

# The Implementation of Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile's Local Wisdom Theme in the Merdeka Curriculum in Elementary School

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20230611>

## ABSTRACT

This research aims to provide an in-depth discussion of the Implementation of Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile's Local Wisdom Themes in the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools. This study employs qualitative phenomenology and symbolic interactionism methods to deepen understanding of the implementation of the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile with a local wisdom theme. Data collection techniques used include interviews, observations, and documentation of the implementation of the local wisdom project. The results of this research indicate that: 1) The implementation of the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile with a local wisdom theme follows stages of planning, introduction, contextualization, action, reflection, and follow-up. The implementation stages enable students to recognize local wisdom knowledge through the process of each stage, rather than focusing solely on the final outcome. 2) Teachers attribute significance to the local wisdom project as a good and innovative practice in achieving the Pancasila student profile, leading to positive changes in students' social attitudes after project-based learning. 3) In the execution of the project, the school actively contributes to fulfilling the needs of the project activities, including infrastructure, resources, and the requirements of teachers and students, in the implementation of strengthening the Pancasila student profile with a local wisdom theme in elementary schools.

**Keywords:** Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile's, Local wisdom, Elementary School, Independent Curriculum

## INTRODUCTION

Basic education as the foundation for implementing character education faces various issues. Yasinta et al., (2022) revealed that character problems among elementary school children are quite complex, particularly in terms of nationalism, cultural understanding, and respect for other cultures. Rajest & Suresh, (2018) stated that character issues can lead to changes in children's mindset, such as individualism, which tends to make children selfish and indifferent towards others. Suprpto et al., (2021) highlighted that children nowadays are starting to forget their local culture and wisdom, being more familiar with fast food than local cuisine, and adopting the lifestyle and culture of other countries.

Various negative phenomena that have a destructive impact on children's education need to be anticipated by building their character based on local wisdom principles. Developing the character of the next generation involves equipping them not only with professionalism and skills for future challenges (the era of Industry 4.0) but also grounding them in the cultural and religious values of Indonesian society that influence them (4) This condition is relevant

in addressing the old paradigm of education as the inheritance of the nation's noble values. The values inherited from the past often contain character education values (5). In order to enhance character education, the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, introduced the Merdeka Curriculum, which includes the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project. This project offers students the opportunity to experience knowledge as a process of character strengthening and learn from their surrounding environment, particularly through learning that is anchored in cultural values (6).

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 56/M/2022 on the Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation, the curriculum structure in early childhood education, as well as primary and secondary education, consists of intracurricular learning activities and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project. Based on this regulation, in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, every educational institution is required to carry out the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project. The curriculum should be aligned with students' needs (7). Curriculum innovation should be implemented dynamically to adapt to changes and demands in society.

Based on interviews with the school principal, it is revealed that the presence of the Pancasila Student Profile project brings a new dimension to the education system by directing students to be more connected with their community and environment. This project aligns with the existing gap, where character values, particularly those related to local wisdom, are starting to fade. For instance, students have minimal knowledge about their local environment and culture, including unfamiliarity with traditional customs, traditional dances, traditional clothing, traditional musical instruments, traditional food, and a declining understanding and use of the Bugis regional language in their daily lives.

The implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile strengthening project is a step towards bringing students closer to their culture. The project is carried out flexibly in terms of content, activities, and timing, and is designed separately from the intracurricular curriculum. The objectives, content, and activities of the project do not have to be directly related to the objectives and subject matter of the intracurricular lessons. Educational institutions can involve the community and/or the working world in designing and implementing the Pancasila Student Profile strengthening project (8).

Based on the above statement, schools, as educational institutions, have a responsibility to develop and strengthen character through project-based activities to produce cultured students. Teachers play a crucial role as examples or role models for students to emulate. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stated that a systematic and evidence-based curriculum design and implementation (projects) offer the best opportunity to equip students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values they need to shape their future and thrive (9).

The Pancasila Student Profile strengthening project involves more interactive learning activities that directly engage students with their surroundings to strengthen various competencies they should possess (6). The main objective of the Pancasila Student Profile is to preserve the noble cultural values (10). Students can practice cultural values through the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile project (11). This is supported by the findings of a study by (12), which showed that the implementation of the profile project enhances students' critical thinking skills, empathy, understanding of various local wisdom, and promotes a spirit of cooperation.

Therefore, schools as the means of implementing the profile project, and teachers as the frontline of education, play a significant role in guiding and directing students. The guidance provided by teachers should not only focus on intellectual

development but also aim to help students delve into the meaning of the projects they undertake. Teachers are professional educators with the primary task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students. With the Ministry of Education and Culture's policy on local wisdom themes in the Pancasila Student Profile strengthening project, it is important for teachers to have their own understanding of the profile project. This understanding refers to an individual's interpretation or perception of a particular concept within the framework already established in their mind, and each new concept is obtained and processed alongside the concepts they already possess (13). Therefore, it is crucial to understand how teachers interpret this concept, as it assists them in instilling values from the profile project in students. Additionally, teachers need to develop their own strategies for implementing and instilling the values contained in the Pancasila Student Profile within the context of local wisdom projects. Based on the aforementioned issues and relevant research that highlights the new paradigm in the Merdeka Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile strengthening project, this study aims to analyze in more depth one specific project theme: local wisdom in the context, and this research would have a positive impact on sustainability education in Indonesia

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile Project**

The Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile Project is a multidisciplinary and contextual project based on the needs of the community or issues within the educational institution. As one of the means to achieve the Pancasila student profile, this project provides opportunities for students to "experience knowledge" as a process of character strengthening and a chance to learn from their surrounding environment. In this project profile activity, students have

the opportunity to study important themes or issues such as climate change, anti-radicalism, mental health, culture, entrepreneurship, technology, and democratic life, enabling them to take real action in addressing these issues according to their learning stages and needs (8)

The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Indonesia determines the theme for each project profile implemented in educational institutions, one of which is the theme of local wisdom that helps students develop curiosity and inquiry skills through exploring the culture and local wisdom of the surrounding community or region, as well as its development. Local wisdom, etymologically, consists of two words, namely wisdom and local. Other terms for local wisdom include local policy, local knowledge, and local genius (14). Local wisdom refers to the way of life inherited from one generation to another in the form of religion, culture, or common customs within the social system of a community (15)

### **Local Wisdom Project**

In the implementation of the independent curriculum, the term local wisdom project is known. Quoting from the guideline book for the development of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Research and Technology, 2022), it states that a project is a series of activities aimed at achieving a specific goal by exploring a challenging theme. Projects are designed to enable students to conduct investigations, solve problems, and make decisions. Students work within a scheduled period of time to produce products and/or actions. The implementation of the local wisdom project within the Pancasila student profile strengthening project provides an opportunity for students to explore, develop their thinking framework, and collaborate according to their abilities and interests, leading to the achievement of the Pancasila student profile (16).

There is a saying that goes, "it takes a village to raise a child" (17). This proverb implies the need for the role of parents, the community, and schools in realizing a curriculum that prioritizes students, and these parties are referred to as the three pillars of education. Therefore, when teachers design the curriculum, they need to prioritize the needs, opinions, experiences, learning outcomes, and interests of the students. The curriculum is designed for the students to achieve all the expected competencies, and thus all parties must collaborate to the maximum extent.

### **Independent Curriculum**

The Independent Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning where the content is optimized to allow students sufficient time to delve into concepts and strengthen competencies. Teachers have the freedom to choose various teaching materials so that learning can be tailored to the learning needs and interests of students. Projects to strengthen the achievement of the Pancasila student profile are developed based on specific themes determined by the government. These projects are not aimed at achieving specific learning targets, so they are not bound by subject matter content (Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Research and Technology, 2022).

Merdeka Belajar (Freedom to Learn) is one of the programs initiated by the Minister of Education and Culture, Mr. Nadiem Makarim, aiming to create a pleasant and joyful learning atmosphere. The goal of Merdeka Belajar is to ensure that teachers, students, and parents have an enjoyable learning environment. Freedom to learn means that the educational process should create a pleasant atmosphere (18)

One of the components in the structure of the Independent Curriculum is project-based learning. Project-based learning, which focuses on the learning process rather than the final outcome, provides meaningful learning experiences for students through interactions in each process. As highlighted

by Barak & Yuan, (2021), the teaching method should emphasize each process to promote meaningful learning by connecting theory and knowledge with students' daily lives. Research conducted by Usher & Barak, (2020) revealed that project-based learning contributes to the development of students' innovation skills. Project-based learning sparks innovation as a cognitive process that leads to the implementation of new or significantly enhanced ideas, benefiting students (21).

### **MATERIALS & METHODS**

This research employs qualitative research methods with the types of phenomenological study and symbolic interaction. The phenomenological approach is used to delve into the meaning of school implementation and contribution in the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile with the theme of local wisdom. The symbolic interaction approach is used to explore the meaning attributed by elementary school teachers to the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile with the theme of local wisdom.

The research was conducted in different elementary schools with the aim of comparing and strengthening the research data. The schools are located in Pinrang Regency, South Sulawesi Province, namely UPT SD Negeri 175 Pinrang, UPT SD Negeri 8 Pinrang, and UPT SD Negeri 166 Pinrang. These schools were chosen because they have the status of a leading school that has implemented the independent curriculum since the academic year 2021/2022 and has implemented the Pancasila student profile project.

The focus of this research is on the implementation of the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile. Specifically, this research examines the implementation, meaning, and contribution of schools in implementing the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile with the theme of local wisdom in the independent curriculum at elementary schools.

Data in this study were collected using purposive sampling technique, which is the selection of data sources based on specific considerations. Purposive sampling is a technique of selecting a group of subjects based on specific characteristics or criteria considered relevant to the intended research objectives (22). To support the phenomenological method used, research participants were carefully selected based on the personal experiences of the teachers and the personal phenomena related to their professional development experiences. This research uses three data collection methods: observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The data were then collected, condensed, presented, and verified.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the research data, the results indicate that designing a project requires good planning, including: 1) identifying the readiness level of the educational institution, 2) forming a project facilitator team, 3) designing dimensions, themes, and time allocation, 4) developing project modules, and 5) designing strategies for reporting project outcomes. The theme of local wisdom serves as a platform for introducing culture, customs, art, and local heritage. This helps students appreciate and preserve local wisdom while fostering a sense of pride in their regional identity. Interdisciplinary collaboration: project activities involve a facilitator team as a form of collaboration among subject teachers, enabling students to see the connections between various fields of knowledge and gain a more holistic understanding. Furthermore, the implementation of the profile project focuses on the process rather than the end result. The evaluation criterion is the development and personal growth of the students, educators, and educational institution. For example, the evaluation is not based on how many students achieve high final grades or the quality of the product, but rather on how students experience learning and develop the

Pancasila student profile throughout the duration of the project.

There is a stage of actual action manifested in a performance or exhibition where students can share their learning experiences with others. This activity serves as an appreciation for the students' efforts during the implementation of the profile project, and also provides a reflection to conclude the overall profile project before the students and facilitator team prepare the learning report.

In addition to benefiting the students, the project also benefits the school by creating an open ecosystem for community participation and involvement, and by contributing to the environment and surrounding community as a learning organization. For educators, the project develops their competence as educators who are open to collaborating with educators from other subjects to enrich the learning outcomes. It also provides space and time for students to develop their competencies and strengthen their character and Pancasila student profile. For students, the project activities enhance their learning experiences through the surrounding environment and help shape their Pancasila student profile as expected in the implementation of the independent curriculum.

Based on the research interviews, the researcher concluded that the subjects were pleased with the presence of the local wisdom project. All three subjects mentioned that the local wisdom project was something new. As new teachers, it was the first time they encountered such a complex activity that touched on the realm of local wisdom. They expressed that the local wisdom project was highly meaningful for both themselves and the students, as they observed the changes experienced after implementing the local wisdom project.

From the research findings, it is also known that schools contribute to the strengthening of the Pancasila student profile project, particularly the local wisdom theme, through the implementation of strategies, policies, and meeting the needs of students

and teachers. Since the introduction of the local wisdom project policy, the school has shown its contribution to the success of the project despite facing various challenges. The contributions of the school to the implementation of the Pancasila student profile strengthening project with the local wisdom theme are as follows:

1. The school principal establishes a special practitioner community to accommodate the implementation of the independent curriculum, including the local wisdom project. The practitioner community provides a space for educators to interact with each other, share concerns, problems, and good practices to be reflected upon together. The term "Community of Practice" was introduced by Etienne Wenger in his book "Communities of Practice." He defines a Community of Practice as "a group of individuals who share a common passion and concern for what they do and want to do it better through regular interaction" The practices referred to depend on the context of the everyday roles of community members. In the context of a Community of Practice for teachers, practices can include teaching methods and interactions with students or parents.
2. The school introduces the activities of the Pancasila student profile strengthening project to a wider scope, including parents and the community. The project activities provide students with the opportunity to "experience knowledge" as a character strengthening process and a chance to learn from their surroundings. Involving the community beyond the educational institution is highly meaningful for the students. Students produce higher quality learning outcomes when they know that someone other than their educators will see or experience their learning results.
3. The school meets the needs of teachers as drivers of activities to enhance their enthusiasm in implementing the project. It provides ample opportunities for

teachers to develop their competencies, and the great enthusiasm of teachers becomes a key feature of effective and high-quality teaching.

4. The school fulfills the needs of students by conducting diagnostic assessments to determine their learning needs and providing facilities and infrastructure to support project activities.

Overall, this research has found that the implementation of the Pancasila student profile strengthening project has a significant impact on the development of students' Pancasila profiles. The school also gains positive impacts from the project, becoming a role model for good educational innovation practices, and teachers as drivers can enhance their competence through project-based learning, which is believed to be easier to understand and increases students' learning interest.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis, the conclusions of this research are as follows:

1. The implementation of local wisdom projects involves the following stages of implementation is a) Planning stage, which includes identifying the readiness of the school, forming a project facilitator team, designing dimensions, themes, and time allocation, developing project modules, and designing strategies for reporting project outcomes. b) Introduction stage, which involves recognizing and building awareness among students about the local wisdom theme being studied. c) Contextualization stage, which involves exploring issues in the surrounding environment related to the topic of discussion. d) Action stage, which involves formulating roles that can be carried out through real actions, showcasing the outcomes of the project activities. e) Reflection and follow-up stage, which involves completing the process by sharing works, conducting evaluation and reflection.

2. Local wisdom projects are interpreted as cultural exploration activities that foster a love for local wisdom, serving as a means to achieve the Pancasila student profile, which, in its implementation, becomes a solution to address various social issues that arise within students. Through the interactions built during its implementation, teachers perceive local wisdom projects as a space for enhancing their competence and creating learning practices that support the attainment of the Pancasila student profile through the exploration of local wisdom in the local community. As a result, there is observable progress towards the desired Pancasila student profile among the students.
3. Schools demonstrate their contribution to the implementation of local wisdom projects through strategies, policies, and meeting the needs of such projects. Schools establish communities of practice as dedicated platforms for reflection in the application of independent learning, fulfill the necessary facilities and infrastructure, as well as cater to the needs of teachers and students. These actions highlight the school's contribution to local wisdom projects.
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### **Declaration by Authors**

**Acknowledgement:** None

**Source of Funding:** None

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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- How to cite this article: Asmirinda Resa, Hamdan Tri Atmaja, Deni Setiawan et.al. The implementation of strengthening Pancasila student profile's local wisdom theme in the Merdeka curriculum in elementary school. *International Journal of Research and Review.* 2023; 10(6): 76-83.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20230611>

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