



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Democracy Education Learning Results and Their Relationship to Democracy Attitudes and Election Participation of Social Science Education Students

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The objectives of this study are to (1) evaluate the learning outcomes of democracy education, attitudes and electoral participation of social studies education students, (2) analyze the relationship between these three variables, and (3) analyze the influence of student demographic factors on these three variables. The instruments used included democracy education learning outcome documents, and questionnaires to measure the domains of democratic attitudes and electoral participation. After data collection, 198 samples were obtained whose data were suitable for analysis. Data analysis included mean, standard deviation, Spear-man correlation, Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests. The domains of democracy education learning outcomes, democratic attitudes and student electoral participation are "good". This is reinforced by the proportion with the "good" category dominating in all three domains. Furthermore, the three domains have positive and significant relationships and correlations. The correlation index is more than 0.80 and the p value is <0.05. However, demographic variables did not affect the three domains.

1. INTRODUCTION

Democracy education is a learning process that aims to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to participate effectively in a democratic political system (Carrera, 2023; Nathan et al., 2024). According to Chanda Chansa Thelma et al. (2024a) and Nuryadi & Widiatmaka (2024), democracy education is not only limited to an understanding of the political system and state institutions, but also involves the development of critical thinking abilities, social awareness, and communication skills that enable individuals to play an active role in community life. In Indonesia, democracy education is part of the education curriculum that aims to create young people who have high political awareness and social responsibility. Learning outcomes of democracy education refer to students' level of understanding and skills acquired through the formal learning process, which is measured through their academic achievements and conceptual understanding of democratic principles.

Attitudes towards democracy refer to the views, beliefs and values held by individuals regarding the importance of democratic principles such as freedom, justice and active involvement in the political process (Chang, 2017; Fernández Guzmán Grassi et al., 2024). These attitudes are formed through an individual's interaction with the social and educational environment, which in this case plays an important role in shaping students' views. Meanwhile, electoral participation reflects the concrete actions of individuals in being directly involved in the political process, especially through voting in elections (Evans & Hepplewhite, 2022). Political participation, according to (Uzamere & Aimiyeqagbon, 2024), is one indicator of the success of democracy education, as it shows the extent to which democratic knowledge and attitudes are translated into concrete actions.

In an era of globalization marked by increasing social and political complexity, democracy education has become a crucial element in shaping active, critical, and participatory citizens. Democratic education not only serves to provide conceptual knowledge about the political system, but also plays an important role in fostering democratic attitudes and awareness of responsibilities as citizens (Chanda Chansa Thelma et al., 2024). In many countries, including Indonesia, political participation, especially electoral participation, is an important indicator of the success of the democratic process. However, empirical data shows a decline in the participation of young voters in the electoral process in various parts of the world, including Indonesia (Qader Ahmed, 2024). This phenomenon raises concerns about the lack of involvement of the younger generation in the political decision-making process. Students, particularly from Social Science Education programs, as future educators and leaders, play a central role in promoting democratic values. Therefore, it is important to explore the relationship between democracy education learning outcomes and students' electoral attitudes and participation, in order to understand the extent to which education can shape democratic character and political participation among young people.

Political participation among young people, especially university students, is one of the main concerns in the study of modern democracy. In Indonesia, electoral participation among young voters has tended to decline in recent years, indicating a lack of active engagement in the political decision-making process (Giry & Halking, 2024a; Revi, 2024). Data from the General Election Commission (KPU) shows that youth participation rates in elections in recent years have been below expectations (Qader Ahmed, 2024), even though they are demographically the largest group in the electorate (Jameson-Charles & Charles, 2022). This decline has sparked concerns about the effectiveness of education in instilling democratic values and encouraging active participation. For university students, especially those from Social Science Education programs, this phenomenon is more worrying as they are expected to be agents of change who are able to spread democratic values to the wider community. Therefore, the main issue at hand is how democracy education taught in higher education affects their attitudes towards democracy and their involvement in political participation, especially elections.

This problem becomes even more significant considering the role of social studies education students not only as voters, but also as prospective educators who will shape the next generation. Whether the learning outcomes of democracy education in higher education can effectively build democratic attitudes and increase election participation among students is still a question that needs to be answered. This research seeks to address these issues by exploring the relationship between democracy education learning outcomes and students' political attitudes and participation. In addition, this study also highlights the importance of evaluating whether the methods and approaches used in learning democracy education in higher education are optimal in facilitating the formation of democratic character and active participation in elections.

This research has high urgency given the central role of democracy education in shaping participatory citizens with democratic character (Ramadhona, 2023; Randiawan et al., 2023). Amid increasingly complex global challenges, including rising political apathy among the younger generation, education has a great responsibility to ensure that individuals not only understand the principles of democracy, but are also actively involved in the political process, especially through participation in elections (Albulescu, 2024). In Indonesia, where youth play an important role as the demographic majority, the low level of electoral participation among students is a crucial issue. Students, especially from the Social Science Education program, play a dual role. Apart from being voters, they are also expected to be agents of democratic character building in society. Therefore, research that explores the relationship between democracy education learning outcomes, attitudes towards democracy, and election participation is highly relevant. This research will not only make an important contribution to the academic literature, but also offer practical insights for curriculum development and democracy learning strategies in higher education, so that they can be more effective in promoting political participation among the younger generation.

The study of democracy education and political participation has grown rapidly in recent decades. Previous studies, such as those by (Chitondo, 2022) and (Manuwa, 2023), have highlighted the

important role of democracy education in increasing political awareness and participation of young voters in various countries. In Europe and North America, research shows that democracy education that is well integrated into the curriculum is successful in shaping democratic attitudes and promoting active engagement in electoral processes (Altaany & Abdelbary, 2024; Tzankova et al., 2023). In Southeast Asia, a study conducted by (Christiane, 2024) emphasized the importance of participatory approaches in democracy education to increase political participation among youth. In Indonesia, although there have been many studies related to political participation and democracy education, such as the study conducted by (Kalfin et al., 2023), the results show that electoral participation among university students is still low, and there are concerns that democracy learning in universities has not been optimal in influencing students' political attitudes and participation. This research places itself in that context by expanding insights into how democracy education learning outcomes correlate with attitudes and electoral participation, as well as providing a new perspective on the effectiveness of learning approaches in Indonesia, which has rarely been explored in depth.

While many studies have explored the relationship between democracy education and political participation, there is a significant gap in research that specifically examines the link between democracy education learning outcomes and Indonesian university students' electoral attitudes and participation. Previous research has generally focused on general understandings of youth political participation, but rarely examines in depth the impact of learning outcomes from formal democracy education in higher education on changes in their political attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, the lack of studies using quantitative and correlational approaches in Indonesia to empirically evaluate the relationship between these variables suggests a need for more focused research. Therefore, this study fills this gap by integrating the perspectives of education, political psychology and sociology to understand the extent to which democracy education can influence students' political attitudes and participation, particularly in the context of elections. Therefore, the objectives of this study are (1) to evaluate the learning outcomes of democracy education, attitudes and electoral participation of social studies education students, (2) to analyze the relationship between learning outcomes of democracy education, attitudes and electoral participation, and (3) to analyze the influence of student demographic factors on these three variables.

1. METHODOLOGY

Research design and participant

This survey is intended to determine the response of social studies education students at Mataram State Islamic University to the Democracy Education course. Therefore, this rapid survey with a target number of 198 respondents is targeted to be completed within one semester (August - December 2023). The target respondents are social studies education students who have taken the Democracy Education course. Because this survey is a survey that assesses learning outcomes, attitudes and perceptions, the target population in this study is 400 people. Therefore, based on the Krejcie and Morgan table, the sample size with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error is 196 respondents (Aslan et al., 2021).

This study used learning outcome documents and an online survey for data collection. The survey instrument itself was copied into a Google Form. The link to the survey was distributed to lecturers teaching the Democracy Education course via WhatsApp. Furthermore, the lecturers conveyed the survey link to their students. The criteria for respondents were social studies education students who taught Democracy Education courses at the undergraduate level. Respondents in this survey were confirmed to be students at Mataram State Islamic University, physically and mentally healthy, aged 18 years and over, and willing to participate in this research. The inclusion criteria for respondents are social studies education students, registered as students at the Islamic State University of Mataram, aged 18 years and over, and willing to participate in this study. The exclusion criteria for respondents were diploma and postgraduate students, not social studies education students, had dropped out of college, non-student status, and did not provide complete demographic information.

Instruments and data collection procedures

The instruments used in this study were the learning outcomes document of the Democracy Education course and the democratic attitudes and electoral participation questionnaire. The questionnaire instrument consisted of four parts: (1) respondents' demographic profile consisting of place of residence, gender, and ethnicity; (2) 20 questions regarding respondents' attitudes regarding awareness of voting rights, elections, information disclosure, and concern for elections; and (3) 12 items of questions about election participation which include enthusiasm for participation, involvement in voter education, and concern for the continuity of elections. For each item in the democratic attitudes and electoral participation domain, respondents were asked to determine the level of agreement with each statement written on the questionnaire by choosing one of five options, namely (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. All items of the questionnaire used in this study have been declared valid and suitable for use to measure democratic attitudes and student electoral participation by three experts.

Data processing and analysis

Documents containing data on democracy education learning outcomes were downloaded from the Academic Information System of Mataram State Islamic University through the approval of the lecturer in charge of the course. Survey data were downloaded in .csv format and checked by the author before analysis. Microsoft Excel and SPSS software were used for data analysis. Demographic data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The scores of democracy education learning outcomes, democratic attitudes, and electoral participation were calculated by summing the scores of all items and converted to scores with a score range of 0-100. The scores of the three aspects were categorized into "good" and "poor" based on Bloom's cut-off points (Leask et al., 2020) and were also adjusted to the scoring guidelines referring to the Academic Guidelines applicable at the Mataram State Islamic University. The respondent's score is categorized as "good" if the respondent gets a score of at least 75, while if it does not reach a score of 75 it is categorized as "poor". The percentage of respondents categorized as "good" and "poor" in each domain is presented in the form of a bar graph. Furthermore, Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests were used to determine differences in mean scores based on demographic characteristics. The significance level used in this study was 0.05.

Ethical approval

This study received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Mataram State Islamic University. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their right not to participate, and the guarantee of personal data confidentiality. Participants who were willing to take part in the study signed an electronic consent form before completing the questionnaire. This study adhered to ethical principles in social research, including confidentiality, anonymity, and respect for voluntary participation.

2. RESULTS

Demographic characteristics of respondents

There were 198 undergraduate students from the Social Studies Education study program who became respondents. Of all the responses collected, all participants met the research criteria. More than 65% of the respondents had a female gender. The remaining less than 35% are male gender. Most of the respondents were students who came from the village. The proportion reached more than 94%. The remaining less than 6% came from the city, mostly from the city of Mataram. From the ethnicity variable, there are 6 different tribes who are social studies education students as well as respondents in this study. This number is only a small part of the hundreds of tribes in Indonesia (Triyanto & Hartanto, 2018). Of the 6 tribes, Sasak is the dominating tribe with a proportion of 85.86%. The rest come from Samawa, Mbojo, Javanese, Lamhala and Bugis tribes. In more detail, the demographic information of respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents (n = 198)

| No | Variables | Frekuensi (n) | Proporsi (%) |
|----|----------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1 | Gender | | |
| | a. Male | 64 | 32.32 |
| | b. Female | 134 | 67.68 |
| 2 | Place of current residence | | |
| | a. City | 11 | 5.56 |
| | b. Rural | 187 | 94.44 |
| 3 | Tribes | | |
| | a. Sasak | 170 | 85.86 |
| | b. Samawa | 8 | 4.04 |
| | c. Mbojo | 13 | 6.57 |
| | d. Jawa | 1 | 0.50 |
| | e. Lamhala | 4 | 2.02 |
| | f. Bugis | 2 | 1.01 |

Learning outcome profiles of democracy education, democratic attitudes and electoral participation

On average, the learning outcomes of democracy education, democratic attitudes and election participation of social studies education students at Mataram State Islamic University are in the good category. The scores are 79.63, 80.59 and 79.27 respectively. Individually, there are even some students who have a score of 97.5 for the domain of learning outcomes of democracy education, and a score of 100 for the domain of democratic attitudes and electoral participation. Although it is still below 100, the score of 97.5 only has a score difference of 2.5 with the highest score. These data-centering scores themselves have a positive impact on the proportion of students in the good category. In the domain of democracy education learning outcomes (LO), 95.65% of students have reached the good category. In the domain of democratic attitudes (DA), and electoral participation (EP), the proportion is lower, but still dominates. Respectively, the proportions are 79.28% and 66.16% (Figure 1).

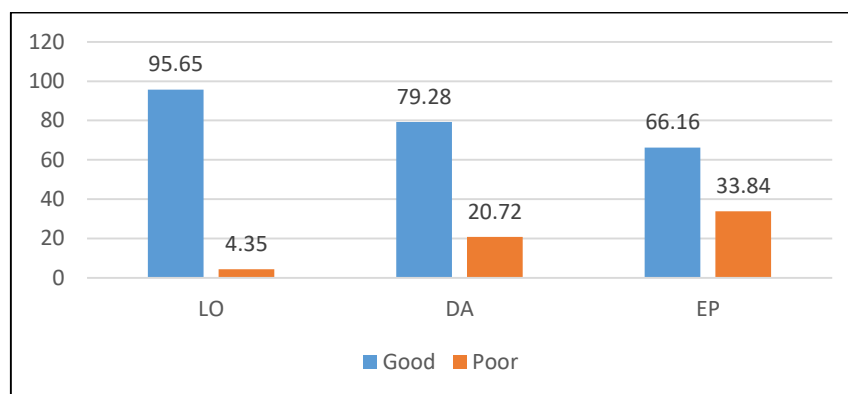


Figure 1. Comparison of the proportion of good and low categories in LO, DA and EP domains.

Relationship between democracy education learning outcomes, democratic attitudes and electoral participation

The results of the analysis show that the domain of democracy education learning outcomes, democratic attitudes and student election participation has a positive and significant relationship. The correlation index is more than 0.8. The analysis indices are 0.835 for the relationship between the domain of democracy education learning outcomes and democratic attitudes; 0.831 for the

relationship between the domain of democracy education learning outcomes and electoral participation; and 0.833 for the relationship between the domain of democratic attitudes and electoral participation (Figure 2). These large correlations mean that LO is a good predictor of DA and EP domains. Similarly, DA is a good predictor of the EP domain. A graph of the relationship between the three domains is presented in Figure 3.

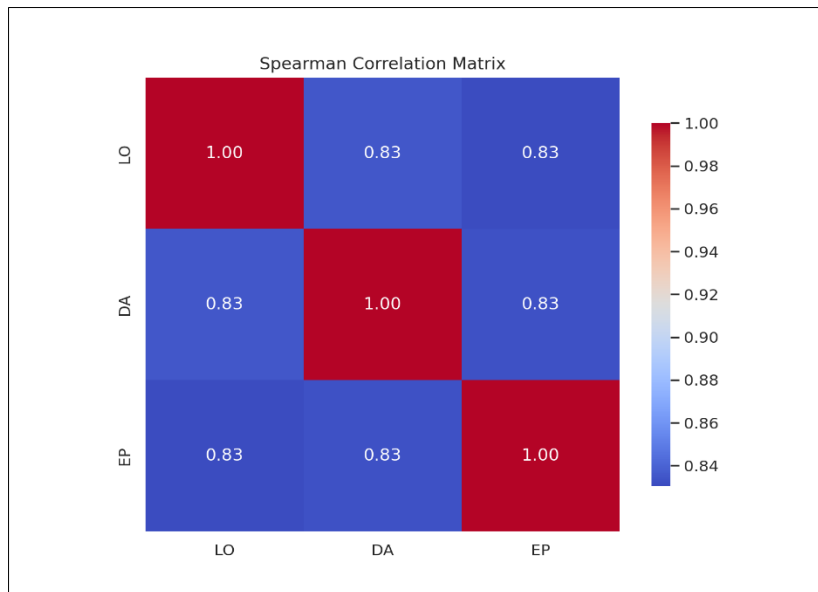


Figure 2. Heatmap of correlation between LO, DA and EP domains

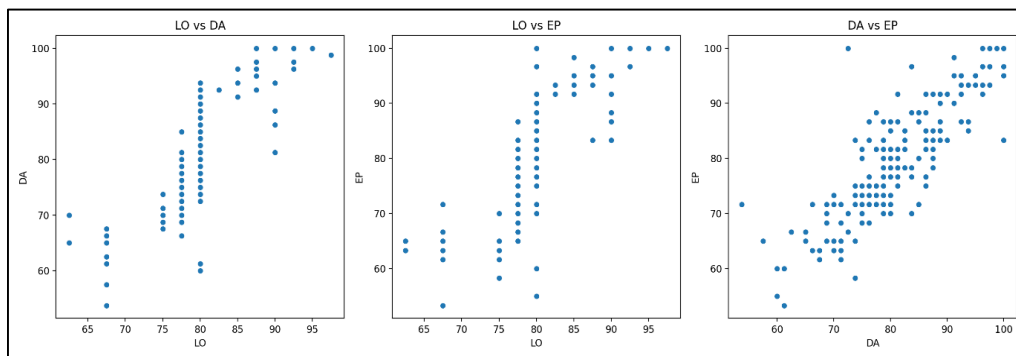


Figure 3. Relationship graph between LO, DA and EP domains

The influence of demographics on democracy education learning outcomes, democratic attitudes and electoral participation

Descriptively, the learning outcomes of democracy education, democratic attitudes and electoral participation of male students are higher than those of female students. However, the difference is small and both are in the “good” category. The difference is also not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), meaning that the demographic factor of the gender variable does not affect the learning outcomes of democracy education, democratic attitudes and student election participation. From the variable of current residence, students from the city are able to achieve better learning outcomes of democracy education compared to students from the village. The same is true for their democratic attitudes and electoral participation. However, the difference is too small, and not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). From the ethnicity variable, students from the Samawa tribe had the highest learning outcomes. However, for the democratic attitude domain, Bugi students had the most positive attitude. As for the election participation domain, students from the Mbojo tribe had the highest score. However, these differences are also small and not significantly different ($p > 0.05$). This means that the variables of

residence and ethnicity have no effect on the three domains. More detailed data can be observed in Table 2.

Table 2. Differences in scores of LO, DA and EP domains based on demographic characteristics

| Variabel | Frekuensi (n) | Nilai LO | | Nilai DA | | Nilai EP | |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------|---------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|
| | | Mean | p-value | Mean | p-value | Mean | p-value |
| Gender | | | | | | | |
| Male | 64 | 80±5.74 | 0.7254 | 81.11±10.22 | 0.5210 | 79.45±11.55 | 0.9059 |
| Female | 134 | 79.46±4.64 | | 80.35±8.5 | | 79.18±9.24 | |
| Place of current residence | | | | | | | |
| City | 11 | 81.59±5.62 | 0.5867 | 83.18±10.19 | 0.3506 | 81.82±9.87 | 0.4476 |
| Rural | 187 | 79.52±4.97 | | 80.44±9.01 | | 79.12±10.03 | |
| Tribes | | | | | | | |
| Sasak | 170 | 79.59±4.98 | 0.7656 | 80.34±9.03 | 0.2874 | 78.88±10.11 | 0.5590 |
| Samawa | 8 | 83.12±8.32 | | 86.09±10.08 | | 82.29±12.85 | |
| Mbojo | 13 | 79.04±1.63 | | 80.29±5.91 | | 85±9.43 | |
| Jawa | 1 | 77.5 | | 73.75 | | 73.33 | |
| Lamhala | 4 | 76.88±6.25 | | 80.31±17.72 | | 80.26±7.54 | |
| Bugis | 2 | 80 | | 86.25±1.77 | | 85±4.71 | |

3. DISCUSSION

The predominance of good categories in students' democratic education learning outcomes is mainly achieved through the application of innovative teaching models and an environment that supports and fosters democratic values. This approach emphasizes active participation, critical thinking, and the development of student competencies. The inquiry learning model, for example, has been shown to significantly improve democratic traits and learning outcomes in elementary school students. In a study in Sidoarjo, the application of this model resulted in an increase in students' democratic character values and learning outcomes across three cycles, with scores increasing from 78.0 to 89.04, surpassing the Criteria for Achievement (Elvirawati & Rezanía, 2022).0 (Elvirawati & Rezanía, 2022). In addition, collaborative and participatory learning models also have a positive impact on democracy education. Studies in Georgia show that collaborative teaching strategies contribute to the development of civic competencies, such as school affiliation, cultural acceptance and tolerance, while fostering autonomy and positive attitudes towards learning (Malazonia et al., 2023). These strategies are further reinforced by participatory budgeting practices that engage students, including those with disabilities, to increase civic knowledge and skills (Bartlett & Schugurensky, 2024).

Integrated learning models, such as the Connected Model Integrated Learning with audiovisual media, have also succeeded in improving student learning outcomes. The application of this model increased the percentage of students who reached the KKM from 58.3% to 86.1% over two cycles (Fatmawati, 2022). In addition to the classroom approach, the influence of the democratic parenting style by parents also plays a significant role. A parenting style based on guidance, communication, and appreciation has been shown to be more effective than authoritarian or permissive styles in promoting students' academic achievement and discipline (Firdaus et al., 2022; Khairi et al., 2022; Lasut et al., 2023). Democracy in education also emphasizes students' equal rights and responsibilities, encouraging independence, self-confidence and critical thinking skills that are essential in a democratic society (Maksum, 2021). However, challenges remain, especially in integrating innovative approaches with traditional learning models that are still teacher centered and do not support student participation (Malazonia et al., 2023). This results in a small number of

students with low learning outcomes. This phenomenon then impacts the quality of their democratic attitudes.

The development of democratic attitudes among university students is influenced by various educational and extracurricular factors that include the educational environment, teaching methodology, student involvement in organizations, and socioeconomic and media influences. The educational environment plays an important role, especially through the integration of democratic values into the curriculum, such as the understanding of human rights, social justice, and civic responsibility applied in academic and extracurricular activities (Biben, 2022). Communicative teaching of English promotes critical thinking skills, multilingual communication and cultural awareness relevant to participation in a democratic society (Asatryan & Gabrielyan, 2023). Innovative teaching methodologies, such as Arends' Time Token model in Civic Education, enhance students' democratic attitudes through active participation and courage to voice opinions (Masyitoh & Ulfah, 2019), while the role-playing method provides practical experience of democratic principles (Rombot et al., 2018). Student participation in self-organizations, clubs and volunteer activities provides opportunities to practice leadership and collaboration, which strengthens democratic values (Biben, 2022). In addition, democratic classroom approaches that involve students in the decision-making process increase their commitment to democratic values. Socio-economic and media influences are also significant, where parents' education levels and exposure to political issues through the media help shape students' more informed perspectives (Akar & KARA, 2022; Vongprasert, 2018). However, challenges such as gaps in civic knowledge and democratic engagement remain, especially among different socioeconomic groups, necessitating a more inclusive approach to education. The practical implementation of democratic values in education also requires adaptation to local contexts and sustained efforts (Asatryan & Gabrielyan, 2023). This results in a small number of students with low democratic attitudes. This phenomenon then has an impact on their participation in electoral contestation.

Student electoral participation is often dominated by certain categories influenced by demographic factors, political education, and political mobilization efforts. Young voters, particularly women aged 18-24 in Kosovo, showed a high turnout of 57.5% due to the desire to bring about political change (Kadriu & Marmilova, 2022). In Indonesia, first-time voters, often university students, are seen as an important asset in the sustainability of the political system (Martini et al., 2020). Political education through curriculum and activities such as election socialization in Singkawang City also increases students' political awareness and readiness (Sulha et al., 2023). Civic education in Nigeria, which emphasizes moral values and honesty, also influences students' active involvement in election management (Nwaokoma & Nyoyoko, 2023). The presence of independent candidates in campus elections in Indonesia expands student participation by promoting diversity of ideas (Fernandes et al., 2022). However, barriers such as low curiosity and distrust of student organizations, as was the case in the 2023 Medan State University Election where 65% of students did not vote, reduce the participation rate (Giry & Halking, 2024). On the other hand, political mobilization by party elites in Malaysia often influences students to align with certain political agendas, which can obscure the authenticity of their engagement (Efrianto et al., 2020). To ensure more inclusive and equitable participation, there needs to be efforts to increase political education and improve the electoral system, so that students from various demographic backgrounds can participate actively and meaningfully.

Democratic education plays an important role in shaping students' democratic attitudes by promoting the development of civic knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for active participation in democratic processes. The positive relationship between democratic education and students' democratic attitudes is reflected in curriculum reforms, participatory learning models and inclusive civic education practices. Curriculum reform focuses on the integration of democratic principles, such as critical thinking and civic responsibility, into learning (Feinberg, 2023). For example, initiatives in Europe promote democratic civic education in schools (Edelstein, 2015). Participatory learning models, such as school participatory budgeting, encourage students' involvement in decision-making and strengthen their sense of responsibility (Bartlett &

Schugurensky, 2024). In addition, service learning and active citizenship also enhance students' democratic awareness and social participation (Geier & Hasager, 2020).

Inclusive civic education ensures all students, including those with disabilities, take part in the democratic process, which contributes to a sense of belonging and empowerment (Bartlett & Schugurensky, 2024b). A democratic school climate also plays an important role in encouraging critical reflection and student participation (Tzankova et al., 2023). At the higher education level, research shows a link between higher levels of education and adherence to democratic values. However, challenges such as unequal access to education and the abstract nature of political issues can be barriers to the effectiveness of democratic education (Silva et al., 2023). Nonetheless, the positive impact of democratic education in fostering democratic attitudes remains significant and provides a basis for addressing such challenges through more relevant and inclusive educational approaches.

Democratic education plays an important role in shaping students' civic and political engagement, which has a direct impact on their participation in elections. The relationship between democratic education learning outcomes and students' electoral participation is significant and positive because it encourages critical reflection, political efficacy and a sense of civic duty. A democratic school climate, with opportunities for active engagement and critical reflection, strengthens students' political efficacy and interest, although its effect on direct electoral participation may vary (Tzankova et al., 2023). In addition, nonacademic experiences such as service-based and extracurricular activities play an important role in building a sense of civic duty, especially among students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Stoddard, 2023). Collaborative learning approaches have also been shown to be effective in improving students' civic competencies, including acceptance of diverse views and affiliation with the school community (Malazonia et al., 2023).

Civic education contributes greatly to students' political knowledge and their trust in political institutions, which are predictors of electoral participation (Deimel et al., 2024). However, this relationship may vary depending on the social and cultural context of each country, so civic education strategies should be customized accordingly. At the post-secondary education level, institutions have the potential to increase civic engagement through the integration of civic education as part of core learning outcomes, as well as through the funding of civic engagement initiatives (Stewart, 2023). However, challenges remain in ensuring equitable access to these democratic educational experiences. Socioeconomic disparities and lack of extracurricular opportunities can widen disparities in political participation, while the effectiveness of civic education relies heavily on approaches that are appropriate to the local political and cultural context.

Students' democratic attitudes have a significant and positively correlated relationship with their participation in elections. This relationship is fostered through various educational and social mechanisms that enhance understanding of democracy, political efficacy and civic duty. A democratic school climate, characterized by opportunities for active engagement and critical reflection, plays an important role in fostering students' political interest and trust, which are strong predictors of electoral participation (Gamio et al., 2024; Tzankova et al., 2023). Civic education is also a key component by equipping students with the civic knowledge necessary to understand democratic processes. For example, research in Peru shows that civic knowledge can predict democratic attitudes, although its impact is influenced by other factors such as gender and political interest (Cuenca & Urrutia, 2020). In Germany, educational experiences that emphasize civic understanding contribute to higher voting intentions (Wallrich et al., 2021).

In addition, participation in extracurricular activities such as service-based programs and mock elections can strengthen students' sense of civic duty, although the impact on real election participation is likely to be indirect (Finnbogadóttir & Önnudóttir, 2022; Stoddard, 2023). Social media platforms also support political engagement by increasing political perceptions and beliefs among youth (Arabani et al., 2022). Student participation in school governance, such as school municipalities, strengthens democratic culture in educational institutions by promoting students' awareness of their ability to influence public life (Gamio et al., 2024; Stojnic, 2020). However, the

relationship between democratic attitudes and electoral participation can be affected by external factors, such as socioeconomic disparities and limited access to participatory opportunities (Stoddard, 2023). Therefore, a multifaceted approach that integrates educational, social and technological strategies is needed to effectively foster democratic attitudes and increase students' participation in democratic processes.

Demographic factors such as gender, place of residence and ethnicity are often thought to affect attitudes towards democratic education, democratic attitudes and electoral participation of university students. However, research shows that their impact is insignificant compared to other factors such as civic education, school environment and educational interventions. Civic education, for example, plays an important role in closing the political participation gap caused by demographic differences. A study in English high schools found that civic education interventions successfully reduced participation gaps related to gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status (Weinberg, 2022). In Peru, mechanisms for student participation in school showed that a democratic educational environment had a greater impact on the formation of democratic attitudes than demographic factors (Stojnic, 2020). Moreover, engagement in democratic practices at school, as found in a study of European adolescents, increased civic participation more significantly than demographic characteristics (Torney-Purta & Barber, 2005).

The educational environment has also been shown to have a greater influence than demographic factors. In the US, school types such as independent and private Catholic schools contribute greatly to the improvement of students' civic skills and political knowledge, confirming the importance of the educational context (Belfield, 2004). Meanwhile, gender differences in democratic attitudes are often not significant overall. In Nigeria, although female students showed higher scores on certain democratic principles, the difference did not have a large impact on the general student population (Obiagu et al., 2023). Other factors, such as parents' educational background and interest in social issues, tend to determine democratic attitudes more. In city K, for example, these two factors have a large effect on public awareness and law observance (Seo & Kim, 2022). These findings highlight that while demographic factors cannot be completely ignored, civic education, school environment, and socio-cultural factors have a more significant influence in shaping students' democratic attitudes and participation.

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