

Integrating Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Values in Indonesian Education: Strengthening the Profil Pelajar Pancasila

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Abstract

This qualitative case study investigates the integration of Pancasila values and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika in educational practices to strengthen the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pancasila Student Profile). Conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Palembang, data were gathered through a multi-method approach, including observations, interviews, and document analysis. Findings reveal that the school ecosystem effectively utilizes these foundational Indonesian values to address and manage diversity across religion, race, culture, gender, and socio-economic status. This integration fosters a school environment where students develop character aligned with Pancasila principles, preparing them to be resilient national successors capable of navigating external influences and the challenges of globalization. The study concludes that embedding Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika values is crucial for cultivating students who embody the attitudes and competencies of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila.

Keywords: Pancasila, Bhineka Tunggal Ika, Pancasila Student Profile

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Introduction

Indonesia stands as a beacon of global pluralism, encompassing over 17,000 islands and more than 270 million people representing an extraordinary array of ethnicities, languages, cultures, and religious traditions (Sidi, 2020). This inherent diversity, while a rich source of cultural heritage, also poses significant challenges to national cohesion. The national motto, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika ("Unity in Diversity"), encapsulates Indonesia's aspiration to maintain harmony amidst profound differences (Parihat, 2024). However, realizing this ideal requires more than mere rhetorical invocation; it demands the active cultivation of tolerance, moderation, and justice as operative values guiding daily interactions across society (Kushner & Clouse, 2024).

The philosophical bedrock for navigating this diversity is Pancasila, the five-principled state ideology. Far from an abstract doctrine, Pancasila emerged from Indonesia's anti-colonial struggle, blending indigenous traditions with global ideals of justice and democracy (Prakoso et al., 2024; Prasetyo et al., 2020). Its principles belief in God, just and civilized humanity, national unity, deliberative democracy, and social justice provide a unifying ethical compass. While scholarly debates question its effectiveness in contemporary pluralism, its continued relevance underscores its centrality



in Indonesian nation-building (Prasetyo et al., 2020).

Education, therefore, plays a pivotal role in transmitting, internalizing, and embodying Pancasila values in the younger generation. Schools are crucial sites for both intellectual development and civic-moral formation, burdening teachers with the dual responsibility of subject matter mastery and value-based instruction. This task is increasingly complex due to global influences, digital technology, and social media, which amplify both cross-cultural learning opportunities and risks of polarization (Utama & Mubarok, 2024).

Recent educational reforms, notably the Kurikulum Merdeka and the introduction of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pancasila Student Profile), aim to systematically embed these national values into pedagogical practices (M. N. Hakim et al., 2024). The Profil Pelajar Pancasila outlines six key attributes: faith, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity designed to align national values with 21st-century learning goals. Empirical studies, such as Purwanti et al. (2025), suggest that initiatives like project-based learning can effectively foster these traits. However, a persistent gap exists between curricular aspirations and classroom enactment, often due to limited teacher training, insufficient resources, and inconsistent institutional support (Kessler, 2024; Meidawati & Kusdarini, 2025; Fairussania, 2024). This highlights the tension between normative ideals and pedagogical practice, where philosophical frameworks provide guidance but teachers struggle with practical translation into daily instruction (Utama & Mubarok, 2024).

Comparative scholarship on multicultural and intercultural education (e.g., in Canada, India, South Africa) reveals similar tensions between policy articulation and classroom realities, emphasizing the importance of teacher professional development and inclusive curricula (Gobana, 2025). Indonesia, with its unique Pancasila framework, offers an important case study for understanding how a nation-specific philosophy interacts with global discourses on diversity education. By examining Pancasila not merely as an ideology but as a pedagogical framework, this study contributes to both local and global conversations on cultivating civic values in plural societies.

Against this critical backdrop, this research aims to describe how Pancasila and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* values are concretely implemented as foundational principles in classroom teaching. It further investigates how such implementations support or constrain the development of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila among students. Through an empirical inquiry in heterogeneous school settings, this study seeks to advance theoretical understandings of value-based education in plural societies and offer practical insights for policy, teacher training, and curriculum design. This research ultimately explores how values of tolerance, justice, and unity can be cultivated among students in a rapidly changing, diverse, and interconnected Indonesian society.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative single-case study design to explore in-depth the processes, meanings, and challenges of integrating the values of Pancasila and *Bhinneka*

Tunggal Ika into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning activities. The primary focus was on how such integration contributes to strengthening the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (PPP). A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate to capture the nuanced interpretations of stakeholders, describe specific pedagogical practices, and analyze evaluation mechanisms that reflect character development, civic literacy, and social empathy within a real-world educational setting.

Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Palembang, a public high school located in an urban setting. This site was purposively selected due to its demonstrated commitment to implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka and integrating national values, offering a rich context for exploring the phenomena under investigation. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure diverse perspectives on value integration. They included: The school principal (n=1) Core subject teachers (e.g., Civics, Indonesian language, science, and mathematics) (n=6) Educational supervisors involved in curriculum oversight (n=2) PPP facilitators responsible for character development programs (n=3) In total, 12 participants contributed to the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, ensuring their voluntary involvement and confidentiality.

Data Collection

Data were collected using complementary qualitative techniques to ensure triangulation and enhance the trustworthiness of the findings:

Semi-structured Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with all participants. The interview protocol was designed to explore their experiences, perceptions, policy interpretations, and challenges related to the integration of Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika values in learning activities and its connection to PPP. Interviews typically lasted between 60-90 minutes and were audio-recorded with participant permission, then transcribed verbatim.

Direct Observations

Over a period of three weeks, non-participant observations were carried out in various settings. These included observations of classroom learning activities (e.g., Civics, Indonesian language), student group discussions, and extracurricular activities (e.g., flag ceremonies,

religious gatherings, cultural events) that prominently featured Pancasila and diversity values. A structured observation rubric guided the data collection, focusing on teacher-student interactions, learning materials, and student behaviours reflecting value integration. Field notes were meticulously recorded during and immediately after observations.

Document Analysis

Relevant school documents were systematically analyzed. These included syllabi, lesson plans, PPP assessment rubrics, school handbooks, school policies related to character education, and institutional evaluation reports. This analysis aimed to map the alignment between official objectives, pedagogical guidelines, and observed practices regarding value integration and PPP indicators.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a thematic approach, guided by the principles of qualitative data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The process involved: Open Coding, Transcribed interviews, observation notes, and document excerpts were initially coded line-by-line to generate initial categories and concepts related to value integration, learning processes, and PPP.

Axial Coding

These initial categories were then grouped and linked to establish relationships between them, particularly focusing on how different aspects of value integration (e.g., planning, implementation) connected with specific PPP components (e.g., noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation).

Selective Coding

A coherent narrative was constructed, integrating the core categories and their relationships, to explain how Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika values unfold in practice within SMA Negeri 1 Palembang and contribute to strengthening PPP.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several measures were employed: Triangulation: Data from interviews, observations, and documents were systematically cross-referenced to corroborate findings and provide a comprehensive understanding of the

phenomenon. Member Checking: Key findings and interpretations were shared with selected participants to verify accuracy and ensure that their perspectives were adequately represented, thereby enhancing internal validity.

Credibility Checks

Thematic stability and consistency were assessed through iterative reviews of coded data by the research team to ensure that themes were robust and well-supported by the evidence.

Ethical Review

The study protocol received ethical approval from Sriwijaya University and adhered to principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality.

Research Instruments

The research instruments were designed to be flexible yet systematic. The semi-structured interview protocol allowed for exploration of participants' experiences, meanings, and policy dynamics. An observation rubric was developed to guide direct observations, focusing on the integration of Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika values in teaching activities and student interactions. Document analysis tools facilitated the systematic mapping of alignment between learning objectives and PPP indicators as stated in official school documents.

Contextual Factors and Contribution

This study also systematically considered contextual factors influencing implementation, such as school leadership support, alignment of curriculum with local culture, availability of value-based learning resources, and structural challenges posed by limited instructional time and curriculum load. The methodological design aimed to generate a comprehensive understanding of both best practices and barriers to value integration, thereby contributing not only to the academic literature on value-based education in pluralistic societies but also to practical recommendations for policymakers, education offices, and schools in strengthening PPP implementation.

Result and Discussion

Results

This study employed a qualitative case study design at SMA Negeri 1 Palembang to investigate the implementation of Pancasila values and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika in learning activities and their contribution to strengthening the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (PPP). Findings derived from semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and document analysis reveal a systematic integration of these national values across the school ecosystem, actively shaping students' character and civic competencies.

Integration of Pancasila Values in Learning Activities

The implementation of Pancasila values was consistently observed and reported across its five principles within SMA Negeri 1 Palembang.

1.1. Belief in God (Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa)

The first principle of Pancasila was primarily evident through the integration of religious practices into daily school routines and explicit character education. Students regularly began lessons with prayers according to their respective faiths. Observational data confirmed that this practice was inclusive, with students from diverse religious backgrounds participating respectfully. Additionally, the school facilitated collective religious activities, such as congregational prayers for Muslim students and designated spaces/times for other religious practices. As stated by a Civics teacher, "We start every day with a prayer. It's not just a ritual; it's about fostering an understanding and respect for different beliefs. Students learn that while their faiths might differ, the essence of spiritual connection is shared." Documents like the school's character education guidelines explicitly list "religious tolerance" and "spiritual growth" as key objectives, directly linking to the first principle.

1.2. Just and Civilized Humanity (Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan Beradab)

The principle of humanity was significantly reinforced through the school's emphasis on the "5S" culture (Senyum, Sapa, Salam, Sopan, Santun) and strong displays of solidarity. Observations showed students consistently applying the 5S culture, particularly during morning assemblies and transitions between classes, with teachers actively modeling this behavior. Beyond courtesy, solidarity was manifested in collaborative efforts and mutual support. "Our students are taught to not just be smart, but to be human. The 5S culture isn't just words; it's how they greet each other, how they treat their friends, and how they show respect to elders," explained the school principal. Observational data frequently recorded students assisting peers with academic tasks, collaborating on school projects, and collectively taking responsibility for classroom cleanliness, extending beyond individual class boundaries.

1.3. Unity of Indonesia (Persatuan Indonesia)

Unity was actively cultivated through regular ceremonial events and a consistent focus on national identity. Flag-raising ceremonies were conducted every Monday and on national commemorative days, regardless of the day of the week. These events served as important rituals for instilling patriotism and collective identity. "The flag ceremony is more than just a routine. It's a moment where all differences disappear, and we remember we are one nation, one Indonesia," remarked a PPP facilitator. Document analysis of lesson plans across various subjects (e.g., history, Indonesian language) revealed explicit learning objectives related to understanding Indonesian diversity, national symbols, and the importance of national unity, further reinforced by *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.

1.4. Democracy Guided by the Wisdom of Deliberation Among Representatives (Kerakyatan yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan dalam Permusyawaratan/Perwakilan)

Democratic practices were fostered through inclusive classroom deliberations and group discussions. Teachers consistently encouraged students to share ideas, debate politely, negotiate differences, and make collective decisions. This approach nurtured participatory learning and early civic literacy. An observation of a social studies class showed a teacher facilitating a discussion on a local community issue, where students were encouraged to propose solutions, listen to opposing views, and collectively agree on a "best option" for presentation. Interviewees, particularly teachers, highlighted the importance of these activities: "We want them to understand that their voice matters, but also that listening and finding common ground are essential for a democracy," a mathematics teacher stated.

1.5. Social Justice for All Indonesian People (Keadilan Sosial bagi Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia)

The principle of social justice was manifested through equitable opportunities for participation and contribution within the classroom and school environment. During group discussions and collaborative tasks, teachers ensured that all students, regardless of background or academic ability, had an equal opportunity to express ideas and contribute to the collective output. Document analysis of assessment rubrics for group projects indicated criteria for evaluating individual contribution and collaborative equity. Observations confirmed teachers actively mediating group dynamics to prevent any single student from dominating and to encourage quieter students to participate, creating a fair and conducive learning environment.

Synergy with the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (PPP)

The systematic implementation of Pancasila values at SMA Negeri 1 Palembang demonstrated a strong synergy with the six elements of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila. *Faith, Piety to God, and Noble Character*. Directly nurtured by the first principle (religiosity) and reinforced by the 5S culture (humanity), fostering integrity, honesty, and ethical conduct. *Global Diversity*. Actively promoted through the emphasis on *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* within the unity principle, cultivating respect for

diverse backgrounds, and an understanding of global citizenship. *Mutual Cooperation (Gotong Royong)*. Strongly evident in the solidarity practices rooted in the humanity principle and collaborative learning stimulated by the unity and democracy principles. *Independence*. Fostered as students gained confidence in expressing ideas, making decisions through deliberation, and taking responsibility for their learning. *Critical Reasoning*. Developed through democratic discussions where students analyzed information, evaluated different perspectives, and formulated reasoned arguments. *Creativity*. Encouraged in the open and supportive environment, where students were given opportunities to propose innovative solutions during group tasks and express themselves freely. The school's pedagogical approach, thus, positions Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika not merely as abstract ideals, but as functional frameworks for comprehensive character-based education that aligns directly with the PPP objectives.

Contextual Factors and Challenges

While the integration efforts were robust, several contextual factors influenced the depth and sustainability of implementation. Interviews with teachers consistently highlighted the pivotal role of the principal and school leadership in championing value-based education. *"Our principal is very committed; he constantly reminds us to integrate these values, not just teach subjects,"* noted a language teacher. This leadership fostered a supportive culture for value integration.

The adoption of Kurikulum Merdeka in Grade 10 provided a formal framework for PPP implementation, which aided teachers in connecting their subject matter to character development. Access to diverse learning materials and a supportive physical environment (e.g., spaces for religious activities, collaborative learning zones) facilitated the integration. However, the study also identified ongoing challenges. Teachers expressed concerns about the pressure to cover extensive subject material within limited class hours, sometimes leaving less time for explicit value integration activities. While many teachers were enthusiastic, some admitted to needing more training on specific pedagogical strategies for effectively integrating values into diverse subjects beyond Civics or Religious Education. Participants acknowledged the pervasive influence of digital media and globalization on student behaviour, sometimes challenging the values being instilled in school. These findings suggest that while SMA Negeri 1 Palembang has made significant strides, continuous systemic support and adaptive policies are essential to address these impediments and further strengthen the integration process.

Discussions

The findings from the case study at SMA Negeri 1 Palembang affirm and extend our understanding of how Pancasila values and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika can be effectively integrated into educational practices to strengthen the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (PPP). This research highlights that schools are not merely academic institutions but strategic arenas for instilling crucial national values within a pluralistic society like Indonesia. The multidimensional integration of Pancasila, spanning

from the principle of Belief in the One Supreme God to Social Justice, demonstrates that this national philosophy can be transformed from abstract ideas into concrete behaviors. Practices such as interfaith prayers, the "5S" culture fostering empathy, flag ceremonies reinforcing unity, deliberative discussions promoting democracy, and equal learning opportunities exemplify that Pancasila is not a static doctrine but an adaptive framework. These findings align with Prasetyo et al. (2020), who affirm Pancasila as a "living philosophy" relevant amidst modernization and globalization. Furthermore, this implementation directly addresses concerns raised by Kushner & Clouse (2024) regarding potential fragmentation amidst pluralism; SMA Negeri 1 Palembang illustrates how schools can act as a robust counterweight to these challenges.

The strong synergy between the implementation of Pancasila values and the six elements of the PPP is central to this success. Each Pancasila principle is found to intrinsically support specific PPP dimensions – for instance, the first principle fosters noble character, while the fourth and fifth principles cultivate critical reasoning and creativity. This reinforces the Profil Pelajar Pancasila not merely as a list of attributes, but as a holistic outcome of integrated value-based education. This represents a practical response to the government's efforts through Kurikulum Merdeka to systematically mainstream Pancasila values into pedagogy, as indicated by M. N. Hakim et al. (2024). While Purwanti et al. (2025) have shown the promise of this initiative, our study provides further empirical evidence on the concrete mechanisms linking philosophical values to student character development outcomes.

However, this research also identifies that deep and sustainable implementation is not without challenges. Limited instructional time, curriculum overload, and varying teacher capacity in value-based pedagogy represent significant barriers, consistent with findings by Kessler (2024) and Meidawati & Kusdarini (2025). Teachers often struggle to translate philosophical ideals into daily instructional choices, especially without systematic frameworks and adequate training (Utama & Mubarak, 2024). This indicates a persistent gap between curricular aspirations and classroom realities, underscoring the need for systemic support from policy-making to classroom practice.

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on value-based education in pluralistic societies. Indonesia, with its unique Pancasila ideological framework, offers a critical case study for understanding how a nation-specific philosophy interacts with global discourses on diversity education (Gobana, 2025). By highlighting successful value integration mechanisms at SMA Negeri 1 Palembang, this research contributes to understanding best practices that not only respond to pluralism but also actively leverage it as an educational strength. Practically, these findings offer important recommendations for policymakers, education offices, and schools. To strengthen PPP implementation, it is essential to: (1) enhance teacher training focused on value-based pedagogy and cross-curricular integration; (2) develop learning resources adaptive to local wisdom and diverse contexts; and (3) implement policies that support reducing curriculum load to provide more space for holistic character development. Schools, such as SMA Negeri 1 Palembang, are at the forefront of

shaping future generations of learners who are not only academically competent but also socially responsible, ethical, and globally minded within the framework of national values.

Conclusion

This study unequivocally demonstrates that the school environment is a critical arena for the practical application of Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika as guiding values of Indonesian education. Findings from the in-depth case study at SMA Negeri 1 Palembang reveal a systematic integration of these national values into daily school practices. Concrete examples, including religious activities, the "5S" culture, flag ceremonies, group deliberations, and equitable participation in classroom learning, provide a robust framework for fostering inclusive, respectful, and cooperative behavior among students.

The research establishes a clear synergy between each principle of Pancasila and the development of distinct, interconnected moral, social, and civic competencies aligned with the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (PPP). Specifically, the first principle cultivates religiosity and tolerance; the second fosters humanitarian conduct and solidarity; the third reinforces unity and national identity; the fourth enhances democratic practices through dialogue and consensus; and the fifth promotes justice and equality. Collectively, these principles strengthen students' capacity to adapt to global challenges while preserving their cultural identity. Furthermore, the values of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika complement Pancasila by underscoring respect for diversity and the imperative for unity, enriching students' personal development and fostering a cohesive educational community.

By systematically embedding Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika within the curriculum, particularly through the Kurikulum Merdeka and its six elements of PPP (noble character, global diversity, independence, mutual cooperation, critical reasoning, and creativity), Indonesian education is uniquely positioned to cultivate holistic learners prepared for the 21st century. This study underscores that education rooted in these foundational values transcends a mere academic endeavor, serving as a strategic mechanism to shape complete individuals embodying religious, moral, social, and civic virtues. Such integrated value-based education ensures that Indonesian students develop as globally competent citizens who are deeply connected to their national identity and values. The findings highlight the paramount importance of strengthening school culture as a sustainable strategy to preserve national ideology and cultivate future generations capable of navigating the demands of globalization

without compromising their cultural roots.

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