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Implementation of Character Education in Pancasila Education Learning in Elementary Schools

Dhea Pratista Sari[1(*)], Aulia Putri Zahra[1], Daffa Aufa Zain[1]
[1]STKIP PGRI Pacitan, Pacitan, Indonesia

Abstract

Character education aims to shape learners who are noble, responsible, and committed to national values, and Pancasila Education in elementary schools has a strategic role in instilling these values early. This study aimed to describe how character education is implemented in Pancasila Education learning in elementary schools, covering planning, implementation, and evaluation, together with its supporting and hindering factors. A descriptive qualitative approach was used, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings show that character education is integrated into learning through religious, nationalist, mutual-cooperation, integrity, and independence values. In planning, character values appear in learning objectives and indicators, although for some teachers this integration remains administrative. In implementation, teachers use routines, group discussion, question-and-answer, problem-based tasks, and reflection, and act as role models and facilitators. In evaluation, teachers observe behaviour and keep attitude journals, but assessment is subjective and lacks standard instruments. Constraints include limited time, limited teacher understanding and training, and weak family and community support. Synergy among schools, families, and communities is therefore needed to strengthen character education.

Keywords: Character Education; Pancasila Education; Elementary School; Learning; Character Values

(*) Corresponding Author: dheapratistasari@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the foundation for building the quality of a nation's human resources. In Indonesia, attention goes not only to the cognitive domain but also to the affective and psychomotor domains, which are closely tied to the formation of learners' character. Character education has become a pressing issue because of social problems such as declining morality, rising deviant behaviour, and weak national values among young people (Annur et al., 2021). Recent studies likewise treat character formation in primary schools as a matter of daily practice through teachers, school routines, and Pancasila-based learning (Gumilar et al., 2024; Masniar et al., 2025; Rahayu et al., 2025), and reviews of moral and character

education point to its value for learners' character development (Suciati et al., 2023; Syahri et al., 2026). Elementary school, as the first stage of formal education, plays a strategic role in forming students' character, because children's moral and social values begin to form at this stage. Character education should therefore be instilled systematically and continuously through various subjects, one of which is Pancasila Education (Daryanto, 2013; Gunawan, 2012).

Education cannot be carried out without teaching, and teaching means little unless it is aligned with the aims of education. Teaching concerns the development of intellectual capacity and physical skills, whereas the aim of education is to form a whole person, which relates more to image and values. As they grow, learners often imitate what happens around them; if their environment regularly shows good values, they can emulate them. Character formation has so far been integrated into the teaching process, or more precisely learning, in school. Pancasila Education has both an instructional effect and a nurturant effect, so character values must not only be integrated into learning but also assessed.

Pancasila Education aims to instil the basic values of national and state life that come from Pancasila: divinity, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice. Implementing character education in this subject is highly relevant because both share the aim of forming learners' personality. In practice, implementation is not limited to delivering material; it also involves lesson planning, teaching methods, teacher–student interaction, and the school environment. Teachers, as the spearhead of education, must integrate character values into every learning activity. Challenges remain, however, such as limited teacher understanding of character education, limited learning time, and insufficient support from family and community (Afifi et al., 2025; Hartati et al., 2025; Nisa' et al., 2025). Technology and globalisation add to the challenge, because broad access to information without the ability to filter it can affect students' behaviour negatively (Rosyida & Sari, 2026).

Character education in Pancasila Education must also follow the prevailing curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasises the Pancasila Student Profile, which has six dimensions: faith and devotion to God Almighty, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity. Implementing character education in Pancasila Education therefore aims not only to raise students' knowledge but also to shape attitudes and behaviour in line with Pancasila values. Studies of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) report that students' mutual-cooperation character can reach good levels through project-based activity (Rosmalah et al., 2025; Samudra et al., 2025). A study in Grade IV of elementary school has also examined students' character education in Pancasila learning (Pebriyanti & Badilla, 2023), which shows the topic's relevance. Other recent studies of Pancasila-based character education report both promising practices and weak spots (Hekto et al., 2026; Nurhayati et al., 2026; Putra et al., 2026), and a systematic review concludes that integrated, experiential, and context-based designs hold promise but need stronger empirical validation (Warsito et al., 2025). What remains less clear is how planning, implementation, and evaluation fit together within one classroom setting. This study therefore aims to examine in

depth how character education is implemented in Pancasila Education learning in elementary schools, and which factors influence it.

METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. The qualitative approach was chosen to understand in depth the phenomenon of character education implementation in Pancasila Education learning, and it allows the researchers to explore meanings, perceptions, and practices contextually and naturally (Iskandar, 2009; Darmalaksana, 2020). The descriptive design provides a systematic, factual, and accurate picture of the planning, implementation, and evaluation of character education. It does not test hypotheses but interprets the phenomenon as it occurs in the field.

The research subjects were Pancasila Education teachers, as the main implementers of learning; elementary school students, as the recipients of character education; and the principal, as the school policymaker. Subjects were selected purposively with three criteria: teachers actively teaching Pancasila Education, students directly involved in the learning process, and subjects with experience of implementing character education.

Data Collection

Three techniques were used to obtain valid and comprehensive data. First, classroom observation was carried out directly, with an observation sheet containing indicators of character values such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and honesty. The observation was non-intervention: the researchers did not take part in the learning activities, so the data are natural. Second, in-depth semi-structured interviews with teachers and students explored teachers' understanding of character education, implementation strategies, constraints, and students' perceptions of learning; the interview guide was kept flexible to allow broader exploration. Third, documentation covered teaching documents such as teaching modules and lesson plans and the teachers' attitude journals.

Data were analysed interactively in three steps (Miles et al., 2014): data reduction, in which observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents were selected, coded, and summarised by theme (planning, implementation, evaluation, and supporting and hindering factors); data display, in narrative and tabular form; and conclusion drawing and verification. Validity was checked through triangulation of techniques (observation, interviews, and documentation) and of sources (teachers, students, and the principal), so that a finding was reported only when at least two sources supported it.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

The findings are presented by the three stages of implementation, followed by the teachers' role and the supporting and hindering factors. Table 1 and Figure 1 summarise them.

Table 1. Summary of Character Education Implementation in Pancasila Education Learning

Stage	Main practices	Main constraints	Implication
Planning	Character values and attitude indicators written in teaching modules and lesson plans (religious, discipline, responsibility, tolerance)	Integration is administrative for some teachers; values not yet translated into concrete strategies	Strengthen operational aspects of planning
Implementation	Routines (prayer, greetings, attendance); group discussion, question-and-answer, problem-based tasks; reflection	Dominant lecturing by some teachers; limited classroom management; limited time	Improve teachers' pedagogical competence
Evaluation	Behaviour observation during learning; attitude journals and daily notes; process-based assessment	Subjective judgement; no clear standard; limited time	Develop practical, objective, standardised instruments

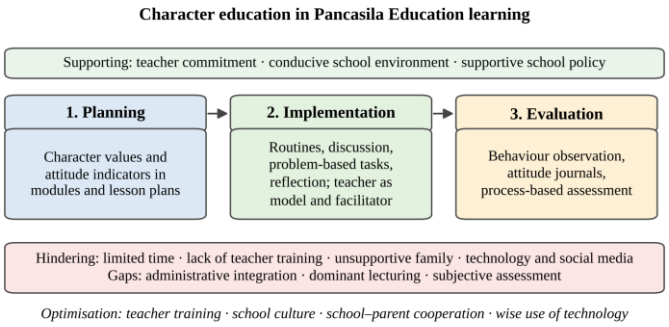


Figure 1. Character education implementation in Pancasila Education learning: stages, supporting factors, and hindering factors

Planning

Pancasila Education planning in the elementary school already integrates character values in teaching tools such as teaching modules and lesson plans. This is visible in learning objectives that cover not only the cognitive but also the affective and psychomotor aspects. The most dominant values were religious, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance. Teachers explicitly wrote the attitude indicators expected during learning, for example "students can show honesty in doing tasks" or "students can cooperate in groups".

This suggests that teachers try to internalise character education from the start of learning. Planning is the main foundation of successful implementation; without clear planning, character education tends to be incidental and undirected. For some teachers, however, the integration is still an administrative formality: values are listed in documents but not yet translated into concrete learning strategies. This points to a gap between planning and implementation, so planning has accommodated character education but needs strengthening in its operational aspects.

Implementation

Implementation is the most crucial stage, because teachers and students interact directly. In the opening, teachers instilled religious and discipline values through routines such as shared prayer, greetings, and attendance checks, which also served as habituation of positive values, a practice that resembles the daily routines reported in other elementary schools (Nurhayati et al., 2026; Zakiyah & Nurhidin, 2026). In the core activities, they used active strategies: group discussion, question-and-answer, and problem-based tasks, through which students practised cooperating, respecting others' opinions, and taking responsibility. Social interaction among students was an effective medium as well, as students learned tolerance, patience, and empathy first-hand. In the closing, teachers held a reflection with students to reinforce the character values learned.

The effectiveness of implementation depended heavily on teachers' classroom management. Some teachers still relied mainly on lecturing, which limited student interaction and could hinder the internalisation of character values. Teachers' pedagogical competence therefore needs to improve so they can apply more varied and interactive methods.

Teachers as Role Models and Facilitators

Teachers are not only conveyors of material but also role models. Students tended to imitate their teachers' discipline, way of speaking, and attitude towards problems, which indicates that teacher modelling influences students' character formation, a role that other studies also stress (Ad Dauwi & Yohamintin, 2025; Jumatullailah, Maksum, et al., 2025; Saifannur, 2025). Teachers also acted as facilitators who created a conducive environment and gave students opportunities to express opinions, discuss, and interact positively. Not all teachers performed these roles optimally, however; some focused on delivering material without attending to character formation. Teachers' awareness and understanding of the importance of character education therefore still need to increase.

Evaluation

Character evaluation was carried out by observing student behaviour during learning. Teachers used attitude journals and daily notes to record students' character development, and assessment covered the process as well as the final result, which suits character education as a continuous process that cannot be measured instantly (Haryati, 2007). Two constraints appeared. First, assessment is subjective because there is no clear standard for measuring attitudes. Second, limited time prevents in-depth evaluation, since teachers must divide their time between teaching, assessing, and administration. A more practical, objective, and standardised evaluation system is therefore needed.

Supporting and Hindering Factors

Supporting factors were teachers' commitment to instilling character values, a conducive school environment, and school policies that support character education. Hindering factors were limited learning time, a lack of teacher training, unsupportive family environments, and the influence of technology and social media. The family environment was the most dominant hindering factor, a barrier

that other studies also report (Afifi et al., 2025; Nisa' et al., 2025): a mismatch between school and home values can confuse students about which attitude to take. Broad access to information without supervision can also influence students' behaviour negatively.

Efforts to Optimise Implementation

Four efforts emerged. The first is to raise teacher competence through training and workshops on effective strategies for instilling character values. The second is to strengthen school culture through habituation such as literacy programmes, religious activities, and extracurriculars. The third is closer cooperation between school and parents, because character education cannot be optimal without family support. The fourth is the wise use of technology as learning media that supports character development.

Discussion

Implementing character education in Pancasila Education in elementary schools is a strategic effort to shape learners' personality in line with Pancasila values (Gumilar et al., 2024). The findings show that it has been done through integration in planning, implementation, and evaluation. At the planning stage, teachers put character values into objectives and indicators, which suggests that character education is no longer treated as a separate component but as part of learning itself. However, the integration tends to be administrative and is not yet always followed by concrete strategies. This echoes the view that values listed in documents do not guarantee their internalisation in practice, and it resembles the finding that teachers who understand the concept of character education still need support to apply it consistently through lesson plans, modelling, and routines (Afifi et al., 2025). Reviews likewise argue that character education works best when it is thoroughly integrated into the curriculum (Hartati et al., 2025).

At the implementation stage, character education runs through active and participatory learning. Group discussion, cooperation, and reflection give students opportunities to develop responsibility, tolerance, and mutual cooperation, which are also dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. Similar mechanisms appear in other primary schools, where habituation, role modelling, reflection, and discussion carry Pancasila values into students' everyday behaviour (Nurhayati et al., 2026; Rahayu et al., 2025; Rosyida & Sari, 2026), and where project-based activity has supported mutual-cooperation character (Rosmalah et al., 2025; Samudra et al., 2025). Such contextual learning appears better suited to instilling values than one-way lecturing, although this study did not compare methods directly, so the point is an interpretation rather than a tested result. A school culture of routine religious practice and a clear discipline culture have also been linked to discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and religious character, although in settings that differ from this one (Harfi et al., 2025; Zakiyah & Nurhidin, 2026).

The teacher's role as a model also stands out. Students imitate what teachers do every day, so consistency in showing positive values is an important condition for success, as character formation involves knowing, loving, and acting upon the good. Studies in other elementary schools report that teachers shape discipline and other values through exemplary behaviour, habit-building routines, active learning,

and reflection (Azimah et al., 2026; Istikomah & Febrianti, 2025; Jumatullailah, Maksum, et al., 2025; Jumatullailah, Nurhasanah, et al., 2025; Naja & Widodo, 2026), and that modelling works better when guidance is adapted to students' social and cultural conditions (Saifannur, 2025). Effectiveness is not guaranteed, however: in one Grade IV setting, character education through Pancasila Education was judged not yet effective, with discipline working well but religiousness, tolerance, honesty, and independence lagging (Hekto et al., 2026). This is a reminder that the practices described here should be read as a picture of implementation and not as proof of character change.

Implementation still faces constraints. Limited time often leads teachers to focus on cognitive achievement, and differences in students' backgrounds and weak family support make consistent character formation harder. These constraints are reported repeatedly in the literature: limited teacher competence and training, academic pressure, and social and media influences (Hartati et al., 2025), limited parental support, diverse family backgrounds, and limited time (Afifi et al., 2025), and limited facilities and outside influences (Nisa' et al., 2025; Putra et al., 2026). The finding that family support is the most dominant hindering factor therefore supports calls for school–family–community collaboration (Abni et al., 2025; Manda et al., 2025; Santoso et al., 2025). Local-wisdom-based programmes, for example, have been associated with students' tolerance, yet still call for stronger school–family–community collaboration (Fadlayani et al., 2026).

Evaluation remains a challenge too: assessment tends to be subjective and uses no standardised instrument, even though character values in Pancasila Education must be assessed formatively and summatively. The wider measurement literature points the same way. A systematic review of instruments for social and emotional skills found that only 10 of 25 instruments covered all five CASEL competence areas and recommended combining several assessment methods and informants (Martinez-Yarza et al., 2023). For classroom practice this suggests combining observation, attitude journals, and short structured instruments, rather than relying on the teacher's impression alone. Overall, implementation has run fairly well but needs strengthening in the implementation and evaluation aspects, and it needs the involvement of families and communities, not only schools (Listiowati & Trisiana, 2021).

The study has limitations. As a descriptive qualitative study of limited scope, its findings describe practices in the studied setting and cannot be generalised to all elementary schools. Statements about teacher modelling and student imitation rest on observation and interview reports, not on measures of character change, so the study does not show that students' character actually improved. Future research could use longer observation, more schools, and developed character-assessment instruments, and could test the effect of teacher training on character outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Character education in Pancasila Education in elementary schools has been implemented through integration in planning, implementation, and evaluation. In planning, character values are written into objectives and indicators. In implementation, they are carried out through active learning involving social interaction among students and through

teachers' role modelling. In evaluation, character is assessed by observing student behaviour. Implementation is not yet fully optimal because of limited time, varied teacher understanding, and weak family support, so more systematic and sustained efforts are needed.

Pancasila Education therefore has an important role in forming learners who are not only academically capable but also of good character in line with Pancasila values. Schools are advised to train teachers, to develop practical and standardised character-assessment instruments, and to build cooperation with parents and the community.

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