptive school governance system. Thus, the In-DEMO model can serve as a pedagogical bridge between the grand vision of national policy and transformative classroom practices.

Experts' validation of the In-DEMO model yielded an average score of 87 %, which falls into the “very valid”

category. Aspects assessed included clarity of syntax, integration between components, and alignment with the goals of democratic education. Practicality testing was conducted through a limited trial in a public high school in Padang City, involving six teachers and thirty students, with positive results: 85 % of teachers and 82 % of students stated that the model was practical. Teachers reported that the module was easy to use, relevant to the school context, and able to increase student interest and engagement in democratic issues.^(49,50)

Although the initial results are promising, several limitations in this study must be acknowledged. First, the practicality test was only conducted in one school with a limited number of participants, so the generalizability of the results needs to be limited. Second, the implementation duration was relatively short and does not allow for evaluation of the long-term impact on students' civic competence. Third, the successful implementation of this model is highly dependent on systemic support, including ongoing teacher training, the availability of digital learning resources, and competency-based teacher assignment policies. As Barber et al.⁽⁵¹⁾ emphasized, educational innovation will not have a significant impact without a strong and collaborative learning ecosystem. Therefore, the In-DEMO model can be a conceptual and practical solution to strengthen transformative democratic education in schools, as long as it is supported by policy and institutional commitment at various levels.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that the implementation of P5 on the theme “Suara Demokrasi” in secondary schools faces serious obstacles, particularly in terms of teacher competency, non-inclusive student engagement, and non-competency-based program management. These gaps hamper the goal of participatory and meaningful democratic education. The In-DEMO model was developed as a solution, integrating Project-Based Learning, Meaningful Learning, and Transformative Learning approaches within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. Validation and practical testing results demonstrate that this model is feasible and effective in improving students' political literacy and strengthening teachers' capacity. These findings underscore the importance of contextual, collaborative, and inclusive democratic learning design. In-DEMO provides conceptual and practical contributions to strengthening democratic education in schools and encourages the need for more adaptive policy support and teacher training.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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