

Recontextualizing Pancasila and Civic Education in Political Science Education: The Formation of Students' Democratic Literacy

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Abstract:

This article examines the repositioning of Pancasila and Civic Education within Political Science education, particularly in relation to the development of students' democratic literacy. In higher education, civic education is often delivered as a normative subject that emphasizes value transmission rather than critical political understanding. Such an approach risks reducing Pancasila to a static doctrine, detached from contemporary democratic realities faced by students. Using a qualitative approach based on critical literature review and conceptual analysis, this study draws on recent discussions in civic education, political literacy, and ideological education in Indonesia. The analysis shows that Pancasila education has significant potential to foster democratic literacy when it is taught as a reflective and dialogical learning process that engages students with real political issues, democratic practices, and digital public spaces. However, this potential remains underutilized due to the dominance of instructional and doctrinal teaching models in higher education. This study argues that Pancasila and Civic Education should be reoriented as a critical component of Political Science education, contributing not only to moral formation but also to the development of politically literate and democratically engaged citizens.

Keywords: *Pancasila education, civic education, democratic literacy, political science education*

Abstrak:

Artikel ini mengkaji penempatan ulang Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan dalam pendidikan Ilmu Politik, khususnya dalam kaitannya dengan pembentukan literasi demokrasi mahasiswa. Di perguruan tinggi, pendidikan kewarganegaraan masih sering diposisikan sebagai mata kuliah normatif yang berfokus pada penanaman nilai, bukan pada pengembangan pemahaman politik yang kritis. Pendekatan semacam ini berpotensi menjadikan Pancasila sekadar doktrin yang terlepas dari realitas demokrasi yang dihadapi mahasiswa dalam kehidupan sosial dan politik sehari-hari. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui telaah literatur kritis dan analisis konseptual dengan merujuk pada kajian mutakhir tentang pendidikan kewarganegaraan, literasi politik, dan pendidikan ideologi di Indonesia. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan Pancasila memiliki potensi besar dalam membentuk literasi demokrasi apabila dipahami sebagai proses pembelajaran reflektif dan dialogis yang mengaitkan nilai-nilai Pancasila dengan praktik demokrasi, isu politik aktual, dan ruang publik digital. Namun, potensi tersebut belum dimanfaatkan secara optimal karena kuatnya model pembelajaran yang bersifat instruksional dan doktrinal di perguruan tinggi. Artikel ini menegaskan perlunya reorientasi Pendidikan Pancasila sebagai bagian integral dari pendidikan Ilmu Politik untuk membentuk warga negara yang tidak hanya bermoral, tetapi juga sadar politik dan terlibat secara demokratis.

Kata Kunci: *pendidikan Pancasila, pendidikan kewarganegaraan, literasi demokrasi, ilmu politik*

INTRODUCTION

Pancasila occupies a central position in the Indonesian political and constitutional system as the philosophical foundation of the state and the normative basis of national identity. Within the national education system, Pancasila and Civic Education has historically functioned as a strategic instrument for strengthening civic responsibility and national cohesion. However, in the context of higher education, particularly in Political Science programs, the relevance and implementation of Pancasila education continue to be debated. In many universities, civic education is still delivered as a normative subject that prioritizes value transmission and memorization rather than fostering critical political engagement and democratic reflection. Such an approach risks reducing Pancasila into a symbolic doctrine detached from contemporary democratic challenges faced by university students.

Recent democratic developments in Indonesia reveal complex political dynamics characterized by political polarization, identity based political contestation, and fluctuating public trust toward democratic institutions. These challenges demand universities to play a more strategic role in preparing students who possess democratic literacy and critical political awareness. Civic education, therefore, should not only function as moral education but must also encourage students to interpret political realities and actively participate in democratic processes. Studies show that civic education contributes significantly to the formation of political awareness and participatory citizenship among students (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Furthermore, research indicates that civic education in higher education can strengthen political culture and digital political literacy among young citizens, particularly in the context of contemporary democratic participation (Muhajir et al., 2025).

In the Indonesian context, Pancasila education is frequently positioned as ideological education aimed at strengthening national identity and social cohesion. Scholars argue that Pancasila represents a living ideology that must continuously be reinterpreted in response to socio political transformation (Kaelan, 2016). Similarly, Asshiddiqie (2015) explains that Pancasila serves as a constitutional and philosophical framework for Indonesian democracy that should be reflected in educational practices. However, empirical studies on Pancasila education tend to focus predominantly on curriculum implementation at the primary and secondary education levels. Research that specifically examines the integration of Pancasila education within Political Science education remains relatively limited.

Several recent studies demonstrate the growing importance of civic literacy and democratic education within contemporary educational discourse. The development of civic literacy through civic education courses has been shown to strengthen students' civic responsibility and democratic engagement (Sukmayadi et al., 2025). In addition, democratic education grounded in Pancasila values is considered essential in addressing democratic regression and strengthening civil society participation in Indonesia (Pratiwi et al., 2025). Despite these contributions, limited attention has been given to how Political Science education can integrate Pancasila based civic education as a critical framework for developing democratic literacy.

This limitation indicates a significant research gap. Political Science education ideally equips students with theoretical and analytical tools to understand political structures, governance systems, and democratic participation. However, the intersection between Political Science education and Pancasila based civic education has not been

explored extensively. Without critical integration between these domains, civic education risks remaining peripheral within Political Science curricula and failing to contribute effectively to the formation of democratic citizens.

Therefore, this study aims to recontextualize Pancasila and Civic Education within Political Science education by examining its role in developing democratic literacy among university students. This research seeks to contribute to the theoretical development of civic education discourse while offering practical insights for transforming Pancasila learning approaches in higher education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a critical literature review and conceptual analysis as its primary methodological framework. The qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the research focuses on examining ideas, concepts, and theoretical debates surrounding Pancasila and Civic Education within Political Science education, rather than measuring variables or testing statistical relationships.

Data sources in this study consist of academic journal articles, scholarly books, policy documents, and relevant media publications related to civic education, democratic literacy, and Pancasila education in higher education. Priority is given to peer reviewed journal articles published within the last five years in order to ensure the relevance and currency of the analysis. In addition, selected media articles are used to contextualize contemporary democratic challenges and public discourse related to civic engagement and political participation among university students.

The data collection process was conducted through systematic identification and selection of relevant literature using academic databases and journal platforms. The selected sources were reviewed critically to identify dominant themes, conceptual frameworks, and patterns of argumentation regarding the role of civic education and Pancasila in democratic citizenship development. This process allowed the researcher to map existing perspectives while identifying gaps in current research, particularly in relation to Political Science education.

Data analysis was carried out through thematic and interpretative analysis. The literature was analyzed by categorizing key concepts such as democratic literacy, political awareness, civic participation, and ideological education. These categories were then examined in relation to the objectives of Political Science education to assess how Pancasila and Civic Education can be recontextualized as a critical component of political learning. The analysis emphasizes interpretation and synthesis rather than mere description, enabling the development of a reflective and analytical argument.

To ensure the credibility of the study, the analysis is grounded in established theories of civic education and supported by recent empirical findings from previous research. By combining critical interpretation with systematic literature analysis, this study seeks to provide a rigorous and meaningful contribution to the discourse on Pancasila education and democratic literacy in higher education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Democratic Literacy as a Core Outcome of Pancasila and Civic Education

The analysis of relevant literature shows that democratic literacy emerges as a central outcome of effective Pancasila and Civic Education in higher education.

Democratic literacy goes beyond procedural knowledge of democracy, such as understanding elections or governmental institutions. It also includes the capacity to critically interpret political events, evaluate public policies, and reflect on the ethical dimensions of political decision making. In this sense, democratic literacy represents a combination of political knowledge, critical reasoning, and civic responsibility.

Studies on civic education emphasize that democratic citizenship cannot be formed solely through moral instruction or value transmission. Instead, it requires learning processes that expose students to political dilemmas, democratic debates, and real public issues (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Research conducted in Indonesian higher education contexts indicates that Pancasila education can contribute to the development of such competencies when it is framed as civic learning rather than ideological indoctrination (Muhajir et al., 2025).

Furthermore, civic literacy has been identified as a key component of democratic literacy. Civic literacy enables students to understand their rights and obligations as citizens while developing awareness of their role within democratic systems. Sukmayadi et al. (2025) argue that civic education courses in universities play an important role in shaping students' civic responsibility and participatory attitudes. These findings suggest that Pancasila and Civic Education has the potential to strengthen democratic literacy when learning objectives are aligned with the analytical goals of Political Science education.

However, the literature also indicates that the realization of democratic literacy through Pancasila education is highly dependent on pedagogical orientation. When learning emphasizes discussion, reflection, and contextual analysis, students demonstrate higher levels of political awareness and democratic engagement. Conversely, when learning remains procedural and text based, democratic literacy tends to develop only at a superficial level.

Normative and Doctrinal Tendencies in Pancasila Learning Practices

Despite its strategic potential, the findings reveal persistent normative tendencies in the implementation of Pancasila education at the university level. Many studies report that Pancasila courses are still dominated by instructional teaching models that prioritize memorization of ideological concepts, historical narratives, and formal definitions. This approach positions students as passive recipients of knowledge rather than active participants in political learning.

Kaelan (2016) notes that Pancasila education often emphasizes ideological preservation rather than critical reinterpretation. As a result, Pancasila is frequently presented as a static doctrine that must be accepted rather than questioned or contextualized. This pedagogical orientation limits students' opportunities to critically examine how Pancasila values are implemented in contemporary political practices, including governance, public policy, and democratic institutions.

The dominance of normative learning also affects students' perception of Pancasila education. Several studies indicate that students tend to view Pancasila courses as formal requirements rather than as meaningful spaces for political reflection. This perception weakens the relevance of Pancasila education within Political Science programs, which are expected to cultivate analytical skills and critical perspectives on power relations and democratic processes.

Moreover, doctrinal approaches risk creating a disconnect between ideological education and political reality. When Pancasila is taught without engaging with current socio political challenges, such as political polarization or democratic regression, students may struggle to see its relevance in contemporary democratic life. This condition

reinforces the argument that normative teaching models constrain the transformative capacity of Pancasila education in higher education.

Digital Political Culture and the Transformation of Student Participation

Another significant finding concerns the transformation of political participation among university students in the context of digital political culture. The literature consistently highlights that digital media has become a central arena for political communication, information exchange, and civic engagement among young citizens. Students increasingly access political information, express opinions, and mobilize collective action through social media platforms and online networks.

This transformation has important implications for democratic literacy. Democratic participation in digital spaces requires not only political knowledge but also digital literacy, critical media awareness, and the ability to evaluate information credibility. Muhajir et al. (2025) demonstrate that integrating digital literacy into Pancasila education can strengthen students' political culture and democratic awareness, particularly among Generation Z students who are deeply embedded in digital environments.

However, the literature also warns that digital public spaces are characterized by misinformation, polarization, and emotional political discourse. Without adequate critical skills, students may become vulnerable to disinformation or adopt unreflective political attitudes. Therefore, democratic literacy in the digital era requires educational approaches that equip students with analytical tools to navigate digital political content responsibly.

These findings suggest that Pancasila and Civic Education must adapt to the realities of digital political culture. Integrating discussions on digital democracy, online civic engagement, and media ethics into Pancasila learning can enhance its relevance for contemporary students. Failure to address these dimensions risks marginalizing Pancasila education in the lived political experiences of university students.

Discussion

Democratic Literacy and the Repositioning of Pancasila Education in Political Science

The findings of this study indicate that democratic literacy should be understood as a central objective of Pancasila and Civic Education within Political Science programs. Democratic literacy is not limited to students' familiarity with democratic institutions or political procedures, but encompasses critical awareness, ethical judgment, and the capacity to participate responsibly in democratic life. From a Political Science perspective, this form of literacy is essential for enabling students to analyze power relations, governance practices, and the functioning of democratic institutions.

The results suggest that when Pancasila education is treated merely as a normative subject, its contribution to democratic literacy remains limited. This condition supports the argument advanced by civic education scholars that democratic learning must move beyond moral instruction toward critical engagement with political realities (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). In Political Science education, Pancasila should therefore function as an analytical framework that helps students interpret political phenomena through national values, rather than as a fixed ideological doctrine.

Repositioning Pancasila education in this manner allows it to complement core Political Science subjects such as political theory, comparative politics, and public policy. Instead of standing apart from disciplinary learning, Pancasila education can enrich students' understanding of democracy by grounding abstract political concepts in Indonesia's ideological and constitutional context. This integration strengthens the

relevance of Pancasila education within Political Science curricula and enhances its contribution to democratic literacy.

Normative Teaching Models and Their Implications for Democratic Learning

The persistence of normative and doctrinal teaching models represents a significant obstacle to the development of democratic literacy. The findings indicate that instructional approaches centered on memorization and unilateral value transmission limit students' capacity for critical reflection. Such approaches may ensure ideological compliance, but they do not adequately prepare students to engage with the complexities of democratic governance.

Kaelan (2016) argues that treating Pancasila as a static ideology undermines its role as a living set of values that must be interpreted in relation to social and political change. This observation is particularly relevant in higher education, where students are expected to develop analytical and critical thinking skills. When Pancasila education does not encourage debate or critical inquiry, it risks being perceived as disconnected from students' intellectual development.

From the perspective of Political Science education, this condition creates a mismatch between learning objectives and pedagogical practice. Political Science aims to cultivate critical thinkers who can question authority, analyze institutions, and assess policy outcomes. Normative teaching models in Pancasila education, however, often discourage questioning and dissent, thereby constraining democratic learning. This tension suggests the need for pedagogical transformation that aligns Pancasila education with the epistemological foundations of Political Science.

Pancasila as a Living Ideology and Democratic Practice

The discussion of Pancasila as a living ideology provides an important theoretical basis for reorienting civic education in higher education. As a living ideology, Pancasila is not merely a historical or symbolic foundation of the state, but a normative framework that must be continuously interpreted in response to contemporary challenges. Asshiddiqie (2015) emphasizes that Pancasila serves as a constitutional and philosophical guide for democratic governance, which implies its relevance for ongoing political analysis.

Interpreting Pancasila as a living ideology enables students to critically examine how its values are realized, contested, or even contradicted in political practice. This approach encourages students to engage with issues such as democratic accountability, social justice, and public participation from a value based yet critical perspective. In doing so, Pancasila education contributes to democratic literacy by linking normative ideals with empirical political realities.

Moreover, this perspective allows Pancasila education to address tensions and contradictions within Indonesian democracy without abandoning its ideological foundations. Rather than presenting Pancasila as an unquestionable doctrine, education can frame it as a critical reference point for evaluating democratic performance. Such an approach aligns with the analytical orientation of Political Science and supports the development of reflective democratic citizens.

Digital Political Culture and the Expansion of Democratic Literacy

The findings also highlight the growing importance of digital political culture in shaping students' democratic engagement. Digital media has transformed political participation by creating new spaces for discussion, mobilization, and expression. For university students, these digital spaces often represent their primary arena of political

engagement. Consequently, democratic literacy must now include the ability to navigate digital political environments critically and responsibly.

Research suggests that integrating digital literacy into civic education enhances students' political awareness and participatory competence (Muhajir et al., 2025; Sukmayadi et al., 2025). However, digital political culture also presents significant challenges, including misinformation, polarization, and the dominance of emotional discourse. Without critical guidance, students may struggle to evaluate political information or engage constructively in online debates.

In this context, Pancasila and Civic Education can play a strategic role by providing ethical and normative guidance for digital political participation. By linking Pancasila values with discussions on digital democracy, media ethics, and online civic engagement, education can help students develop a more reflective and responsible form of democratic participation. This integration expands the scope of democratic literacy to include both offline and online political practices.

Implications for Political Science Education and Curriculum Development

The discussion of these findings has important implications for Political Science education. First, it suggests that Pancasila and Civic Education should be repositioned as a core component of democratic learning rather than as a peripheral normative course. Second, it highlights the need for pedagogical innovation that emphasizes dialogue, critical inquiry, and contextual analysis.

Curriculum development in Political Science programs should therefore encourage closer integration between Pancasila education and disciplinary courses. Case based learning, issue oriented discussions, and analysis of contemporary political events can help bridge the gap between ideological education and political analysis. Such approaches not only enhance democratic literacy but also strengthen students' intellectual engagement with national values.

Ultimately, recontextualizing Pancasila and Civic Education within Political Science education contributes to the formation of politically literate graduates who are capable of engaging critically with democratic challenges. This outcome aligns with the broader objectives of higher education in supporting democratic citizenship and sustainable political development.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Pancasila and Civic Education holds significant potential in developing democratic literacy within Political Science education when it is positioned beyond a purely normative framework. Democratic literacy, as revealed in this analysis, encompasses not only knowledge of democratic institutions and values, but also critical political awareness, civic responsibility, and the capacity for meaningful participation in democratic processes. These competencies are essential for Political Science students who are expected to engage analytically with power relations, governance, and public policy.

However, the findings also indicate that the contribution of Pancasila education to democratic literacy remains constrained by the persistence of normative and doctrinal teaching models in higher education. When Pancasila is taught primarily as a fixed ideology and moral instruction, its relevance to contemporary political realities and democratic challenges becomes limited. This condition reduces its effectiveness as a component of Political Science education that should foster critical inquiry and reflective citizenship.

The study further highlights the importance of understanding Pancasila as a living

ideology that requires continuous reinterpretation in response to socio political transformation. In the context of digital political culture, democratic literacy must also incorporate digital literacy and critical media awareness. Without adapting to these developments, Pancasila education risks being disconnected from students' actual modes of political engagement.

Based on these findings, this study argues for the recontextualization of Pancasila and Civic Education as a critical and integrative element of Political Science education. Pedagogical approaches that emphasize dialogue, contextual analysis, and engagement with contemporary political issues are necessary to strengthen democratic literacy among students. This reorientation not only contributes to the theoretical development of civic education discourse, but also offers practical implications for curriculum development in higher education aimed at preparing politically literate and democratically engaged citizens.

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