

Multicultural Education in Elementary Schools: Fostering The Pancasila Student Profile Through an Ethnopedagogical Approach

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Abstract

Multicultural education in Indonesia plays a crucial role in shaping the nation's character based on Pancasila. The ethnopedagogy approach emerges as an effective strategy to integrate local and national cultural diversity into the elementary school learning process. This study aims to examine how the ethnopedagogy approach can foster the Pancasila learner profile through multicultural education at the elementary level, as well as strengthen the values of tolerance, justice, and mutual cooperation as part of the nation's character. The method employed includes a literature review and field observations at several elementary schools implementing ethnopedagogy in their teaching. Qualitative analysis was used to assess the influence of this approach on character formation and the application of Pancasila values. The results indicate that ethnopedagogy can enhance students' awareness of cultural diversity and reinforce attitudes of tolerance, justice, and solidarity. Students better understand and appreciate their own cultural identities while respecting other cultures, thereby contributing to the development of a Pancasila student profile who is faithful and cultured. Multicultural education based on ethnopedagogy is effective in fostering character and Pancasila values among elementary school students. This approach can serve as a vital strategy in cultivating a tolerant generation with strong national identity, capable of living harmoniously within diversity.

Keyword: *multicultural education, elementary school, profile of pancasila students, ethnopedagogy*

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and increasing cultural diversity, education in Indonesia must be capable of cultivating a generation that understands and values diversity (Pada et al., 2024). The concept of multicultural education has become a strategic solution in fostering empirical and inclusive attitudes at the elementary level. As the foundational stage for shaping students' character, elementary schools need to instill Pancasila values that reflect the nation's pluralism and diversity (Istianah et al., 2024). Therefore, multicultural education in elementary schools is not merely about acquiring knowledge; it also involves fostering attitudes and behaviors that embody the noble values of the nation (Fatmawati, 2021).

The implementation of multicultural education at the elementary level is crucial because children, even from a young age, are capable of absorbing various social and cultural values (Wahyuni et al., 2024). Accordingly, an appropriate pedagogical approach is ethnopedagogy, which is a learning method that respects and integrates local cultures and the cultural diversity of students (Ariani, 2025). This approach is believed to enhance respect for other cultures and

strengthen national identity, as well as the character of the nation within the framework of Pancasila as the state ideology.

Furthermore, ethnopedagogical-based education not only provides space for cultural diversity but also improves the quality of interaction and communication among students (Dirgantari & Cahyani, 2023). By understanding and respecting each other's cultures, children can develop tolerance, empathy, and collaboration—traits essential for social life (Aramudin & Susanti, 2024). Consequently, a Pancasila student profile that is characterized by integrity, quality, and global competitiveness can be effectively cultivated from the elementary level (Rahayu et al., 2023).

Considering the vital role of elementary schools in instilling these values, this study aims to explore how the implementation of multicultural education through the ethnopedagogical approach can foster the Pancasila student profile. The main focus of this research is to investigate field strategies, obstacles, and opportunities, as well as to provide practical recommendations for educators and policymakers to strengthen character education based on diversity. This approach is expected to reinforce national identity while producing a generation that loves the homeland and appreciates diversity (Prasetyo et al., 2024).

Thus, this article will present a comprehensive perspective on the relevance and effectiveness of ethnopedagogy-based multicultural education in shaping the character of Pancasila students in elementary schools. Analysis of various studies and field practices will serve as the foundation for formulating concrete and applicable recommendations. The hope is that this study can contribute significantly to curriculum development and educational strategies that aim to enhance the quality of multicultural education throughout Indonesia in a sustainable manner.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach using a literature review methodology as the primary basis for understanding the concepts and theoretical frameworks related to multicultural education, ethnopedagogy, and the Pancasila student profile. Additionally, data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with teachers, school principals, and students to explore their experiences and perspectives regarding the implementation of these approaches in schools. Direct field observations were also conducted at several elementary schools that implement multicultural education and ethnopedagogy, aiming to obtain a real-world understanding of the teaching and learning processes, social interactions, and cultural

diversity present in the environment. The data obtained from these three methods were analyzed thematically to identify patterns, barriers, and opportunities in the implementation of multicultural education rooted in local culture and Pancasila values.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Multicultural education plays a strategic role in shaping national character and identity. Through an ethnopedagogical approach, learners not only acquire knowledge about cultural aspects but also develop pride, patriotism, and a spirit of unity—core characteristics of the Pancasila student profile (Kurniawan & Suprayitno, 2024). Strengthening cultural identity and nationalism through local cultural-based learning is believed to reinforce the foundations of national unity while fostering a generation that is characterful, inclusive, and prepared to face future multicultural challenges.

Development of the Pancasila Student Profile through Multicultural Learning

Multicultural education based on ethnopedagogy effectively contributes to strengthening the Pancasila student profile, especially in the aspect of character, by instilling the fundamental values of Indonesia's nationhood. Through direct experience in cultural activities and diversity, students not only understand that diversity is a wealth of the nation but also internalize Pancasila principles in their daily lives (Hidayat & Putro, 2024).

Students are taught to demonstrate justice and responsibility toward others and to position themselves effectively within a diverse society. They learn that diversity should be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen unity rather than as a source of division, aligning with the values of mutual aid and harmony within Pancasila. Furthermore, this learning process cultivates respect for differences in identity, culture, and religion, enabling children to become inclusive and tolerant individuals. They are taught to see others as equals and value diversity as part of the nation's pluralism (Wijayanti & Muthali'in, 2024).

Besides attitude development, this process also impacts students' knowledge and social skills. Learners become capable of effective communication, building harmonious social cooperation, and resolving conflicts through dialogic and empathetic approaches (Valencya et al., 2025). Thus, this approach comprehensively instills the nation's character based on Pancasila values.

In conclusion, developing the Pancasila student profile through multicultural education transcends academic achievement and becomes a process of forming a nation's personality that is integral, inclusive, and culturally rooted. These students are expected to act as change

agents who can strengthen diversity as a national strength, maintain social harmony, and embody noble values within community life (Marbun et al., 2023).

Strengthening Cultural Identity and Nationalism through Multicultural Learning

Multicultural education can enhance the Pancasila student profile, particularly in terms of nationalism and national identity. Through in-depth understanding and appreciation of local cultural richness, students are guided to realize that cultural diversity is an integral part of Indonesia's identity based on Pancasila. They learn that nationalism should not be merely rhetorical but actualized through strengthening local cultures and traditions (Abdullah et al., 2024).

Cultural-focused learning activities foster pride in ancestral heritage and instill pride as part of Indonesia's diverse society. They become aware that cultural diversity is a strength that must be preserved to maintain national unity. Consequently, students internalize love for their homeland as part of a resilient national character (Julfian et al., 2024).

Besides identity, this process also nurtures solidarity and unity among learners. They understand that cultural, customary, and linguistic diversity are treasures to be protected and celebrated together. This attitude aligns with the core value of diversity that characterizes the Pancasila student profile: the ability to live harmoniously amid diversity and actively develop a love for the homeland (Eriani et al., 2024).

In concrete terms, the reinforcement of cultural identity and nationalism is reflected in the spirit of mutual cooperation and community participation in maintaining regional traditions and customs. Students not only learn about these values theoretically but also practice them through cultural activities and active engagement in the community. They learn that true nationalism is inclusive and respectful of diversity as part of a collective identity (Nurlaila et al., 2024).

In the long term, this process can produce a generation that is conscious of its national identity and capable of strengthening national unity. They do not merely understand diversity cognitively but also feel and practice it in everyday life. Hence, Pancasila students become agents of change who can uphold national integrity and promote inclusive nationalism with a future-oriented mindset (Judijanto et al., 2025).

Implementation Barriers and Challenges in the Field

Despite its evident benefits, the reality on the ground shows that ethnopedagogical implementation faces several obstacles. One major challenge is the lack of facilities and learning resources supporting comprehensive integration of cultural diversity. Some schools have limited access to adequate references, leading to less varied learning processes and stagnant student motivation.

Furthermore, the absence of specialized training for teachers in managing culture-based learning results in an imbalance in application. Many teachers feel insufficiently competent or confident to present authentic and engaging cultural content, impacting the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process (Sigalingging et al., 2025). This highlights the need for more comprehensive and ongoing professional development.

Parental and community resistance also constitutes a significant barrier. Some parents perceive multicultural and local cultural-based education as requiring higher costs and more time. They worry that such approaches might disrupt formal learning processes and diminish students' academic focus. Aside from external factors, internal challenges like teachers' low competence and creativity in managing diversity innovatively also hinder program success. Teachers need support through training that enhances their pedagogical skills and cultural knowledge to deliver meaningful and engaging learning experiences (Silvester et al., 2023).

Another key challenge involves limited support policies from government and educational authorities. Rigid curricula and lack of incentives for cultural innovation constrain the effective application of ethnopedagogy in schools (Praekanata et al., 2024). Successful implementation of this education model, however, requires assertive and systematic policies from policymakers.

Opportunities and Supportive School Ecosystem

Despite these challenges, opportunities for successful ethnopedagogical implementation remain wide open. Schools with a strong commitment to character education and diversity development can organize cultural festivals, traditional arts performances, and cultural site visits, enriching students' experiences.

These collaborative programs increase student engagement, strengthen social networks, and foster solidarity among participants. They learn that cultural diversity is a shared treasure that must be celebrated collectively, not disputed. This active participation becomes a positive driver for ethnopedagogical success at various educational levels (Alditia et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the involvement of community leaders and local cultural figures as strategic partners greatly supports culture-based learning. They serve as sources of inspiration and tangible examples of diversity. This support emphasizes that cultural education is a shared responsibility of all elements of the nation (Adham et al., 2024).

External support from government programs, teacher training, and cultural learning resources also plays a crucial role. National policies encouraging character and diversity strengthening as part of curriculum innovation are strategic steps for sustainability. The synergy between various stakeholders is key to long-term success (Hartati et al., 2025).

Digital technology and interactive media innovations open further opportunities to broaden the reach and improve the effectiveness of multicultural education. Digital media enable wider, more engaging, and interactive cultural materials, accessible to students from diverse geographic and social backgrounds (Nurjanah & Srihilmawati, 2025).

Impact on the Pancasila Student Profile

Through the ethnopedagogical approach, education becomes not only transactional but also a process of building students' character and national identity simultaneously. They do not only learn about diversity theoretically but also internalize Pancasila values such as justice, tolerance, and mutual aid as part of their identity (Nafus, 2025).

A solid moral and cultural character is formed through firsthand experience in local cultural activities containing moral and spiritual values. Students recognize diversity as a national strength to be preserved and see themselves as part of this asset. Consequently, this process influences the formation of an inclusive identity and a resilient national character (Zahra, 2025).

Besides moral and social aspects, character development also enhances students' social and cognitive competence. They become critical thinkers regarding diversity, effective communicators, and collaborators from different backgrounds. These outcomes align with character education's goal to develop a well-rounded, competitive personality (Hidayat, 2021).

Effective implementation of ethnopedagogy will produce future generations who are not only knowledgeable in theory but also capable of applying Pancasila values in everyday life. They become active agents of change who can maintain social harmony and actively promote diversity as a source of national strength (Ramdhan & Arifin, 2025).

CONCLUSION

The ethnopedagogical and multicultural learning approaches have proven effective in building character and a national identity based on Pancasila by internalizing moral values and inclusive nationalism. Their successful implementation depends on teacher preparedness, policy support, and community participation. This synergy will cultivate Pancasila students who are not only knowledgeable but also possess noble character and tolerance, enabling them to become agents of change who strengthen diversity as a national asset.

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