



FKIP UAD STUDENTS' OPINIONS ON DEMONSTRATIONS AS A SOCIAL CONTROL MECHANISM OVER THE PERFORMANCE OF THE DPR RI

Wahdini Aprillia

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Ahmad Dahlan University Indonesia

2200009012@webmail.uad.ac.id

Triwahyuningsih

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Ahmad Dahlan University Indonesia

triwahyuningsih@ppkn.uad.ac.id

Abstract: This study aims to examine the opinions of students from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) at Ahmad Dahlan University who participated and did not participate in demonstrations regarding the effectiveness of demonstrations as a social control mechanism over the performance of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI). The study was motivated by differences in students' views concerning the effectiveness of demonstrations in influencing public policy and the performance of the DPR RI. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method with data collected through interviews and documentation. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model and validated through source triangulation. The findings indicate that students who participated in demonstrations viewed demonstrations as an effective social control instrument for conveying public aspirations, criticizing government policies, monitoring the performance of the DPR RI, and enhancing public political awareness. Meanwhile, students who did not participate in demonstrations considered demonstrations a legitimate form of political participation, but viewed their effectiveness as being limited to expressing aspirations, facilitating political communication, and increasing public awareness. Both groups agreed that demonstrations play an important role as a social control mechanism over the performance of the DPR RI.

Keywords: Student Opinions, Demonstrations, Social Control, DPR RI Performance, FKIP Students

INTRODUCTION

A democratic system places citizens as the primary overseers of government performance. Democracy not only guarantees the freedom to vote but also provides opportunities for citizens to express their opinions and exercise social control over state policies. Nuna (2019) argues that the fundamental essence of a democratic state lies in its commitment to upholding the constitution and providing space for citizens to participate in expressing their socio-political aspirations as a form of responsibility for the continuity of

governance. Public participation therefore serves as an indicator of the extent to which the principle of popular sovereignty is genuinely implemented (Irma & Fajriyah, 2021).

Demonstrations represent one form of non-conventional political participation through which citizens convey aspirations, express criticism, and respond to public policies. From a juridical perspective, demonstrations constitute the exercise of freedom of expression in public, as guaranteed by Article 28E Paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and further regulated by Law Number 9 of 1998 concerning

Freedom of Expression in Public. Based on this legal framework, demonstrations should not merely be understood as acts of opposition to certain policies but also as legitimate instruments of social control (Bunajar & Wardhani, 2023).

University students are often regarded as a group with critical thinking abilities who function as a pressure group, namely a social group that seeks to influence public policies without being directly involved in formal political structures. As a pressure group, students play an important role in articulating public aspirations, monitoring government policies, and reminding state institutions to remain committed to serving the public interest (Sulaiman, 2021).

Social control refers to the mechanisms used by society to regulate the behavior of its members in accordance with prevailing norms and values. In the context of state governance, social control functions not only as a regulatory instrument but also as a means of maintaining a balance between state authority and citizens' rights. Roucek explains that social control encompasses all planned and unplanned processes intended to educate, persuade, or even compel individuals to conform to the customs and values of their social groups (Syarifudin, 2017). As a form of external social control, demonstrations position civil society as an active actor in monitoring and evaluating the performance of state institutions, including the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI) (Santoso & Derung, 2024).

Political participation can generally be categorized into conventional and

non-conventional forms. Conventional participation includes activities such as voting and election campaigns, whereas non-conventional participation includes petitions, demonstrations, and similar forms of political engagement (Ramadhan, 2022). Demonstrations belong to the category of non-conventional political participation because they exert direct pressure on policymakers. Rusmadi et al. (2023) state that young people, including university students, are increasingly utilizing non-conventional channels of political participation in response to dissatisfaction with the performance of representative institutions. The increasing frequency of student demonstrations in Indonesia in recent years provides evidence that formal channels of participation are often perceived as insufficient for effectively conveying public aspirations.

As the legislative institution of the state, the performance of the DPR RI should be assessed based on its three primary functions: legislation, budgeting, and oversight. In practice, however, these functions have frequently been subject to public criticism. Riwanto (2016) notes that low legislative productivity, the dominance of partisan interests, and weak internal oversight mechanisms are among the primary factors contributing to the decline of public trust in the DPR RI. This condition has encouraged citizens, particularly university students, to utilize demonstrations as a direct and tangible form of external oversight. Patabang (2025) further argues that student social movements advocating constitutional rights represent a significant form of youth political

participation that cannot be ignored within a democratic system.

The role of students as a pressure group has been clearly reflected in various socio-political dynamics in Indonesia, one of which was the “Reject DPR Allowances” demonstration held from 25–29 August 2025 in several regions of the country (Bestari, 2025). The performance of the DPR RI has frequently been criticized by the public because it is perceived as not having optimally fulfilled its legislative and oversight functions. Low productivity in lawmaking, the dominance of political party interests, and weak discipline among members have been identified as major factors contributing to the decline of public confidence in the institution (Riwanto, 2016).

Although demonstrations have long been one of the most prominent forms of political participation among university students, debates continue regarding the extent to which such actions effectively influence policy changes and improve the performance of state institutions. Based on this context, the present study seeks to address this research gap by analyzing the opinions of students from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) at Ahmad Dahlan University regarding the effectiveness of demonstrations as a form of political participation and social control in safeguarding democratic values in Indonesia.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the background of the study, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How do students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) at Ahmad Dahlan University

who participated in demonstrations perceive the effectiveness of demonstrations as a social control mechanism over the performance of the DPR RI?

2. How do students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) at Ahmad Dahlan University who did not participate in demonstrations perceive the effectiveness of demonstrations as a social control mechanism over the performance of the DPR RI?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design aimed at describing and analyzing social phenomena in depth based on the perspectives of the research participants. A qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to understand students' views and interpretations regarding the effectiveness of demonstrations as a social control mechanism over the performance of the DPR RI.

The research was conducted at Campus IV of Ahmad Dahlan University, Yogyakarta, from April to May 2026. The participants consisted of six students from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) at Ahmad Dahlan University who were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The participants were divided into two categories: three students who had participated in demonstrations (MZ from Civic Education, MN from Civic Education, and AN from Primary School Teacher Education) and three students who had not participated in demonstrations (RN from Early Childhood Teacher Education, AA from Civic Education, and FA from Guidance and Counseling).

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and documentation. The interviews were conducted face-to-face using a flexible interview guide covering five indicators: (1) clarity of aspirations and demands, (2) political support and participation, (3) government or institutional responses, (4) impacts and follow-up actions, and (5) orderliness and compliance with the law. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation. Data analysis employed the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of four stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Perspectives of Students Who Participated in Demonstrations

FKIP UAD students who participated in demonstrations generally perceived demonstrations as a legitimate, strategic, and effective form of political participation and social control over the performance of the DPR RI. The effectiveness of demonstrations was not solely measured by their ability to directly influence policy changes but also by their capacity to generate public pressure, enhance political awareness, and encourage legislative institutions to respond to public aspirations.

Regarding the clarity of aspirations and demands, students who directly participated in demonstrations emphasized that every protest action should be carefully planned and coordinated. MZ stated:

"We should not participate in demonstrations without clear demands. Even during demonstrations, we need to

coordinate regarding the demands and aspirations that will be conveyed." (MZ, 2026)

MN reinforced this view by explaining that the demands raised in demonstrations were always related to concrete issues, such as labor wage policies, which were directly conveyed in front of the DPR RI office. AN further added that the demands had been clearly formulated from the beginning, including the abolition of DPR RI allowances, the return of the military to the barracks, and the enactment of the asset confiscation bill.

In terms of participation, students who participated in demonstrations emphasized that involvement should be based on genuine political awareness rather than merely following others. MN explained:

"The most important aspect of participating in demonstrations is awareness, especially political awareness. If someone participates only because others do, it becomes meaningless and merely turns into a form of FOMO." (MN, 2026)

These findings indicate that demonstrations are not merely understood as street protests but also as a form of political participation grounded in citizens' awareness of public issues. Political awareness plays a crucial role because it determines the quality of student engagement in democratic processes. Students who possess a strong understanding of the issues being advocated are more capable of conveying aspirations in a focused and responsible manner. Consequently, demonstrations become not only a means of expressing dissatisfaction but also a manifestation of active student involvement in monitoring

government performance and legislative institutions.

AN further emphasized that participation in demonstrations was voluntary:

"Most of the participants attended voluntarily because of their personal concern for the country. There was no coercion or financial incentive from any party. Participation was entirely voluntary." (AN, 2026)

Concerning institutional responses, students who participated in demonstrations perceived the DPR RI and the central government as largely unresponsive to the aspirations conveyed through protest actions. MN stated:

"In my opinion, the DPR RI and the government often provide little to no response. Demonstrators are usually confronted only by security forces such as the police, military personnel, and other authorities. There is no genuine response from the government in the form of direct meetings or discussions with us." (MN, 2026)

An exception was observed at the regional government level. AN appreciated the response of the governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta:

"Sultan Hamengkubuwono personally came to the demonstration site at around one o'clock in the morning to ensure that the protest remained peaceful. After his arrival, a discussion was finally held between the demonstrators' representatives and the police." (AN, 2026)

The participants also acknowledged that demonstrations had a significant impact on increasing public awareness. MZ stated:

"The public places considerable hope in us, and I believe that

demonstrations contribute to the collective good and foster greater public concern for social issues." (MZ, 2026)

MN further emphasized that without pressure from students and civil society, the government could act without sufficient public oversight. Regarding orderliness, MZ argued that demonstrators were highly disciplined:

"In my opinion, demonstrators are among the most civilized members of society because they are required to disperse before 5:00 p.m. and maintain cleanliness and order throughout the demonstration." (MZ, 2026)

These findings indicate that students who participated in demonstrations possess a comprehensive understanding of the function of demonstrations as a social control mechanism rather than merely spontaneous expressions of anger or protest. They recognize that the legitimacy of a demonstration is largely determined by the clarity of its demands, the quality of participation, and the degree of order maintained during its implementation. Sihombing et al. (2023) explain that strong civic engagement among young people is reflected in their ability to participate critically and responsibly in public affairs. This perspective is consistent with the characteristics of the student demonstrators in this study, who viewed themselves not merely as participants in a crowd but as political actors with a clear awareness of the issues they advocated.

Furthermore, students' perceptions regarding the limited responsiveness of the DPR RI reflect a gap between the representative function that legislative institutions are expected to perform and the realities experienced

by citizens. Jazmine et al. (2025) argue that inadequate management of public aspirations by the DPR RI has contributed to perceptions of injustice among the public, which in turn encourages the emergence of social movements, including student demonstrations. In this context, demonstrations function not only as channels for expressing aspirations but also as indicators of the extent to which state institutions uphold the principles of good governance and public accountability.

Wahyuningroem et al. (2024) also note that Indonesian student movements supported by digital mobilization have been capable of exerting significant pressure on policymaking processes, as demonstrated by movements such as #ReformasiDikorupsi and #TolakOmnibusLaw.

Overall, students who participated in demonstrations perceived demonstrations as an effective instrument of social control within a democratic system. This finding is consistent with Santoso & Derung (2024), who argue that student demonstrations represent both expressions of dissatisfaction with perceived injustice and legitimate instruments of social control. Their effectiveness is considered more visible in fostering political awareness and generating public pressure than in producing immediate policy changes.

2. Perspectives of Students Who Did Not Participate in Demonstrations

FKIP UAD students who did not participate in demonstrations generally viewed demonstrations as a legitimate form of political participation that continues to serve as a

mechanism of social control. However, their assessments tended to be more reflective and evaluative because they were based on the perspective of observers rather than direct participants.

Regarding the clarity of demands, this group considered the objectives of student demonstrations to be generally clear. AA emphasized that the clarity of the message is the most fundamental aspect:

“The main purpose of a demonstration is not merely to take to the streets. Rather, it is about ensuring that the messages and demands conveyed by students can be understood by the wider community as well as by the government. If the demands are clear, focused, and directed at the core issue, the public will be more likely to understand why students are engaging in such actions.” (AA, 2026)

However, RN pointed out that some individuals participate in demonstrations without fully understanding the substance of the demands, thereby weakening the effectiveness of the message:

“Although I did not participate directly in demonstrations, I continue to follow the news and monitor issues that I believe deserve to be advocated through demonstrations. However, in my surroundings, student participation in demonstrations remains relatively low because demonstrations are often perceived as disorderly, chaotic, or ineffective due to the actions of certain individuals. This situation makes many students hesitant to participate directly, resulting in low levels of participation.” (RN, 2026)

In terms of participation, although these students did not physically attend demonstrations, they remained

politically engaged through social media. FA explained:

“Student demonstrations help make the public more aware of the issues being advocated because such demonstrations are usually covered by the media and widely discussed on social media platforms. As a result, the DPR RI receives greater public attention and scrutiny, encouraging it to be more cautious when making decisions.” (FA, 2026)

The role of social media in expanding access to information emerged as an important finding in this study. Information regarding demonstrations is no longer limited to those who are physically present at protest sites but can be disseminated widely through digital platforms. As a result, the issues advocated by students are more likely to attract public attention. The broader dissemination of information strengthens the function of demonstrations as a social control mechanism because citizens are able to monitor and evaluate government and DPR RI policies more actively.

The relatively low level of direct participation was partly influenced by concerns about potential disorder and conflict, as acknowledged by RN. This finding is consistent with Bhakti (2020), who argues that the development of digital public spaces has created alternative channels for youth political participation.

Regarding government responses, this group perceived the DPR RI and the central government as not yet fully responsive to public aspirations. AA stated:

“There are situations in which the government appears willing to listen to students’ aspirations, for example by opening opportunities for dialogue.

However, there are also instances in which government responses are perceived as slow, less transparent, or merely symbolic without any meaningful follow-up.” (AA, 2026)

This finding suggests that the effectiveness of demonstrations is determined not only by the quality of the demands expressed by students but also by the willingness of state institutions to respond to public aspirations. In a democratic system, demonstrations essentially function as a channel of communication between citizens and the government. Therefore, responses in the form of dialogue, policy clarification, or concrete follow-up actions constitute important indicators for assessing the extent to which demonstrations fulfill their function as a mechanism of social control over state institutions.

In terms of impact, this group perceived demonstrations as an important means of political education. AA stated:

“Demonstrations do not merely function as acts of protest; they also serve as a form of political education for society. Many issues that previously received little attention eventually become matters of public discussion because of demonstrations.” (AA, 2026)

Nevertheless, RN believed that the influence of demonstrations on policy changes within the DPR RI remained limited because many public demands had not yet been translated into concrete policy outcomes.

Regarding orderliness, this group emphasized that the legitimacy of demonstrations largely depends on the discipline of participants. AA stated:

“Demonstrations that are orderly, peaceful, and conducted in

accordance with regulations are generally more likely to gain public sympathy.” (AA, 2026)

Orderliness in the implementation of demonstrations is an important factor because it influences public acceptance of student protest actions. Demonstrations conducted peacefully and in accordance with legal regulations tend to gain greater legitimacy from society. Conversely, actions that result in disorder may divert public attention away from the substantive issues being advocated. Therefore, compliance with legal norms and public order constitutes an integral component of the effectiveness of demonstrations as a social control mechanism.

The perspectives expressed by this group reflect a more moderate yet still critical assessment of the effectiveness of demonstrations. Although they were not directly involved in protest actions, they demonstrated a relatively high level of political awareness by following developments through social media and providing indirect support. Bhakti (2020) explains that digital public spaces have created new channels of participation for young people who choose not to be physically present at demonstrations but nevertheless contribute to public opinion formation and the strengthening of social pressure through online platforms. This finding suggests that youth political participation cannot be measured solely by physical attendance at demonstrations but must also include active engagement in public discourse within digital spaces.

The view that demonstrations are more effective in raising awareness and facilitating political communication

than in directly influencing policy changes does not contradict the fundamental function of demonstrations as a mechanism of social control. Syarifudin (2017) argues that, in the reform era, students who choose not to participate directly in demonstrations still contribute to the strengthening of democratic discourse through more persuasive forms of engagement. Furthermore, Arbinata & Warsono (2021) explain that students' perceptions of demonstrations are influenced by organizational backgrounds, levels of political awareness, and perceptions of the risks associated with participation in mass actions. Consequently, the differences in opinion between the two groups in this study should not be viewed as contradictory but rather as reflections of the diversity of political participation among university students within Indonesia's democratic system.

Overall, students who did not participate in demonstrations still recognized demonstrations as a legitimate component of democracy and an important mechanism of social control over the performance of the DPR RI. However, they tended to view their effectiveness primarily in terms of fostering public awareness and political communication rather than producing direct policy changes.

CONCLUSION

Students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) at Ahmad Dahlan University who participated in demonstrations generally supported demonstrations as an effective mechanism of social control over the performance of the DPR RI. Demonstrations were perceived as a legitimate and strategic

form of political participation through which public aspirations can be expressed, government policies can be criticized, and legislative performance can be monitored. Their effectiveness was not measured solely by direct policy changes but also by their ability to enhance political awareness among citizens and encourage the DPR RI to respond to public aspirations. Demonstrations that are orderly, peaceful, and conducted in accordance with legal regulations were considered capable of strengthening the legitimacy of student movements as pressure groups within a democratic system.

Students who did not participate in demonstrations also viewed demonstrations as a legitimate form of political participation and an important mechanism of social control over the performance of the DPR RI. They perceived the effectiveness of demonstrations primarily in their ability to convey public aspirations, facilitate political communication, and increase public awareness rather than directly influence policy changes. Nevertheless, they acknowledged the significant role of demonstrations in monitoring government and DPR RI policies, particularly when demonstrations are conducted peacefully, in an orderly manner, and with broad public support.

REFERENCES

- [1] Arbinata, Febryan, & Warsono. (2021). Konstruksi Mahasiswa FISH tentang Demonstrasi sebagai Saluran Penyampaian Aspirasi Politik. *Kajian Moral Dan Kewarganegaraan*, 9, 109–122.
- [2] Bestari, Novina Putri. (2025). Kronologi Demo 25-29 Agustus: Demo DPR Melebar Jadi Amarah ke Polisi. Retrieved from CNBC INDONESIA website: <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20250830145726-4-662882/kronologi-demo-25-29-agustus-demo-dpr-melebar-jadi-amarah-ke-polisi>
- [3] Bhakti, Sukri Eka. (2020). Ruang publik dan media sosial: partisipasi politik mahasiswa indonesia. *Jurnal Kajian Media*, 4(1), 1–10.
- [4] Bunajar, Habib, & Wardhani, Novia Wahyu. (2023). Gerakan Mahasiswa Dalam Bentuk Demonstrasi Sebagai Bagian Dari Demokrasi Pada Masa Orde Baru. *Ganesha Civic Education Journal*, 5(1), 52–56. <https://doi.org/10.23887/gancej.v5i1.5142>
- [5] Irma, Fajriyah, Nurul. (2021). Rendahnya Partisipasi Politik Pemula pada Pemilihan Umum. *Jurnal Mahasiswa Karakter Bangsa*, 1(1).
- [6] Jazmine, Indira, Roring, Edward Benedictus, & Tholemadia, Finnova Khairullah. (2025). Prinsip Good Governance dan Kritik atas Rasionalitas : Diskursus Pengelolaan Tunjangan Anggota DPR RI dalam Membentuk Persepsi Keadilan Publik Media Hukum Indonesia (MHI). *Media Hukum Indonesia (MHI)*, 3(4), 121–128.

- [7] Karolus Teguh Santoso, & Teresia Noiman Derung. (2024). Mahasiswa Menuntut Keadilan: Mengurai Aksi Demonstrasi atas Kenaikan Tunjangan Anggota DPR dalam Perspektif Sosiologi Pendidikan. *Khatulistiwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Sosial Humaniora*, 4(4), 433–445. <https://doi.org/10.55606/khatulistiwa.v4i4.8489>
- [8] Nuna, Muten, & Moonti, Roy Marthen. (2019). Kebebasan Hak Sosial-Politik Dan Partisipasi Warga Negara Dalam Sistem Demokrasi Di Indonesia. *Jurnal Ius Constituendum*, 4, 110–127.
- [9] Patabang, Viktor. (2025). 17 + 8 Tuntutan Rakyat : Kajian Hukum atas Gerakan Sosial dan Partisipasi Politik Generasi Milenial-Gen Z dalam Menyuarakan Hak Konstitusional. *IJLJ: Indonesian Journal of Law and Justice*, 2(1), 21–28.
- [10] Ramadhan, Dimas. (2022). Rasional-Demokratis Proyeksi Partisipasi Memilih Kaum Muda. *Jurnal Bawaslu Provinsi Kepulauan Riau*, 4, 144–158.
- [11] Riwanto, Agus. (2016). Strategi politik hukum meningkatkan kualitas kinerja dpr ri dalam produktivitas legislasi nasional. *Jurnal Cita Hukum, Fakultas Syariah Dan Hukum UIN Jakarta*, 4(2), 267–286. <https://doi.org/10.15408/jch.v4i2.4140>
- [12] Rusmadi, Yusuf, Raidah Intizar, & Hukma, Anil. (2023). Partisipasi Politik Kontemporer dan Pandangan Generasi Muda mengenai Demokrasi di Kota Makassar (Studi Komunikasi Politik) Contemporary Political Participation and Young People ' s Views on Democracy in Makassar City (A Study of Political Communication. *Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Media*, 2(2), 1–10.
- [13] Sihombing, Sinta Roulina, Hodriani, & Alhudawi, Usman. (2023). Memperkuat Civic Engagement Pada Generasi. *Pancasila and Civic Education Journal*, 2(2), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.30596/jcositte.v1i1.xxxx>
- [14] Sulaiman, Anton. (2021). Performance komunikasi politik mahasiswa di kota Cirebon. *Communicative: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam*, 2, 125–135.
- [15] Syarifudin, Aip. (2017). Mahasiswa Sebagai Pressure Group : Fenomena Silent Majority Di Era Reformasi. *SOSFILKOM*, XI(02).
- [16] Wahyuningroem, Sri Lestari, Heryadi, Dudy, Sirait, Rheinhard, & Uljanatunnisa, Uljanatunnisa. (2024). Youth political participation and digital movement in Indonesia: the case of #ReformasiDikorupsi and #TolakOmnibusLaw. *F1000 Research*, (May), 1–25.
- [17] MN. (2026, May 5). *Interview on the effectiveness of student demonstrations as a social control mechanism over the performance of the DPR RI*. Yogyakarta: Personal Interview.

- [18] MZ. (2026, May 5). *Interview on the effectiveness of student demonstrations as a social control mechanism over the performance of the DPR RI*. Yogyakarta: Personal Interview.
- [19] AA. (2026, April 30). *Interview on the effectiveness of student demonstrations as a social control mechanism over the performance of the DPR RI*. Yogyakarta: Personal Interview.
- [20] AN. (2026, May 7). *Interview on the effectiveness of student demonstrations as a social control mechanism over the performance of the DPR RI*. Yogyakarta: Personal Interview.
- [21] FA. (2026, May 7). *Interview on the effectiveness of student demonstrations as a social control mechanism over the performance of the DPR RI*. Yogyakarta: Personal Interview.
- [22] RN. (2026, April 27). *Interview on the effectiveness of student demonstrations as a social control mechanism over the performance of the DPR RI*. Yogyakarta: Personal Interview.