

BEYOND THE VISIBLE CLASSROOM: HOW INDONESIA'S PANCASILA STUDENT PROFILE STRENGTHENING PROJECT PROGRAM AS HIDDEN CURRICULUM ENHANCES STUDENTS' COLLABORATION, CHARACTER FORMATION, AND CREATIVITY

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Abstract

This study analyzed how Indonesia's Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), as a hidden curriculum, contributes to collaborative abilities, character formation, and creativity enhancement. The research employed a mixed-method correlational design, collecting quantitative data from 60 junior high students across 10 schools in Palangkaraya through Likert questionnaires, complemented by qualitative interviews with 10 P5 coordinator teachers, analyzed using Pearson correlation and thematic analysis. Statistical analysis revealed significant positive correlations between P5 implementation and all outcomes: character development ($r = .507, p < .001$), collaboration skills ($r = .610, p < .001$), and creativity ($r = .652, p < .001$), representing large effect sizes with creativity showing the strongest association (42.5% explained variance). Qualitative findings confirmed P5 fosters collaborative interactions through group projects, authentic character development through real-world experiences involving responsibility and empathy, and enhanced creativity through interest-driven projects. The study concludes that P5 effectively functions as a hidden curriculum, developing Pancasila Student Profile characteristics through meaningful experiential learning that transcends conventional approaches, warranting continued policy support.

Keywords

Collaboration Character Formation Creativity, Hidden Curriculum, P5 Program.



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INTRODUCTION

Education in the era of globalization faces increasingly complex challenges (Zulfikar, 2018). Technological developments, rapid information flows, and dynamic social changes demand that the educational sector adapt and continuously undertake reforms (Multazam, 2023). Schools are no longer sufficient to merely educate students to be academically intelligent, but must also be capable of developing holistic learners, individuals who possess strong character, are able to collaborate within diversity, and are creative in addressing various real-life challenges (Hafizallah, 2024). In this context, strengthening moral values, social competencies, and 21st-century skills becomes the primary objective of national education (Dolata, 2009).

However, empirical evidence in the field demonstrates that the majority of schools in Indonesia still tend to implement conventional learning processes that are teacher-centered and focus solely on cognitive aspects (Zulfikar, 2018). Affective and psychomotor domains are often inadequately addressed (Hoque, 2016). This condition results in poor quality of social interactions among students, weak awareness of Pancasila values, and limited opportunities for creativity development (Parwati & Suastra, 2024). Students learn for grades rather than for meaning. This constitutes a serious problem, considering that the student profile expected by the government encompasses individuals who are faithful, globally minded, collaborative, independent, critically reasoning, and creative.

Addressing this issue, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemdikbudristek) introduced the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project, subsequently abbreviated as P5, as an integral component of the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka). This program is designed to develop student character through a project-based learning approach that emphasizes collaborative, participatory, and contextual processes (Meganingtyas & Aryani, 2023). P5 is implemented flexibly, not as a separate subject, but integrated into school life (Chamisijatin et al., 2023). Since it is not explicitly included in the formal curriculum structure and primary cognitive evaluation, its existence positions P5 as part of the hidden curriculum (Andarvazh et al., 2023). Herein lies the significance: it is precisely through these hidden activities that noble values are often more effectively instilled and leave lasting impressions on students' souls.

The hidden curriculum, as explained by Jackson (1990), refers to values, norms, and behaviors that are indirectly taught in schools through social interactions, regulations, routines, and institutional culture (Andarvazh et al., 2024). It is not documented in curriculum materials, yet it has

a substantial influence on character formation (Kärner & Schneider, 2024). Within the context of the P5 Program, hidden curriculum can manifest in thematic project activities that foster responsibility, empathy, honesty, collaborative skills, and creative courage, all of which develop not through lectures, but through direct experience (Cobo, 2013). The problem is that although P5 has been implemented in various schools, limited research has systematically examined its contribution to students' affective achievements, such as collaboration, character, and creativity (Tanaya Dhayinta et al., 2024). Most existing research focuses on technical implementation aspects rather than its essential impact on Pancasila student profile formation (Sutrisno & Mahruzah Yulia, 2022). Therefore, it is important to examine P5 not merely as a formal program, but as a hidden curriculum strategy that can provide profound influence on students' personality and social competencies.

Palangkaraya, as the capital city of Central Kalimantan Province, stands in much diversity that encompasses not only Dayak ethnic groups but also numerous other ethnicities, including Javanese, Banjarese, Florenese, Batakinese, and many more communities. This ethnic diversity creates social dynamics, including the school environment. The Indonesian proverb "*dimana bumi dipijak, disitu langit dijunjung*," which means wherever you are, respect and adapt to the local customs and values, contributes to minimizing friction arising from diversity (Karliani et al., 2018). Local wisdom values such as Belom Bahadat mean living in a cultured manner; huma betang means the longhouse as a symbol of togetherness; handep means mutual cooperation/gotong royong, and pintar tuntang harati means intelligent and wise are realized guides to live in diversity (Suswandari et al., 2022). In the context of character education, creativity, and collaboration, these local values have correlations with the Pancasila student profile (Pelu & Tarantang, 2018). The P5 program aims to develop, particularly the dimensions of mutual cooperation (gotong royong), global diversity (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika), and creativity. Based on preliminary observations conducted at ten junior high schools in Palangkaraya during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, it was identified that the majority of schools have implemented the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) since 2022; however, P5 implementation remains in the adjustment phase across all school components. P5 has become a government program that has been massively socialized across all levels of educational institutions, including in Central Kalimantan. Nevertheless, field implementation reveals persistent challenges. Educational equity, transportation access, inadequate digital access, and insufficient socialization regarding the P5 program constitute problems that must be addressed.

The foundation of this research emerged from preliminary findings indicating a gap between the expectations of the P5 program and the reality of its implementation in junior high schools in Palangkaraya. Initial findings from ten junior high schools in Palangkaraya city revealed that P5 implementation tends to be characterized by administrative formality: teachers develop P5 modules to fulfill curriculum requirements; however, in practice, P5 activities are often not integrated with students' real lives, and the values intended to be instilled are not consistently reflected in daily behaviors. P5 is noted as an "additional program" separate from the core curriculum. The P5 program is also a program that, when implemented with correct procedures consistently, can enhance students' 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking abilities, collaboration, creativity, and communication. However, field implementation has not yet sufficiently aligned with these excellent objectives. The essence of the P5 program is to create a generation of Pancasila students who possess strong character and holistic exploratory capabilities that can be utilized in the future. This research was conducted at the junior high school level (SMP) based on two theoretical foundations. First, Piaget's understanding suggests that individual development can be effectively guided at ages 13-15 years, during which individuals have a need to prove their self-existence (Piaget, 2000). Second, Pickering et al (2020) in their research demonstrated the fact that individuals within the 13-15 age range prefer to interact with peers. These two theoretical premises are directed toward positive outcomes to enhance creativity and collaboration, which will be highly beneficial for individuals in the future.

This research aims to analyze and understand how P5 implementation as part of the hidden curriculum contributes to three primary aspects of student development: collaborative abilities, character formation, and creativity development. This study empirically examines the relationship between P5 implementation and indicators of holistic Pancasila student profile formation. The investigation focuses on junior high school (SMP) students, considering that adolescence represents a crucial period in identity formation and social character development.

Various previous studies have demonstrated that the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) as a hidden curriculum exerts a significant influence on character formation, collaboration, and creativity among students. Research by Aeni et al. (2024) affirms that P5 plays a crucial role as a hidden curriculum in cultivating the character of Indonesian students who are faithful, independent, and practice mutual cooperation in junior high schools. Meanwhile, Trisdiono et al. (2019) found that the implementation of P5 enhances students'

collaborative skills and empathy through community-based projects. In the context of character education, Waruwu et al. (2024) elaborate that the hidden curriculum makes a significant contribution to the formation of students' morality and social responsibility. These findings are reinforced by Andika Ikhfa Nurdian et al. (2024), who highlight the positive relationship between school climate and the successful implementation of Pancasila values through informal activities not explicitly prescribed in the official curriculum. This study possesses a distinctive quality as it endeavors to integrate these three aspects within a single correlational model based on a mixed-method approach. Furthermore, this research contributes to scholarly knowledge by positioning P5 not merely as a formal program but as a hidden curriculum that implicitly shapes students' behavior and values within the school environment.

Theoretically, this research draws upon several main frameworks. First, the hidden curriculum theory by Jackson (1968), which posits that education occurs not only through formal instruction but also through indirect processes such as values instilled through the environment and social interactions (Azimpour & Khalilzade, 2015). Second, the character formation theory by Lickona (1991) which emphasizes the importance of habits and exemplary behavior in instilling moral values (Portelli, 1993). Third, the concept of collaboration is explained by Dillenbourg (1999) as interpersonal skills that develop within cooperative learning contexts (Cachia et al., 2010). Fourth, creativity, according to Torrance (1974), is the result of learning that enables exploration and freedom of thought (Lozano et al., 2022). All these theories are relevant in framing the influence of P5 as a medium of hidden curriculum in education.

Through a mixed-method approach, this research will not only reveal quantitative data through student questionnaires but also capture contextual dynamics through teacher interviews. The research findings are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the P5 program influences student behavior and social development in practice. The benefits of this research are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this study expands the examination of hidden curriculum within the Indonesian context, which is rich in local and national values. Practically, teachers, principals, and educational policymakers as a reference for developing more effective, targeted, and impactful P5 implementation strategies for student development can utilize the research findings. Thus, schools become not merely venues for knowledge transfer but arenas for holistic human development.

METHOD

This study used a mixed-method approach using an explanatory sequential design, in which the quantitative phase precedes the qualitative phase to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). Data were obtained from primary sources, questionnaires with students, and interviews with teachers. The secondary sources including school documents such as P5 activities reports. Students and teachers are from ten junior high schools in Palangkaraya that have implemented P5 for the past two years. The quantitative sample included 60 students engaged in P5 projects, and the qualitative sample consisted of 10 instructors functioning as P5 coordinators. The quantitative sample comprised 60 students actively involved in P5 projects, while the qualitative sample consisted of 10 teachers serving as P5 coordinators. A Likert scale questionnaire with four options was used to measure students' perceptions of P5 and its relationship with collaboration, character, and creativity. To check validity, the Pearson correlation was used, and to check reliability, Cronbach's Alpha (0.88) was used. This shows that the results were quite consistent. Quantitative data were examined using Pearson correlation at a 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$), whilst qualitative data were assessed by theme analysis, which included data reduction, categorization, and interpretation. The qualitative findings were subsequently employed to elucidate and reinforce the quantitative results, thereby assuring a full understanding and the validity of the research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

3.1. Quantitative Data

The Pearson correlation analysis examined the relationships between the P5 intervention and three key educational outcomes: character development, collaboration skills, and creativity. The analysis was conducted with a sample size of 60 participants.

3.1.1 P5 and its Correlation to Character Development

The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the P5 intervention and character development ($r = .507$, $p < .001$, $n = 60$). This correlation coefficient indicates a moderate to large positive relationship, suggesting a systematic linear association between the two variables.

Table 1. The Correlation between P5 and Character Development

		P5	Character
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	,507**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	60	60
Character	Pearson Correlation	,507**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	60	60

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient of .507 demonstrates that as P5 scores increase, character development scores tend to increase proportionally. The squared correlation coefficient ($r^2 = .257$) indicates that approximately 25.7% of the total variance in character development scores can be statistically accounted for by the P5 intervention scores, while the remaining 74.3% of variance is attributable to other factors not measured in this analysis. According to Cohen's (1988) benchmarks for correlation coefficients, this relationship represents a large effect size ($r > .50$), indicating not only statistical significance but also practical importance. The magnitude suggests a meaningful association that extends beyond chance occurrence and demonstrates substantial shared variance between the intervention and character outcomes. With 60 participants, this correlation demonstrates adequate statistical power for detecting medium to large effects. The highly significant p-value ($p < .001$) provides strong evidence against the null hypothesis of no relationship, with less than 0.1% probability that this association occurred due to sampling error alone.

3.1.2 P5 and its Correlation to Collaboration

The correlation analysis between P5 and collaboration skills yielded a stronger positive association ($r = .610$, $p < .001$, $n = 60$), representing a large effect size with considerable practical significance.

Table 2. The Correlation between P5 and Collaboration

		P5	Collaboration
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	,610**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	60	60
Collaboration	Pearson Correlation	,610**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	60	60

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient of .610 indicates a strong positive linear relationship, where higher P5 intervention implementation consistently corresponds with enhanced collaboration skills. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .372$) reveals that 37.2% of the variance in collaboration skills can be statistically explained by P5 intervention levels, representing a substantial proportion of explained variance in educational research contexts. This correlation is notably stronger than the character development relationship (difference of .103 in correlation coefficients), suggesting that the P5 intervention may have particular efficacy in fostering collaborative competencies compared to character development. The increase in explained variance from 25.7% to 37.2% represents an additional 11.5% of variance accounted for, indicating meaningfully enhanced predictive utility. The large correlation with high significance ($p < .001$) demonstrates robust statistical evidence for the relationship. The 95% confidence interval for this correlation would likely exclude zero by a substantial margin, indicating stable and replicable findings across similar populations and contexts.

3.1.3 P5 and its correlation to Creativity

The most substantial relationship emerged between P5 and creativity ($r = .652$, $p < .001$, $n = 60$), representing the strongest statistical association among all variables examined.

Table 3. The Correlation Between P5 and Character Development

		P5	Creativity
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	,652**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	60	60
Creativity	Pearson Correlation	,652**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	60	60

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient of .652 indicates a strong positive linear relationship approaching the upper range of large effect sizes in educational research. This coefficient suggests that creativity demonstrates the most systematic and predictable response to P5 intervention implementation. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .425$) indicates that 42.5% of the variance in creativity scores can be statistically attributed to P5 intervention levels. The correlation coefficient approaches .65, which in educational intervention research represents a particularly strong relationship. The explained variance of 42.5% indicates that nearly half of the variability in creativity outcomes can be predicted from P5 intervention scores, suggesting substantial practical utility for educational planning and

implementation. With $p < .001$ and $n = 60$, this correlation demonstrates both statistical significance and adequate sample size for reliable estimation. The large effect size, combined with high significance, provides compelling evidence for a genuine, substantial relationship that would likely replicate across similar educational contexts and populations.

3.2. Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were collected through interviews with 10 teachers serving as P5 coordinators in their respective schools. The questions related to P5 as a hidden curriculum for enhancing collaboration, character formation, and creativity. The interview results are as follows:

3.2.1. P5 as a Hidden Curriculum for Building Student Collaboration

The implementation of the P5 program has been recognized by teachers as a platform that fosters natural and productive social interactions among students—interactions that are often absent in conventional learning settings. Through project-based activities, students are required to collaborate in diverse groups that may span across classes, backgrounds, and even age groups. This dynamic environment encourages the development of communication skills, negotiation abilities, and a sense of collective responsibility. Mrs. AY from SMPN 1 shared, “Before P5 existed, many students were selfish during group work. However, since the cultural project, they have started learning to divide tasks and remind each other. A sense of collective awareness has grown.” Similarly, Mr. DMJ, a teacher from SMPK Santo Paulus, observed, “The students even choose their own team coordinator. There is a democratic selection process, and everyone participates willingly without being forced.” Mr. YT from SMPN 3 added, “They are learning to discuss rather than debate. During the environmental project, I saw them listening to one another and making decisions together.” These observations highlight the transformative potential of P5 as an authentic and inclusive medium for collaborative learning. By engaging in meaningful projects, students not only develop essential teamwork skills but also cultivate mutual respect and shared accountability, key traits that are vital for their personal and social growth.

3.2.2. Character Development through Real Experiences in P5 Projects

Through the P5 program, teachers have observed that character values are not effectively instilled through lectures alone, but rather through students' active engagement in real-life experiences filled with challenges, conflicts, and decision-making processes. Traits such as discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and empathy naturally emerge as students navigate these meaningful experiences. Mr. YDT from SMPN 14 shared, “During the project, there were students

who willingly took over their sick friend's tasks. They were not instructed to do so; they took the initiative themselves." Mr. YD from SMPN 2 noted, "I observed students who were usually indifferent beginning to show concern for their friends. They became more sensitive to others' conditions." Similarly, Mrs. PNY from SMPN 6 remarked, "They also learned to be responsible. If previously they often disengaged, now they are the ones who approach me for project reports. "These reflections highlight that character formation through P5 is transformative and deeply rooted in authentic, direct experiences. Unlike temporary behavioral changes, the values developed through these projects are more enduring, as they are cultivated through meaningful and self-driven actions. This approach underscores the importance of experiential learning in fostering holistic student development.

3.2.3. Developing Students' Creativity through Interest-Based and Real-World Context Projects

One of the most evident impacts of the P5 program is the emergence of new ideas from students that were previously unseen in routine learning activities. The freedom to choose themes, project formats, and delivery media provides ample space for diverse creative expressions. For instance, Mrs. TNY from SMPN 6 shared, "My students created a simple Android application to promote local traditional foods. It wasn't an assignment, but an idea they came up with themselves." Similarly, Mrs. LLA from SMPN 8 stated, "There was a group that had a discussion about bullying issues. They conducted their own research, recorded, edited, and shared the information in school mading." Mr.DA from SMP 4 remarked, "I was truly surprised that students who were usually passive in class managed to design an art exhibition using recycled materials, complete with a digital catalog made by Canva."

Discussion

This study's main goal is to provide empirical evidence supporting the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project's (P5) effectiveness as a hidden curriculum in promoting student development in junior secondary education. The quantitative data demonstrate strong and statistically significant positive correlations between P5 implementation and the three outcome variables investigated: Creativity ($r = .652, p < .001$), Collaboration ($r = .610, p < .001$), and Character Development ($r = .507, p < .001$). These correlation coefficients exceed the threshold for large effect sizes, indicating substantial practical significance. The qualitative data, obtained from P5 coordinators, support these findings by demonstrating that P5 cultivates authentic social interaction, thereby developing collaborative abilities and character attributes through experiential learning, as

opposed to traditional pedagogical methods. Furthermore, it allows students to channel their creativity through projects that resonate with their individual interests.

The theoretical basis for comprehending these mechanisms is rooted in Jackson's (1968) seminal research, which posited that schools exert their most significant influence on students through informal processes that occur beyond the formal curriculum. Within this context, P5 constitutes a unique variant of hidden curriculum, specifically because it is deliberately constructed rather than arising spontaneously. The efficacy of P5 demonstrates that learning is most effective when institutional support is coupled with authentic student autonomy (Portelli, 1993). The most significant correlation observed was with creativity ($r = .652$), which aligns closely with Torrance's (1974) conceptual framework, which emphasizes cognitive freedom, substantive challenges, and psychological safety as crucial prerequisites for cultivating creative abilities (Torrance, 1983) (Almeida et al., 2008). Essentially, P5 functions as a deliberately designed hidden curriculum, specifically aimed at fostering student creativity within educational environments. The correlation between P5 and Collaboration ($r = .610$) substantiates Dillenbourg's model, which underscores the significance of authentic collaborative experiences (Dillenbourg, 1999); this aligns with Vygotsky's notion of mutual scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) . Simultaneously, the association between P5 and Character ($r = .507$) supports Lickona's (1991) assertion that moral development arises from participation in genuine ethical scenarios, rather than solely from abstract discussion, thereby reflecting fundamental tenets of moral development theory (Lickona, 1991.).

Indra Daulay & Witarsa's (2024) research corroborates the positive impact of P5 on character education, demonstrating that P5 fosters student character development. The study's $r = .507$ correlation surpasses the effect size commonly observed in traditional character education programs, thereby highlighting P5's efficacy in generating authentic moral scenarios. Furthermore, Muhammad et al. (2023) provided qualitative support for P5's role in cultivating students' moral compass and sense of social responsibility. The correlation between P5 and Collaboration ($r = .610$) aligns with findings, which indicate that cooperative skills are most effectively cultivated through structured group activities that emphasize interdependence (Johnson et al., 2023). Rohman & Munir's (2024) research on the Merdeka Curriculum's implementation indicates that the P5 Program is fundamentally collaborative, with the attainment of P5 objectives hinging on the cooperative efforts of principals, educators, staff, parents, and the broader community. This collaborative

approach has demonstrably enhanced project efficacy by facilitating improved resource allocation and the exchange of ideas, concurrently fostering student character development through the promotion of teamwork, communication, and the cultivation of cooperative values and leadership skills. Consequently, the robust correlation between P5 and Creativity ($r = .652$) aligns with Cutikawati's (2024) research, which determined that P5 effectively cultivates student creativity, particularly by accommodating individual interests and aptitudes, a result of the program's emphasis on project-based learning that fosters exploration. Furthermore, Nadiah & Aminanti (2024) indicated that the P5 Program seeks to augment students' soft skill proficiencies through psychomotor training. The strong correlation found suggests that the P5 program is effective and positively affects student creativity. This aligns with the goals of the Merdeka Learning Program, which aims to develop students' creativity, their ability to generate ideas and solutions, and their enthusiasm for completing tasks (Wulandari et al., 2024). However, this study also identifies some opposing viewpoints and challenges related to the implementation of P5. Conversely, despite the favorable outcomes, existing national literature identifies obstacles including insufficient teacher preparedness, inadequate infrastructure, and the perception that P5 constitutes an extraneous obligation unrelated to academic success.

The robust correlations observed in this investigation, particularly within Palangkaraya, imply that the participating schools have successfully navigated national obstacles via targeted interventions. These institutions presumably employed key strategies, including enhanced teacher collaboration, flexible pedagogical methods, and alliances with diverse stakeholders (Sutrisno & Mahruzah Yulia, 2022). As a result, this study offers a noteworthy contribution by reframing P5 not simply as a policy instrument or administrative duty, but as a model of efficacious practice. Consequently, this study offers a distinctive perspective, framing P5 not simply as a policy mechanism but as a paradigm of exemplary practice for a deliberately designed hidden curriculum.

CONCLUSION

Based on interview data and supporting research, the implementation of P5 as a hidden curriculum has shown significant educational benefits by strengthening collaboration, character, and creativity among students. It fosters inclusive teamwork that builds communication, negotiation, and problem-solving skills—key 21st-century competencies—while promoting contextual character development through real-world projects and social engagement, enabling

students to internalize values such as responsibility, empathy, and discipline through meaningful participation and reflection. P5 also enhances creativity by encouraging interest-based projects, digital media use, and community involvement, allowing students to explore, experiment, and innovate. Overall, P5 serves as a powerful pedagogical tool that authentically shapes the Pancasila Student Profile by addressing often-overlooked aspects of learning such as social skills, character, and creativity, affirming hidden curriculum and project-based learning as effective frameworks for developing 21st-century competencies, and underscoring the need to strengthen P5 implementation and empower teachers as inclusive, reflective facilitators.

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