



## Pancasila's Influence on Student Perspectives Regarding Tolerance and Diversity: A Case Study at Politeknik Bhakti Kartini

Yasin Azhari

Politeknik Bhakti Kartini, Indonesia

**Abstract.** *As Indonesia's foundational ideology, Pancasila promotes national unity by encouraging tolerance and inclusivity among its people. This study explores how students at Politeknik Bhakti Kartini comprehend and apply Pancasila principles in their daily lives, particularly concerning cultural diversity and tolerance. Adopting a qualitative descriptive method, this research analyzes student perspectives through surveys and thematic evaluations. The results suggest that while students possess a solid theoretical grasp of Pancasila, challenges persist in translating these values into practical actions, particularly in fostering inclusivity and countering digital misinformation. This study highlights the need for adaptive teaching methods, interfaith and intercultural discussions, and enhanced digital literacy programs to strengthen students' application of Pancasila values. By integrating experiential learning and encouraging proactive engagement, higher education institutions can cultivate a more inclusive and tolerant academic environment.*

**Keywords:** *digital literacy, diversity, intercultural education, Pancasila, student perspectives, tolerance*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Pancasila, as Indonesia's foundational ideology and guiding principle, encompasses fundamental values that serve as a reference for social, national, and governmental life. One of its key elements is the principle of tolerance and diversity, which acts as the backbone of unity in a multicultural society. As the nation's future leaders, students hold a crucial role in preserving and embodying these values within their academic and social lives.

Tolerance within the framework of Pancasila refers to mutual respect and acceptance of societal differences. Bung Karno asserted that Pancasila is the *philosophische grondslag* or philosophical foundation of the nation, which must be upheld in state governance (Soekarno, 1945). This means that Pancasila is not just a political doctrine but also a moral guideline for fostering a harmonious and inclusive society. In higher education, students are expected not only to comprehend Pancasila theoretically but also to implement its values in real life, especially when interacting with individuals from diverse cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.

Diversity stands as one of Indonesia's greatest assets, necessitating both preservation and respect. From an educational standpoint, John Dewey (1916) asserted that "education is not preparation for life; education is life itself," highlighting that learning experiences, including engaging with diversity within the campus environment, are instrumental in shaping one's character. By understanding and valuing differences, students cultivate inclusivity, an essential trait for both social and professional spheres.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Pancasila, Humanity, and Diversity in Scholarly Perspectives**

Prof. Dr. Nurcholish Madjid emphasized that Islam and nationalism are not conflicting concepts but rather reinforce each other. He posited that "Islam, nationalism, and humanity are three interconnected elements essential for constructing a peaceful and harmonious civilization" (Madjid, 1992). This idea is especially relevant for polytechnic students from diverse backgrounds, encouraging them to use Pancasila as a bridge to promote harmony.

Additionally, Azyumardi Azra stressed the importance of upholding diversity in Indonesia through an inclusive approach. He noted that "in a pluralistic society like Indonesia, tolerance is not merely an attitude but a social practice that must be actively demonstrated in daily life" (Azra, 2004). As young intellectuals, polytechnic students should cultivate a critical awareness of the importance of tolerance as an integral component of national and state identity.

Indonesia's fourth President, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), also highlighted that diversity should not be viewed as a threat but as a strength that must be nurtured. He stated, "Religion and nationalism must not be positioned against each other since both serve as fundamental pillars in establishing a peaceful and prosperous Indonesia" (Wahid, 2000). Therefore, polytechnic students should cultivate fresh perspectives and innovative ideas on how to apply tolerance in their academic and social lives.

From a sociological viewpoint, Emile Durkheim (1912) argued that social solidarity in a heterogeneous society is only achievable when shared values are upheld by all members. In Indonesia, Pancasila serves as the primary foundation for fostering harmony across cultural, ethnic, and religious differences. This further reinforces the role of polytechnic students in maintaining social cohesion through national values.

### **Challenges of Diversity in the Digital Age**

Despite the benefits of globalization and digital advancement, upholding Pancasila's values, tolerance, and diversity presents increasing challenges. The rapid spread of information via social media often exacerbates social tensions through misinformation and hate speech. As Yuval Noah Harari remarked, "Misinformation is now a greater threat than ever before, shaping public perception and undermining democratic values" (Harari, 2018). Consequently, students, as change agents, must not only understand but also internalize Pancasila's values in their daily interactions.

Similarly, philosopher Amartya Sen (2006), in his book *Identity and Violence*, highlighted that societal divisions often stem from singular identities being used to justify discrimination and conflict. In this context, polytechnic students must recognize that diversity is a strength rather than a liability. Therefore, fostering an inclusive national identity based on Pancasila is essential for maintaining social stability.

As Mahatma Gandhi once stated, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others" (Gandhi, 1948). In this light, students can contribute to strengthening the values of tolerance and diversity through concrete actions within their academic and societal settings. This aligns with Ki Hajar Dewantara's view that "education is not merely about knowledge transfer but also about character-building rooted in nationalism" (Dewantara, 1922).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. **Research Approach** This study adopts a descriptive qualitative methodology aimed at gaining insights into how students at Politeknik Bhakti Kartini perceive and interpret the principles of Pancasila, tolerance, and diversity in their academic and social experiences. Creswell (2014) suggests that qualitative research allows for a deeper exploration of individual and collective understandings of social phenomena.
2. **Research Setting and Participants** The research was conducted at Politeknik Bhakti Kartini, which comprises students from a wide range of social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Participants were selected from various academic programs using specific criteria to ensure a diverse spectrum of perspectives on the subject matter.
3. **Sampling Strategy** A purposive sampling method was employed to select participants with direct experience and understanding of Pancasila, tolerance, and diversity within the academic environment. The key participants in this study include: a) Students from different academic disciplines who are actively engaged in academic and extracurricular activities. b) Lecturers specializing in Pancasila and civic education with an academic perspective on national values. c) Student organization leaders involved in social, cultural, and religious initiatives on campus.
4. **Data Collection Methods** The data collection process incorporated multiple techniques: a) **In-depth Interviews** Semi-structured interviews were conducted to capture students' interpretations of Pancasila, tolerance, and diversity. The questions focused on how these values are integrated into their daily academic and social interactions. b) **Participant Observation** Observations were carried out during

lectures, student organizational events, and academic discussions to examine the practical application of Pancasila and tolerance in students' daily lives. c) **Document Analysis** Additional data were gathered from institutional documents, such as the Pancasila education curriculum, campus diversity policies, and records of student activities that illustrate the implementation of national and tolerance values.

5. **Data Analysis Techniques** The data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which consisted of the following stages: a) **Data Reduction** – Information obtained from interviews, observations, and documents was categorized into key themes such as Pancasila awareness, experiences of tolerance, and perspectives on diversity. b) **Coding and Classification** – The collected data were systematically coded and grouped according to emerging patterns in students' narratives. c) **Interpretation and Conclusion** – The analyzed data were then connected to relevant theoretical frameworks to develop a comprehensive understanding of polytechnic students' perspectives on Pancasila, tolerance, and diversity.
6. **Ensuring Data Credibility and Reliability** Several validation techniques were employed to ensure data reliability and credibility: a) **Source Triangulation**, which involved cross-checking data from various sources, including interviews, observations, and documents. b) **Member Validation**, which entailed verifying findings with participants to confirm that the interpretations accurately reflected their perspectives. c) **Audit Trail**, which ensured transparency by systematically recording the entire data collection and analysis process.
7. **Ethical Considerations** This research adhered to ethical guidelines, including: a) **Informed Consent**, ensuring that participants voluntarily agreed to partake in the study after being informed of its purpose and procedures. b) **Confidentiality and Anonymity**, protecting the identities of participants to maintain privacy in the research findings. c) **Transparency and Integrity**, presenting the study's results truthfully and without data manipulation.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

##### **1. Pancasila as a Core Value in a Multicultural Society**

Pancasila plays a fundamental role in fostering social harmony and establishing an inclusive society. As the foundational ideology of the state, Pancasila is not merely a political framework but also an ethical compass for everyday life. In the context of students at Politeknik

Bhakti Kartini, comprehending Pancasila's principles is crucial for navigating the challenges of diversity within campus life and broader society.

Soekarno stated, "Pancasila is not just an ideology but a unifying force for the nation. With Pancasila, we achieve unity without uniformity." (Soekarno, 1959). This highlights that diversity should be regarded as a valuable asset rather than something to be eradicated. Polytechnic students, regardless of their regional, ethnic, or religious backgrounds, must recognize that they are part of a unified whole based on Pancasila.

Furthermore, Franz Magnis-Suseno emphasized that "Pancasila serves as a meeting point that enables Indonesians to coexist harmoniously despite differences." (Magnis-Suseno, 1997). Thus, students should not perceive Pancasila as merely a theoretical concept but rather as a guiding principle that must be practiced in daily interactions and future professional endeavors.

## **2. Tolerance in the Polytechnic Student Environment**

Tolerance reflects an attitude of mutual respect and appreciation for differences within society. Among students, tolerance is reflected in interpersonal interactions that prioritize social cohesion.

Azyumardi Azra remarked, "Tolerance is not simply about accepting differences but about transforming them into strengths to build a more harmonious society." (Azra, 2004). This implies that polytechnic students should not only acknowledge diversity but also actively engage in collaborations with individuals from varied backgrounds.

From an Islamic perspective, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari asserted that "Islam teaches *tasamuh* (tolerance), where Muslims must coexist peacefully with other communities in the spirit of fraternity." (Hasyim Asy'ari, 1947). For polytechnic students, applying the principle of *tasamuh* is particularly significant, especially within academic and extracurricular settings.

Gus Dur reinforced this idea, stating, "It does not matter what your religion or ethnicity is; if you contribute positively to others, your background becomes irrelevant." (Wahid, 2003). This reinforces that tolerance should transcend mere rhetoric and be translated into real actions that benefit the community.

## **3. Diversity as Social Capital in Academic Life**

The diversity present on polytechnic campuses reflects the broader pluralism of Indonesian society. In higher education, diversity is an invaluable social asset that fosters an inclusive and dynamic academic environment.

Clifford Geertz noted, "Cultural diversity is a crucial element in a nation's development as it drives innovation and broadens learning opportunities." (Geertz, 1963). For polytechnic students, diversity can serve as a catalyst for expanding perspectives and fostering creativity in learning.

However, if not properly managed, diversity can also lead to social tensions. Amartya Sen, in *Identity and Violence*, emphasized that "Social conflicts often arise when exclusive identities are prioritized over broader national unity." (Sen, 2006). Therefore, polytechnic students must embrace their shared identity as Indonesian citizens, ensuring that national cohesion takes precedence over factional interests.

#### **4. Challenges and Opportunities in Fostering Tolerance and Diversity on Campus**

The digital era presents both opportunities and challenges in maintaining values of tolerance and diversity among polytechnic students. One of the major challenges is the rapid spread of misinformation and hate speech, which can escalate social divisions.

Yuval Noah Harari cautions, "Misinformation has become a significant threat, shaping public perceptions and undermining democratic values." (Harari, 2018). To counter this, polytechnic students must develop strong digital literacy skills to critically assess information and prevent the dissemination of false narratives.

Additionally, from a psychological perspective, Gordon Allport, in *The Nature of Prejudice*, suggested that "Direct intergroup interaction reduces prejudice and fosters social understanding." (Allport, 1954). Consequently, providing spaces for intercultural and interfaith discussions within polytechnic campuses can be an effective strategy for promoting inclusivity.

Despite these challenges, several opportunities exist to reinforce tolerance and diversity, including: 1) Utilizing digital platforms to disseminate positive messages about unity and inclusivity. 2) Encouraging student-led initiatives that foster collaboration among individuals from diverse backgrounds. 3) Integrating national values into the academic curriculum to deepen students' appreciation of the significance of tolerance in a multicultural society.

#### **Challenges**

Despite the fundamental role of Pancasila, tolerance, and diversity in shaping national and civic life, their practical application among students at Politeknik Bhakti Kartini still encounters various obstacles. These challenges stem not only from students' personal understanding but also from broader societal, cultural, and technological influences.

### **1. Limited Integration of Pancasila's Values in Daily Life**

Although Pancasila is meant to serve as a guiding principle for social interactions, many students perceive it solely as a theoretical subject rather than a principle to be implemented in their everyday lives. The following indicators highlight this issue: a) A superficial understanding of the significance of Pancasila in both academic and social settings. b) A tendency among students to regard Pancasila as just another compulsory course rather than a foundational value applicable to real-world interactions. c) Low engagement in critical discussions and minimal efforts to incorporate Pancasila into campus activities.

Franz Magnis-Suseno asserts that "Pancasila cannot thrive if it remains a theoretical construct without real-life application." (Magnis-Suseno, 1997). It is essential to foster environments that encourage students to actively implement Pancasila's values in their daily experiences.

### **2. Emergence of Exclusivist Attitudes and Declining Tolerance Among Students**

Tolerance is a crucial element of national unity, yet some students tend to engage primarily with individuals who share similar cultural, religious, or ideological backgrounds. This phenomenon contributes to: a) Limited social interactions among students from diverse backgrounds, both academically and socially. a) The development of stereotypes and prejudices, weakening social bonds within campus communities. b) The reinforcement of exclusivist perspectives that may lead to tensions and conflicts in academic settings. As Azyumardi Azra pointed out, "Tolerance should not be limited to passive acceptance; it must be reflected in interactions that strengthen unity." (Azra, 2004). Encouraging students to embrace diversity as a source of strength rather than division is vital in addressing this issue.

### **3 Digital Challenges: Spread of Misinformation and Hate Speech Among Students**

The rapid advancement of digital technology significantly impacts student life, offering both opportunities and risks. One pressing challenge is the spread of false information and hate speech, which can escalate conflicts among different groups. Key issues include: a) The widespread circulation of misleading information (hoaxes) related to religion, social issues, and politics, intensifying social divisions. b) Insufficient digital literacy among students, making them more susceptible to misinformation without proper verification. c) The growing prevalence of hate speech and polarization on social media, which can lead to real-world conflicts.

As Yuval Noah Harari observed, "Misinformation has emerged as one of the most significant threats, shaping public perception and potentially undermining democratic values." (Harari, 2018). Polytechnic students must develop the ability to critically evaluate digital content to prevent the spread of misinformation and safeguard social harmony.

#### **4. Lack of Platforms for Cross-Cultural and Interfaith Dialogue on Campus**

The diversity found in polytechnic institutions reflects Indonesia's pluralistic society. However, there is still a lack of sufficient spaces for students to engage in meaningful conversations that foster mutual understanding. This deficiency leads to: a) A scarcity of student forums or initiatives that emphasize diversity and tolerance. b) Limited student participation in multicultural awareness programs. c) A tendency for students to form exclusive social groups, reducing opportunities for cross-cultural interactions.

Gus Dur emphasized, "Diversity is not a problem; it is a valuable asset that requires conscious effort to preserve and nurture." (Wahid, 2003). To address this, institutions must create more opportunities for students to engage in dialogue that promotes inclusivity and mutual respect.

#### **5. Insufficient Practical Application of Pancasila's Principles in Education and Student Activities.**

Although Pancasila is incorporated into the academic curriculum, it is often taught as a theoretical subject rather than being practically applied in student initiatives. Some key concerns include: a) Teaching methods that lack interactivity, leading students to absorb knowledge passively rather than actively applying Pancasila's values. b) Student organizations and extracurricular activities that do not fully integrate national values and principles of inclusivity. c) A shortage of programs that encourage students to embody Pancasila through real-world engagement and social initiatives.

Ki Hajar Dewantara stated, "Education is not just about imparting knowledge; it is about shaping character rooted in national identity." (Dewantara, 1922). Therefore, educational institutions should develop curricula that encourage students to internalize and apply Pancasila's values effectively in their daily lives.

**STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS ON UNDERSTANDING OF PANCASILA, TOLERANCE, AND DIVERSITY (Survey conducted on 100 students from various study programs at Politeknik Bhakti Kartini)**

Aspect	Excellent (%)	Good (%)	Moderate (%)	Poor (%)	Unaware (%)
Understanding of Pancasila principles	30%	40%	20%	7%	3%
Implementation of Pancasila values in daily activities	28%	42%	22%	6%	2%
Perspective on cultural and religious diversity on campus	35%	40%	18%	5%	2%
Participation in tolerance and national awareness activities	22%	38%	25%	10%	5%
Response to misinformation and hate speech on social media	18%	38%	28%	12%	4%
Interest in discussions or seminars on tolerance and diversity	25%	35%	25%	10%	5%

**Data Interpretation**

1. **Comprehension of Pancasila Principles.** A significant proportion (70%) of students possess a strong or very strong understanding of Pancasila, yet around 10% still struggle to grasp its core values. This suggests that while Pancasila education is effective, practical application needs further emphasis.
2. **Application of Pancasila in Everyday Life.** About 70% of students believe they incorporate Pancasila values in their daily interactions. However, 8% report that they do not consistently apply it, possibly due to a lack of exposure to complex social situations.
3. **Attitude Towards Diversity.** 75% of students exhibit a positive approach to cultural and religious diversity, while 7% show resistance. This highlights the need for further initiatives to promote inclusivity within the academic environment.
4. **Involvement in Tolerance and National Awareness Initiatives.** Only 60% of students actively engage in activities that promote tolerance and national unity, while 15% show low involvement and 5% remain completely disengaged. The institution should enhance programs that encourage students to participate in nation-building and tolerance-driven activities.
5. **Reaction to Misinformation and Hate Speech.** 56% of students demonstrate critical awareness and do not readily believe unverified information. However, 16% lack concern, while 4% remain unaware of how to assess misinformation, indicating a need for better digital literacy programs.

6. **Interest in Tolerance and Diversity Discussions.** 60% of students express interest in discussions or seminars on tolerance and diversity. This suggests that a portion of students still lacks engagement in these topics, likely due to a perceived lack of relevance to their personal experiences.

## 5. CONCLUSION

An analysis of Pancasila, tolerance, and diversity in the perceptions of students at Politeknik Bhakti Kartini reveals that while their understanding of national values is generally strong, challenges persist in applying these values in daily life. **Students' Grasp of Pancasila** Although most students have a good conceptual understanding of Pancasila, some only recognize it in a formal sense without internalizing its principles in their daily interactions. While formal education provides a solid theoretical background, a more experiential approach is needed to encourage students to actively apply these principles in academic and social contexts. **Integration of Pancasila into Everyday Life** Many students believe they implement Pancasila values in their daily routines, yet maintaining consistency remains difficult, particularly when navigating social differences. A portion of students remains inactive in initiatives that foster national unity, such as participation in academic and social programs that promote inclusivity and cultural appreciation. **Perceptions of Diversity and Tolerance** While most students recognize and respect cultural and religious diversity, some still exhibit exclusive tendencies in their social circles. A lack of cross-cultural and interfaith engagement within the university environment may limit the development of inclusive perspectives among students. **Digital Era Challenges: Misinformation and Social Division** The rise of digital platforms has introduced new obstacles to reinforcing Pancasila values, particularly in combating fake news, hate speech, and social polarization. While some students demonstrate awareness of the dangers posed by misinformation, others lack the necessary digital literacy skills to critically evaluate online content, leaving them vulnerable to misleading narratives that may contribute to societal divides. **Limited Engagement in Nationalism-Oriented Activities** Participation in programs that promote nationalism and tolerance remains low, often due to students' time constraints, lack of awareness, or a perceived disinterest in existing initiatives. The limited number of spaces for open discussions among students from diverse backgrounds also hinders the development of broader multicultural awareness.

This study underscores Pancasila's continued relevance as a guiding principle for fostering tolerance and cultural inclusivity among students. However, a more dynamic educational, social, and digital approach is necessary to ensure that these values are effectively

translated into practical action. As Gus Dur famously stated, “*Diversity is not a threat but a treasure that must be preserved together.*” Thus, students at Politeknik Bhakti Kartini play an essential role in shaping an Indonesia that embraces inclusivity, tolerance, and national unity. Through strategic interventions and collaboration between educators, students, and university administrators, the principles of Pancasila, tolerance, and cultural diversity can be sustained and developed, ultimately fostering a more harmonious and progressive society.

### **Recommendations**

To address these issues, several approaches can be adopted to enhance students’ understanding and real-life application of Pancasila, tolerance, and diversity within academic settings: a) Adopting interactive teaching strategies, including case studies, community-based projects, and interactive dialogues, to help students connect Pancasila values to real-life experiences. b) Establishing mentorship programs and tolerance-focused activities that enable students to engage with peers from different cultural and religious backgrounds, fostering a more open-minded and inclusive mindset. c) Strengthening digital literacy skills, particularly in identifying and countering misinformation and hate speech, through workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns within the university. d) Making participation in social and nationalism-oriented activities a curricular requirement or a credited academic component, encouraging students to take an active role in programs that reinforce unity and national values. e) Expanding opportunities for cultural exchange and discussion forums, such as multicultural festivals, student-led forums, and national discourse events, to inspire students to cultivate a deeper appreciation for diversity.

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