

THE ROLE OF PANCASILA EDUCATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The protection of students' rights and dignity is a central issue in education because schools are not merely places for the transfer of knowledge, but also spaces where justice, equality, and respect for human dignity must be realized. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach at a high school in Samarinda, Indonesia. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews with the principal, Pancasila Education teachers, and three students, as well as documentation of instructional materials and school policies. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The findings indicate that Pancasila Education supports the implementation of human rights by strengthening students' understanding of rights and responsibilities, fostering equality and justice in classroom interactions, promoting respect for human dignity, and encouraging anti-discriminatory attitudes. The uniqueness of this study lies in its practical analysis of how Pancasila Education operates as a human rights-based pedagogical instrument within the daily school culture, rather than merely as a normative or conceptual subject. Strengthening Pancasila Education through teacher role modeling, participatory learning, and consistent school policies can help prevent bullying, discrimination, and demeaning treatment, while creating a safer, more inclusive, and dignified learning environment.

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INTRODUCTION

Human Rights (HR) are fundamental rights inherent to every human being and must be respected, protected, and fulfilled in all aspects of life, including education. In Indonesia, human rights guarantees are rooted in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and are consistent with the values of Pancasila, particularly the principle of

humanity that recognizes every person as a dignified being (Assembly, 2011). Human rights education also emphasizes the development of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that enable learners to respect their own rights and the rights of others (Ardinata, 2020).

In the educational context, students are not merely recipients of instruction but rights-bearing individuals. They have the right to obtain quality education, to feel safe, to be treated fairly, to participate in learning, and to be free from discrimination, bullying, violence, and humiliating treatment. A rights-based approach to education therefore requires schools to integrate human rights principles into access, teaching quality, school governance, and everyday interactions so that students' dignity is protected within and beyond the classroom (Palguna & Dwi Atmaja, 2023).

Pancasila Education has a strategic role in connecting civic values with the practical implementation of human rights in schools (Bajaj, 2011). Through this subject, students are introduced to humanity, justice, equality, tolerance, responsibility, democratic participation, and respect for diversity (Ceswara & Wiyatno, 2018). These values are aligned with human rights education because they do not stop at cognitive understanding but also guide students to develop attitudes and behaviors that respect human dignity in social life (Declara, 2024).

Nevertheless, the implementation of students' rights and dignity in schools still faces challenges. Cases of bullying, verbal abuse, discriminatory labeling, exclusion, and unfair treatment show that knowledge about rights is not always followed by practices that protect students (Amnesty International, 2012). Human Rights-Friendly School principles emphasize that equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination, and participation must be reflected not only in school policies but also in relationships among principals, teachers, students, parents, and the wider school community (Arliman, 2022).

Teachers and school leaders therefore become key actors in transforming human rights values into visible school culture. Teacher role modeling, respectful communication, fair assessment, participatory classroom strategies, and digital literacy guidance shape how students learn to exercise responsibility and respect the dignity of others (Mayvaras et al., 2023). This is particularly important in the digital era, because online interactions can expand opportunities for learning but can also intensify bullying, exclusion, and the spread of harmful labels (Wardani & Budiono, 2023).

Despite the increasing emphasis on human rights education, previous studies have largely focused on conceptual discussions, policy frameworks, or general civic education practices rather than examining how human rights values are practically implemented through Pancasila Education in daily classroom interactions and school culture. This creates a research gap in understanding how Pancasila Education functions as a pedagogical instrument for protecting the rights and dignity of students at the school level. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of Pancasila Education in implementing human rights to protect students' rights and dignity within the school environment, especially in a senior high school in Samarinda (Tibbitts, 2002).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach. The research was conducted at a senior high school in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. The location was selected because the school had implemented Pancasila Education as part of civic character formation and had school rules related to discipline, student protection, and respectful interaction.

The informants consisted of the principal, one Pancasila Education teacher, and three students selected through purposive sampling. The selection was based on their involvement in learning activities and their knowledge of how human rights values were practiced in the school environment. This composition allowed the research to capture perspectives from school leadership, classroom practice, and student experience.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were used to examine classroom interaction, student participation, teacher communication, and the application of school rules. Interviews explored informants' understanding and experience regarding the implementation of human rights values in Pancasila Education. Documentation was used to examine lesson plans, teaching materials, school regulations, and activity records that supported the protection of students' rights and dignity.

Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The data reduction stage involved selecting information relevant to equality, justice, dignity, safety, non-discrimination, and responsibility. The

data were then presented narratively and interpreted inductively by identifying patterns, themes, and relationships among findings. Source triangulation and technique triangulation were used to strengthen the credibility of the findings (Esubalew Aman Mezmir, 2020).

RESULTS

The results of observations, interviews, and documentation show that the implementation of human rights values in the school was visible in the effort to build a safe, fair, and respectful educational environment. The dominant values found in school life were equality, justice, respect, protection, responsibility, and anti-discrimination. These values appeared in classroom interaction, teacher treatment, school rules, and the habit of encouraging students to respect one another.

Implementation of Equality and Justice in Pancasila Education

Pancasila Education helped students understand that every individual has equal rights regardless of social, economic, cultural, religious, gender, or academic background. During learning activities, the teacher provided opportunities for students to ask questions, express opinions, respond to friends' ideas, and participate in group discussions. This practice showed that equality was not only discussed as a concept but also experienced in classroom participation.

The value of justice was also reflected in the way the teacher treated students proportionally. Students who experienced learning difficulties received guidance, while students with stronger academic capacity were encouraged to assist peers and develop enrichment tasks. In this context, fairness did not mean treating all students identically, but ensuring that every student had a meaningful opportunity to learn according to their needs and abilities.

School rules were applied to all students without favoritism. Rewards and sanctions were explained as educational measures rather than as instruments of humiliation. Students stated that they felt more confident when rules were communicated clearly and applied consistently. This finding indicates that fair rules can strengthen students' trust in the school environment and support the protection of their dignity.

Respect for Students' Dignity

Respect for dignity was found in the teacher's effort to communicate politely, advise students without belittling them, and resolve problems through dialogue. Students were positioned as individuals who had the right to be heard, respected, and guided. This atmosphere encouraged students to express opinions without fear and to build positive relationships with teachers and peers.

The teacher also avoided physical and verbal violence during the learning process. Advice was delivered through explanations of consequences and moral responsibility. Students who made mistakes were guided to reflect on their actions rather than being labeled negatively. This practice strengthened students' sense of self-worth and helped prevent treatment that could degrade human dignity.

Respect for dignity was also visible in assessment practices. Students expected assessment to be objective, transparent, and accompanied by feedback. When feedback was delivered respectfully, students felt motivated to improve rather than discouraged. Thus, the protection of dignity was connected not only to interpersonal communication but also to academic processes.

Protection of Students' Right to Safety and Freedom from Discrimination

Pancasila Education contributed to the protection of students' right to feel safe by emphasizing respect for differences, empathy, solidarity, and rejection of discriminatory behavior. Students were encouraged to understand that differences in religion, culture, gender, social background, ability, and opinion should not become reasons for exclusion or bullying.

The school had rules related to discipline and the prevention of harmful behavior. Although the implementation still needed strengthening, teachers and the principal emphasized that bullying, verbal abuse, and discrimination must be addressed through guidance and educational sanctions. Students also recognized that reporting harmful treatment was important because silence could allow injustice to continue.

In the digital context, students faced challenges related to online teasing, negative comments, and the circulation of labels through social media. Pancasila Education therefore became relevant in guiding students to use digital spaces responsibly, respect others' privacy, and avoid forms of cyberbullying that could harm students' dignity.

The Role of the School Community in Implementing Human Rights

The implementation of human rights values was not solely the responsibility of the Pancasila Education teacher. The principal played a role in establishing school policies, teachers modeled respectful behavior, students participated in maintaining a harmonious environment, and parents supported character formation at home.

Cooperation between the school and parents was important in strengthening students' awareness of rights and responsibilities. Teachers stated that communication with parents helped resolve student problems more effectively, especially when issues were related to discipline, peer conflict, or digital behavior. This finding shows that the protection of students' rights requires continuity between school culture and family support.

Students also contributed to the creation of a human rights-based school environment. Their willingness to respect peers, avoid discriminatory jokes, help friends who experienced difficulties, and participate in class discussions showed that students were not only objects of protection but also active subjects in upholding human dignity.

Challenges and Supporting Factors

The main challenges in implementing human rights-based Pancasila Education were differences in student personality, peer conflict, inconsistent behavior, limited time for reflective discussion, and the influence of digital media. These challenges sometimes made students understand human rights conceptually but fail to apply them consistently in daily interaction.

Supporting factors included the school's commitment to safety, the teacher's role modeling, open communication between teachers and students, students' willingness to participate in discussion, and parent collaboration. These factors helped minimize conflict and supported the creation of a school climate that was more inclusive and respectful.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that Pancasila Education does not merely function as a cognitive subject but also as a transformative tool that shapes students' attitudes and behaviors (Sarkadi et al., 2022). This supports the view that human rights education should move beyond the transmission of legal concepts toward the formation of values, skills, and actions that enable students to respect and defend human dignity in everyday life (UNESCO & OHCHR, 2023).

The implementation of equality and justice in classroom participation shows that students learn human rights most effectively when the learning process itself respects their rights. This is consistent with the principle of education about, through, and for human rights: students learn about rights, experience rights-based treatment during learning, and are encouraged to act for the rights of others (Pitsou & Zotou, 2025).

Teacher role modeling emerged as a central factor. From the perspective of social learning theory, students learn not only from verbal instruction but also from observing how teachers communicate, solve conflicts, and treat students fairly. Therefore, when teachers demonstrate empathy, patience, and respect, students receive concrete examples of how human rights values should be practiced (Sarkadi et al., 2022).

The findings also strengthen the relevance of Pancasila Education for transformative citizenship. Students are not only expected to obey rules but also to develop moral awareness, empathy, and courage to reject discrimination (Banks, 2017). This is aligned with the idea of transformative civic education, which emphasizes the capacity of learners to participate in building a more just and inclusive community (Osler & Starkey, 2018).

The role of the school community confirms that human rights-based education must be supported by institutional culture. A Human Rights-Friendly School is not built only through classroom lessons but also through governance, relationships, curriculum, extracurricular activities, and participation of all school members (Saleh et al., 2025). Thus, anti-bullying policies, fair disciplinary procedures, and parent-school collaboration are practical requirements for protecting students' rights and dignity (Hanna, 2025).

The influence of digital media indicates that human rights education must respond to contemporary challenges. Students need digital ethics education so that freedom of expression is balanced with responsibility, respect for privacy, and awareness of the impact of online behavior. Digital literacy therefore becomes an important supporting element in preventing cyberbullying and maintaining dignity in both physical and virtual school spaces (Council of Europe & European Wergeland Centre, 2020).

The practical implication of this study is that schools should strengthen Pancasila Education through participatory learning, reflective dialogue, case-based discussion, peer collaboration, consistent anti-bullying mechanisms, and restorative guidance (Gregory et al., 2016). Such strategies help connect human rights values with discipline, responsibility, and student character formation, so that respect for rights becomes a habit rather than a slogan (Purwati et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Pancasila Education has a strategic role in implementing human rights values to protect students' rights and dignity. Its role is seen in the internalization of equality, justice, respect for dignity, protection from discrimination, and responsibility in school life. These values become effective when they are translated into classroom interaction, fair teacher treatment, inclusive learning, consistent school rules, and respectful communication among school members.

The study also shows that the protection of students' rights and dignity depends on the cooperation of the principal, teachers, students, and parents. The novelty of this study is its emphasis on the practical function of Pancasila Education as a human rights-based pedagogical instrument in everyday school culture. However, challenges remain, especially social conflict among students, inconsistency in behavior, and the influence of digital media. Therefore, schools need to strengthen participatory learning, teacher role modeling, anti-bullying policies, parent collaboration, and digital ethics education. Through consistent implementation, Pancasila Education can help schools become spaces that protect rights, uphold dignity, and develop students who respect humanistic values in daily life.

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