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The Impact of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project on Political Literacy and Civic Knowledge among Senior High School Students

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Abstract. Students' understanding of political literacy and civic knowledge remains relatively low, as observed among 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Takalar. This low level of understanding highlights the need for more contextual and character-oriented learning strategies. This study aims to examine how the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) can improve students' political literacy and civic knowledge. It also seeks to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in the project's implementation, analyze the implications for students' understanding, and propose solutions to the identified challenges, particularly by focusing on the enhancement of critical thinking dimensions. The research employed a mixed methods approach with a qualitativedominant emphasis. Data were collected through questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documentation. Quantitative respondents were selected via simple random sampling, while qualitative informants were chosen purposively. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, and quantitatively through verification and percentage analysis of the questionnaire data. The findings indicate that the implementation of P5 significantly contributes to improving students' understanding of political systems, their ability to analyze political information, and their engagement with social and political issues. Furthermore, the project enhances students' critical thinking, argumentation, and collaboration skills. In conclusion, P5 proves to be an effective approach in enhancing political literacy and civic knowledge while also fostering active and reflective citizenship among students.

Keywords: Pancasila Student Profile Project; Political Literacy; Civic Knowledge; Critical Thinking; Students

INTRODUCTION

In response to the challenges of globalization and the complexities of modern society, Indonesia's educational reform through the *Merdeka Curriculum* has introduced the "Pancasila Student Profile" as a core framework for character education (Ananda, 2024; Anfar, 2024; Suardi, 2023, 2024). This profile seeks to foster a generation of students who are faithful, devoted, independent, critical thinking, creative, collaborative, and globally minded (Rifki et al., 2024; Wahyuni et al., 2024). One of the strategic instruments for implementing this vision is the *Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project* (P5), which integrates project-based learning approaches to reinforce national values (Solehuddin et al., 2024; Suwandi et al., 2025).

Among the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile, critical thinking is considered fundamental, as it serves as the cornerstone for citizens' participation in modern democratic societies (Munir et al., 2024; Wahyuni et al., 2024). Critical thinking skills are essential for understanding, evaluating, and making informed decisions on socio-political issues (Grayson,



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2024; Keegan, 2021; Thusi & Harley, 2020). However, several studies have highlighted that Indonesian students' political literacy and civic knowledge remain inadequate, resulting in limited political participation and weak evaluative skills regarding political information (Geers et al., 2020; Reichert, 2022).

Political literacy refers to the competencies necessary to understand political processes, governmental structures, and civic rights and responsibilities (Eriksen, 2020; Karolčík et al., 2025). As the flow of digital media and information accelerates, new challenges such as misinformation and political disinformation arise, shaping the cognitive landscape of the younger generation (Austin et al., 2020; Chang et al., 2020; Hameleers, 2022). Thus, strengthening critical thinking through the integration of political literacy and civic knowledge becomes a relevant pedagogical focus in schools.

Civic knowledge, as a key component of civic education, encompasses the understanding of legal systems, political institutions, and democratic values (Alscher et al., 2022; Luengo-Kanacri et al., 2023; Reichert, 2022). Enhancing civic knowledge correlates positively with increased trust in institutions, community involvement, and adherence to social norms (Gómez & Suárez, 2023; Sampermans et al., 2021). Project-based learning has been recognized as an effective strategy to contextualize civic knowledge through experiential activities, critical reflection, and open discussions (Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2023; Jansa et al., 2024; Pangalila et al., 2024).

Existing literature also supports that systematic implementation of P5 can cultivate reflective thinking and deepen students' national awareness (Benawa et al., 2024; Nur Hakim et al., 2024). P5 provides students with opportunities to engage in real-world problem-solving, develop empathy, and understand diverse social and political perspectives (Duboc & Ferraz, 2020; Gentry et al., 2024; Obermaier et al., 2025). In this context, political literacy and civic knowledge are not merely cognitive constructs but part of an ongoing internalization of national values (Crampton & Lewis, 2020; Siani et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2024).

This study aims to examine the implementation of the *Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project* (P5) in improving political literacy and civic knowledge among 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Takalar. The focus is directed toward evaluating the project's effectiveness in fostering critical thinking skills, while also identifying the supporting and constraining factors in its implementation. This inquiry is essential to reinforce both theoretical and empirical foundations for character education development grounded in Pancasila values within Indonesian schools.



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RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a mixed methods approach using a sequential exploratory design that systematically integrates qualitative and quantitative methods. This strategy was chosen to gain an in-depth contextual contextual understanding of the social phenomena surrounding the enhancement of political literacy and civic knowledge through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) (Gómez & Suárez, 2023; Luengo-Kanacri et al., 2023). The research began with qualitative data collection to obtain in-depth contextual insights, followed by quantitative data collection to measure and statistically validate the initial findings (Alscher et al., 2022; Reichert, 2022).

The quantitative sample was selected using simple random sampling from the population of 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Takalar, while the qualitative informants were selected using purposive sampling, including teachers, the school principal, and actively involved students (Benawa et al., 2024; Suwandi et al., 2025). Data collection methods included closed and openended questionnaires, participant observation, in-depth interviews, and project documentation (Nur Hakim et al., 2024; Solehuddin et al., 2024).

The questionnaires and interview guides were developed using a framework that encompasses the dimensions of political literacy and civic knowledge (Chang et al., 2020; Hameleers, 2022; Karolčík et al., 2025). Content validity was established through expert judgment, and reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha (Rachman et al., 2024; Wahyuni et al., 2024).

Qualitative data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, following the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2023; Crampton & Lewis, 2020). Meanwhile, quantitative data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using statistical software to assess distributions, means, and the significance of relationships between variables (Eriksen, 2020; Geers et al., 2020; Jang & Baek, 2024).

This comprehensive and contextualized methodological approach was designed to effectively evaluate the implementation of P5 (Nur Hakim et al., 2024; Obermaier et al., 2025; Pangalila et al., 2024). By integrating diverse data collection and analysis techniques, the study aims to generate both empirical evidence and practical insights for strengthening political literacy and civic knowledge in the school context.

RESULT

The implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), with its emphasis on the critical thinking dimension, had a significant positive impact on political literacy



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and civic knowledge among 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Takalar. This focus enabled students to develop analytical thinking skills related to socio-political issues and enhanced their engagement in civic life (Munir et al., 2024; Wahyuni et al., 2024).

Political Literacy Analysis

The P5 initiative made a substantial contribution to enhancing students' political literacy, particularly in their understanding of the political system, analytical skills in evaluating political information, and active participation in discussions. Political literacy serves as a foundation for democratic participation by enabling students to comprehend the relationships between government, society, and their own roles as citizens (Thusi & Harley, 2020; Whatley et al., 2020).

Firstly, students exhibited a marked improvement in understanding political systems after participating in P5 activities. They demonstrated greater ability to connect Pancasila values to the dynamics of national and civic life, which aligns with previous findings indicating that strengthening national values through project-based learning deepens students' societal awareness (Nur Hakim et al., 2024; Rifki et al., 2024).

Secondly, students showed increased ability to critically evaluate political information. They became more discerning when consuming media content, especially amidst the rise of political disinformation (Ardèvol-Abreu et al., 2024; Čábyová & Javořík, 2024). This skill is essential for navigating the digital landscape and reflects the growing importance of political-digital literacy in the information age (Guess & Munger, 2023; Zhang et al., 2024).

Civic Knowledge Analysis

Civic knowledge was analyzed through three key indicators: understanding socio-political issues, argumentative skills, and collaboration. All three areas showed significant improvement throughout the implementation of P5. Students demonstrated a stronger grasp of contemporary issues through class discussions and community observation, illustrating how contextualized education helps them link civic theory to real-world realities (Gómez & Suárez, 2023; Luengo-Kanacri et al., 2023).

Their argumentation skills improved through structured debates and group discussions, where they were encouraged to construct logical arguments and articulate their perspectives. These practices fostered critical thinking and promoted a culture of democratic dialogue (Brodie-McKenzie, 2020; Eriksen, 2020; Keegan, 2021). In terms of collaboration, P5 encouraged students to work in teams, co-design projects, and collectively address challenges. These activities



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cultivated a spirit of cooperation and constructive conflict resolution, reinforcing communal values and collaborative problem-solving (Benawa et al., 2024; Siswanto et al., 2024).

DISCUSSION

The integration of project-based learning and critical thinking in P5 strategically supported the development of political literacy and civic knowledge through contextual learning experiences that actively engaged students (Alexandropoulos, 2023; Munir et al., 2024). This approach not only deepened students' understanding of socio-political information but also shaped their reflective thinking toward public issues (Keegan, 2021; Lowery, 2023).

Project-based civic education, such as P5, has been shown to enhance both the cognitive and affective competencies of students, including the ability to critically assess information (Chang et al., 2020; Wahyuni et al., 2024). These competencies are particularly important in the face of widespread disinformation and political polarization, where strong political literacy serves as a democratic safeguard (Guess & Munger, 2023; Hameleers, 2022).

Student engagement in P5 is aligned with participatory theories in civic education, which emphasize the development of civic engagement and deliberative skills (Alscher et al., 2022; Gómez & Suárez, 2023). Activities such as open classroom discussions, social-issue-based projects, and collaborative experiences were effective in enhancing civic understanding and fostering empathy (Carrasco et al., 2020; Sinclair et al., 2023).

Moreover, critical thinking has a positive correlation with civic efficacy students' confidence in their ability to contribute to societal change (Luengo-Kanacri et al., 2023; Obermaier et al., 2025). When students are equipped to critically assess information, they become more responsive to social-political phenomena and resilient against media manipulation (Bonnet & Rosenbaum, 2020; Daunt et al., 2023).

The implementation of P5 strengthened the link between critical thinking, digital literacy, and civic participation (Geers et al., 2020; Harden & Harden, 2020). Moreover, the experiential model of learning accelerated the development of character and mutual cooperation, in alignment with the values embedded in the Pancasila Student Profile (Solehuddin et al., 2024; Suwandi et al., 2025).

Strategically, P5 presents an opportunity to integrate constitutional values and 21st-century skills such as collaboration, communication, and creativity into school curricula (Nur Hakim et al., 2024; Rachman et al., 2024). This integration is especially urgent given the persistently low levels of political literacy and civic knowledge among Indonesian youth (Erawati, 2020; Mardhiah et al., 2024).



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Globally, the integration of political and digital literacy in education is recognized as vital for protecting students against misinformation and political bias (Ardèvol-Abreu et al., 2024; Jang & Baek, 2024; Peyton, 2021). Therefore, P5 represents a pedagogical response well-suited to address the challenges of contemporary democracy (Karolčík et al., 2025; Pointer, 2023). In sum, the structured project-based learning approach in P5 not only strengthens students' cognitive competencies in understanding socio-political dynamics but also instills participatory, critical, and reflective values fundamental to modern civic education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions, it can be concluded that the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) contributes significantly to improving political literacy and civic knowledge of high school students through a project-based learning approach that emphasizes the dimension of critical reasoning. P5 not only improves students' understanding of the political system and social issues, but also strengthens the ability to think critically, argue, collaborate, and participate actively in society. This approach provides space for students to become active subjects in learning, by forming the reflective mindset and democratic attitude needed in the life of the nation and state. Strengthening the character and values of Pancasila through P5 activities has proven to be able to create a learning environment that is contextual, inclusive, and relevant to the needs of contemporary society.

The implications of these findings encourage the importance of implementing P5 more systematically in the Merdeka Learning curriculum as an effective strategy in shaping students who are cognitively, socially, and morally resilient. Thus, P5 can be an important foundation for the formation of young generations who are capable of political literacy and empowered in 21st-century civic life.

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