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Building Pancasila Values in Early Childhood Education at Klasis Flores

Maryance Ferawati Tamelab[1]✉, Efraim Semuel Nalle[2], Irony Damianus Saefatu[3], Petrus Logo Radja[4], Retno J. K. Lopo[5], Agnesti Pae[6]
Pendidikan Kristen Anak Usia Dini, Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Kupang, Indonesia[(1,2,3,4,5,6)]
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Abstract
This study aims to evaluate early childhood character development in Klasis Flores by implementing the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly in the post-pandemic period, which prompted a shift to technology-based learning. By descriptive quantitative method, we collected the data through surveys, observation, interviews, and documentation. The outcomes show that kids are independent, believing, and ethical yet at the same time, inadequate in imagination, worldwide mindfulness, tolerance, and innovation. Unsurprisingly, progress was uneven, demonstrating the need for further guidance from teachers. These findings underscore the essential character-building approach to address challenges in distance learning in rural areas.

Keywords: *Character Development; Early Childhood; Pancasila Student Profile.*

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✉ Corresponding author:
Email Address: ellatamelab2@gmail.com (Kupang, Indonesia)
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Introduction
Early childhood education (ECE) is a critical foundation for character development, particularly during the "golden age" of 0 to 6 years (Hridya & Mohammed, 2018). During this stage, children undergo rapid development in a variety of cognitive, affective, social, and moral domains. It is imperative to provide high-quality early childhood education (ECE) in order to cultivate well-rounded individuals who are more prepared to face future personal and academic challenges. In Indonesia, the significance of character education at this early stage is becoming more widely acknowledged as a means of cultivating national identity and social values.

Character education at ECE is essential for remote regions in Indonesia, such as Klasis Flores, during the post-pandemic period. Conventional learning was further disrupted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated a shift to technology-assisted distance learning. Distance learning faced significant obstacles in Klasis Flores due to the limited technology infrastructure. Consequently, character development was impeded by the limited time available for tailored instruction, which resulted in instructors and students being optional in person.

Indonesia's Ministry of Education implemented the Pancasila Student Profile framework in response to the necessity for structured character education. Marsidin (2022) asserts that the objective of this initiative is to incorporate six fundamental principles into the national curriculum: independent thought, cooperation, critical thinking, faith, piety, global

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diversity, and creativity. The framework aims to cultivate students who are not only academically proficient but also embody the ethical principles of Pancasila, Indonesia's philosophical foundation, by promoting these values. The Pancasila Student Profile is particularly pertinent in ECE, as it instills fundamental values at an early stage of a child's development.

However, the Pancasila Student Profile's implementation in peripheral regions presents distinct obstacles. The program's realization, which is designed to foster character development, may be impeded by cultural diversity, teacher training, and limited resources (Iskandar, et. al, 2024). The intricate consideration of the assimilation of national and local culture is necessary in Klasis Flores, where there are ethnic diversities of Ngadha-Lio, Mukang-Lamaholot-Kedang. According to prior research, character-building programs encounter contextual and structural challenges in remote regions, which necessitate regionally-based planning and implementation standards.

Most previous research on character education during the pandemic has focused on cognitive skills and learning loss, referring to the decline in academic knowledge and skills due to disrupted schooling. Although this research provides valuable insights into academic challenges, it often overlooks the character development aspect, especially in young children. There is a notable gap in studies that evaluate the long-term impact of character education programs in the context of ECE, particularly in isolated regions like Klasis Flores, where unique sociocultural dynamics influence educational outcomes.

This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile in ECE institutions in Klasis Flores. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study gathers data through surveys, observations, interviews, and documentation from six local ECE institutions. By focusing on both teachers' perspectives and students' progress, this research aims to assess how effectively the program promotes character development and identify the key challenges educators face in these settings.

Character education must not only reflect the core principles of the Pancasila Student Profile in the deeply religious and traditional values-rooted context of Klasis Flores, but also respect and incorporate local cultural values. Integrating Pancasila values with local customs could enhance the relevance of character education for young children in these communities. Thus, the research offers insights into adapting the Pancasila framework to local values and fostering an inclusive environment that nurtures both national and cultural identity.

Character education, according to Sopian (2023), is more than teaching moral principles; it involves fostering values such as self-awareness, resilience, empathy, and ethical behavior. For early learners, these values form the basis of social interaction, emotional intelligence, and responsible decision-making. In areas like Klasis Flores, developing these qualities is particularly important, as children need the skills to navigate a diverse and changing world while remaining grounded in their cultural heritage.

The six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile align well with modern character education goals. Faith and piety, for example, foster religious understanding and morality, while independence encourages self-regulation (Mahendra, 2024). Mutual cooperation emphasizes teamwork and empathy; critical thinking enhances problem solving; global diversity fosters cultural acceptance; and creativity encourages original thinking. By structuring character education around these dimensions, the Pancasila Student Profile provides a holistic approach that can address the diverse developmental needs of children in Klasis Flores.

Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the academic literature on character education implementation in remote Indonesian communities by offering practical recommendations for optimizing the Pancasila student profile in ECE. By examining the impact of the program and identifying specific challenges, this research intends to assist educators, policymakers, and parents in enhancing character-building practices that prepare

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young children in Klasis Flores to become socially responsible, ethically grounded, and adaptable members of society.

Methodology

Our research employed a qualitative descriptive methodology, including survey data collection techniques, interviews, observation, and documentation (Busetto, 2020). The survey results were processed using frequency analysis and then compared to the conditions, situations, and manifestations of various research variables photographed using interview, observation, and documentation techniques (Rofiah & Bungin, 2021). In this study, a questionnaire was distributed to all early childhood education (PAUD) teachers in the six PAUD units in the Klasis Flores region. The questionnaire was designed to gather data on teachers' perceptions and views regarding implementing the Pancasila Student Profile among young children. Each questionnaire included a series of questions related to the six dimensions and twenty elements of the Pancasila Student Profile.

Interviews were also conducted with all teachers at each PAUD unit to obtain in-depth information that would complement the survey data. These interviews allowed researchers to explore teachers' insights and perspectives on character development in early childhood education, especially within the context of the Pancasila Student Profile. By engaging directly with each teacher, the interviews provided a richer understanding of the daily practices and challenges they encounter.

Table 1. The Pancasila Student Profile

No	Dimension	Elements
1.	Having faith, fearing God, and worshipping.	1. The element of religious morality 2. Personal Moral Elements 3. The element of morality in nature 4. The element of national morality
2.	Self-reliant	1. Self-awareness and situations encountered 2. Self-regulation
3.	Mutual Cooperation	1. Collaboration Elements 2. Care Elements 3. Share Elements
4.	Global Diversity	1. The aspect of understanding and valuing culture 2. Elements of intercultural communication and interaction 3. Elements of introspection and accountability regarding the experience of exhaustion 4. The characteristic of social justice
5.	Critical Thinking	1. acquiring and processing data and concepts 2. Analyse and assess reasoning. 3. Considers and evaluates his reasoning.
6.	Creative	1. Create original thoughts 2. Creating unique efforts and actions 3. Possess the mental agility to identify alternative solutions to problems

Source: Decision of the Head of the Educational Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Body of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology No. 009/H/KR/2022 on the Dimensions, Elements, and Sub-Elements of the Profile of Pancasila Students on the Free Curricula

Observations were carried out during the learning process and throughout the entire daily schedule, from morning until the end of the school day in each class at the PAUD units. The observation covered various aspects of daily activities, such as interactions among children, teaching methods, and other activities that could reflect the application of Pancasila

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values. Each PAUD unit was observed over four days, ensuring that data was gathered from various activities and situations within the school environment.

To enhance the validity of the findings, data triangulation was implemented by cross-referencing data obtained from the survey, interviews, and observations. This triangulation process aimed to verify the consistency of the information and provide a more comprehensive view of the actual situation within each PAUD unit. Documentation was also used as a supplementary data collection method, including analyzing relevant records, lesson plans, and other supporting materials to strengthen the research conclusions.

The sampling criteria in this study involved selecting all six PAUD units in Klasis Flores as the research population, allowing the data to represent the entire region accurately. By including all teachers and observing each PAUD unit thoroughly, the study ensured that the findings would reflect the unique characteristics and challenges in implementing the Pancasila Student Profile within early childhood education settings.

Result and Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate varying levels of implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile dimensions across four early childhood education (PAUD) institutions: Syalom Ende Kindergarten, Kalvari Maumere Kindergarten, Ebenhezer Larantuka Kindergarten, and SPS Kasih Sayang Solafide Lewoleba. To present a more concise summary, we focus on the six core dimensions, capturing the main trends and significant findings, with detailed scores summarized in Table 1. Each institution's progress in implementing the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile is further analyzed below.

Faith, God-Fear, and Noble Morality

Across all four kindergartens, the dimension of faith and morality is generally progressing, but at varying stages. Syalom Ende and Kalvari Maumere show steady growth, with scores around 3.3, indicating a developing-to-established understanding of religious symbols and rituals. However, Ebenhezer Larantuka scored slightly lower, averaging around 2.48, likely due to its continued use of the 2013 curriculum, which lacks certain aspects emphasized in the Merdeka curriculum. These findings align with Kulsum, et.al., (2024) insights that curriculum adjustments impact students' moral and religious comprehension.

Global Diversity

Global diversity comprehension is also in the developing phase in most institutions. Kalvari Maumere and Syalom Ende students are progressively aware of cultural differences, scoring averages of 2.77 and 2.9 respectively. However, Ebenhezer Larantuka kindergarten struggles with full adaptation, scoring an average of 2.0 for younger and 2.96 for older classes, as students gradually familiarize themselves with diversity. This aligns with Niermeier's (2021) assertion that cultural adaptability requires time, especially in early childhood settings with limited diversity exposure.

Mutual Cooperation

The cooperation dimension, encompassing collaboration and empathy, is one of the strongest dimensions across the institutions. Kalvari Maumere, in particular, reached a higher average score of 3.34, demonstrating an entrenched stage in fostering collaboration. Similarly, Ebenezer Larantuka scored 3.38 in educator surveys, although classroom observations reflected inconsistencies. These findings support McGowan, Christenson & and Muccio's (2021) claim that cooperative learning environments enhance students' empathy and collaboration skills, especially when actively modeled by educators.

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Independence

The independence dimension shows mixed results. Kalvari Maumere achieved an average score of 2.9, reflecting initial but meaningful growth in students' self-awareness and situational adaptability. In contrast, Ebenhezer Larantuka shows a disparity between educator perceptions (score of 3.38) and researcher observations (score of 2.25), suggesting students' independence is still maturing. Venancio, et.al., (2013) emphasizes the role of contextual factors and supportive environments in nurturing independence, which might explain the variance observed.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking development is in the early stages, with Syalom Ende and Kalvari Maumere scoring approximately 2.7, indicating growing comprehension in analyzing and processing information. However, Ebenhezer Larantuka scores remain lower at 2.75, and SPS Kasih Sayang Solafide reflects similar initial levels, indicating this dimension requires further emphasis. This observation is consistent with O'Reilly, Devitt & Hayes (2022), who assert that early childhood critical thinking skills benefit significantly from structured interventions that encourage questioning and information synthesis.

Creativity

The creative dimension demonstrates gradual development, with Syalom Ende and SPS Kasih Sayang Solafide students showing moderate improvements, scoring around 2.8. Creativity here is limited, with convergent thinking being more developed than divergent skills. According to Ata-Akturk & Sevimli-Celik (2023), fostering creativity in early childhood requires frequent opportunities for self-expression, a factor that might require reinforcement across the institutions.

Discussion

The discussion of the Pancasila Student Profile implementation provides a broad overview of its progress and areas for improvement across Syalom Ende, Kalvari Maumere, Ebenhaezer Larantuka, and SPS Kasih Sayang Solafide Lewoleba kindergartens. While positive strides are observed, deeper interpretation and alignment with theoretical literature could enhance understanding.

In line with Noddings and Brooks' (2016) findings on the role of moral education, the success in faith and noble morals across most institutions, especially in Syalom Ende and Kalvari Maumere, illustrates the impact of structured religious and moral frameworks. As Ningsih and Wiyani (2021) discuss, religious values in early childhood are foundational, as young children are highly receptive to moral guidance that aligns with their daily experiences. However, the gap observed between intentions and practical application suggests that moral education is complex, requiring consistent teaching practices and a supportive environment where students can internalize these values in meaningful ways.

The global diversity dimension, which remains underdeveloped in most institutions, reflects broader societal and educational challenges around intercultural understanding, as Banks (2015) has highlighted. Introducing young children to diverse perspectives is essential for fostering an inclusive mindset early on, yet it requires purposeful activities that go beyond theoretical explanations. Kalvari Maumere's positive outcomes in this area, albeit at an early stage, demonstrate that effective multicultural education at this level may benefit from experiential learning strategies, where students engage with stories, celebrations, and activities from various cultures (Banks, 2015).

The cooperation dimension, one of the stronger areas in these kindergartens, aligns with Diatta-Holgate (2020) research on cooperative learning as a vehicle for empathy and social bonding in young learners. The success of this dimension, particularly in Syalom Ende and Kalvari Maumere, may be attributed to the presence of interactive learning practices that

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foster collaborative problem-solving and role-playing, which Kochanska and Thompson (1997) argue are instrumental in building empathy and a sense of mutual respect.

The varied outcomes noted in the independence dimension reflect Cassidy's (2013) findings, highlighting the necessity for meticulously structured experiences that enable youngsters to cultivate self-reliance at their own pace. Independence as a developmental milestone significantly differs according to individual temperament and contextual influences. In kindergartens like Kalvari Maumere, where independence is more developed, educators may provide structured yet progressively released autonomy, which, in accordance with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development theory, fosters growth by assisting students just beyond their existing capabilities.

Across all institutions, critical thinking and creativity remain areas that need significant enhancement. O'Reilly, Devitt & Hayes (2022) highlight that these skills are foundational yet challenging to cultivate in early childhood, particularly when curricula emphasize rote learning or structured play. Bers (2014) suggests that creativity in early education should involve both convergent (structured problem-solving) and divergent (open-ended exploration) thinking. Incorporating project-based activities that stimulate imagination, such as drawing, storytelling, and guided questioning, could bridge this gap and support these dimensions' growth more practically and engagingly.

Ebenhaezer Larantuka's reliance on the 2013 curriculum, which lacks the Merdeka curriculum's adaptability to the Pancasila Student Profile, illustrates the impact of curriculum design on character education outcomes. Sudrajat et al. (2021) highlight the importance of a curriculum that is both flexible and inclusive of values-based education to meet holistic developmental goals. The older curriculum's limitations may impede more dynamic, interactive approaches that are essential for implementing values-based learning objectives effectively.

Fantinelli (2024) emphasizes the importance of reflective teaching practices, which are evident in cases where educators adapt their methods based on observational data. Divergences between survey and observation results indicate that educators may benefit from ongoing professional development to ensure that their teaching strategies align with Pancasila's objectives. Such reflective practice allows for continuous improvement and ensures that educators can respond to the unique needs of their students, as they learn how best to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in character education.

In conclusion, while each institution demonstrates progress in implementing the Pancasila Student Profile, varying levels of success highlight the need for a contextually responsive approach. As Noddings and Brooks (2016) suggest, character education is not a one-size-fits-all model; it requires adaptation to fit students' specific backgrounds, institutional culture, and available resources. By incorporating experiential learning, cooperative frameworks, and scaffolded independence, kindergartens can create environments that support young children in holistically internalizing Pancasila values.

This analysis emphasizes the need for ongoing curriculum refinement, professional development for educators, and pedagogical adjustments that leverage current literature and best practices in early childhood character education. With such targeted efforts, these institutions are well-positioned to cultivate young citizens who embody the principles of the Pancasila Student Profile.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that implementing the Pancasila Student Profile in several early childhood education institutions (PAUD) in Klasis Flores has shown progress in certain dimensions, such as faith and noble character as well as mutual cooperation. However, other dimensions, such as global diversity, critical thinking, and creativity, still require further development to achieve their potential fully. To enhance the effectiveness of the Pancasila

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Student Profile, this research suggests that educators implement contextually adapted strategies that incorporate local culture. Activities that encourage collaborative play, moral reflection, and cultural diversity should be prioritized, allowing young children to connect Pancasila values with their daily lives meaningfully. Integrating experiential and project-based learning, such as storytelling and role-playing with local cultural elements, can help foster empathy, independence, and creative thinking.

Teachers in Klasis Flores should receive ongoing training that integrates Pancasila values with local customs and traditions, allowing for character education that resonates deeply with students' cultural backgrounds. The Merdeka curriculum, which is more flexible and supportive of the Pancasila Student Profile, should be fully implemented across PAUD institutions. Additional resources should also be allocated to adapt the curriculum to remote areas. Involve parents and local community members in the character education process, encouraging a shared responsibility in modelling and reinforcing Pancasila values at home and in community spaces. This community approach will strengthen the influence of character education outside the classroom. By adopting these approaches, PAUD institutions in Klasis Flores can create an environment that fosters the holistic development of children, ensuring that they grow into socially responsible, ethically grounded, and adaptable individuals aligned with the principles of the Pancasila Student Profile.

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