Published Version

Jurnal Konseling dan Pendidikan
Volume 13, Number 2 2025

Recontextualizing dewey's democracy and education in Indonesia's pancasila student profile program

Author Name(s): Marianus Tapung

Publication details, including author guidelines
URL: https://jurnal.konselingindonesia.com/index.php/jkp/about/submissions#authorGuidelines
Editor: Khairul Bariyyah

Article History
Received: 26 Jun 2025
Revised: 28 Jul 2025
Accepted: 2 Aug 2025

How to cite this article (APA)
Tapung, M. (2025). Recontextualizing dewey's democracy and education in Indonesia's pancasila student profile program. Jurnal Konseling dan Pendidikan. 13(2), 549-560. https://doi.org/10.29210/1149100

The readers can link to article via https://doi.org/10.29210/1149100

SCROLL DOWN TO READ THIS ARTICLE

We are Crossref Member

Indonesian Institute for Counseling, Education and Therapy (as publisher) makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications. However, we make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors and are not the views of or endorsed by Indonesian Institute for Counseling, Education and Therapy. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Indonesian Institute for Counseling, Education and Therapy shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to, or arising out of the use of the content.

Jurnal Konseling dan Pendidikan is published by Indonesian Institute for Counseling, Education and Therapy comply with the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing at all stages of the publication process. Jurnal Konseling dan Pendidikan also may contain links to web sites operated by other parties. These links are provided purely for educational purpose.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Copyright by Tapung, M. (2025).

The author(s) whose names are listed in this manuscript declared that they have NO affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest (such as honoraria; educational grants; participation in speakers' bureaus; membership, employment, consultancies, stock ownership, or other equity interest; and expert testimony or patent-licensing arrangements), or non-financial interest (such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or beliefs) in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript. This statement is signed by all the authors to indicate agreement that the all information in this article is true and correct.

Jurnal Konseling dan Pendidikan
ISSN 2337-6740 (Print) | ISSN 2337-6880 (Electronic)

ISSN 2733-6740 (Print)
ISSN 2733-6880 (Electronic)

Jurnal Konseling dan Pendidikan

Volume 13 Number 2 (2025)
https://doi.org/10.29210/1149100

Article

Recontextualizing dewey′s democracy and education in Indonesia′s pancasila student profile program

Marianus Tapung[*)]
Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the conceptual and practical tensions in implementing democratic education within Indonesia s Pancasila Student Profile (P5) program by recontextualizing John Dewey s theory of Democracy and Education. The research addresses the core problem of ideological and institutional misalignment between Dewey s participatory ideals and the hierarchical, norm-driven structures prevalent in Indonesian schools. Employing a qualitative literature-based approach, the study analyzes 43 selected primary and secondary sources published in the past five years using thematic categorization and interpretative analysis across three dimensions: socio-cultural, pedagogical, and institutional. Findings reveal critical gaps between the democratic ideals of student participation and the top-down school culture; between the goals of democratic education and the applied instructional strategies; and between policy ambitions and fragmented implementation. The study contributes theoretically by adapting Dewey s progressive educational thought to the collectivist, value-oriented context of Pancasila. Practically, it proposes policy recommendations such as teacher capacity development, institutional reform, and participatory learning environments. The research emphasizes that meaningful democratic education in Indonesia requires not only curriculum innovation but also systemic alignment between educational values, institutional structures, and cultural realities. This recontextualization offers insights for scholars, educators, and policymakers seeking to localize global educational theories within national ideological frameworks.

Keywords:

Democracy and education
John Dewey′s theory
Literature-based approach
Pancasila student profile
Strengthening project

Corresponding Author:

Marianus Tapung,
Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng
Email: marianustapung45@gmail.com

Introduction

Democracy is a political system that allows the people to have the same authority in government management (Dewey, 2024; Talpin, 2024). Democratic voices are essential to ensuring the sustainability of the democratic political system (Arisanti et al., 2024; Kirania et al., 2024). Pancasila is the basis of the Indonesian state, which is philosophical, systematic, and consistently open to citizens' contributions to the progress of their nation (Saptadi et al., 2024). The ideal of democratic education has long been discussed by philosophers and educational reformers, yet its practical implementation within national policy frameworks often remains fragmented and inconsistent (Fatmawati et al., 2024; Rosser et al., 2021; Widodo, 2024). In the Indonesian context, the effort to instill democratic values through education has taken form in the "Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project" (Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila/P5), a flagship program under the Independent Learning Curriculum (Nurislamiah et al., 2024; Prasetiyo et al., 2024; Y. D. S. Putri et al.,

2023). One of the thematic pillars of this initiative is "Voice of Democracy" (Suara Demokrasi), which aims to cultivate students' critical thinking, participation, and civic responsibility (Febriani et al., 2024). However, despite its noble intentions, the actual implementation of this theme across Indonesian schools reveals substantial conceptual and operational challenges. There exists a growing concern that the initiative, while rich in rhetoric, often lacks pedagogical depth, theoretical clarity, and coherent integration with students' lived educational experiences.

This study departs from the premise that democratic education cannot be reduced to procedural activities such as student council elections or classroom discussions. Instead, it requires a philosophical foundation that views democracy as both a social ethic and a mode of living. This vision is articulated by Dewey (1974), which emphasizes the importance of participatory learning, experiential knowledge, and community engagement as the core of democratic schooling. Dewey's perspective offers not only a normative but also a critical framework to examine whether programs like P5 genuinely contribute to the democratic character of Indonesian students, or whether they fall into the trap of performative compliance with national directives.

The central issue addressed in this article is the disconnection between the normative goals of the "Voice of Democracy" initiative and its pedagogical and philosophical underpinnings. While the policy text claims to promote democratic values grounded in Pancasila, it is unclear how these values are operationalized in a manner consistent with progressive democratic education theory. The core research problem, therefore, is: To what extent does the "Voice of Democracy" theme in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project align with Deweyan principles of democratic education, and what implications does this alignment (or lack thereof) have for cultivating substantive democratic competencies among students?

This issue is urgent for several reasons. First, Indonesia's democracy continues to face threats from political polarization, authoritarian populism, and civic disengagement. Educational institutions, as the primary arenas for shaping citizens, must address these challenges critically and reflectively. Second, the policy discourse surrounding P5 tends to conflate moral instruction with democratic education, ignoring the critical dimensions of dialogue, dissent, and participatory decision-making that Dewey considers essential. Third, the lack of theoretical grounding in most implementations of "Voice of Democracy" limits its transformative potential and reduces it to technical programming. Therefore, reinterpreting this initiative through Dewey's philosophical lens is both timely and necessary.

Previous studies on democratic education in Indonesia have largely focused on curriculum implementation and classroom practices (Agustina et al., 2022; Arianto, 2022; Zahrah et al., 2024). While valuable, these studies often lack a strong theoretical anchoring in the philosophy of democracy. Other research has examined character education through Pancasila values (Ciciria et al., 2022; Ulfah et al., 2023), but seldom interrogate whether these values are taught in ways that promote critical agency or participatory learning. Internationally, Dewey's works have been extensively explored in relation to civic education (Desjardins & Wiksten, 2022; Harkavy, 2023; Lee, 2021), but few studies attempt to localize his ideas within the Indonesian educational and ideological context. Thus, this article seeks to fill this conceptual gap by analyzing the "Voice of Democracy" theme through Dewey's progressive educational philosophy, and positioning it within the discourse of democratic citizenship formation in Indonesia.

The relevance of this research is twofold. Academically, it contributes to the theoretical refinement of democratic education in non-Western contexts by adapting Dewey's ideas to Indonesian educational policy. Practically, it offers reflective insights for policymakers, school leaders, and teachers to redesign P5 implementation strategies in ways that are not only compliant but also conceptually sound and pedagogically meaningful. In this regard, the study does not aim to evaluate the program in a managerial sense, but rather to interpret its philosophical coherence and educational promise.

This study focuses specifically on the implementation of the "Voice of Democracy" theme in junior and senior high school levels as regulated under the P5 initiative. The analysis is grounded in qualitative research, based on literature synthesis and conceptual interpretation. Rather than generalizing across all schools, the study seeks to provide a reflective framework for analyzing the compatibility between policy ideals and educational theory.

In light of the above, this study poses the following research questions: (1) How does the implementation of the Voice of Democracy theme in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project reflect (or diverge from) John Dewey s theory of democratic education?; (2) What theoretical and practical implications arise from aligning the project with Deweyan principles in the Indonesian educational context?

Accordingly, the objective of this research is to critically examine the conceptual alignment between the Voice of Democracy theme and Dewey s philosophy of education, thereby offering a deeper understanding of democratic education within the national ideological and curricular framework of Indonesia. This critical inquiry serves as a basis for reconstructing democratic practices in schools that are not only procedurally democratic but also philosophically and pedagogically grounded.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative interpretative approach employing a narrative and integrative literature review design, guided by the goal of interpreting conceptual alignments between John Dewey's theory of democratic education and the implementation of the "Voice of Democracy" theme within the Indonesian Independent Learning Curriculum. The choice of a literature review is grounded in the nature of the research question, which seeks to explore philosophical relevance, theoretical coherence, and normative implications rather than to produce empirical generalizations. As articulated by Snyder Cronin & George (2023), an integrative literature review enables the synthesis of diverse theoretical perspectives while allowing room for reinterpretation of foundational concepts in contemporary contexts.

The literature review follows a conceptual synthesis model structured into four main stages (Pham Thi, 2025): (1) Planning and scope definition, including the formulation of the guiding research question; (2) Systematic selection and classification of literature sources based on predefined criteria; (3) Thematic coding and conceptual mapping, using Dewey s democratic education framework as an analytical lens; (4) Interpretative analysis and synthesis, focusing on the convergence between Deweyan principles and the ideological-pedagogical goals of Pancasila education.

The decision to center the analysis on John Dewey s theory is based on three main considerations: (1) Dewey is one of the most influential thinkers in democratic education, whose work is foundational in the progressive education paradigm; (2) his emphasize on participatory learning and experiential knowledge offers a coherent philosophical basis to evaluate democracy-themed educational practices; and (3) there is a growing need to contextualize Western democratic educational theories within non-Western ideological and policy frameworks, particularly Pancasila as Indonesia s national ideology. Alternative theories such as Paulo Freire s critical pedagogy and Illich s deschooling have been acknowledged, yet Dewey is selected due to his emphasis on democratic formation within institutional schooling rather than outside of it.

The sources reviewed include primary theoretical works by John Dewey (Democracy and Education, Experience and Education, Human Nature and Conduct) and secondary literature such as peer-reviewed journal articles, academic monographs, and empirical studies related to democratic education and Pancasila-based pedagogy. The inclusion criteria were: (1) Thematic relevance to democratic education, civic learning, or character formation; (2) Direct engagement with Dewey s educational philosophy or the P5 Voice of Democracy theme; (3) Scholarly credibility, including

publication in reputable journals or publishers; (4) Published within the last 5 years with exceptions made for classical or foundational texts.

The sources were categorized thematically into: (1) Democratic education theory; (2) Dewey s educational philosophy; (3) Pancasila and Indonesian civic education; and (4) Implementation studies of P5 and Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning).

The data were analyzed using thematic content analysis with a conceptual orientation. The process involved: (1) Initial coding of literature into relevant categories based on key themes such as participatory learning, moral education, experiential learning, and ideological formation; (2) Cross-comparison between Dewey s concepts and their presence (or absence) in the P5 Voice of Democracy implementation; (3) Interpretative synthesis by mapping philosophical constructs (e.g., democracy as lived experience) onto policy intentions and educational outcomes; (4) Critical reflection on the ideological convergence or contradiction between Deweyan principles and the application of Pancasila values in schools.

This process was carried out iteratively, allowing categories to evolve as relationships between theory and practice emerged more clearly. Visual concept maps and matrix comparisons were also utilized to trace philosophical alignment.

To enhance credibility and reduce interpretive bias, this study applied several validation strategies. First, key concepts were cross-referenced across multiple sources to confirm theoretical consistency. Second, the analysis was contextually anchored by relating conceptual interpretations to practical examples and documented implementations of the Voice of Democracy theme in Indonesian schools, drawing from policy reports and case study documentation. Although this research does not involve direct fieldwork, it remains engaged with contextual realities through the review of relevant policies and documented educational practices, ensuring that theoretical interpretations are grounded in the actual dynamics of school-based democratic education.

Results and Discussion

This study found that the relationship between John Dewey's ideas on democratic education and the implementation of the "Voice of Democracy" theme in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) shows high theoretical relevance but experiences a gap in its application in the Indonesian educational context. Three main findings can be drawn from the analysis process conducted, namely: (1) conceptual compatibility between Dewey's ideas and the objectives of the P5 program, (2) inconsistency between the philosophical framework and the reality of implementation, and (3) weak institutional and pedagogical support for the development of a democratic culture in schools.

First, there is a similarity between the values of Dewey's democratic education theory and those contained in the objectives of the P5 program. Dewey emphasizes the importance of learning that fosters active participation, critical thinking skills, and social engagement in the learning process. The objectives of the "Voice of Democracy" theme in P5 also normatively encourage students to be able to express their opinions, participate in decision-making processes, and develop social awareness. Substantively, both approaches place education as a means of shaping democratic character, not merely as a transmission of knowledge. This indicates that the P5 program has a philosophical foundation that can be strengthened through the integration of Dewey's thinking, particularly in emphasizing the importance of direct experience and active student involvement in school life.

Second, despite the alignment between the theoretical framework and policy direction, the implementation of the "Voice of Democracy" program at the school level does not fully reflect the essence of democratic education as conceived by Dewey. A review of various documents and implementation reports shows that the activities carried out in schools tend to be ceremonial or administrative in nature, such as election simulations, class debates, and student council elections. These activities generally lack a deeper understanding of democracy, are not directed toward critical

reflection, and have not touched on the ethical and socio-political dimensions of democratic education. In other words, the process of learning democracy in schools remains focused on procedural aspects and does not reach the transformative realm that would enable students to develop mature political views and awareness.

Third, analysis of the supporting structure for P5 implementation shows that many schools face resource constraints, both in terms of teacher readiness, conceptual understanding of democracy, and the time available to integrate the project into the regular learning process. Teachers often view the P5 project as an additional workload rather than part of their core pedagogical strategy. Furthermore, there is no teacher training model that specifically equips them with a deep understanding of the principles of democratic education, including how to facilitate inclusive discussion spaces and how to build equal relationships between students and teachers.

Schools that have implemented the P5 project with the theme "Voice of Democracy" also show significant variation in terms of the quality of implementation. Some schools have successfully integrated democratic values into daily learning practices, such as through open discussions, class meetings, and student involvement in formulating school rules. However, other schools have carried out the project in a formalistic manner, merely following technical instructions from the education department without developing a reflective and participatory approach. This indicates that the success of the program is greatly influenced by the commitment and internal capacity of each school, not just by national policies.

In general, it was found that the implementation of the "Voice of Democracy" theme in P5 has not yet fully become part of the school culture. Most activities are temporary and separate from the main curriculum, so they lack continuity in the process of character building for students. Students involved in project activities do not always receive feedback or space for reflection, which is actually important in the process of internalizing democratic values. Thus, even though project activities have been carried out, their effectiveness in shaping a democratic student profile is still questionable.

Furthermore, there are structural and cultural challenges that hinder the successful implementation of democratic education ideas in schools. Structurally, the national education system still tends to be oriented toward achieving grades and administrative compliance. The school structure also does not provide sufficient space for students to truly participate in decision-making that affects their interests. Culturally, the relationship between teachers and students is still characterized by an authoritarian pattern, which makes students reluctant to express their opinions openly. This poses a major challenge to efforts to promote the democratization of the learning space.

Moreover, the absence of an evaluation tool capable of measuring the successful internalization of democratic values remains a fundamental weakness in the implementation of the P5 program. Current evaluations are still limited to the outputs of activities (the final project product), rather than focusing on the process and the long-term impact on students' behavioral change. As a result, even if projects are carried out in accordance with administrative indicators, there is no guarantee that these activities genuinely contribute to shaping students' democratic character.

The findings also indicate that the theme of "Voice of Democracy" has not been systematically linked to current social issues relevant to students' lives. According to Dewey's democratic education approach, learning should be rooted in social realities and issues faced by society. In practice, projects implemented in schools often choose safe and neutral themes, avoiding issues that contain conflict or controversy. This makes the democratic learning process superficial and fails to challenge students' critical thinking.

Based on all these findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of the "Voice of Democracy" theme in P5 still faces various conceptual, structural, and cultural challenges. Although philosophically aligned with Dewey's principles of democratic education, its implementation in practice has not yet been able to create a transformative learning space. Therefore, a more systematic,

reflective, and contextual approach is needed so that this project does not merely become a formal activity but truly serves as a means of fostering the character of democratic and civilized citizens.

Socio-Cultural Dimension: Tension between Participation and Hierarchy

Dewey's idea of school as a miniature democratic society places students not only as recipients of knowledge, but also as active subjects in constructing meaning, making decisions, and taking social responsibility. In the Indonesian context, these values clash with social structures that tend to be hierarchical and vertical educator-child relationships. In many schools, students are not accustomed to expressing their opinions openly, let alone participating in decision-making processes that affect their learning environment.

This phenomenon highlights the tension between participatory democratic values and social norms that prioritize order, obedience, and respect for authority. Here lies the main challenge: how to build a democratic culture in a space that historically has not grown in deliberative values. Therefore, the implementation of P5 is not sufficient through thematic activities alone but must target changes in social relations within the educational ecosystem itself. Democracy in education must be understood not as a method but as a shared value that requires openness, recognition of differences, and trust in students' capabilities.

Previous studies have shown that democracy in education in Indonesia still faces fundamental challenges in terms of cultural acceptance and school social structures. A study Simorangkir (2025), Rahman & Irayanti (2025) and (Sukmayadi et al., 2025) found that participatory democratic practices in the classroom often fail to function effectively due to the authoritarian nature of school culture. Teachers still play a dominant role as sole decision-makers, while students are positioned as passive recipients of knowledge.

In the context of the "Voice of Democracy" project in P5, several field studies reported that the activities carried out were often symbolic, such as election simulations or class debates, but were not followed by the creation of open and equal discussion spaces (Qomaruddin Sya'bani & Kholidya, 2023). Participatory processes are still hampered by the unequal relationship between teachers and students, where students' voices are not yet considered meaningful input in school decision-making. These findings confirm that socio-cultural challenges are significant obstacles to the implementation of democratic education in schools.

Based on these findings, researchers argue that the tension between the spirit of participation and hierarchical culture is not only an implementation issue, but also reflects institutional unpreparedness in building an equitable educational social structure. Democracy in education is not merely about activities or procedures, but about how to shape collective thinking that values differences, actively listens, and trusts the equal capacity of school members, including students. In the Indonesian context, where respect for seniority and authority is part of cultural values, democratic education must be implemented with an adaptive and transformative approach. This means creating a dialogue space that is sensitive to local culture while still encouraging the habit of critical thinking, openly expressing opinions, and actively participating in school life.

Researchers also observed that dismantling these hierarchical patterns of relations requires long-term efforts involving gradual familiarization with participation, starting with simple things such as class discussions, choosing activities, and involvement in formulating school rules. Change will not happen solely through thematic projects such as P5, but must be accompanied by reforms in how schools manage relations among their members. Thus, the tension between participation and hierarchy should not be seen as an absolute obstacle, but as a space for social transformation that must be responded to through continuous and contextual democratic learning.

Pedagogical Dimension: The Discrepancy between Ideals and Learning Strategies

From a pedagogical perspective, the implementation of democratic education requires a shift from a teacher-centered instructional approach to one that empowers students as subjects of learning. This includes changes in how teachers design learning, evaluate students, and build dialogue spaces in the classroom. However, in reality, most P5 implementations have not shown significant pedagogical

innovation. Project activities are often ritualistic, not integrated with the core curriculum, and do not facilitate reflection-based and deep experiential learning.

This problem is also caused by the lack of capacity among teachers to develop democratic learning models. Teachers are still accustomed to one-way instructional approaches and do not have enough time or resources to design meaningful collaborative activities. In many cases, teachers understand democracy as freedom of speech or merely deliberative activities, without addressing critical aspects such as equality of participation, collective responsibility, or deliberative conflict management. Therefore, one important recommendation is the transformation of teachers' pedagogy through continuous training and mentoring rooted in philosophical understanding rather than merely technical administration.

Previous studies have consistently shown a gap between the ideal vision of democratic education and the learning strategies implemented in the classroom. A study by Hanifah et al. (2025) revealed that democracy-based character education has not been able to realize participatory and reflective learning. Teachers still tend to use a one-way instructional approach, and student involvement in learning decision-making is still very limited. This is due to teachers' limited understanding of the essence of democracy in education and the lack of pedagogical training oriented towards the development of participatory values.

Research conducted by Putri (2024) also shows that limited resources, including inadequate facilities and teaching materials, are the main obstacles to the optimal implementation of democratic education. The lack of adequate training for teachers causes some of them to face difficulties in adapting to new methods. Meanwhile, a study by Bastrian et al. (2024) on the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) found that teachers often only place students as project implementers without encouraging them to be involved reflectively in designing, evaluating, or making decisions about the processes they undergo.

Based on this analysis, researchers believe that there is a clear discrepancy between the ideals of democratic education as promoted in P5 and the reality of the learning strategies implemented by teachers in the field. Project activities under the theme of "Voice of Democracy" essentially offer space for the application of progressive pedagogical approaches, but have not been accompanied by a profound paradigm shift in teaching. Teachers still perceive project activities as supplementary programs rather than an integral part of the learning process. As a result, student engagement remains procedural and superficial, lacking reflective learning processes that address self-awareness, empathy, and social responsibility.

Researchers believe that the success of democratic education cannot be determined solely by the content of the curriculum, but is greatly influenced by the pedagogical approach used by teachers in their daily classroom activities. The transformation of learning strategies is key, where teachers need to understand and apply methods that encourage open dialogue, collaboration among students, and the courage to give space to students' voices in the learning process. Democratic education requires teachers to act as facilitators who encourage the growth of agents of change, rather than simply instructors who deliver material.

Thus, researchers emphasize the need for systematic and sustained intervention in the development of teachers' pedagogical competencies, so that they not only understand the concept of democracy normatively, but are also able to translate it into contextual, reflective, and participatory learning strategies. Without fundamental updates to learning strategies, the ideal of forming democratic and character-driven Pancasila students will remain nothing more than a slogan without substance in everyday educational practice.

Institutional Dimension: Disparities in Implementation and Policy Fragmentation

Although the P5 policy normatively promotes democratic values, its implementation in schools shows high disparities. On the one hand, there are schools that have resources, participatory leadership, and progressive teachers, enabling them to carry out projects with meaning and quality. On the other hand, many schools implement projects only to fulfill their obligations. This

fragmentation indicates that the success of the program is largely determined by institutional readiness and local leadership, not solely by the design of national policy.

Here, Dewey's theory faces a practical challenge: the idealism of democratic education requires supportive institutional infrastructure. In the Indonesian context, there are no effective mechanisms to measure the quality of participation, integrate projects into school culture, or overcome resistance from educational actors who do not yet understand the substantial meaning of democracy. In addition, the mismatch between the pressure to achieve academic results and the space for character development often marginalizes democracy projects in school priorities.

Previous studies have shown that the successful implementation of democratic values in education is largely determined by institutional consistency and the alignment of education policies themselves. Research indicates that the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) depends on the readiness of resources, school management capacity, and support from local education authorities. Schools with access to training, budgetary support, and transformative leadership are better able to carry out P5 projects in a meaningful way, while schools in marginalized areas tend to implement them in a symbolic and administrative manner (Aifa' iyah et al., 2024; Lestari & Nurlizawati, 2023; Prasetyo et al., 2025; Purba et al., 2025).

Research by Firdaus (2023) also highlights the fragmentation of policies in strengthening character education. They note that although there is a national commitment to national values and character through Pancasila, implementation in schools is often not supported by adequate technical regulations. Schools are required to integrate democratic and character values, but are not provided with applicable guidelines or adequate institutional assistance.

Based on these findings, researchers observed that educational institutions in Indonesia still face structural challenges in building a strong foundation for democratic education. Disparities in the implementation of P5 are symptomatic of systemic problems, whereby institutional instruments have not been able to ensure equal quality of implementation across educational units. Policy fragmentation, characterized by weak coordination between programs and inconsistencies in their implementation, increases the risk of implementation gaps between schools in urban centers and those in peripheral areas.

The researchers believe that democracy in education cannot be achieved through curriculum changes or thematic projects alone, but requires holistic institutional reform. Educational institutions need to be directed toward strengthening a collaborative, integrated, and equitable ecosystem. This includes equitable teacher training, supervision policies that support democratic learning innovation, and evaluation mechanisms based on process and values, not merely administrative documents. In addition, local community participation in educational decision-making needs to be strengthened as a form of true institutional democratization.

Researchers also emphasize the importance of consistent and responsive policy governance. The government needs to ensure that every new policy issued, including the Merdeka and P5 curricula, is reinforced with synchronized and operational implementation instruments, rather than stopping at slogans or macro designs. Without strong institutional consolidation oriented toward educational justice, efforts to build a culture of democracy in schools will only become sporadic programs that fail to create long-term transformative impact.

Although John Dewey's thinking provides a strong philosophical foundation for democratic education, it is not without its weaknesses. First, Dewey developed his theory within the framework of American liberal society, which values individualism and direct participation. In a society like Indonesia, which has a more hierarchical communal, religious, and cultural structure, Dewey's approach cannot be adopted directly. The value of collectivism inherent in Pancasila actually offers the possibility of reinterpreting democratic participation as being more oriented towards social harmony and consensus, rather than conflict and sharp differences.

Second, Dewey seems to assume equality of capacity in participation, whereas in Indonesian society there are social and economic inequalities that affect who can speak and be heard. This calls for a more context-sensitive democratic education, especially in providing space for marginalized groups and students from non-dominant social backgrounds.

Third, Dewey's theory places great emphasis on the educational process in formal spaces, whereas democratic practices in Indonesia are also greatly influenced by social and political experiences outside of school. Therefore, a relevant democratic educational approach must be able to bridge the gap between formal education and students' real-life experiences, including involvement in communities, youth organizations, and other public spaces.

In order for democratic education through the theme of "Voice of Democracy" to be effective, an approach is needed that is not only philosophical, but also sociological, political, and psychological. Democratic values cannot be instilled solely through thematic projects but must become the overarching ethos of the educational institution. This includes a democratic evaluation system, a participatory school management structure, and equitable social relations among all school members.

Successful democratic education must also be able to read the developing social dynamics: issues of political polarization, intolerance, and crisis of trust in public institutions. Schools must be places where students learn to listen, think critically, and live together in diversity. This is the big task of implementing P5: transforming values into culture, and culture into collective consciousness.

Conclusion

This study concludes that there is significant conceptual alignment between John Dewey's ideas on democratic education, the values of Pancasila as the ideological foundation of the nation, and the objectives of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), particularly in the theme of "Voice of Democracy." All three place education as an instrument for shaping the character of active, reflective, and responsible citizens. Dewey emphasizes the importance of participation, real-world experience, and dialogue in the educational process, while Pancasila underscores the principles of deliberation, social justice, and humanity as the foundation of national life. The integration of these two perspectives should strengthen Indonesia's educational orientation toward substantive democracy.

However, the research results also show that the implementation of the theme of "Voice of Democracy" in P5 still faces a significant gap between the normative vision and the reality on the ground. Democratic education has not yet deeply reflected participatory values, remaining limited to formal activities without philosophical reflection, and has not touched on the transformation of school culture. The lack of teacher readiness, weak institutional capacity, and the dominance of procedural approaches have caused democratic education in P5 to remain stagnant, failing to be as transformative as Dewey's theory envisions.

Conceptually, this study contributes to the expansion of democratic education discourse by contextualizing Dewey's theory of progressivism within the Indonesian education system, which is characterized by the ideological collectivity of Pancasila. This shows that democratic education does not always have to be rooted in liberal-individualistic values, but can be built within a framework of social harmony, togetherness, and a spirit of mutual cooperation. Thus, this study enriches the theoretical approach in understanding student character not only from an individual ethical perspective but also in terms of social relations and national life.

From a practical standpoint, this study yields several important implications. First, a reformulation of the implementation approach for P5 is necessary to ensure it does not remain a series of activities but becomes an integral part of the educational ecosystem that fosters a democratic culture in schools. Second, teacher capacity development is an absolute requirement for the success of democratic education, through training that is not only technical but also philosophical and reflective.

Third, a process-based evaluation system involving students needs to be developed that can capture the dimensions of participation, empathy, and critical thinking, not just project outcomes.

For policymakers, these findings underscore the importance of cross-sectoral integration among curriculum development, teacher training, and school management, ensuring that democracy becomes a lived educational reality rather than a mere slogan. For educational institutions, this study serves as an impetus to reflect on how learning spaces, communication among school stakeholders, and school governance can function as authentic mediums for democratic learning. Meanwhile, for the academic community, this research expands the discourse on character education based on democratic values by demonstrating that Western theoretical approaches can be adapted to local ideological and sociocultural frameworks.

References

Agustina, Y., Mulyadi, Y., & Indriyani, D. (2022). Penanaman Budaya Demokrasi Di Smp Negeri 3 Cianjur (Studi Tentang Proses Pembentukan Kemampuan Kepemimpinan Demokratis Siswa). *Jurnal Pendidikan Politik, Hukum Dan Kewarganegaraan*, *12*(1). https://jurnal.unsur.ac.id/jpphk/article/viewFile/1702/1586

Aifa iyah, B., Oktarina, N., & Rohman, F. (2024). Implementasi Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Di Smp Negeri 1 Candiroto Kabupaten Temanggung. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, *9*(04), 117 127. https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v9i04.20462

Arianto, D. (2022). Urgensi pendidikan demokrasi di sekolah. *Misbahul Ulum (Jurnal Institusi)*, *4*(2 Desember), 179 190. https://doi.org/10.70688/misbahululum.v4i2 Desember.252

Arisanti, A., Septiningtyas, D. T., & Habibbulloh, M. (2024). Generasi Cerdas Dan Demokratis: Penerapan Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila Di Sma Melalui Yel Yel Suara Demokrasi. *Dedikasi: Journal Of Community Engagement And Empowerment*, *2*(2), 72 79. https://doi.org/10.58706/dedikasi.v2n2.p72-79

Bastrian, N., Marmoah, S., & Adi, F. P. (2024). Kendala implementasi P5 dengan tema bhinneka tunggal ika di sekolah dasar. *Didaktika Dwija Indria*, *12*(1), 14 19. https://doi.org/10.20961/ddi.v12i1.79362

Ciciria, D., Kesuma, T. A. R. P., & Hafidz, M. (2022). Pengaruh Pemahaman Nilai-Nilai Pancasila terhadap Kehidupan Berdemokrasi Mahasiswa. *Tapis: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmiah*, *6*(2), 154 165. https://doi.org/10.32332/tapis.v6i2.5776

Cronin, M. A., & George, E. (2023). The Why and How of the Integrative Review. *Organizational Research Methods*, *26*(1), 168 192. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428120935507

Desjardins, R., & Wiksten, S. (2022). Introduction: civic engagement and education. In *Handbook of Civic Engagement and Education* (pp. 1 10). Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800376953.00008

Dewey, J. (1974). *John Dewey on education: Selected writings*. https://philpapers.org/rec/DEWJDO

Dewey, J. (2024). *Democracy and education*. Columbia University Press. https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.7312/dewe21010-003/html

Fatmawati, F., Mahmud, M. N., & Badruddin, M. (2024). Democratic Education And Its Application In Indonesia Perspective Of Islamic Education Philosophy. *Maerifah: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, *1*(1), 1 8. https://jurnallppm.iaiasadiyah.ac.id/index.php/maerifah/article/view/82

Febriani, Y., Montessori, M., Indrawan, J., Darmansyah, D., & Ockta, Y. (2024). The Development of Pancasila Student Profile towards the Benefits of Democratic Voice from an Islamic Perspective: Students View. *Progresiva: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam*, *13*(02), 269 282. https://doi.org/10.22219/progresiva.v13i02.33931

Firdaus, Z. (2023). *Implementasi Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila Pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti Tema Suara Demokrasi Kelas X SMAN 1 Baureno Bojonegoro*. Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Sunan Giri. https://repository.unugiri.ac.id/id/eprint/2863/

Hanifah, H., Suastra, I. W., & Lasmawan, I. W. (2025). Projek Profil Pelajar Pancasila dalam Kurikulum Merdeka: Sebuah Studi Kepustakaan tentang Penguatan Karakter di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Indonesia (JPPI)*, *5*(2), 1122 1135. https://doi.org/10.53299/jppi.v5i2.1522

Harkavy, I. (2023). Dewey, implementation, and creating a democratic civic university. *The Pluralist*, *18*(1), 49 75. https://doi.org/10.5406/19446489.18.1.06

Kirania, M. T., Rosalyn, C., & Hakim, A. (2024). Implementasi Nilai Nilai Pendidikan Karakter dalam Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5) Fase D di SMP Negeri 30 Makassar. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, *9*(04), 534 552. https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v9i04.19970

Lee, H. (2021). John Dewey and Global Citizenship Education. *Education and Culture*, *37*(1), 121 142. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27140380

Lestari, W. Y., & Nurlizawati, N. (2023). Implementasi Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5) Tema Suara Demokrasi Untuk Membentuk Keterampilan Bernalar Kritis Siswa di SMA Negeri 3 Pariaman. *Naradidik: Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, *2*(4), 291 301. https://doi.org/10.24036/nara.v2i4.172

Nurislamiah, S., Setyawati, A., & Astuti, S. (2024). The Implementation of Pancasila Principles on the Development of the Independent Curriculum in the Execution of the P5 Program: A Perspective from Educational Philosophy. *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan*, *13*(3), 3293 3302. https://doi.org/10.58230/27454312.423

Pham Thi, K. (2025). The relevance of John Dewey s pragmatism for educational innovation in contemporary Vietnam. *Cogent Education*, *12*(1), 2510055. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2510055

Prasetiyo, N. T., Sariyani, S., & Haq, M. D. (2024). Implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) in Enhancing Student Character. *JIIP-Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, *7*(11), 13170 13177. https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v7i11.6278

Prasetyo, H. T., Rohmadi, T., & Muhibbin, A. (2025). Evaluasi P5RA Tema Suara Demokrasi sebagai Upaya Menanamkan Pendidikan Demokrasi di Pesantren. *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan*, *14*(2 Mei), 1943 1954. https://doi.org/10.58230/27454312.1933

Purba, I. S. K., Sukadi, S., & Budiarta, I. W. (2025). Analisis Implementasi Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5) dalam Membentuk Karakter Religius dan Mandiri pada Siswa Kelas VIII di SMPN 3 Banjar. *Edu Society: Jurnal Pendidikan, Ilmu Sosial Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, *5*(1), 564 573. https://doi.org/10.56832/edu.v5i1.833

Putri, F. (2024). *Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Dalam Membentuk Profil Pelajar Pancasila Peserta Didik Kelas Iv Di Sdn 78 Kota Bengkulu*. UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. http://repository.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id/3457/

Putri, Y. D. S., Khaerunisah, A., Astuti, D., Septiana, S., Alfiani, T., Fakhiroh, Z., & Febrianti, A. A. (2023). Implementation of the pancasila student profile strengthening project (p5) in elementary school. *Journal of Education and Teacher Training Innovation*, *1*(1), 11 23. https://doi.org/10.61227/jetti.v1i1.3

Qomaruddin Sya bani, M., & Kholidya, C. F. (2023). Internalisasi Nilai Demokrasi Melalui Kegiatan Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila Guna Menangkal Radikalisme Di Kalangan Remaja (Studi Kasus Di Smkn 1 Kemlagi). *Seminar Nasional Inovasi Dan Pengembangan Teknologi Pendidikan*, 1 2.

Rahman, A., & Irayanti, I. (2025). The Pancasila Deliberation Model: A Framework for Fostering Democratic Citizenship in Civic Education. *Entita: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, *7*(1), 41 58. https://doi.org/10.19105/ejpis.v7i1.18530

Rosser, A., King, P., & Widoyoko, D. (2021). The political economy of the learning crisis in Indonesia. *RISE Annual Conference, University of Oxford*, 22 24. https://riseprogramme.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/Political_Economy_Learning_Crisis_Indonesia_0.pdf

Saptadi, N., Holid, A., Firmansyah, M., Sampe, F., Nansi, W., Asridiana, Susilawati, E., Perang, B., Fitriani, Y., & Pustaka, S. (2024). *Pendidikan Politik*.

Simorangkir, A. P. (2025). *Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Demokratis Melalui Mata Pelajaran Pkn Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa Di Kelas Viii Smp Hkbp Sidorame Medan*. https://repository.uhn.ac.id/handle/123456789/12132

Sukmayadi, T., Abdulkarim, A., Komalasari, K., & Masyitoh, I. S. (2025). The dynamics of civic education lectures in shaping the democratic character of students at ahmad dahlan university. *Jurnal Pendidikan PKN (Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan)*, *6*(1), 251 265. https://doi.org/10.26418/jppkn.v6i1.92421

Talpin, J. (2024). *Schools of democracy: How ordinary citizens (sometimes) become competent in participatory budgeting institutions*. ECPR Press. https://books.google.com/books?hl=id&lr=&id=I14nEQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP6&dq=Democracy+is+a+political+system+that+allows+the+people+to+have+the+same+authority+in+government+management.+in+school&ots=RxCs-pdFoz&sig=ACxB7EaZh8LGROzstwH6b1Vh_-8

Ulfah, N., Sumardiyani, L., Ardini, S. N., & Pramesti, M. R. D. (2023). Implementasi projek penguatan profil pelajar pancasila (p5) dengan tema suara demokrasi di smk negeri 6 semarang. *PRIMER: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin*, *1*(4), 455 462. https://doi.org/10.55681/primer.v1i4.178

Widodo, S. A. (2024). Analysis of the implementation of education democracy in Indonesia (regulations, models, problems, and future prospects). *South African Journal of Education*, *44*(2). https://www.ajol.info/index.php/saje/article/view/273950

Zahrah, M. A., Susanti, E., Amalya, R. N., Putri, Y. K., Istiqomah, E., & Putri, A. (2024). Pentingnya Pendidikan Demokrasi Untuk Membentuk Sikap dan Prilaku Demokratis. *Jurnal Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Dan Politik*, *2*(1), 10 19. https://doi.org/10.61476/qjcjtp29