

The Implementation of Preliminary State Defense Education in Shaping the Character and State Defense Awareness of Students at Pakuan University Based on Pancasila Values

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Abstract

This study analyzes the implementation and effectiveness of the Preliminary State Defense Education (PPBN) program at Pakuan University in shaping student character and enhancing national defense awareness based on Pancasila values. As globalization intensifies and individualistic ideologies increasingly influence youth, instilling civic

responsibility and national identity has become more challenging. Employing a qualitative-descriptive approach, this research evaluates program outcomes through document analysis, stakeholder reports, and thematic insights into student engagement. The findings indicate that PPBN—though conducted over only three days—has succeeded in introducing core values such as nationalism, solidarity, and social responsibility. However, the short duration and varying levels of student motivation limit long-term value internalization. To improve effectiveness, the study recommends integrating civic values into broader curricular and extracurricular programs, incorporating digital and immersive learning tools, and expanding partnerships with external institutions. Alumni involvement and gamification are also proposed as innovative strategies to maintain student interest and deepen experiential learning. Overall, PPBN is a strategic initiative in national character education, yet it requires continuous innovation and policy support to remain relevant and impactful. This study contributes to the discourse on civic education in higher education and offers insights for curriculum developers and policymakers seeking to strengthen national identity in a globalized era.

Keywords: *Pancasila Values, Character Education, National Defense Awareness, Civic Engagement, Higher Education in Indonesia*

Introduction

National defense is a fundamental responsibility that must be upheld by every citizen in a sovereign state. In the context of Indonesia, the 1945 Constitution (Article 27, Paragraph 3) explicitly states that every citizen has the right and duty to participate in efforts to defend the nation. This constitutional mandate is not only legal in nature but also reflects a deeper moral obligation rooted in love for the homeland and loyalty to the values that shape national identity. The concept of national defense (*bela negara*) encompasses not only military defense but also civil efforts that aim to preserve unity, integrity, and national resilience in the face of various global and internal challenges (Subekti & Wahyuni, 2022).

Hence, education—especially at the university level—becomes an important arena for cultivating the character and awareness necessary for national defense, particularly in an era where threats are increasingly ideological and non-physical in nature.

Higher education institutions in Indonesia, including Pakuan University, are expected to integrate national defense education into their curriculum. This form of education, commonly referred to as Preliminary State Defense Education (*Pendidikan Pendahuluan Bela Negara*, or PPBN), serves as a strategic vehicle for instilling Pancasila-based values in students. Pancasila, as the philosophical and ideological foundation of the Indonesian state, embodies key values such as nationalism, humanism, democracy, social justice, and mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*). These values are crucial for shaping individuals who are not only academically competent but also morally grounded and socially responsible (Sutrisno & Prasetyo, 2021). PPBN aims to reinforce these ideals by aligning cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of learning with the moral imperatives of national unity and identity preservation. Therefore, universities have a strategic role not just as knowledge producers, but also as moral and civic institutions.

However, implementing PPBN in practice often encounters significant challenges. One major issue is the limited depth of students' understanding of Pancasila values, which are sometimes perceived as abstract or ceremonial rather than as guiding principles for daily conduct. In addition, student motivation varies widely, and not all learners exhibit enthusiasm toward subjects related to national ideology and citizenship (Yuwono & Sumarsono, 2020). This is further complicated by the changing media landscape and the influence of global digital culture, which tends to emphasize individualism, consumerism, and skepticism toward traditional institutions. Consequently, there is a growing concern about moral degradation, weakening national identity, and reduced civic engagement among youth. These trends call for more engaging and adaptive pedagogical strategies in delivering national defense education.

The PPBN program at Pakuan University seeks to address these issues by employing a values-based and character-oriented approach to

learning. Through structured modules, student discussions, experiential learning, and interaction with community and government actors, the program attempts to foster critical thinking and civic responsibility rooted in Pancasila values. Students are encouraged to internalize concepts such as national unity, solidarity, responsibility, and resilience. Moreover, the program promotes ethical reflection on current national issues, preparing students to become agents of change in both local and national contexts. Although the initiative has achieved some success in cultivating awareness, preliminary observations suggest that its impact is still uneven across departments, partly due to variations in instructional quality and institutional support.

The relevance of PPBN becomes even more critical in the face of globalization and digital transformation. These phenomena not only reshape economic and technological structures but also affect the cultural and ethical foundations of society. In such a landscape, education must adapt to foster students who are both globally competent and locally rooted. National defense education, when properly implemented, can serve as a moral compass amid ideological confusion and identity crisis (Arifin, 2023). Pakuan University's initiative aligns with broader national education policies that aim to produce graduates with strong character, a sense of nationalism, and readiness to contribute to sustainable national development. The PPBN program, therefore, represents a form of civic innovation that responds to the shifting demands of contemporary society.

Given the strategic importance of national character education, this study aims to evaluate the implementation of PPBN at Pakuan University with a focus on how it shapes students' character and awareness of national defense based on Pancasila values. By employing a qualitative descriptive method involving literature analysis and interviews with key stakeholders, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and limitations of the program. The findings are expected to contribute to the improvement of educational strategies in civic and character education and to inform policymakers in the formulation of more responsive and contextual national education

policies. Ultimately, this study aspires to support the broader goal of building a resilient, ethical, and nationally conscious younger generation, equipped to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative literature-based research approach, relying on published sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles, official reports, institutional documents, and academic publications related to the implementation of Preliminary State Defense Education (PPBN) at Pakuan University. The data collected encompassed academic documentation, curricular materials, program implementation guidelines, and evaluative reports issued by relevant educational stakeholders. These sources were critically analyzed to gain insights into the structure, objectives, and outcomes of the PPBN program as implemented in the university setting.

The primary aim of this methodological approach was to evaluate how the PPBN program has contributed to shaping student character and enhancing national defense awareness based on the foundational values of Pancasila. By synthesizing data from a variety of credible sources, this study sought to construct an evidence-based assessment of the program's effectiveness, identify key challenges in its implementation, and provide recommendations for policy and curriculum improvement. The method enabled a contextual understanding of how civic and character education is operationalized within higher education institutions, particularly in the context of national ideology and youth development.

Result and Discussion

Implementation of Pancasila Values in the Preliminary State Defense Education (PPBN) Program

Pakuan University conducts the Preliminary State Defense Education (PPBN) program as part of its character education initiative, targeting new students during their initial orientation period. This three-day program is designed to instill foundational national values derived from Pancasila, including patriotism, discipline, unity, and national awareness.

Despite the limited duration, the program incorporates both theoretical and practical elements, aiming to cultivate not only students' understanding of state defense but also their civic engagement and moral responsibility as future contributors to national development.

The core Pancasila values embedded in the PPBN program at Pakuan University are as follows:

1. **Nationalism:** The program emphasizes the importance of love for the homeland and the responsibility to uphold national sovereignty. Students are encouraged to internalize these values through reflection and engagement in thematic discussions and patriotic activities.
2. **Mutual Cooperation and Unity (Gotong Royong):** Group-based activities serve as a pedagogical tool to promote collaboration, solidarity, and social harmony, reflecting the spirit of unity that Pancasila upholds.
3. **Discipline and Perseverance:** The PPBN also aims to instill discipline, self-control, and a fighting spirit necessary for overcoming challenges both within the academic context and as future citizens navigating complex societal issues.

This structured approach aligns with national education directives that seek to strengthen civic identity through value-based learning experiences (Yuwono & Sumarsono, 2020; Sutrisno & Prasetyo, 2021).

The PPBN program at Pakuan University is not merely symbolic or ceremonial; it is oriented toward preparing students for active participation in the nation's civic and security frameworks. Based on institutional documentation and program evaluations, several specific objectives of the PPBN initiative can be identified:

1. **Equipping New Students with Foundational Civic Values:** The primary goal is to provide students with a moral and ideological foundation that includes discipline, patriotism, perseverance, and unity—traits considered essential for meaningful participation in national defense efforts.

2. **Strengthening Campus and National Resilience:** Beyond individual character formation, PPBN is intended to foster institutional resilience by organizing students as a stabilizing force capable of contributing to campus security and broader national preparedness. This objective echoes the national strategy for total defense (*Sistem Pertahanan dan Keamanan Rakyat Semesta* or *Sishankamrata*), wherein every citizen plays a role.
3. **Promoting Participation in Sishankamrata Components:** Students are introduced to and encouraged to understand the framework of people-based defense systems, including community protection units (Linmas), civilian security forces (Kamra), and civil resistance units (Wanra), aligning civic education with national defense principles (Subekti & Wahyuni, 2022).
4. **Cultivating Pancasila-Based Personality:** Lastly, the program aims to shape student personality traits consistent with Pancasila values, ensuring these principles are not only understood but practiced in everyday university life and beyond. This includes ethical conduct, social empathy, and critical awareness—all essential for building an inclusive and cohesive society (Arifin, 2023).

The results from this evaluation suggest that while the PPBN program at Pakuan University is relatively short in duration, it plays a vital role in character education and national defense awareness formation. Future iterations of the program may benefit from extended duration, enhanced instructional design, and stronger integration across faculties to ensure broader impact and sustainability.

Student Character Development and the Enhancement of National Defense Awareness

The Preliminary State Defense Education (PPBN) program at Pakuan University offers students a structured opportunity to cultivate character through activities grounded in discipline, cooperation, and responsibility. Despite its limited duration of three days, the program integrates

leadership training, group exercises, and simulation-based learning aimed at fostering key personal qualities such as integrity, resilience, and commitment. These character-building elements are vital in preparing students to become individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also socially responsible and nationally conscious. Leadership development, in particular, plays a central role in helping students internalize the values of national defense beyond its physical dimensions, encouraging ethical reflection and civic engagement in daily academic life (Yuwono & Sumarsono, 2020).

While the PPBN program is relatively short, preliminary observations and qualitative feedback from participants suggest it has a tangible impact on student attitudes and behaviors. The combination of theoretical instruction and interactive learning strategies fosters meaningful engagement with Pancasila values and encourages students to demonstrate scholarly discipline and national commitment in their actions. Students are involved in team-building exercises that enhance their understanding of cooperation, mutual respect, and strategic problem-solving—skills that are relevant both to personal development and the broader context of national unity. Such experiential learning encourages long-term retention of national values and complements academic competencies with civic virtues (Arifin, 2023).

A notable outcome of the PPBN initiative is the increased sense of responsibility among students toward campus safety and order. Participants become more aware that national defense is not solely concerned with military involvement, but also includes efforts to promote social harmony and contribute to national development through civilian means. The program emphasizes that defending the country can take the form of participating in social service, maintaining civic discipline, and advocating for justice—acts that align with the non-physical dimensions of defense education. Students begin to understand their roles as active citizens who can contribute to national resilience by supporting ethical, inclusive, and sustainable community development (Subekti & Wahyuni, 2022).

Despite the successes observed, the program also faces several challenges. One major limitation is the program's duration. Conducting character and ideological transformation within three days is inherently constrained. Therefore, a more sustainable approach would involve the integration of Pancasila and defense values into co-curricular and extra-curricular activities throughout students' academic journeys. Another issue is the variation in student motivation; while some participants demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm, others perceive PPBN as a compulsory academic formality. This disparity in attitude influences the depth of impact the program can achieve. Addressing this challenge requires differentiated instructional strategies and ongoing mentorship to reinforce the program's core messages (Sutrisno & Prasetyo, 2021).

In the context of globalization and rapid technological advancement, universities must also adapt the content and delivery of national defense education to ensure its continued relevance. Students are increasingly exposed to global values and narratives, some of which may dilute their sense of national identity and pride. Therefore, PPBN must evolve by incorporating contemporary pedagogical tools, digital learning platforms, and real-world examples that contextualize national defense in everyday life. The educational approach must balance global engagement with local values, ensuring students are equipped not only to thrive in a globalized world but also to maintain loyalty and commitment to their national identity (Nasution, 2022).

Pakuan University has responded to these challenges by institutionalizing PPBN as a core element of its academic structure. In the 2023/2024 academic year, the university organized a PPBN program with the theme *"Strengthening Innovation to Realize National Resilience,"* involving 2,827 first-year students. The program aimed to instill core values such as patriotism, discipline, nationalism, and unity. It also collaborated with various stakeholders, including Pusdikzi PUSZIAD of the Indonesian Army, to ensure the program's effectiveness and alignment with national defense policies. The inclusion of military and civic institutions not only enriched the learning content but also provided real-life context for students to understand their role in

national development. This strategic initiative demonstrates the university's commitment to character formation and civic responsibility as integral components of higher education.

Analysis of the Effectiveness of PPBN in Character Formation and National Defense Awareness

The evaluation of the Preliminary State Defense Education (PPBN) program at Pakuan University is essential in understanding its effectiveness in instilling Pancasila-based values and fostering civic consciousness among students. Several indicators are used in this evaluation, including student participation, institutional commitment, curriculum content, and integration with campus life. In the 2023/2024 academic year, the program was attended by 2,827 new students, marking a significant achievement in terms of outreach. High levels of participation reflect growing awareness and acceptance of national values among students. Furthermore, the collaboration between the university and Pusdikzi PUSZIAD (Indonesian Army) indicates strong institutional support, which is crucial for the successful implementation of values-based education in higher education settings (Subekti & Wahyuni, 2022).

Curricular materials delivered during the program are centered on the core principles of Pancasila—nationalism, mutual cooperation, and social justice. These values are not only conveyed through lectures but are also embedded in interactive and experiential learning activities that allow students to internalize them through practice. The integration of PPBN with the university's broader student orientation activities, such as campus life introduction programs, reinforces these values in practical contexts. As a result, students are better positioned to understand and apply the ideals of civic responsibility in both academic and social settings (Sutrisno & Prasetyo, 2021). The emphasis on active participation, reflective dialogue, and real-world engagement makes the program more than a symbolic exercise—it becomes a transformative learning experience.

Despite its strengths, PPBN's relatively short duration—three days—poses challenges in achieving deep and sustained behavioral change. While the initial results are promising, there is a clear need for longitudinal assessment to determine the long-term impact of the program. Proposed enhancements include integrating national defense values into co-curricular activities and academic subjects throughout the student's university experience. Psychological assessments and attitude surveys can be employed post-program to evaluate shifts in student behavior and mindset. Quantitative analysis of participation metrics and academic performance may also enrich the assessment process. These data will be essential in shaping responsive policy and ensuring continuous program improvement (Arifin, 2023).

Several policy recommendations emerge from the current evaluation. First, the inclusion of contemporary global issues—such as climate change, digital nationalism, and transnational threats—into the PPBN curriculum may help students contextualize national defense in modern terms. Second, the development of an extended or follow-up program beyond the initial three-day orientation would allow for the reinforcement of values over time. Third, partnerships with civil and military organizations should be expanded to include NGOs, community leaders, and public intellectuals to provide broader perspectives and more practical engagement opportunities. These recommendations reflect a need for a more comprehensive and sustained approach to civic education in universities (Nasution, 2022).

PPBN at Pakuan University is a strategic initiative aimed at integrating Pancasila values into character education. It functions not only as an orientation program but also as a foundational platform for long-term civic engagement. The university's decision to institutionalize PPBN reflects its commitment to confronting the challenges posed by globalization and cultural homogenization, both of which may weaken national identity. Activities such as public lectures, group discussions, and leadership training form the core of the program. These activities are designed to provide a multidimensional experience, combining theoretical knowledge with practical skill-building. The involvement of

TNI-AD personnel adds a layer of authenticity and practical application, ensuring that students understand national defense not merely as abstract theory but as a lived responsibility (Yuwono & Sumarsono, 2020).

The outcomes of the PPBN program indicate positive developments in three critical areas: national awareness, character development, and social engagement. Students exhibit a stronger sense of patriotism and a deeper understanding of their civic duties. Character-wise, they become more disciplined, responsible, and socially empathetic. Socially, students are more inclined to participate in community service and contribute to campus harmony. However, challenges remain, particularly with regard to sustaining interest and ensuring equitable engagement across all student demographics. Some students display lower levels of participation and engagement, which can diminish the overall impact of the program. Future initiatives must consider strategies to personalize engagement and maintain the momentum of civic awareness after the program concludes.

The implementation of Preliminary State Defense Education (PPBN) at Pakuan University has demonstrated significant effectiveness in cultivating student character grounded in the values of Pancasila. Despite operational challenges such as limited program duration and varying student motivation, the program has succeeded in raising awareness of national defense and encouraging social engagement among participants. Students have shown greater appreciation for values such as patriotism, discipline, and unity—qualities essential for the sustainability of national integrity in a rapidly globalizing world. This finding supports earlier studies asserting that character education embedded in civic frameworks can contribute meaningfully to long-term national development (Lickona, 2018; Nucci, Narvaez, & Krettenauer, 2022).

Although conducted over a relatively short three-day period, the PPBN program was able to foster foundational awareness of state defense among students, both in physical and non-physical dimensions. The integration of theoretical discussions and practical exercises allowed students to develop a more nuanced understanding of their roles as future citizens. The inclusion of leadership training, group collaboration, and

defense-related simulations provided experiential learning opportunities that helped students internalize civic values. Nonetheless, the short timeframe of the program inevitably limited the depth of understanding that could be achieved. As previously argued by Arthur et al. (2021), sustainable character formation requires continuity and reinforcement within the broader academic environment.

Another central challenge was the variation in student motivation. Some students actively engaged in PPBN activities due to their internalized sense of civic responsibility, while others participated merely to fulfill academic requirements. This disparity influenced the program's overall impact, echoing concerns in civic education literature about the importance of student agency and intrinsic motivation in value formation (Biesta, 2021). As such, ensuring equitable engagement among all participants remains a critical area for future improvement. Approaches such as value-based mentoring and active citizenship modules may help bridge motivational gaps and improve the absorption of national values.

To address these concerns, the integration of national defense education into the broader university curriculum is highly recommended. Embedding Pancasila values into multiple academic subjects across disciplines can ensure that students encounter these ideals consistently throughout their studies. This aligns with current educational strategies advocating for holistic and cross-disciplinary character education, as discussed by Berkowitz and Bier (2021). When civic values are normalized in daily academic discourse, they become more deeply embedded in students' ethical frameworks, increasing the likelihood of long-term internalization.

Additionally, extending learning beyond the classroom through practical civic engagement activities can reinforce PPBN outcomes. Service-learning programs, community leadership projects, and campus-based campaigns promoting unity and social justice can serve as platforms for real-life application of Pancasila values. International studies have shown that participatory learning—especially when linked to real social challenges—can significantly enhance students' moral

reasoning and civic responsibility (Campbell, 2022; Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019). Such initiatives may also reduce the abstract nature of civic values and bring their relevance closer to students' daily lives.

A continuous and structured evaluation system should be developed to monitor and refine the effectiveness of PPBN implementation. This includes quantitative data collection (e.g., participation rates, behavioral assessments) and qualitative feedback (e.g., student reflections, stakeholder interviews). Moreover, partnerships with external stakeholders—government agencies, civil society organizations, and national defense institutions—can enrich the program by offering diverse perspectives and real-world learning opportunities. Through these collaborative and multidimensional efforts, PPBN at Pakuan University can become a sustainable model of civic education that not only fosters momentary awareness but also instills enduring character and a deep-rooted commitment to national resilience.

Analyzing the Effectiveness of PPBN in the Era of Globalization

In the context of globalization, instilling national defense values among university students presents increasingly complex challenges. The widespread influence of global culture, unrestricted access to digital information, and the dominance of individualistic ideologies have contributed to the gradual erosion of national identity among youth. The findings from the implementation of the Preliminary State Defense Education (PPBN) program at Pakuan University reveal that, while students acquire a foundational understanding of national defense, the short duration of the program—only three days—limits their ability to fully internalize the values of Pancasila. This aligns with the assertion by Banks (2020), who emphasizes that character education in multicultural societies requires sustained and multidimensional engagement to compete with global cultural narratives.

Research by Suharto (2020) has highlighted the necessity of integrating civic values not only into academic curricula but also into co-curricular activities to foster a resilient sense of national identity. Pakuan University can enhance the long-term effectiveness of its PPBN program

by adopting digital innovations such as e-learning modules, gamified content, and augmented reality simulations. These platforms have proven successful in increasing learner engagement and retention in civic and moral education, especially among digital-native students (Kimmons & Veletsianos, 2022). Interactive tools such as virtual reality (VR) can immerse students in simulated scenarios that require collective action, empathy, and leadership—core values of national defense—thereby reinforcing theoretical knowledge through experiential learning.

Several strategic approaches may be adopted to address existing challenges. First, alumni engagement can play a pivotal role in extending the values of PPBN beyond the classroom. By involving alumni who actively demonstrate civic values in government, education, or social movements, students gain relatable role models and tangible examples of national defense in action. Universities can establish structured alumni panels, mentorship programs, or thematic seminars to build intergenerational dialogue and deepen students' appreciation of civic responsibility. According to Arthur et al. (2021), mentoring relationships can significantly influence students' civic attitudes and ethical development when anchored in lived experience.

Second, instructional innovation is essential. Gamification, for instance, is a pedagogical method that incorporates game mechanics to enhance motivation, participation, and mastery of complex concepts. When applied to civic education, gamified learning environments can promote collaboration, empathy, and decision-making through simulated problem-solving tasks (Basham, Hall, & Carter, 2020). The integration of such methods allows students to experience civic dilemmas in a controlled setting, bridging the gap between theory and action. Furthermore, immersive technologies like VR can simulate historical events or crisis situations where students must respond using principles of nationalism, solidarity, and ethical leadership, providing a deeper affective and cognitive engagement (Squire & Dikkers, 2019).

Third, collaborative partnerships with external institutions can enrich the PPBN program both in content and context. While current collaborations with Pusdikzi PUSZIAD TNI AD are commendable,

partnerships can be broadened to include ministries, civil society organizations, and private sector stakeholders. Internship programs in civic-based institutions or participation in national resilience initiatives can offer students real-world experience in applying Pancasila values. This approach echoes the findings of Hoskins and Janmaat (2019), who argue that civic learning is most impactful when embedded in authentic social environments that demand responsibility and public participation.

Within the Pakuan University context, the implementation of PPBN seeks not only to orient new students to university life but also to lay the foundation for long-term civic engagement based on national identity. The program emphasizes the role of students as active citizens in preserving national unity and responding to emerging global threats to social cohesion. However, the challenges of delivering such a program in the digital age are notable. The youth of today are immersed in transnational media ecosystems, where values of consumerism, instant gratification, and cultural relativism often overshadow local traditions. If civic education is to remain relevant, it must adapt both in substance and delivery to engage with these realities (Biesta, 2021).

For PPBN to effectively counteract the homogenizing effects of globalization, continuous reinforcement and expanded formats are essential. The brief three-day exposure, while impactful in raising awareness, is insufficient for lasting behavioral change. Motivational disparities among students—some driven by obligation rather than genuine civic interest—further reduce the program’s long-term effectiveness. Addressing this requires universities to embed PPBN’s core principles into semester-long modules, community-based projects, and reflective learning practices.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Preliminary State Defense Education (PPBN) program at Pakuan University has demonstrated significant potential in shaping students’ character and enhancing their awareness of national defense. Despite the program’s relatively short duration, it effectively introduces key Pancasila values such as nationalism, mutual

cooperation, social justice, and patriotism. The combination of theoretical instruction and practical engagement enables students to develop a foundational understanding of their civic responsibilities and the importance of safeguarding national unity in an era marked by rapid globalization and cultural shifts.

This study reveals that several challenges persist, particularly regarding the sustainability of value internalization and student motivation. The limited three-day timeframe restricts the depth of comprehension and long-term retention of state defense values. Moreover, the diversity of student engagement—ranging from enthusiastic participation to passive compliance—illustrates the need for more inclusive and motivating pedagogical strategies. Addressing these challenges requires a more integrative approach that embeds civic and character education across academic disciplines and campus activities.

The effectiveness of PPBN can be significantly enhanced through innovation and collaboration. Integrating digital tools, immersive technologies, and gamified learning can strengthen student engagement and contextual understanding. In addition, partnerships with alumni, civil society, and government institutions can enrich program content and foster real-world applications of civic values. Ultimately, a continuous and adaptive strategy is essential to ensure that PPBN contributes meaningfully to the formation of a resilient, ethical, and nationally conscious generation ready to navigate the challenges of the future.

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