Pedagogik Journal of Islamic Elementary School
Vol.9, No.1, hal.1-14
ISSN(E): 2615-3904
DOI : https://doi.org/10.24256/pijies.v9i1.9351
https://ejournal.iainpalopo.ac.id/index.php/PiJIES

A TPACK-Based Analysis of Pre-service Primary Teachers' Understanding of Pancasila and Civic Education

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Abstract
The integration of pedagogy, content, and technology remains a key challenge in preparing pre-service primary teachers, particularly in Pancasila and Civic Education learning. This study aimed to explore the level of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) mastery among pre-service primary teachers enrolled in the Learning Pancasila and Civic Education in Primary Schools course. The research employed a qualitative case study design involving six pre-service primary teachers from a university in Jakarta, selected through purposive sampling based on variations in mid-term academic achievement. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, including teaching modules, student assignments, and evaluation results. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to students' conceptual understanding, pedagogical competence, initial technology integration, and supporting and constraining factors in the learning process. The findings show that students generally demonstrated adequate content understanding of Pancasila and Civic Education; however, their pedagogical understanding was not yet well developed, particularly in selecting and applying appropriate learning approaches and models. Technology integration tended to focus on technical and media-related aspects rather than supporting pedagogical strategies, indicating limited TPACK integration. Several constraints, such as limited theoretical literacy and learning context challenges, influenced students' ability to integrate pedagogy, content, and technology coherently. This study suggests that teacher education programs need to strengthen pedagogical scaffolding and reflective learning experiences to support more effective TPACK development among pre-service primary teachers.

Keywords: *TPACK, Pre-service Primary Teachers, Pancasila and Civic Education, Qualitative Study, Teacher Education*

Abstrak
Integrasi pedagogi, konten, dan teknologi masih menjadi tantangan dalam menyiapkan calon guru Sekolah Dasar, khususnya pada pembelajaran Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan (PPKn). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi penguasaan Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) mahasiswa calon guru Sekolah Dasar pada mata kuliah Pembelajaran PPKn SD. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif dengan melibatkan enam mahasiswa calon guru SD di sebuah perguruan tinggi di Jakarta yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling berdasarkan variasi capaian hasil Ujian Tengah Semester. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi perkuliahan, serta analisis dokumen yang meliputi modul pembelajaran, tugas mahasiswa, dan hasil evaluasi. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik untuk

mengidentifikasi pola pemahaman konseptual, kompetensi pedagogis, integrasi teknologi awal, serta faktor pendukung dan penghambat dalam proses pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa telah memiliki pemahaman konten PPKn yang cukup baik, namun pemahaman pedagogis belum berkembang secara optimal, terutama dalam pemilihan dan penerapan pendekatan serta model pembelajaran. Integrasi teknologi dalam pembelajaran masih berfokus pada aspek teknis dan penggunaan media, dan belum sepenuhnya mendukung strategi pedagogis. Keterbatasan literasi teoretis dan konteks pembelajaran menjadi faktor yang memengaruhi kemampuan mahasiswa dalam mengintegrasikan pedagogi, konten, dan teknologi secara utuh. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini merekomendasikan penguatan scaffolding pedagogis dan pengalaman belajar reflektif dalam pendidikan calon guru untuk mendukung pengembangan TPACK secara lebih efektif.

Kata kunci: TPACK, Calon Guru Sekolah Dasar, Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan, Kompetensi Pedagogis, Pendidikan Guru

Introduction

Pancasila and Civic Education (known by its Indonesian abbreviation, PPKn) at the primary school level plays a strategic role in shaping students' character, morals, and civic competence from an early age, going beyond mere knowledge transmission. Furthermore, Pancasila and Civic Education serve a primary function in developing civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Branson, 1998). To achieve these goals, teachers are required to design contextual, reflective, and value-infused learning experiences. It requires strong content mastery and pedagogical skills aligned with the characteristics of Pancasila and Civic Education learning (Winataputra, 2016). For prospective elementary school teachers, a thorough understanding of Pancasila and Civic Education is crucial before engaging in classroom teaching.

However, various studies demonstrate a gap between curriculum demands and student readiness. One of these is a study by Kusuma et al. (2023), which revealed that prospective primary teachers tend to understand Pancasila and Civic Education concepts normatively but struggle to translate these abstract concepts into meaningful, applicable learning practices. This situation is reinforced by other research highlighting students' weak ability to connect values, social context, and participatory learning strategies (Siregar et al., 2024). This challenge is further complicated by the demands of the 21st century, which require integrating technology into the learning process.

The Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework emphasises the importance of teachers harmoniously integrating content, pedagogy, and technology to produce relevant and meaningful learning (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). In the context of Pancasila and Civic Education, the use of technology serves not only as a presentation medium but also as a means to develop critical thinking skills, civic dialogue, and digital citizenship literacy, which are increasingly essential in the modern era (Kusumawati et al., 2025). Unfortunately, various studies indicate that student teachers often understand technology separately from content and pedagogy, resulting in suboptimal technology integration (Koehler et al., 2013).

Recent studies also emphasise the importance of a reflective approach in student-teacher learning (Wahyuni, 2020; Wijaya & Gaudiawan, 2020). The concept of reflective teaching (Schön, 1983) positions prospective teachers as reflective practitioners capable of critically evaluating pedagogical decisions and adapting learning strategies. This reflective approach is highly relevant in Civics learning, which is value-laden and requires teachers to contextualise social issues within the learning process. However, research on Pancasila and Civic Education students' understanding of simultaneously combining CK, PCK, and TPACK, especially in the early stages of the course before microteaching, remains very limited.

A mapping of previous research reveals that the focus of these studies remains fragmented: most address understanding of values and content (Safitri et al., 2021), others highlight aspects of PCK outside the Pancasila and Civic Education context (Shulman, 1987; Loughran (2019), while TPACK studies have not yet been extensively focused on Civics learning in primary schools. Therefore, this study has both academic and practical urgency to provide a comprehensive overview of prospective primary teachers' understanding of Civics learning through an integrated analysis of conceptual, pedagogical, and technology-integration aspects.

This study was limited to pre-service primary teachers in urban areas who had attended lectures until mid-semester, without involving lesson plan development or teaching practice. The analysis focused on pre-service primary teachers' conceptual understanding and integrative readiness, rather than on practical performance. By formulating research questions on conceptual understanding, pedagogical strategies, TPACK-based technology integration, and influencing factors, this study aims to make an empirical contribution to strengthening the curriculum of primary school education

study programs and developing civics learning that is adaptive to the demands of 21st-century competencies.

Research Methods

This research used a qualitative case study design to provide an in-depth description of TPACK mastery among primary teacher candidates in the Learning Pancasila and Civic Education in Primary Schools course. Qualitative approaches facilitate a comprehensive, in-depth understanding by exploring meanings, behaviours, and individual action patterns that cannot be reduced to numerical representations (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The study subjects consisted of six pre-service primary teachers at a university in Jakarta, selected through purposive sampling based on varying levels of understanding, referring to the mid-term test results. Detailed demographic profiles and characteristics of the research participants are presented in Table 1. This context selection aimed to provide a clear picture of the integration of content knowledge, pedagogy, and technology among prospective teachers who will teach Pancasila and Civic Education in primary schools.

Table 1 Gender and The Mid-Term Test Results of Participants

Participants	Gender (F=0/M=1)	Mid-term Test Results' Level (Excellent=100-90 / Good=80-89 / Average=70-79)
P1	0	Excellent
P2	1	Average
P3	1	Average
P4	0	Excellent
P5	0	Good
P6	0	Good

Source: Primary data, 2025

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, lecture observations, and document review (teaching modules, student assignments, and evaluation results). As a form of in-depth interviewing, semi-structured interviews offer a high degree of flexibility, facilitating the collection of more nuanced and multifaceted data than rigidly structured formats (Kallio et al., 2016). These interviews were used to explore pre-service primary teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges in learning the Pancasila and Civic Education in Primary Schools course. Data were collected focusing on four themes: conceptual understanding of Pancasila and Civic Education, pedagogical understanding, initial technology integration, and supporting and constraining factors in learning.

Through the framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), data is processed thematically to extract significant patterns through stages of systematic identification and analysis before finally being reported as research findings. This analysis process is carried out through six systematic phases, starting from data familiarisation to writing the final report. The verification process was conducted through triangulation of sources and techniques to enhance the validity of the findings. This analysis identifies TPACK mastery patterns, the obstacles students face, and contextual factors that influence the learning process of Pancasila and Civic Education through the integration of technology, pedagogy, and content.

Results and Discussion

Pre-service Primary Teachers' Conceptual Understanding of the Objectives of Pancasila and Civic Education

Interview results indicate that prospective primary teachers generally understand the objectives of Civics learning as efforts to build character and internalise Pancasila values. P1 emphasised that Civics shapes educators' character before these values are taught to students, such as religiosity and responsibility. P3 echoed this sentiment, stating that Pancasila and Civic Education aims to foster students' sensitivity to social values so they can practice them in their daily lives.

> *"As a prospective primary teacher, I believe that teachers must possess these character traits before teaching them to students." (P1)*
> *"...to shape children's character attitudes so they are sensitive to social values and the values of Pancasila." (P3)*

In addition to character aspects, several participants also touched on the structural dimension of citizenship. P5 and P6 mentioned a basic understanding of state institutions and laws, and awareness of rights and obligations, as part of the objectives of Civics learning.

These findings indicate that students' conceptual understanding remains dominated by a normative, moralistic orientation. Civics is understood primarily as a means of developing good attitudes and behaviour in accordance with Pancasila values. This understanding reflects the traditional Pancasila and Civic Education paradigm, which emphasises moral knowing and moral being, but fails to fully address moral feeling and the development of civic reasoning, civic engagement, and critical thinking skills as citizens. Without these reasonings, Civics in primary schools is trapped in indoctrination, which, according to Sant (2019), will distance students from their ability

to participate in a pluralistic and complex democratic society. Meanwhile, students position the values of Pancasila as a given dogma, rather than as life values that need to be tested through critical thinking skills.

This limited conceptual understanding has the potential to impact students' future pedagogical practices. When the goals of Pancasila and Civic Education are narrowly understood as instilling values, learning tends to culminate in memorising norms and practising behaviours, without providing space for students to reflect, question, and relate Pancasila values to complex social realities. Furthermore, the learning design they develop is likely to be behavioristic. It limits the scope for implementing Freire's critical pedagogy, which should encourage students to reflect on moral dilemmas and the social realities around them (Shor, 2002). In line with this, findings by Peterson (2020) show that teachers who understand the purpose of citizenship only as the transmission of values tend to close off space for reflection for students. Rather than developing critical students, this concept will only foster blind adherence to norms.

Pre-service Primary Teachers' Pedagogical Understanding of Pancasila and Civic Education in Primary Schools

Regarding the pedagogical aspect, the research results showed a fairly consistent pattern among participants. Learning media was perceived as the easiest aspect to understand, while learning approaches, methods, and models were the most difficult. Most participants stated that learning media were concrete, flexible, and did not require in-depth theoretical understanding.

> *"For me, learning media is the easiest lecture topic because it is more concrete than other topics." (P1)*
> *"I think learning media is because this topic is more flexible and does not require complex theories like other topics." (P4)*

Conversely, the topic of learning approaches and models was considered confusing, particularly due to the large number of terms, similarities between models, and differences in explanations from one source to another.

> *"I haven't found a common thread between approaches and models. Some reading sources have different interpretations, making it difficult for me to understand this topic." (P1)*
> *"The learning models I find in various academic journals are too varied, and many are similar, so I'm confused about differentiating them." (P5)*

Pedagogically, these findings indicate that students tend to understand learning at a technical-instrumental level, rather than a conceptual-reflective one. Learning media

is the easiest aspect to master due to its concrete and pragmatic nature. P4's statement that media development does not require a strong theoretical foundation reflects epistemological reductionism, where learning instruments are detached from the theoretical basis that supports them. It aligns with the findings of König et al. (2020), who stated that prospective teachers often possess strong general pedagogical knowledge procedurally, but are weak in connecting it to abstract theoretical foundations. Learning media, however, are not merely teaching aids, but cognitive bridges. As a result, students are capable of creating media and designing activities, but lack a strong pedagogical framework to explain the rationale for selecting a particular learning approach or model in the context of Pancasila and Civic Education in primary schools.

This situation needs to be addressed, considering that Civics Education learning demands a clear pedagogical orientation. Students' difficulty distinguishing between approaches, methods, and models indicates low Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). Research by Loughran (2019) shows that conceptual confusion among prospective teachers is often caused by an inability to engage in pedagogical reasoning—the critical thinking process used to select strategies that best suit the characteristics of the material. Their confusion indicates that students view models only as labels or names, rather than as a logical framework for achieving specific citizenship goals, without an adequate understanding of approaches and models, learning risks becoming procedural and losing its substantive direction as civic education.

Initial Integration of Technology in Pancasila and Civic Education in Primary Schools

Interview results indicate that technology integration in Civics learning is still in its early stages and is limited. Most participants stated that they have only seen examples of technology use through videos or presentations, but have not yet had hands-on experience in Civics learning.

> *"I've seen it on social media, but I've never tried it directly." (P1)*
> *"… I've seen it in class, but I've never tried it myself." (P5)*

Technology is generally understood as a visual aid to attract students' attention, such as instructional videos. There is no apparent understanding of technology as a means to deepen understanding of civics concepts, foster critical discussions, or facilitate social problem-based learning. These findings indicate that prospective elementary school teachers face obstacles in constructing a comprehensive TPACK (Comprehensive

Assessment of Civics). According to Mishra and Koehler (2006), effective technology integration in learning is not simply the addition of tools, but rather the integration of content, pedagogy, and technology.

The dominance of the Technological Knowledge (TK) aspect indicates that students have a partial understanding of TPACK, as evidenced by their ability to access social media and videos. Research by Koehler et al. (2014) confirms that possessing technological skills alone does not guarantee the ability to integrate them into specific content. This knowledge is more passive because the use of technology is not integrated with the Content Knowledge (CK) aspect. As a result, technology is used merely as decoration outside the essence of the material being presented.

Furthermore, students understand technology only as a visual aid, but do not yet understand technology as a tool to transform students' learning methods (the Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK) aspect). However, according to Joo et al. (2018), the use of technology is crucial for building civic interactions in the digital age. Instead of using collaborative platforms to simulate democratic discussions, they only utilise technology by using videos available online. Research by Natasya et al. (2025) describes that many prospective teachers are technology-aware but still use traditional teacher-centred methods. It indicates that technology is not yet understood as a means to enhance pedagogical strategies, but rather as a substitute for conventional learning media.

In addition, technology is used only to attract students' attention. Technology should be able to represent civics content more dynamically. It demonstrates the lack of Technological Content Knowledge (TCK) among student teachers. They do not see technology as an instrument to help students explore abstract concepts such as mutual cooperation (*gotong-royong*) and justice, given that primary school students' cognitive development is still at the concrete operational level (Piaget, 1964). It aligns with the findings of Chai et al. (2019) that technology integration in elementary schools is often hampered because teachers fail to align the characteristics of technology with the depth of the subject matter.

In short, these findings indicate that technology integration is not yet fully connected to the content and pedagogy of Pancasila and Civic Education. Technology is still positioned as a supplement, rather than as part of a meaningful learning design. It demonstrates the low conceptual integration of TPACK, particularly in the intersection

of pedagogical knowledge and technological knowledge in the context of Pancasila and Civic Education in primary schools.

Supporting Factors and Obstacles in Pancasila and Civic Education in Primary Schools

The research results show that the main supporting factors in Civics lectures are active learning, discussions, simulations, and reinforcement from lecturers after student presentations. P5 and P6 stated that lecturers' clarification and reinforcement helped them understand previously unclear material. However, the main obstacle that consistently emerged was the use of English in bilingual classes. Most participants acknowledged that limited linguistic competence directly impacted their comprehensive understanding of the material.

> *"...because my biggest obstacle was the use of English." (P1)*
> *"When lectures were conducted entirely in English, I had difficulty understanding what was being conveyed." (P2)*

From the perspective of Sweller's (1988) Cognitive Load Theory, which is supported by research by Paas and Merriënboer (2020), students learning abstract philosophical concepts in a foreign language experienced a very high extraneous cognitive load. Instead of allocating their cognitive resources to understanding the essence of citizenship, students' mental energy was used up in translation. This issue is what systematically causes the low conceptual and pedagogical understanding discussed in the previous subchapter.

In addition to language, limited lecture time and the density of the material also hamper conceptual understanding. These constraints are not only technical in nature but also impact the quality of students' conceptual understanding, pedagogical understanding, and technology integration. Buchanan (2020) in his book confirms that time constraints in a dense curriculum force prospective teachers to focus on procedural aspects rather than philosophical reflection. It reinforces the findings in subchapter 4.2 regarding why students primarily master the technical level (such as learning media) but are weak at the philosophical level (models/approaches). These findings suggest that Pancasila and Civic Education in primary schools course design needs to consider students' academic readiness, particularly in bilingual classroom contexts. Pecorari and Malmström (2018) emphasised that without adequate scaffolding strategies, the use of a foreign language has the potential to hinder understanding of the material's substance.

Synthesis of Findings and Implications for Developing TPACK-Based Pancasila and Civic Education for Primary Schools

Based on a comprehensive synthesis of the findings in Subchapters 4.1 to 4.5, this study indicates that the readiness of prospective elementary school teachers in Pancasila and Civic Education learning cannot be understood as a single entity, but rather as a complex configuration of value orientation, pedagogical understanding, and technological integrative capacity. Conceptually, students have demonstrated a relatively consistent understanding of Pancasila and Civic Education as a means of character formation, internalisation of Pancasila values, and development of civic awareness from the elementary level. This understanding forms a strong normative foundation and serves as initial capital in the professional development of prospective primary teachers.

However, when this conceptual orientation is confronted with the demands of learning practice, structural tensions emerge in the pedagogical realm. Interview findings indicate that although students recognise the importance of contextual, participatory, and experiential learning, they still experience difficulties in constructing a systematic pedagogical framework. This confusion in distinguishing learning approaches, models, and methods is not merely terminological but reflects the students' immature pedagogical reasoning in designing operational Pancasila and Civic Education learning. This situation indicates that students' pedagogical understanding remains declarative and has not yet fully transformed into professional competency.

From the perspective of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Shulman, 1986), these findings indicate obstacles in the didactic transposition process, particularly in transforming normative and abstract Civics content into learning experiences that align with the cognitive and social characteristics of elementary school students. The Pancasila and Civic Education demands a reflective and contextual pedagogical approach, as civic values cannot be taught solely procedurally or textually when pedagogical mastery is not yet solid, strong value content risks being reduced to moral discourse without meaningful learning experiences.

Regarding technology integration, research findings reveal that the use of technology in Civics learning is still at an early level and is not yet transformative. Students generally view technology as a means of visualisation and presentation, rather than as an integral part of pedagogical strategies for building civic understanding and

reflection. The results of the TPACK questionnaire indicate that mastery of basic technology does not automatically imply integrative skills between technology, pedagogy, and content. Within the TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), this situation reflects the fragmentation of professional knowledge, where each component develops separately without meaningful synergy.

The learning context also plays a role in shaping this dynamic. The implementation of bilingual classes, although intended to broaden students' global perspectives, in practice creates additional cognitive load, particularly on abstract and theoretical pedagogical material. Limited language comprehension causes students to focus on more concrete and accessible aspects of learning, such as learning media, while mastery of pedagogical and integrative frameworks is marginalised. This phenomenon demonstrates that the integration of technology and pedagogy cannot be separated from linguistic readiness and adequate instructional scaffolding design.

Based on these overall findings, this study proposes that the primary challenge in developing TPACK-based Civics learning in pre-service teacher education lies not in weak value orientation or minimal technological literacy, but rather in the lack of a conceptual bridge that reflectively integrates content, pedagogy, and technology. Therefore, the development of Pancasila and Civic Education learning in teacher education needs to be directed at strengthening pedagogical reasoning, integrative practical experience, and learning design that allows students to construct professional knowledge as a whole, not just understanding its components separately.

Conclusion

This study aims to analyse the readiness of prospective elementary school teachers in learning Pancasila and Civic Education in terms of conceptual understanding, pedagogical understanding, and technology integration within the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework. The results of the study indicate that students have a strong value orientation and conceptual understanding of Pancasila and Civic Education learning objectives, especially in character building and internalisation of Pancasila values. Still, this readiness has not been accompanied by adequate operational pedagogical mastery and integrative TPACK skills, so that the use of technology still tends to be substitutive and not transformational. These findings indicate a gap between normative understanding and

learning practices, which is influenced by limited theoretical literacy, fragmented pedagogical understanding, and contextual factors such as the use of bilingual language of instruction without adequate scaffolding. This study has limitations in the number and scope of samples and the use of self-perception-based instruments that have not been supplemented with observations of learning practices. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve a wider sample, use a more comprehensive mixed methodology design, and include observational data and analysis of learning tools to deepen understanding of the development of professional competencies of prospective primary teachers based on TPACK.

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