



## Transforming Junior High Student Elections: The Impact of Pancasila Student Profile Projects on School Democracy

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### ABSTRACT

Conventional student council elections often function as mere formalities, failing to serve as practical laboratories for democratic engagement and character development. This study evaluates the transformation of student elections through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) at Junior High School 1 Polongbangkeng Utara. The research focuses on three key dimensions: student participation levels, the implementation of democratic principles, and the development of civic skills among candidates. Employing a descriptive qualitative methodology, the study engaged teachers, students, and candidate pairs as primary informants. Data were gathered through interviews, systematic observation, and documentation, followed by analysis using data condensation, visualization, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was established via source triangulation. The findings demonstrate that: student participation reached an "excellent" threshold under the P5 framework; core democratic principles—direct, general, free, confidential, honest, and fair—were rigorously integrated into the electoral process; and candidate pairs exhibited "excellent" civic competencies. This research concludes that embedding student elections within the P5 framework significantly enhances democratic citizenship competencies. It offers a scalable pedagogical model for educational institutions to transform routine administrative procedures into meaningful, value-driven character-building experiences. Consequently, this approach bridges the gap between theoretical civic education and practical democratic participation in a secondary school context.

**Keywords:** civic skills, junior high school, P5, student council election, school democracy

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### INTRODUCTION

National education is essentially a fundamental process that goes far beyond the mere transfer of knowledge [1], [2]. It is a deliberate effort to change the character and personality of students so that they become smart, critical, and good citizens. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System in Indonesia clearly states this mandate [3]. The law emphasizes that the goal of education is to develop students' potential to become people who are faithful, pious, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and, most crucially, become democratic and responsible citizens [4]. This goal establishes a philosophical foundation, emphasizing that schools are not just academic institutions, but rather "laboratories of democracy" that implement civic values [5]. However, creating a truly democratic school environment faces significant challenges, particularly in translating the abstract values of Pancasila into concrete, everyday student actions [6], [7]. Entering an era of disruption, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology is addressing the character challenge through the implementation of the Independent

Curriculum [8]. The main innovation in this curriculum is the development of the Pancasila Student Profile as a compass for 21st-century character education [9], [10]. This profile is not merely a slogan but rather a character-building orientation encompassing six main dimensions: faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character; global diversity; cooperation; independence; critical thinking; and creativity [11], [12], [13].

The development of the Pancasila Student Profile aims to create a fundamental balance between cognitive competence and social attitudes [14], [15]. In the specific context of junior high schools, where students are in the early adolescent phase and undergoing identity formation, the internalization of these values requires pedagogical methods that transcend traditional classroom lectures. Consequently, the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) was introduced as a strategic curricular intervention designed to provide cross-disciplinary experiential learning [16], [17]. Through the P5 framework, students are encouraged to observe and formulate solutions to real-world problems, particularly those concerning organizational governance and leadership within the school environment [18], [19].

Historically, the Intra-School Student Organization (OSIS) has served as the primary vehicle for student character development [20], [21]. As a vital instrument for fostering democratic attitudes, the election of the OSIS president is intended to function as a "miniature democracy," educating students on both the procedural and substantive mechanisms of democratic systems [22]. However, empirical evidence suggests a contradictory phenomenon where traditional OSIS elections often devolve into meaningless formalities [23], [24]. These practices are frequently mired in acute problems, including low political participation, the dominance of popularity-based politics over vision-mission quality, and a lack of procedural integrity that diminishes student trust in the democratic system.

This widening gap indicates that the ideal principles of LUBERJURDIL (Direct, General, Free, Confidential, Honest, and Fair), as stipulated in Law No. 7 of 2017, have not been fully realized at the educational unit level [25], [26]. In response to this crisis of democratic values, Junior High School 1 Polongbangkeng Utara implemented a transformative intervention by integrating OSIS leadership succession into the P5 co-curricular activity under the theme "Voices of Democracy." This integration transforms the election from an exclusive administrative event into a mass collaborative project. It evolves into a long-term learning series encompassing issue-based research, scientific oratory, and open debates, deliberately designed to address the dimensions of critical reasoning, cooperation, and global diversity.

The novelty of this research lies in its systemic shift of student elections from an extracurricular to a curricular status. While previous studies predominantly view OSIS elections as supplementary activities [20], [27], this study examines them as an integral component of the formal curriculum with structured learning outcomes and character assessment rubrics. Furthermore, this study offers a Holistic Impact Approach, moving beyond mere participation metrics to analyze how the P5 process fundamentally reshapes school democratic culture. It empirically validates the LUBERJURDIL principles within a pedagogical context, demonstrating how a scientific electoral phase can eliminate popularity bias and fraudulent practices, thereby establishing a new standard for democratic pedagogy.

The significance of this study is underscored by its potential to provide an innovative model for democratic learning that is highly time-sensitive in the current educational landscape. By mapping the development of civic skills and dispositions through the P5 framework, this research serves as a critical reference for policy evaluation, particularly for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The findings offer "best practice" evidence that transforming routine school activities into value-driven projects can produce a generation that not only understands democratic theory but internalizes it as a lifestyle consistent with the spirit of Pancasila.

Building upon these considerations, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the transformation of school democracy. To guide this inquiry, the research addresses the following objectives: (1) to evaluate the impact of the P5 framework on student political participation levels; (2) to analyze the integration of democratic principles within the election process; and (3) to determine the extent to which this integrated model enhances the civic skills and democratic competencies of student candidates.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a qualitative approach with a comprehensive case study design. The qualitative approach was selected to facilitate a naturalistic analysis of the transformative impact of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) on students' democratic behavior. As a case study, this design allowed for an in-depth investigation of the Intra-School Student Organization (OSIS) presidential election at Junior High School 1 Polongbangkeng Utara as an integrated system. In this context, the researcher served as the key instrument, maintaining a presence in the field as a moderate participant observer. This involvement ensured a meticulous observation of the "Voice of Democracy" project cycle—from planning and vision-mission oratory to the final vote count—without compromising the students' independent political choices.

The study was strategically conducted at Junior High School 1 Polongbangkeng Utara, Takalar Regency. This site was selected using a purposeful sampling rationale, as the institution is a pioneer in comprehensively integrating OSIS elections into the P5 curriculum structure. The research timeline spanned the full cycle of the OSIS presidential election, encompassing three distinct stages: the preparation phase, the implementation phase, and the post-project evaluation phase. This temporal depth allowed the researcher to capture the longitudinal development of student character and democratic literacy throughout the intervention.

Research subjects and data sources were categorized into primary and secondary groups to ensure data richness. Primary data were obtained through direct engagement with informants selected via a purposive sampling technique. These subjects included the school principal (policy authority), the P5 coordinator, the OSIS advisor, the student election committee, OSIS chairperson candidates, and voter representatives from grades VII, VIII, and IX. Secondary data complemented these insights, consisting of formal curriculum documents, the "Voice of Democracy" Project Module, activity documentation, vote tally results, and student reflection logs compiled after the P5 implementation.

To ensure the depth of data collection, the study utilized a multifaceted triangulation technique. First, systematic observation was employed to monitor student activities during the P5 stages, specifically targeting indicators of critical reasoning during debates

and collaborative efforts during voting simulations. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore informants' perceptions regarding the paradigm shift in democracy before and after the P5 intervention. Third, a documentation study was performed by analyzing student project portfolios to evaluate the substantive depth of their understanding regarding the LUBERJURDIL (Direct, General, Free, Confidential, Honest, and Fair) principles.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which comprises three simultaneous activity streams [28]. The first stream, data condensation, involved selecting, simplifying, and transforming raw field notes and interview transcripts into focused summaries regarding P5's impact on school democracy. The second stream, data display, utilized descriptive narratives, comparative tables of democratic behavior, and matrices to visualize the achievement of the Pancasila Student Profile dimensions. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification were performed to formulate a definitive assessment of the effectiveness of the P5-based OSIS election transformation in fostering a healthy democratic culture.

To maintain the rigorous standards of qualitative validity and reliability, the researcher implemented three layers of verification. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing perspectives between students, teachers, and school leaders concerning the project's impact. Technical triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing interview data with direct observations of student behavior in the field. Lastly, a member check was performed, where initial findings were discussed with the informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations were accurately aligned with the actual experiences and social realities of the research subjects.

The student participation instrument in campaign activities was designed to measure active voter involvement in the early phase of school democracy. Observation data showed that participant competencies included awareness of the campaign schedule, in-depth attention to the issues raised, and providing motivation and moral support to the candidates. Furthermore, indicators of successful participation were evident in students' high concentration at the campaign location, enthusiasm in participating in all events, and their courage to openly voice their support without hesitation.

Entering the candidate debate phase, observation parameters were expanded to assess the depth of students' attention and critical interaction with the debate material presented. Participants were not only expected to be familiar with the schedule but also to be able to listen to the key points of each candidate and follow the entire debate process from beginning to end. The manifestation of student support during this phase became more dynamic, demonstrated through acts of encouragement, spontaneous applause, and even singing along with other supporters as a form of expression of joy in democracy.

In the core phase, voting, the focus of observation shifted to adherence to procedures and oversight of the integrity of the election process. Students were observed for their understanding of the technical rules of voting and their concern for ensuring that the organizing committee consistently enforced these rules. Prominent aspects of participation include enthusiastic participation in the vote count until the end, appreciation in the form of applause for candidates not chosen as a form of sportsmanship and continued moral support for the organizing committee.

Specifically, the assessment of candidate pairs focuses on mastery of civic skills, encompassing intellectual aspects and moral integrity. Each candidate is evaluated on their in-depth understanding of and commitment to the vision, mission, and proposed work programs, in addition to their ability to effectively communicate ideas to the audience. Furthermore, this instrument validates candidates' sportsmanship at every stage, integrity in accepting defeat, and possession of social, spiritual, and character intelligence that can be trusted as the foundation for accountable OSIS leadership.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The integration of the OSIS chairman election into the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) structure with the theme "Voice of Democracy" has empirically transformed school leadership succession into a substantive laboratory of democracy through three main pillars: experiential internalization of the LUBERJURDIL principle, achievement of high participation metrics through stimulating project-based learning models, and the development of in-depth civic skills for candidates. These findings confirm that curricular interventions for student organizations are effective in transforming administrative routines into measurable character-building processes, where the synergy between Pancasila values and field practice can reduce the rate of political apathy to below 1% while fostering accountable political ethics for the younger generation.

### 1. Transformation into a Laboratory of Democracy: Internalizing LUBERJURDIL

The integration of the OSIS presidential election into the P5 "Voice of Democracy" framework has successfully transformed the paradigm of school elections from a mere annual administrative routine into a substantive "laboratory of democracy". Research findings indicate that students did not merely learn about democracy theoretically but practiced it through the direct application of LUBERJURDIL (Direct, General, Free, Secret, Honest, and Fair) principles. Observations confirmed that students cast their ballots at polling stations (TPS) without intimidation, maintaining full confidentiality.

The integration of the Student Council (OSIS) presidential election into the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) with the theme "Voices of Democracy" at Junior High School 1 North

Polongbangkeng has fundamentally shifted the orientation of activities. Field observations indicate that the election process is no longer merely an annual administrative routine but has transformed into a substantive "laboratory of democracy" for students. Through the P5 framework, students not only cognitively learn democratic theory in the classroom but also actively engage in practicing it in a controlled, structured, and educational environment.

All stages of the election have consistently adhered to the principles of LUBERJURDIL (Direct, General, Free, Secret, Honest, and Fair), which align with national election standards. Observations indicate that freedom and security were fully maintained, with students casting their votes at polling stations (TPS) without pressure or intimidation from any party. The confidentiality of the vote was also guaranteed through the provision of representative voting booth infrastructure, while the integrity of the process was closely monitored by the committee to ensure honesty and fairness for each competing candidate pair.

The students' active involvement demonstrated a remarkable level of enthusiasm throughout every phase of the project, from the campaign stage to the open debate. During the debate sessions, students demonstrated critical participation by listening intently and taking notes on key points of the candidates' visions and missions. This successful participation was quantitatively reflected in the 99.50% attendance rate on election day, with only four students absent for medical reasons. For students in grades 7 through 9, this activity provided a meaningful first experience exercising their right to vote, creating a vibrant atmosphere of democratic celebration within the school environment.

Session 1: First Experiences and the Meaning of Voting

*Researcher: "How did you feel about participating in this year's student council president election, which was combined with the P5 project?"*

*Grade VII Student (Informant A): Honestly, sir, this is my first time voting. At first, I thought I was just being asked to choose, but because of the P5 project, we were taught how to look at the candidates' visions and missions. So, when I entered the voting booth, I felt like my vote was truly important for the school. It felt very meaningful because we weren't just watching but also participating in the decision-making process.*

*Grade VIII Student (Informant B): Last year there was an election too, but this year the atmosphere was very different. With the theme 'Voices of Democracy,' we felt more involved. I understand that democracy isn't just about winning or losing, but about how*

*we exercise our rights confidentially and freely without being pressured by our peers.*

Session 2: Atmosphere of Democracy Celebrations at School

*Researcher: "How did you see the atmosphere at school during this series of activities?"*

*Grade IX Student (Informant C): It was lively, sir! The atmosphere felt like a party or celebration. Especially during the debate yesterday, when the entire class gathered and we were free to ask questions of the candidates. There was no negative tension; in fact, we became closer, despite our differing choices. Election day was the climax, with everyone enthusiastically arriving at the polling stations.*

*P5 Coordinator (Informant D): We saw a vibrant atmosphere. The school was no longer rigid with classroom routines. The schoolyard had transformed into a center of democracy. The children were very enthusiastic, with attendance almost reaching 100 percent. This truly was a celebration of democracy for them.*

Session 3: Internalizing Values through Practice

*Researcher: "What do you remember most from the entire 'Voice of Democracy' series?"*

*Eighth Grade Student (Informant E): The moment at the polling station, sir. The line was long but orderly. We saw the committee working hard, and there were witnesses too. That made us believe that the results would be fair and just. This kind of hands-on experience was much more memorable than just reading a book about democracy in the library.*

In addition to mass participation, observations of the candidate pairs revealed significant development in their civic skills, with each achieving the "Excellent" category. The candidates demonstrated critical reasoning in formulating work programs relevant to school challenges and demonstrated improved public communication skills during public speaking. Furthermore, the values of sportsmanship and integrity shone through in the candidates' emotional maturity in accepting the election results, demonstrating a deep respect for the majority vote's decision as a foundation for the character of future leaders.

The successful internalization of democratic values in this study was driven by a paradigm shift toward experiential learning, where students' direct involvement in all stages of elections proved far more effective in shaping political awareness than traditional classroom instruction. These findings confirm that active engagement in structured election simulations allows students to contextualize democratic material within the real-world practice of citizenship within the school environment [29],

[30], [31]. This aligns with the principles of critical pedagogy, which state that substantive political education can only be achieved through empirical experiences that provide space for students to independently practice their rights and responsibilities [32], [33], [34], [35].

Academically, the results of this study reinforce the arguments of Fentarani and other scholars who assert that school organizational management that adopts national election standards provides students with a strategic understanding of the value of every vote in a democratic system [36]. By replicating accountable election mechanisms, schools successfully bridge the gap between civic theory and political reality, fostering more inclusive and sustainable political literacy. This study also validates the view that curricular interventions through small-scale simulation models are the most effective instrument for building strong civic dispositions before students enter broader roles in society [37], [38].

## 2. High Participation Metrics and the "Project" Stimulus

Quantitative data shows that student participation in the P5-based Student Council (OSIS) presidential election was categorized as "Very Good," with consistently high participation indices across three key areas: campaign (3.44), debate (3.57), and voting (3.56). The most significant finding was the voter turnout rate, which reached 99.50%, with only 0.50%, or four students, absent due to illness. This high participation rate demonstrates that the project-based learning model of the election stimulated far deeper engagement than conventional extracurricular formats. This aligns with student engagement theory, which states that a contextually designed and collaborative learning environment can significantly enhance students' motivation and civic responsibility [39], [40], [41].

The candidate debate stage, which achieved the highest score (3.57), confirmed that providing a structured dialectical space effectively stimulates students' critical reasoning. In this context, the school successfully implemented the concept of a "democracy laboratory," where students are not merely passive voters but also active participants, testing the candidates' ideas. These findings support Fentarani's previous study, which emphasized that school organizational management that adopts national election standards provides students with a strategic understanding of the value of each vote in determining leadership [36]. This curricular integration demonstrates that political education is most effective when delivered through hands-on experiences relevant to students' social environments.

Despite the very positive turnout, this study uncovered a classic challenge in democracy: the tendency of first-time voters to prioritize candidate popularity over the substance of their work programs. This weakness, coupled with the

perception of some students who still view these activities as administrative routines, suggests that procedural understanding does not always correlate directly with shifts in substantive political ethics. This situation confirms the view of experts that internalizing democratic values requires ongoing support to overcome the barriers of one-way socialization [42], [43]. Therefore, the strategic implication of these findings is the need to strengthen the connection between democratic materials and students' real-life experiences so that their political literacy does not stop at the technical stage of voting but rather penetrates deeper levels of civic responsibility.

## 3. Development of Substantive Civic Skills

The findings of this study confirm that the integration of the P5 project had a significant impact on the competency development of the OSIS (Student Council) presidential candidate pairs, as evidenced by their "Excellent" performance score of 3.67. This development included strengthening critical reasoning in formulating work programs, honing public communication skills through open debate, and internalizing sportsmanship in accepting election results as a form of respect for the majority vote. Theoretically, this achievement demonstrates that the transition from mere cognitive understanding to direct practice (experiential learning) enables students to internalize leadership values more substantially and deeply [44], [45].

The strength of the P5 model at Junior High School 1 Polongbengkeng Utara lies in its ability to provide a structured mentorship scheme that encourages candidates to interact intensively and meaningfully with peers to gain support. This reinforces the argument that the school organization serves as the most effective medium for cultivating civic dispositions before students enter the wider community [46]. Consistent with the views of education experts, leadership and democratic character do not develop organically through incidental activities but must be fostered through planned, systematic, and integrated curricular interventions within the school's learning ecosystem [47], [48].

Empirical evidence on the development of these skills validates previous research suggesting that the effectiveness of democracy education depends heavily on consistency between theory and practice. These results indicate that when the election of the Student Council (OSIS) president was elevated from an extracurricular activity to an integral part of the curriculum (through P5), there was a measurable increase in the quality of character output and civic skills. The implications of this study support the Merdeka Curriculum orientation, which asserts that the project to strengthen Pancasila student profiles can bridge the gap between procedural political literacy and accountable leadership ethics, thereby creating a model of

democratic pedagogy that can be replicated in other educational institutions [49].

#### 4. Implications and Contributions to Educational Policy

The transformation of the Student Council (OSIS) presidential election through the P5 framework at Junior High School 1 Polongbangkeng Utara demonstrates that leadership succession in schools can function beyond mere organizational procedures and serve as a meaningful political education initiative. The structural integration of the character-building project and student organizations has empirically reduced the rate of political apathy (golput) to below 1%. This achievement marks a significant milestone in first-time voter literacy, demonstrating that active participation can be dramatically increased through curriculum design that engages students emotionally and practically in the school's democratic ecosystem.

Theoretically, this study makes a vital contribution to the literature on the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka), particularly regarding the operationalization of the "Voice of Democracy" theme, which is often difficult to translate into concrete actions. The primary implication of these findings emphasizes that educational institutions should no longer view OSIS elections as merely extracurricular activities separate from the academic process. Instead, they must be integrated into the curriculum to ensure measurable and well-planned character development. This approach shifts the paradigm of schools from mere administrative implementers to facilitators of students' moral and political ethical development. By directly connecting democratic ethics to students' lived experiences, schools can ensure that political literacy reaches a substantive level, going beyond mere procedural technical understanding. This model fosters the emergence of a golden generation that views democracy as a responsible lifestyle, not merely a formal five-yearly obligation. Therefore, this study recommends the integration of P5 and OSIS as a new pedagogical standard in civic education, where Pancasila values are internalized through accountable, transparent, and inclusive leadership practices at the secondary school level.

#### CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of the OSIS chairman election into the structure of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) with the theme "Voice of Democracy" has empirically transformed school leadership succession from an administrative routine into a substantive "laboratory of democracy" through a paradigm shift towards experiential learning. The success of this model is reflected in three main achievements, namely the real internalization of the LUBERJURDIL principle, the achievement of exponential participation metrics of up to 99.50% which effectively suppress the political

apathy rate below 1%, and the significant development of civic skills for candidates through strengthening critical reasoning and moral integrity.

As a recommendation, it is recommended for educational units to standardize the integration of the OSIS chairman election into the P5 curriculum on an ongoing basis by strengthening substantive mentoring and the duration of dialogic campaigns to minimize the anomalies of first-time voters based on popularity. Educators and project coordinators need to design a more contextual "Voice of Democracy" module by increasing debate space to stimulate students' critical thinking, while the Education Office can adopt this model as a best practice for regional policies to improve political literacy and reduce the number of abstentions among the younger generation. Finally, further researchers are advised to conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term impact of this model on students' democratic behavior in society, as well as explore the use of e-voting technology that still prioritizes the principle of transparency within the framework of character education.

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