

The Character Values of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* through Role-Playing in Early Childhood at TK Penggerak in Semarang City

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Abstract. This study aims to provide an overview and examine the inculcation of character values in students, particularly in early childhood education. The government has long promoted character education, and currently, it is developing the Pancasila Student Profile program by involving educational institutions from the earliest levels, including early childhood education (ECE), elementary, junior high, and senior high schools, as sekolah penggerak. The Pancasila Student Profile represents Indonesian students as lifelong learners who possess global competencies and embody the values of Pancasila. It comprises six core dimensions: being faithful, devoted to God Almighty, and virtuous; embracing global diversity; working collaboratively; demonstrating independence; engaging in critical reasoning; and showing creativity. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, using a descriptive research design. Questionnaires were used as the main instrument to collect data from several respondents representing the research population in Semarang. Additionally, interviews with the principal and classroom teachers were conducted, along with observations of children to explore the character values already present. The findings revealed that most children in group A were at the stage of “emerging development” in terms of character aspects. In contrast, children in group B began to demonstrate “expected development.” Role-playing activities proved to be an effective and enjoyable method for instilling Pancasila character values in early childhood, as they encouraged active participation, empathy, and meaningful social interaction.

Keywords: character education; early childhood education; Pancasila student profile; role-play

INTRODUCTION

The impact of changes in the modern era has influenced both education and the character of students. These changes, with their positive and negative effects, pose challenges for early childhood education (ECE) institutions in fostering children's morals and strengthening character education from an early age (Wiyani, 2023). Character refers to an individual's inherent traits, personality, and behavior expressed in daily life. In today's era, changes spread rapidly due to advances in modern communication technology. Therefore, to balance these developments, schools must strengthen their character education. One of the government programs to cultivate character is the Pancasila Student Profile initiative, which aligns with the vision and mission of the Ministry of Education and Culture, as stated in Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 22 of 2020 on the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education and Culture 2020–2024.

According to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia (2003) on the National Education System, Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a developmental effort directed at children from birth to six years old, carried out through educational stimulation to support physical and spiritual growth and development, thereby preparing children for further education. The law also stipulates that ECE can be organized through formal education (kindergartens, Raudhatul Athfal, or equivalent), non-formal education (playgroups, childcare centers, or equivalent), and informal education (such as family-based education or community-provided education). Among the key factors supporting education in institutions are teachers or educators. Based on Law No. 14/2005, Article 1, paragraph 1, teachers are professional educators whose main duties include educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in formal early childhood, primary, and secondary education. In addition to teachers, educational institutions also involve administrative staff and principals. Yusuf and Rahmat (2020) state that education provides holistic facilities for each child's developmental process.

The Pancasila Student Profile was introduced as a guideline for Indonesian education. It is not only intended for national-level education policies but also serves as a reference for educators in shaping children's character within smaller learning environments. A Pancasila Student is a lifelong learner who is competent and demonstrates character aligned with Pancasila values. Students with this profile embody six inseparable dimensions: (1) faith in God Almighty and noble character; (2) independence; (3) collaboration; (4) global diversity; (5) critical reasoning; and (6) creativity. If one dimension is absent, the profile becomes incomplete. Implementing these values in ECE is essential to shaping students' character from the outset (Afipah & Imamah, 2023).

Character education in early childhood plays a crucial role in forming the foundation of a child's personality, values, and morals. During this golden phase of development, character stimulation not only serves to shape behavior but also acts as a foundation for the growth of social, emotional, and spiritual awareness (Hasanah, 2024; Lickona, 1996). In the Indonesian context, this effort aligns with the policy of the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasizes six main dimensions: faith and piety towards the One and Only God and noble character, global diversity, cooperation, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity (Rizky Satria et al., 2022).

One relevant approach to instilling these values is through role-playing activities. Role-play has long been recognized as an effective learning strategy in Early Childhood Education (ECE) as it encourages children to express emotions, practice empathy, and understand others' perspectives (Wahyuni & Musayyadah, 2024). However, most previous studies have only highlighted the cognitive and social aspects of role-play without directly linking it to the framework of the Pancasila Student Profile within the Indonesian education system.

One effective approach is role-playing. Role-play is not only enjoyable for children but also serves as a medium for the indirect internalization of character values (Jumiatmoko et al., 2023). Through role-play, children learn to express themselves, understand social roles, and interact with peers (Wahyuni & Musayyadah, 2024). For instance, when students are required to generate new and original ideas to solve problems, they must also employ critical reasoning to analyze the situation. Solutions should also reflect moral responsibility toward other living beings, which relates to the dimension of faith in God Almighty and noble character. Collaboration and global diversity are key when involving others, while independence is reflected in considering one's own abilities in problem-solving. The following section provides a more detailed explanation of the Pancasila Student Profile.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Essence of Character Values

Character education is a conscious and deliberate effort to guide students in developing their personal character, enabling them to become individuals who benefit themselves and their surroundings. It is a system of education designed to instill specific character values in students, encompassing knowledge, awareness, willingness, and actions that promote the application of those values. This is essential for children so that they can develop an understanding of right and wrong behavior (Birhan et al., 2021).

The reality of the growing moral crisis highlights the importance of implementing character education. For religious communities (e.g., Islam), references to morality and the importance of character education can be drawn from past cases of moral decline. As an academic field, character education must meet scholarly standards in terms of content, approaches, and methodology. In many developed countries, such as the United States, there are dedicated centers for character education studies (e.g., the Character Education Partnership; International Center for Character Education). Character education evolves through a multidisciplinary approach involving psychology, moral/ethical philosophy, law, and the humanities. As an aspect of personality, character reflects the wholeness of a person's mentality, attitudes, and behavior. This form of education is more accurately referred to as moral education or value education. It emphasizes practical behaviors such as etiquette, courtesy, and customs, focusing on whether a person demonstrates good character according to contextual and cultural norms.

Definition of Character Education

The word character originates from the Greek term *charassein*, meaning "to engrave," like drawing on paper or carving into stone or metal. From this root, character came to mean a distinctive mark, which led to the view that character refers to an individual's unique behavioral pattern or moral state. After passing through childhood, one's character becomes a predictable aspect of behavior in relation to their environment (Kevin Ryan, 1999). Character education, therefore, refers to moral and value education aimed at developing students' ability to navigate daily life (Ependi et al., 2023).

Williams & Schnaps (1999) define character education as "any deliberate approach by which school personnel, often in conjunction with parents and community members, help children and youth become caring, principled, and responsible." This definition emphasizes the collaborative efforts among teachers, parents, and the community to help children and adolescents develop into caring, principled, and responsible individuals. Seven Reasons for the Importance of Character Education. According to Lickona, there are seven reasons why character education must be taught. First, it is the most effective way to ensure that children develop good character throughout their lives. Second, it enhances academic achievement. Third, some students cannot develop strong character elsewhere. Fourth, it prepares students to respect others and navigate diverse societies. Fifth, it addresses moral and social issues such as rudeness, dishonesty, violence, sexual misconduct, and a poor work ethic. Sixth, it prepares students for future workplace behavior. Seventh, teaching cultural values is an essential aspect of societal progress.

According to Ki Hajar Dewantara (in Mulyasa:2022), there are seven principles of character education: the right of individuals to regulate themselves for the sake of social harmony; education means guiding children to achieve inner, intellectual, and physical independence; education must be aligned with life; a culture in harmony with nature should bring peace to life; individuals must work according to their own strengths and abilities; individuals must live independently; and with independence, individuals are prepared to serve learners freely and sincerely.

The Essence of The Pancasila Student Profile

A Pancasila Student is a lifelong learner who is competent and demonstrates character in accordance with Pancasila values. The Pancasila Student Profile represents the objectives of national education and plays a crucial role in developing both character and competencies in learners. Students with this profile embody six integrated

dimensions that educators must understand due to their significant role (Badan Standar Kurikulum dan Asesmen Pendidikan, 2022). These dimensions include: 1) Faith in God Almighty and a noble character, 2) Independence, 3) Collaboration (Gotong Royong), 4) Global diversity, 5) Critical reasoning, and 6) Creativity. Below is an explanation of each character dimension.

Faith in God Almighty and Noble Character

Indonesian students who have faith in God Almighty and possess noble character demonstrate morality in their relationship with the Divine. Educators introduce children to God and religious values from an early age (Farhana & Cholimah, 2024). They understand their religion or belief and apply it in daily life, encompassing five key elements: religious morality, which involves knowing and loving God, understanding religious teachings, and practicing them; personal morality, demonstrated through integrity and maintaining physical, mental, and spiritual well-being; morality toward others, reflected in respecting equality, appreciating differences, and showing empathy; morality toward nature, which includes protecting the environment and understanding ecosystem interconnections; and morality as citizens, manifested by fulfilling rights and obligations as responsible members of society.

Global Diversity

Indonesian students preserve noble cultural values, local identities, and traditions while remaining open-minded when interacting with other cultures. This fosters mutual respect and the potential for positive intercultural synthesis without conflicting with national values. Key elements of global diversity include cultural appreciation, intercultural communication, and reflection and responsibility in diverse contexts (Dwita et al., 2023). Cultural appreciation involves exploring, comparing, and respecting cultural knowledge, beliefs, and practices. Intercultural communication involves effective interaction across cultures, considering multiple perspectives. Reflection and responsibility focus on eliminating stereotypes and prejudice, aligning cultural differences, and fostering inclusion. Social justice requires active participation in building a fair, inclusive, and sustainable society through shared decision-making and understanding one's role in democracy.

Collaboration (Gotong Royong)

Indonesian students demonstrate the ability to work together voluntarily so that shared activities run smoothly and effectively. Elements of collaboration include teamwork, which involves cooperating, communicating, and developing positive interdependence while coordinating toward shared goals; care, which entails responding to environmental and social needs, developing social perception, and supporting community well-being; and sharing, which consists of giving and receiving things that are important for personal and communal life. These aspects strengthen children's social character and provide them with valuable life skills (Arifinata et al., 2025).

Independence

Indonesian students are independent learners who take responsibility for their learning processes and outcomes. Key elements of independence include self-awareness, which involves recognizing one's qualities, interests, and challenges while practicing reflection, as well as self-regulation, which entails managing emotions, setting goals, making plans, working independently, and maintaining discipline, confidence, resilience, and adaptability. Developing independence requires consistent habits from an early age (Verawati et al., 2024).

Critical Reasoning

Critical thinkers can objectively process qualitative and quantitative information, establish relationships among pieces of information, analyze, evaluate, and draw conclusions. Key elements include acquiring and processing ideas, analyzing reasoning, reflecting on thinking processes, and making decisions. For instance, in acquiring and

processing information and ideas, a student can pose questions to gather accurate data, identify, clarify, and analyze information and reasoning, as well as reflect on and evaluate their own thinking. Critical thinking is essential for problem-solving (O'Reilly et al., 2022).

Creativity

Creative students can modify, generate, and produce original, meaningful, useful, and impactful outcomes. The key elements of creativity include generating original ideas, producing original works and actions, and demonstrating cognitive flexibility in seeking alternative solutions. Teachers should allow freedom of expression while guiding, so that children can explore their creativity (Yuniarti et al., 2024).

Role-playing

Play is a primary activity that emerges as early as three to four months of age. It is crucial for children's cognitive, social, and personal development. According to Freud, play is similar to fantasy or daydreaming, as it allows individuals to project hopes and personal conflicts. Bruner also emphasized that play serves as a medium for developing creativity and flexibility. For children, the essence of play lies in its meaning rather than the outcome.

Role-playing, as described, Munthe, (2008; 101), is a planned learning activity designed to achieve specific educational objectives. Similarly, Sanjaya, (2006 : 161) defines role-play as a teaching method that involves simulating certain events. Through role-play, children discover the meaning in social interactions within their environment, which benefits them personally while also enabling them to collectively resolve dilemmas with peers. Role-play also provides opportunities for children to express themselves freely, experiment, and explore new concepts, difficult emotions, or undeveloped skills (Fehr et al., 2021). Additionally, children learn that life requires cooperation with others. In this sense, role-play facilitates children's engagement in group social processes.

Successful role-play requires effective cooperation among individuals. Cooperation is a vital component to be developed in early childhood. Cooperative behaviors typically begin to emerge around ages three to four, when children start showing the ability to work together. Through cooperation in role-play, children can practice essential social skills, including communication, listening, sharing, decision-making, and taking responsibility.

The Nature of Early Childhood

Early childhood refers to a stage of growth and development often described as the golden age, during which children are regarded as future leaders who will carry on the legacy to the next generation. According to Faila Sufa & Khamidun, (2014), the period between birth and six years is the most appropriate time to stimulate children's growth and development to achieve optimal outcomes. Nurturing and developing children's potential between the ages of five and six is both a necessity and a responsibility for parents and educators. The learning environment created and structured by parents and teachers plays a decisive role in shaping children's development and character from an early age. Guiding children's abilities early on is essential so that their potential can emerge properly, which is also one of the aims of the national education (Nuryati & Hardiyana Andri, 2021).

According to Sari, (2021), education begins at ages four to six. At this stage, children are capable of understanding language both in communication and in following instructions. Children aged five to six demonstrate greater maturity in comprehending spoken language and non-verbal cues. They also exhibit a rich fantasy life and demand increased independence. With such imaginative capacities, children enjoy and appreciate stories and simple poems, sometimes even memorizing them. At this age, they tend to resist excessive control, showing a stronger desire for independence.

Children aged five to six are also highly curious and enthusiastic about new experiences, often showing a strong sense of exploration. This period is effective for nurturing their potential through play-based activities. Dwi & Diana, (2018) Emphasize that this age is crucial for developing children's early social studies concepts through play. Similarly, Sari et al. (2017) note that children in this age group possess strong information absorption abilities, making it an ideal stage for practicing foundational skills.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, as its primary objective is to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of role-playing activities in developing Pancasila character values in early childhood. This approach was chosen to enable the researcher to capture the experiences, interactions, and dynamics of the learning process as they occur naturally in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research subjects include young children, teachers, and parents from an ECE institution that incorporates role-playing activities as part of its learning process. The research location was selected purposively based on several criteria, including: an ECE institution that already implements play-based learning, support from the school and parents for the character education program, and the school's willingness to be observed. The research was conducted at TK Pertiwi 31 Terwidi, Mangunsari, where students participated in three role-play sessions. These sessions utilized themes derived from the character values outlined in the Pancasila Student Profile, aiming to instill these values.

Data was collected through three primary techniques: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and participatory observation. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers and parents to explore their perceptions of the children's character development across the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, the principal, and parents using an interview guide based on indicators of character values such as cooperation, independence, religiosity, tolerance, and responsibility. Participatory observation was employed to observe children's role-playing activities in the classroom, utilizing an observation sheet that focused on tangible child behaviors, such as cooperation during role-play, the ability to express opinions, and showing care for peers.

The research instruments consisted of a questionnaire with a simple Likert scale, a semi-structured interview guide, and a child behavior observation sheet. These instruments were first piloted on a small scale to ensure their readability and suitability for the research context. The research procedure began with coordination with the school, followed by the implementation of role-playing observations, the completion of questionnaires by teachers and parents, and in-depth interviews with key participants. The collected data were analyzed using data reduction, data display, and verification techniques as proposed by Miles, (1994). To enhance the validity of the data, the researcher employed source triangulation (involving children, teachers, and parents) and methodological triangulation (utilizing questionnaires, interviews, and observation), along with member checking with teachers and peer debriefing with fellow researchers. Through this detailed elaboration, this research methodology is expected to provide a clear picture of the overall design, procedures, and rationale for the selected methodology.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data obtained through observations using prepared instruments, as well as interviews with the principal and teachers, revealed the following findings. The questionnaires contained items related to the six character values of the Pancasila Student Profile: faith in God Almighty and noble character, global diversity, collaboration, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity. The results showed that most responses fell into the “emerging development” category, particularly among students in Group A. Meanwhile, several responses indicated “expected development,” especially among Group B students. Role-playing not only trains social and communication skills but also helps children understand others' perspectives and develop empathy. (Bodrova & Leong, 2024; Wahyuni & Musayyadah, 2024). Overall, children's abilities based on the Pancasila character values were still in the “emerging development” category, indicating the need for further stimulation to strengthen these values through role-playing activities.

In general, the findings suggest that the internalization of Pancasila character values among children remains at an early stage, requiring engaging, developmentally appropriate learning strategies. One promising strategy is the role-play method, which provides children with opportunities to experience roles and situations in a direct and contextual manner. This method helps children internalize values through real-life experiences, rather than relying solely on verbal explanations from teachers. Role-play engages children in social interactions that foster

cooperation, respect, and responsibility, all reflections of Pancasila values. Real learning experiences provide children with opportunities to demonstrate their character.

The findings of this study indicate that role-playing activities can be an effective strategy for developing character values aligned with the Pancasila Student Profile in early childhood. A practical implication of these findings is the need to strengthen the implementation of the role-playing method within the ECE curriculum as a means of more contextual and enjoyable character learning. The long-term impact of this research has significant potential, particularly in supporting the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Program across Indonesia. If applied consistently and systematically, this approach could become a replicable model for character education in various ECE institutions, with adjustments for local cultural contexts (Idhayani et al., 2023; Sofiyah et al., 2024).

However, the discussion of long-term impact must also consider future challenges and opportunities for development. One key consideration is how this method can be scaled and adapted to different contexts, such as ECE settings in high-tech urban areas versus rural regions with limited resources. Furthermore, this study's results hold relevance for educational policy direction, as they can support the development of ECE curricula that place greater emphasis on internalizing Pancasila values through play-based pedagogical approaches (Arifin, 2025; Sesanti et al., 2023).

These findings align with Saptawati et al. (2024), who highlight that children view teachers as role models in character development. In role-play, teachers act as facilitators and exemplars of behavior that reflects Pancasila values. Children naturally observe and imitate these behaviors during the activity. For example, when a teacher role-plays as a character who helps friends or respects others' opinions, children tend to adopt such behaviors in their own play. As a result, values such as collaboration and global diversity are instilled naturally and without coercion.

Role-playing also positively impacts the development of critical reasoning and creativity. When faced with scenarios requiring problem-solving, children practice decision-making, explore alternative solutions, and generate new ideas. For instance, when role-playing as sellers and buyers in a mini market, children practice polite communication, basic counting, and price negotiation. These experiences indirectly enhance social skills and logical thinking. From an academic perspective, this study opens avenues for further research, for instance, through quasi-experimental designs to measure its long-term effectiveness or through cross-cultural comparative approaches to examine the extent to which role-playing can contribute to character education in diverse contexts. Therefore, this study not only provides a practical contribution for teachers and ECE institutions but also establishes a crucial foundation for the future direction of character education policy and research. Thus, role-play not only instills Pancasila values but also supports the development of 21st-century skills relevant to children's future needs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that developing Pancasila character values can be effectively achieved through role-playing activities. Through role-play, children unconsciously learn to recognize and internalize character values consistent with the Pancasila Student Profile. Role-playing activities can run effectively if they begin with engaging explanations that capture children's attention. In addition to meaningful introductions, children's interest and motivation also influence the success of the activity. With high levels of interest and motivation, children will participate enthusiastically and joyfully in role-play, which in turn supports the successful cultivation of Pancasila character values.

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