Integrating *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5)* into the Merdeka Curriculum: Tenth Graders' Perception at SMA Gajah Mada

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Abstract: This study explores the integration of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) into the Merdeka Curriculum, focusing on tenth graders at SMA Gajah Mada. The research aims to evaluate students' perceptions of P5's implementation and its impact on their holistic development. Using qualitative methods, including questionnaires and interviews, the study captures in-depth insights into student experiences. The findings reveal that P5 effectively strengthens students' understanding of Pancasila values, encourages critical thinking, and fosters personal growth. More than 70% of respondents agreed that the program enhances their knowledge and ability to apply these values in real-life contexts. Key strengths highlighted include teacher involvement, collaborative activities, and relevant learning materials, which contribute to high levels of engagement and satisfaction. However, areas for improvement, such as time allocation for activities and fostering an open environment for expression, were identified. Overall, the P5 initiative is perceived as a valuable component of the Merdeka Curriculum, promoting character building and equipping students to address global challenges while upholding national values.

Keywords: Kurikulum Merdeka, Curriculum Development, P5, Student Perception

Introduction

The curriculum plays a fundamental role in shaping the direction of education, serving as a framework for achieving institutional vision, mission, and goals (Mulia et al., 2023; Oktaviana et al., 2024). It translates abstract educational objectives into actionable learning experiences for students, guiding them toward personal and intellectual growth. Despite its critical importance, discussions around education often fail to emphasize the strategic value of curriculum development. Haleem et al. (2022) stated that curriculum is a part of society, technology, and knowledge evolve rapidly, the curriculum must adapt to prepare learners for future challenges. In Indonesia, curriculum reform has been a constant priority to meet the nation's changing needs. These reforms not only reflect the dynamic nature of education but also serve as a response to societal expectations for quality and relevance. Mahardhani

et al. (2023) assert that the ongoing evolution of the curriculum ensures that it remains a powerful tool for fostering both academic and character excellence in students.

Indonesia's curriculum has undergone numerous revisions since the country's independence, adapting to both local and global demands (Laila et al., 2025; Oktavia et al., 2023). Each revision reflects efforts to modernize education, from the early iterations to the current Kurikulum Merdeka, introduced to address evolving challenges. Prior to this, the 2013 curriculum underwent substantial improvements, paving the way for the Kurikulum Merdeka as the latest advancement (Asrifan et al., 2023; Priawasana & Subiyantoro, 2024). The need for these updates became more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted traditional learning methods and highlighted disparities in student outcomes. National and international studies have shown that Indonesia faces a persistent learning crisis, with gaps in achievement and competency levels among students (Beatty et al., 2021). Recognizing these challenges, the Ministry of Education and Culture launched the Kurikulum Merdeka to facilitate recovery and enhance the quality of education. This curriculum emphasizes adaptability, innovation, and character development, aligning education with modern societal needs.

The Kurikulum Merdeka aims to provide students with sufficient time to explore concepts and develop skills while incorporating character-building initiatives like the Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5) (Betari & Rusman, 2024; Susanti et al., 2023). This initiative seeks to instill Pancasila values as the foundation for student development, addressing essential competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, and ethical decision-making. Through P5, students engage in activities that foster moral character, problem-solving abilities, and a sense of national identity. The program emphasizes interdisciplinary collaboration, allowing students to connect academic learning with real-life challenges (Fahri et al., 2023; Islamiah et al., 2024). Additionally, P5 integrates school culture, intracurricular learning, and extracurricular activities to create a holistic educational experience. This approach not only nurtures intellectual growth but also ensures that students embody the values and principles of Pancasila. Such a comprehensive framework positions P5 as a cornerstone of Indonesia's efforts to cultivate globally competent yet locally grounded learners.

As Rudiyanto (2024) noted that the character of education has become increasingly crucial in a world shaped by technological advancement and globalization. The rapid pace of change demands that students not only acquire knowledge but also develop the moral foundation to use it responsibly (Malik, 2018). Supported by Moustafa & Al-Rashaida (2024) the P5 initiative addresses this need by fostering character development through contextual, project-based learning. Students are encouraged to engage with real-world phenomena, enabling them to develop problem-solving skills and critical thinking abilities in authentic settings. These activities align with the Ministry of Education and Culture's vision of preparing students to face modern challenges with a strong ethical compass. By bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application, P5 supports the holistic development of learners. This dual focus on intellectual and moral growth positions P5 as a critical element in balancing technological progress with human values.

Gajah Mada High School in Bandar Lampung is one of the institutions implementing P5 as part of the Kurikulum Merdeka. The school integrates the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile into its academic and extracurricular activities, aiming to develop well-rounded students. With the motto "Competent, Intelligent, and Polite," the school emphasizes character education alongside academic excellence. Differentiated learning approaches are employed to meet the unique needs and interests of each student, ensuring personalized and meaningful learning experiences. The school also fosters a positive culture that reinforces Pancasila values, creating an environment conducive to holistic development. By actively implementing P5, Gajah Mada High School seeks to produce students who are not only academically capable but also morally grounded. This approach reflects the school's commitment to aligning education with national ideals and preparing students for global challenges.

Previous research on the P5 initiative highlights its positive impact on character building and interdisciplinary collaboration. Studies from Prasetiyo et al. (2024) and Rachman et al. (2024) demonstrated that P5 promotes critical thinking, ethical behavior, and the ability to solve real-world problems. Building on these findings, this study explores students' perceptions of the P5 implementation at Gajah Mada High School. Understanding these perceptions is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of P5 and identify areas for improvement. By focusing on student feedback, this research provides insights into how the initiative contributes to personal and academic development. The study underscores the importance of character education in fostering competent, ethical, and resilient learners. Ultimately, the findings aim to support efforts to enhance the quality and impact of the Kurikulum Merdeka, ensuring its relevance in shaping Indonesia's future leaders.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach. The qualitative method is suitable for capturing and reporting observers' perceptions, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Sugiyono, 2013). This approach was chosen to explore how the Pancasila Student Profile initiative supports character development among students. By combining data collection methods such as questionnaires and interviews, the study aims to gather in-depth insights into students' experiences and perceptions of the initiative.

Research Participants

The participants in this study were 10th-grade students (Class X.1) from Gajah Mada High School, specifically selected for their involvement in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). A total of 36 students were targeted, with 20 completing the questionnaire and six participating in follow-up interviews. These participants were invited via WhatsApp to contribute to the research, ensuring accessibility and ease of participation. The selected participants represent a diverse group within the class, providing valuable perspectives on the implementation of P5.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed using Google Forms and distributed digitally through WhatsApp to the 36 participants involved in the P5 program. Students were given one week to complete the questionnaire, which was administered during the first day of the study in January. The questionnaire focused on gathering data about students' experiences and perceptions regarding the P5 initiative. After the responses were collected, the data were downloaded in both form and text format for subsequent analysis. The structured format allowed the researcher to capture a broad range of insights while maintaining consistency across responses.

Interview

Following the questionnaire phase, in-depth interviews were conducted to gather richer, more nuanced data. Students from Class X.1 were invited to volunteer for one-on-one interview sessions. The interviews took place a week after the questionnaire phase, ensuring ample time for participants to reflect on their experiences. Each interview lasted approximately 15 minutes and was conducted face-to-face. The sessions were audio recorded for accuracy, and the recordings were subsequently transcribed. The researcher carefully reviewed the transcripts multiple times, identified key themes and keywords, and synthesized the findings to provide deeper insights into the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project.

Result and Discussion

The results present the findings obtained from the questionnaire and interview sections. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items posed to students, categorized into four classifications. The findings from the questionnaire were further supported by students' statements gathered through the interview process.

Strengthening Pancasila Values

In the first classification of items questionnaire, it highlight about how students strenghten Pancasila valui through the activity of *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5)*. Based on the findings, the chart highlights participants' responses to activities aimed at enhancing their understanding and application of Pancasila values. The data, measured on a Likert scale, reveals that the majority of participants strongly agreed that these activities strengthened their values, increased their knowledge, and deepened their understanding of Pancasila. Additionally, a significant proportion affirmed that the project's purpose and activities were clearly explained. The findings highlight the effectiveness of well-structured and clearly communicated initiatives in promoting Pancasila values among students. Overall, the results indicate that the activities successfully achieved their objective of reinforcing the Pancasila student profile.
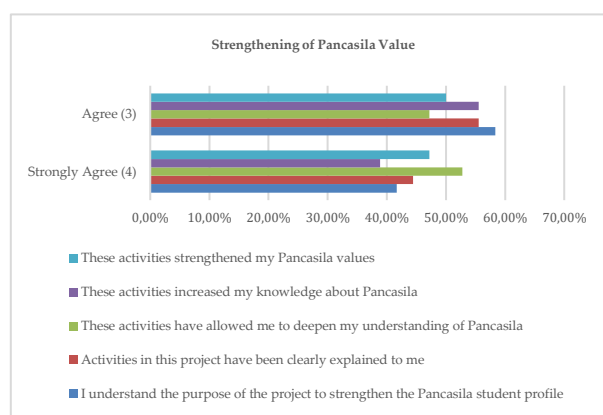
Figure 1. Strenghtening of Pancasila Value

The findings are further supported by statements from several respondents, including Student 1 and Student 2, who highlighted that the activities provided an opportunity to explore topics or themes not typically covered in the classroom. This suggests that the activities served as a complementary learning platform, enabling students to broaden their knowledge beyond the standard curriculum. By engaging in these activities, students were able to acquire new and valuable information that enriched their understanding and perspectives. Such experiences emphasize the importance of integrating diverse and innovative approaches into educational programs to enhance learning outcomes. The findings underscore the role of extracurricular activities in fostering holistic development and exposing students to new areas of knowledge.

The Effectiveness of Project P5

The chart shows the effectiveness of the P5 program based on a questionnaire. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements, showing positive feedback. The highest agreement (above 80%) was for "Teachers enthusiastically carry out activities," reflecting strong satisfaction with teacher involvement. High agreement was also noted for "Teachers encourage participation and discussion" and "The resources and materials provided are useful for learning." However, lower agreement percentages were seen for "Sufficient time is allocated for project activities" and "I feel comfortable expressing my opinion during activities," indicating areas for improvement. Minimal disagreement across all categories suggests little dissatisfaction. Overall, the program is effective but could be improved in a few areas.
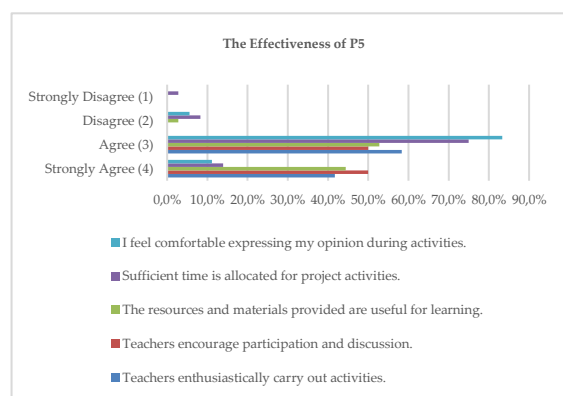

Figure 2. The Efectiveness of P5

The chart illustrates the effectiveness of the P5 program based on responses to a questionnaire, further supported by interview findings. A majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with all the statements, reflecting a generally positive perception of the program. Interview responses reinforced this data, with participants highlighting that teachers enthusiastically lead activities and encourage active participation, which aligns with the chart's highest agreement percentages. Additionally, interviewees emphasized the usefulness of the provided resources and materials, noting their relevance to learning objectives. However, some participants mentioned in interviews that they occasionally felt rushed during project activities, mirroring the relatively lower agreement on the allocation of sufficient time. Others expressed that while they appreciated the open environment, they sometimes hesitated to voice opinions, linking to the lower strong agreement percentage on this aspect. Combining questionnaire data with interview insights provides a richer understanding of the program's strengths and areas for improvement.

Engagement

The graph below illustrates engagement levels in various activities based on five statements, rated from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." A significant majority of respondents selected "Agree" for most statements, particularly for the statements that the activities are interesting and well-connected to other subjects, both of which garnered over 50% agreement. Additionally, many participants agreed that group work with classmates is collaborative and that their classmates actively participate in discussions. The "Strongly Agree" category also shows notable percentages, especially for statements about the activities being interesting and fostering collaboration. On the other hand, the "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" categories have minimal representation, suggesting a predominantly positive perception of the activities. This trend indicates that participants generally find the activities engaging, relevant, and supportive of active participation. Overall, the data reflects a favorable view of the activities' ability to promote collaboration, discussion, and interest.
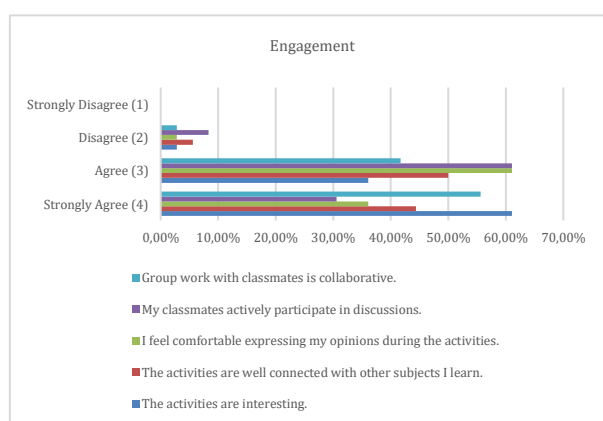

Figure 3. Students' Engagement

The findings from the graph are supported by student interviews, which reveal similar positive sentiments regarding engagement in activities. Students expressed that collaborative group work fosters a sense of teamwork and mutual understanding, enabling them to contribute effectively. One student mentioned, "Working with my classmates helps

me learn better because we exchange ideas and solve problems together." Another student highlighted how discussions during activities encourage active participation, stating, "I feel more confident sharing my opinions because the environment is supportive and interactive." Moreover, many students noted that the activities are not only interesting but also relevant to other subjects, enhancing their overall learning experience. For instance, a student remarked, "The activities are well-connected to what I study in other classes, making the learning process more meaningful." These insights align with the statistical data, further emphasizing the positive impact of the activities on student engagement.

Critical Thinking and Personal Growth

The graph presents respondents' levels of agreement regarding the implementation and impact of a school project. A significant majority selected "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" across most statements, particularly for the statements "I believe this project can positively impact students" and "Overall, I am satisfied with the implementation of this project in my school," with over 50% agreement. Similarly, there is strong agreement that the activities encourage critical thinking and reflection and that students can apply the concepts to real-life situations. The "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" categories are minimally represented, indicating overall satisfaction with the project. This trend reflects a positive perception of the project's relevance, effectiveness, and ability to meet its objectives, particularly in fostering critical thinking and practical application of concepts.
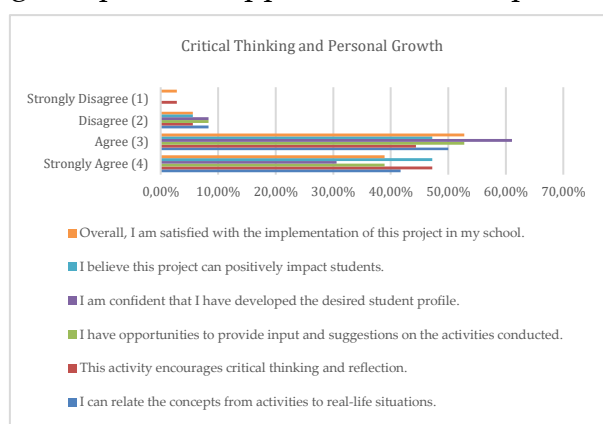

Figure 4. Critical Thinking and Personal Growth

Interviews with students further corroborate the findings from the graph. Many students expressed satisfaction with the project's implementation, citing that it has positively influenced their learning experience. One student shared, "This project has helped me develop critical thinking skills, especially during discussions and reflections." Another student highlighted the relevance of the activities to real-life situations, stating, "I feel more confident applying what I learn in school to my daily life because of this project." (students) also appreciated the opportunity to provide input and suggestions, with one participant remarking, "The teachers listened to our ideas and incorporated them into the activities, which made me feel valued." These comments align with the statistical data, reinforcing the view that the project successfully engages students and supports their academic and personal growth.

Students' Perception on Integrating P5 into the Merdeka Curriculum

From observation findings which are confirmed by questionnaires and interviews, students' perceptions regarding the integration of P5 into the independent curriculum can be depicted in the following diagram:
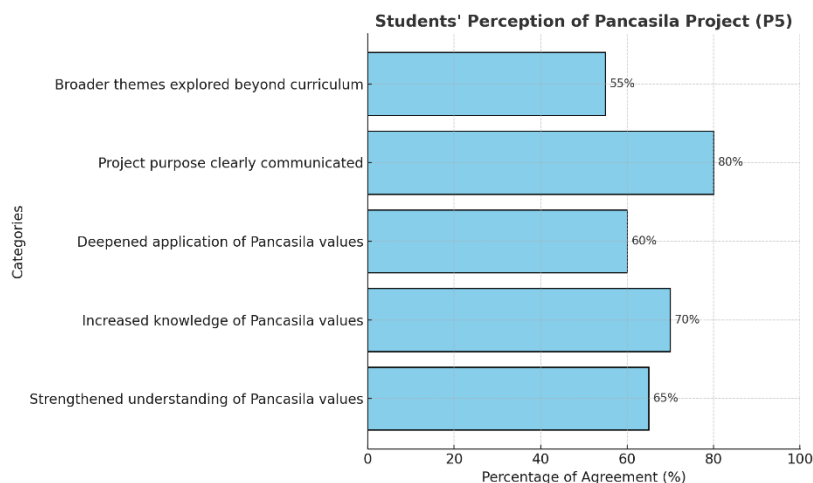

Figure 5. Students' Perceptions on P5

Based on the findings, the majority of students demonstrated a positive perception of the Pancasila Project (P5). The highest agreement (80%) was observed in the category indicating that the project's purpose was clearly communicated, reflecting the effectiveness of the project's design and implementation. Additionally, a significant proportion of students (70%) agreed that the project increased their knowledge of Pancasila values, while 65% felt it strengthened their understanding. Moreover, 60% acknowledged that the project deepened their ability to apply these values in practical contexts, and 55% appreciated the exploration of broader themes beyond the standard curriculum. These results highlight the project's success in fostering a deeper understanding, practical application, and holistic development of Pancasila values among students. Overall, the P5 initiative appears to be a well-structured and impactful program that effectively engages students and enriches their learning experience.

Discussion

The findings from the questionnaire and interviews provide a comprehensive overview of the Pancasila Project (P5) and its integration into the Merdeka Curriculum. Students overwhelmingly expressed positive perceptions of the program, particularly in its effectiveness at strengthening Pancasila values. More than 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program enhanced their understanding and application of these values. Additionally, many students acknowledged that the project's purpose and activities were clearly communicated, contributing to their ability to connect with its goals. The interviews supported these results, with students emphasizing how the activities allowed them to explore themes not typically addressed in regular classes. These opportunities enriched their understanding and broadened their perspectives, highlighting the value of the program as a complementary learning platform. The findings underline the importance

of integrating innovative approaches, such as P5, into the curriculum to foster students' holistic development and reinforce national values.

The program's overall effectiveness was also reflected in students' responses, particularly in their high levels of satisfaction with teacher involvement and the quality of resources provided. The majority of participants agreed that teachers enthusiastically led activities, encouraged participation, and provided relevant materials to support their learning. This was further reinforced by interview statements where students highlighted how teacher support positively influenced their engagement and learning outcomes. However, there were some areas for improvement. Lower percentages of agreement were observed for statements related to sufficient time allocation and students' comfort in expressing opinions during activities. Interviews revealed that some participants occasionally felt rushed and hesitated to share their thoughts openly. While these issues were minimal, they suggest areas where adjustments could further enhance the program's effectiveness. Overall, the findings indicate that while P5 has been successful in its implementation, there is room for refinement to better meet students' needs.

Engagement and critical thinking were also notable aspects of the P5 program, with most students reporting high levels of interest and participation in the activities. The majority agreed that the activities were well-connected to other subjects, fostering relevance and encouraging collaboration. Students expressed in interviews that group work and discussions helped them build teamwork skills and confidence in sharing ideas. One student noted that collaborative activities enhanced their understanding by providing opportunities to exchange ideas and solve problems together. Additionally, the program successfully encouraged critical thinking and real-life application of concepts, with students highlighting how the activities positively impacted their learning experiences. Many students appreciated that the project allowed them to apply classroom knowledge to practical situations, which strengthened their confidence and skills. These findings are supported by Prasetiyo et al. (2024) and Rachman et al. (2024) which emphasize the success of P5 in promoting engagement, critical thinking, and personal growth, making it a valuable component of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Conslusion

In conclusion, the findings from both the questionnaire and interviews indicate that the Pancasila Project (P5) has been highly effective in strengthening students' understanding and application of Pancasila values, fostering engagement, and encouraging critical thinking. The majority of students expressed satisfaction with the clarity of the program's objectives and the relevance of its activities, which allowed them to explore new themes beyond the regular curriculum. Teacher involvement was another strength, with students appreciating their enthusiasm and support, which encouraged active participation. However, some areas for improvement were identified, such as the allocation of sufficient time for activities and students' comfort in expressing their opinions. These issues, although minimal, suggest that adjustments could enhance the program further. Students also reported high levels of engagement, especially in collaborative activities that encouraged

teamwork and mutual learning. The program's focus on real-life applications and critical thinking skills was positively received, reinforcing its relevance to students' personal and academic growth. The integration of P5 into the Merdeka Curriculum was largely perceived as successful, contributing to students' holistic development. Overall, the Pancasila Project appears to be a valuable initiative, though refining certain aspects could further improve its impact and effectiveness.

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