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Pancasila Laboratory between Practical Urgency and the Absence of Standardization within the Formal Education Environment

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Abstract

The Pancasila Laboratory is a strategic instrument in strengthening Pancasila values education through contextual, reflective, and experience-based learning for young citizens. Although its urgency is recognized, to date, there has been no standardization of conceptual, operational, or evaluative standards, even though its development is based on ideology. Standardization is needed not to impose uniform practices, but to provide a flexible, context-specific minimum quality framework that guarantees the function, process, and achievement of values. This study uses a qualitative, multi-case study design and a conceptual analysis of the Character Padepokan at UNNES, the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Laboratory at SMK Negeri 1 Sambu, and the Pancasila Laboratory School by YPLP. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The results of the study show that there is no uniform national model, but laboratory practices have developed organically through an approach of experience, reflection, collective participation, and the formation of values through habit. The findings emphasize the need for a flexible and adaptive standardization framework to ensure consistency in quality and measurable outcomes. The integrated conceptual model offered has the potential to strengthen character education, civic engagement, and the sustainability of Pancasila ideology within the national education system.

Keywords: laboratory of Pancasila, standardization of values education, character building

INTRODUCTION

The Pancasila Laboratory is a strategic instrument in strengthening Pancasila values education. The Pancasila Laboratory provides a contextual, reflective, and experience-based learning space for students as young citizens. Through the Pancasila Laboratory, Pancasila values are not only understood cognitively but also practiced through social simulations, citizenship projects, community service, and learning grounded in real social problems. Examples include procedures for obtaining an ID card, driver's license, passport, and so on.

A number of studies confirm that this kind of practical approach is more effective in shaping character, civic disposition, and citizenship competencies than normative-conceptual learning alone (Suyato & Wantoro, 2022; Hoskins & Janmaat, 2023). Therefore, the Pancasila Laboratory plays an important role as a bridge between the Pancasila ideology and the social reality of citizens, grounded in Pancasila values. However, despite its growing recognition, the Pancasila Laboratory still lacks standardization across its conceptual, operational, and evaluative aspects, even though its development is grounded in ideology. In various formal education settings, Pancasila laboratories are developed using a wide variety of approaches, varying in objectives, activity design, learning methods, and success indicators. This situation has led to the implementation of Pancasila laboratories that tend to be partial, experimental, and dependent on each institution's initiative, without a measurable, replicable quality framework.

Although not many educational institutions have such laboratories, recent research shows that the

lack of standards leads to disparities in the quality of values education and weakens the sustainability of programs aimed at strengthening the Pancasila ideology (Rahmawati & Hidayat, 2024). The lack of standardization also impairs the effective integration of Pancasila laboratories into the development of character education grounded in Pancasila values as the national character. Indeed, the requirements of Pancasila and Citizenship Education underscore the significance of integrating ideological principles, social competencies, leadership qualities, and preparedness for work, all grounded in Pancasila ethics. The OECD (2023) emphasizes that effective values and citizenship education must be designed systematically, competency-based, and include clear achievement indicators to produce citizens who are characterful, adaptive, and productive. Without clear standards, Pancasila laboratories risk becoming merely symbolic spaces rather than vehicles for transforming character and civic competence. This underscores the mounting necessity for the standardization of Pancasila laboratories, whether in the form of conceptual frameworks, operational guidelines, or achievement-based assessment tools for character and civic competence.

Standardization aims not to impose rigid uniformity in practices, but rather to establish a flexible and context-specific minimum quality framework. Through the implementation of clear standards, Pancasila laboratories are able to operate effectively as centers for fostering Pancasila values, integrated with character development, civic engagement, and the work competencies of young citizens across diverse social and institutional contexts.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative methodology utilizing a multi-case study design integrated with conceptual analysis. This approach is pertinent because the research objective extends beyond simply quantifying effectiveness. It aims to attain a comprehensive understanding of the development of Pancasila laboratories across various contexts, their implementation processes, and the manner in which Pancasila values are articulated through social interactions.

The multi-case design allows researchers to compare several identified practices, such as the Character Padepokan in universities, the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Laboratory in secondary schools, and the Pancasila Laboratory School model developed by educational foundations. Through cross-case comparisons, researchers are able to identify common patterns, differences in institutional orientation, and establish core elements that may be formulated as conceptual standards for Pancasila Laboratories.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with program managers, educators, and students to explore perceptions, learning processes, and perceived impacts. Participatory observation was used to understand the dynamics of value praxis in real activities. Meanwhile, documentation studies included analysis of the curriculum, activity guidelines, and program reports.

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and simultaneous conclusion drawing. To strengthen validity, the study applied source and technique triangulation, as well as member checking with key informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the research indicate that, to date, Indonesia has yet to establish a nationally standardized Pancasila laboratory. There is currently no formally designated 'Pancasila Laboratory' model that encompasses a consistent framework of objectives, operational procedures, and achievement indicators across educational institutions. However, the absence of standardization does not mean the absence of Pancasila laboratory practices. Conversely, empirical research indicates that Pancasila laboratories manifest in diverse forms, titles, and methodologies, tailored to the specific context of the institution, educational philosophy, and student requirements.

Some of the laboratories found include the Character Center at Universitas Negeri Semarang, the Pancasila Study Center at Universitas Gadjah Mada, the Civic Education Laboratory at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, and several others in Indonesia. These modes of practice demonstrate that the values of Pancasila have been internalized through contextually relevant and experiential learning environments,

despite not always being designated as "laboratories." This observation verifies that Pancasila laboratories in Indonesia have evolved organically and contextually, rather than through centralized policy formulation. This condition presents both advantages and disadvantages. Flexibility facilitates innovation and regional adaptation; however, the lack of standardized guidelines results in inconsistencies in quality, strategic direction, and the sustainability of implementation.

Findings within the higher education domain indicate that the Character Padepokan at Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) operates as a de facto Pancasila laboratory, despite the absence of explicit laboratory nomenclature. Padepokan Karakter was developed as a space for fostering values, attitudes, and character among students through a holistic approach that integrates moral reflection, social practice, local wisdom, and the internalization of Pancasila values. In practice, this padepokan has evolved into an informal educational platform that supplements Pancasila education within the classroom environment. It emphasizes experiential learning, role modeling, and the enhancement of civic character.

The results of the observation show that the Character Development Center serves as a space for practicing values, not merely a symbolic space. Students are not only encouraged to understand Pancasila as an ideology and the foundation of the state, but also to internalize it through activities that demand social responsibility, leadership, and empathy. This pattern illustrates the primary characteristic of a Pancasila laboratory, specifically the incorporation of experiential learning that facilitates profound internalization of values. However, since it does not conform to the standard framework of a Pancasila laboratory, the role of the padepokan heavily relies on the internal policies of the institution and the dedication of its management. Consequently, it may encounter challenges concerning sustainability and replication.

Meanwhile, in the context of vocational secondary education, SMK Negeri 1 Sambu demonstrates similar practices through the development of the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Laboratory. This laboratory explicitly promotes diversity as one of the fundamental principles of Pancasila and is intentionally designed as a space for fostering tolerance, togetherness, and unity amidst the diversity of students. The research findings indicate that this laboratory serves not only as a physical environment but also as a socio-educational platform where students learn to engage across various backgrounds, address differences, and cultivate mutual respect. Furthermore, innovations have been developed within this laboratory, involving a combination of various natural product forms, such as clothing.

The Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Laboratory at SMK Negeri 1 Sambu demonstrates that Pancasila laboratory practices can be strongly integrated into vocational education. Pancasila values are not separated from the development of work competencies but are positioned as an ethical foundation for shaping prospective workers with character. Students learn that vocational skills must be accompanied by tolerance, discipline, and social responsibility. In this case, the laboratory serves a dual purpose: as a vehicle for character education and as a reinforcement of value-based work competencies.

The Pancasila Laboratory was developed by Yayasan Pendidikan Laboratorium Pancasila (YPLP), an educational foundation located at Jalan Cilincing Pagi II No. 15A, North Jakarta. The foundation operates in the field of education with the primary vision of internalizing Pancasila values through the formal education system. The term "Laboratory" in the foundation's name emphasizes that the schools it manages are positioned as spaces for value practice rather than merely as sites for knowledge transfer. One of its initiatives is the establishment of Sekolah Laboratorium Pancasila (SLP) in Penajam Paser Utara (PPU) Regency, East Kalimantan, as a pilot project for the initial implementation of the SLP program, which was later expanded to various regions. In addition, the foundation also organizes NGOBRAS WASBANG (Ngobrol Asik Santai Wawasan Kebangsaan), a casual discussion program on national awareness conducted in several cities, including Serang and Banjarbaru.

A comparison among the Character Center at UNNES, the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Laboratory at SMK Negeri 1 Sambu Boyolali, and the Pancasila Laboratory Education Foundation reveals that the core elements of the Pancasila laboratory are indeed present, albeit under varying names, formats, and emphases. All three share a core similarity, which is placing Pancasila as a core value of life that is practiced through real experiences, not merely taught as a norm. The differences are in their institutional focus and learning objectives. At the university level, laboratories tend to emphasize critical thinking, leadership, and civic engagement among students, while at the vocational secondary level, laboratories are more aimed at developing work ethic and social tolerance.

These findings reinforce the argument that the main problem with Pancasila laboratories in Indonesia is not the absence of practice, but rather the absence of conceptual and operational standardization. In the absence of explicit standards, these diverse good practices become fragmented and pose challenges for comparative measurement of their effectiveness. Furthermore, the lack of such standards complicates the integration of Pancasila laboratories into the national education system, thereby hindering their role as strategic instruments for reinforcing the Pancasila ideology.

The variety of Pancasila laboratory formats demonstrates the necessity for a flexible and adaptable approach to standardization, rather than a uniform and inflexible one. Ideally, standardization should establish fundamental principles, general objectives, and minimum performance indicators, while retaining flexibility for contextual innovations such as character training centers or diversity laboratories. Consequently, existing local practices can be documented, enhanced, and replicated without compromising their distinctiveness. Therefore, these results and discussions confirm that Pancasila laboratories in Indonesia already exist in various forms, both in universities and secondary schools. The Character Padepokan at UNNES, the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Laboratory at SMK Negeri 1 Sambu Boyolali, and the Pancasila Laboratory Education Foundation are concrete examples of how Pancasila education based on praxis has been implemented creatively. The challenge ahead is no longer to prove its urgency, but to formulate a standardization framework that is capable of integrating the diversity of these practices into the national education system, so that Pancasila laboratories can function optimally as a vehicle for strengthening the character, civic engagement, and citizenship competencies of the younger generation.

Pancasila laboratories are an important innovation in strengthening Pancasila education, oriented towards social praxis and character building for citizens. In the development of civic education in Indonesia, there is a growing awareness that Pancasila learning is not sufficient through a normative and cognitive approach alone, but must be integrated with real experiences that enable students to internalize values in their daily lives. A number of studies on Pancasila education show that a social praxis approach can improve understanding of values while shaping more reflective and participatory civic attitudes (Suyato & Wantoro, 2022). In this context, the Pancasila Laboratory is understood as a vehicle for contextual, lively, and experience-oriented value learning.

Nevertheless, the findings from literature reviews and field practices indicate that Pancasila laboratories in Indonesia currently lack implicit and systematic standardization. There exists no comprehensive national framework that explicitly regulate the concepts, functions, processes, and achievement indicators of Pancasila laboratories across various educational levels. Research in the SINTA journal reveals that the implementation of practice-based Pancasila education still depends heavily on institutional initiatives and educators' creativity, resulting in variations in form and quality (Rahmawati & Hidayat, 2024). This condition creates a gap between the urgency of strengthening Pancasila values and the availability of structured and sustainable learning models.

Although not yet standardized, Pancasila laboratories have indeed existed in various forms of institutional practice. In higher education, this initiative frequently manifests as character training centers, national houses, or student character development centers. At the secondary school level, Pancasila value laboratories are commonly observed in the form of diversity laboratories, tolerance corners, or programs aimed at strengthening the Pancasila student profile. Research on civic education in Indonesia shows that while various implementations aim to adapt to local contexts, there is also a lack of standardized operational guidelines to unify these diverse practices (Winarno et al., 2023). In other words, the substance of Pancasila laboratories already exists, but it has not been integrated into a single established conceptual model.

In light of these conditions, the development of a conceptual model for a Standardized Pancasila Laboratory has become both an academic and practical imperative. The standardization discussed herein does not pertain to physical forms or institutional nomenclature but rather to the establishment of minimum standards concerning function, learning processes, and educational outcomes. This approach aligns with the perspectives of character education experts in Indonesia, who emphasize that the success of values education is predominantly influenced by the consistency of the process and the clarity of achievement indicators, rather than solely by institutional symbols (Samsuri, 2022). Therefore, the conceptual model for the Pancasila Laboratory should be designed flexibly while maintaining a clear quality framework.

The Standardized Pancasila Laboratory Model presupposes that Pancasila constitutes a dynamic value system that must be acquired through social experience. In this framework, the Pancasila laboratory is designated as a venue for the enactment of values, wherein students engage directly with Pancasila values in social interactions, collaborative activities, and collective endeavors decision-making. Research on experience-based Pancasila learning shows that actively involving students in social activities enhances the internalization of values like humanity, justice, and togetherness in a more meaningful way (Pratiwi & Al Hakim, 2023). Thus, the Pancasila laboratory is no longer understood as a complementary space, but as the core of value learning.

Conceptually, this model is structured around a framework of input, process, output, outcome, and long-term impact. In terms of input, the Pancasila laboratory requires a clear foundational value system, which includes Pancasila as an ideology and way of life, the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity), and democratic citizenship values. In addition, the involvement of various learning actors, such as students, educators, and community partners, is an important element. Research in the *SINTA* journal shows that collaboration between educational institutions and social communities enhances the relevance of Pancasila learning to students' real lives (Setiawan & Muchtar, 2022).

The learning process is at the core of the Standardized Pancasila Laboratory. This process is structured as an experiential learning cycle that involves engaging in real social activities, reflecting on values, participating collectively, and internalizing values through habituation. Studies on character education in Indonesia emphasize that reflection is a key component in value learning, as it helps students connect their experiences with moral and ideological meanings (Suyanto, 2023). Without reflection, social activities have the potential to become routines without any impact on character building.

Through collective participation, students learn to practice the values of democracy, deliberation, and social responsibility. This process aligns with research on citizenship indicating that engaging in collective decision-making can enhance civic participation and awareness among the youth. (Budimansyah & Karim, 2024). In the context of the Pancasila Laboratory, collective participation is not only a means of learning democracy but also a medium for internalizing the values of unity and social justice.

The output of the Standardized Pancasila Laboratory is reflected in the formation of Pancasila character and civic skills in students. Characteristics such as responsibility, empathy, tolerance, and mutual cooperation are key indicators that can be observed through behavior and social involvement. In addition, the Pancasila laboratory develops civic skills, such as communication, cooperation, and social problem-solving. Research in Civic Education shows that civic skills develop more effectively when students are involved in social projects relevant to their environment (Wahab & Sapriya, 2022).

At the outcome level, this model is anticipated to effectuate modifications in students' civic orientation. Civic engagement is an important indicator, reflected in increased social awareness, participation in public activities, and commitment to national values. A number of *SINTA* journal articles confirm that practice-based Pancasila education has a significant contribution to the formation of positive civic dispositions, such as a sense of belonging to the community and a willingness to contribute to the common good (Murdiono et al., 2023).

The long-term impact of the Standardized Pancasila Laboratory is intended to substantially reinforce the Pancasila ideology within the community. Through continuous value learning, the Pancasila Laboratory has the potential to strengthen social resilience, maintain diversity, and develop human resources with Pancasila character. Studies on civic education policy show that strengthening national ideology requires a systemic approach that integrates formal, non-formal, and community education (Samsuri & Suryadi, 2024). In this context, the Pancasila Laboratory can serve as a connecting node between education and social life.

Overall, the conceptual model of the Standardized Pancasila Laboratory provides an integrated framework for mapping and enhancing existing educational practices based on Pancasila. This model underscores that diversity in institutional structures is not problematic, provided that functions, processes, and value achievements can be standardized in a functional manner. Through this conceptual model, it is anticipated that the implementation of Pancasila laboratories across Indonesia will become more targeted, measurable, and sustainable, thereby supporting the reinforcement of national character and the improvement of citizenship quality among the younger generation.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research affirm that Pancasila laboratories in Indonesia presently lack a standardized national framework or operational model. There is no formalized template with consistent terminology, objectives, procedures, and performance indicators across various educational levels. Nonetheless, the lack of standards does not imply the absence of practice. On the contrary, various forms of Pancasila laboratories have developed organically and contextually, such as the Character Padepokan at UNNES, the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Laboratory at SMK Negeri 1 Sambu, and the Pancasila Laboratory School developed by YPLP. All three demonstrate that the internalization of Pancasila values has been accomplished through an approach rooted in experience, reflection, collective participation, and the habitual application of values in practical life.

These findings indicate that the primary challenge does not lie in the urgency or existence of Pancasila laboratories, but rather, it resides in the necessity for a flexible and adaptable standardization framework. Such standards are essential to ensure consistency in function, quality of processes, and the measurability of educational outcomes. Through an integrated conceptual model, Pancasila laboratories possess the potential to serve as strategic instruments for reinforcing character development, civic engagement, and the sustainability of the Pancasila ideology within the national education framework.

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