

Integrating Pancasila Values in Elementary Civic Education: A Qualitative Study of Teachers in Lampung Province

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ABSTRACT

The integration of Pancasila values into Civic Education (PKn) instruction at the elementary level is a critical yet under-examined dimension of moral formation in Indonesian education. This study aimed to investigate teachers' conceptual understanding of Pancasila values, the instructional strategies employed to integrate those values into daily learning, the assessment practices used to evaluate character development, and the challenges encountered during implementation. A qualitative mini-research design was adopted, employing in-depth semi-structured interviews with three classroom teachers from SDN 01 Negara Mulya (Way Kanan), SDN 10 Krui (Pesisir Barat), and MIN 1 Lampung Barat, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected in March 2026 and analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis. Findings indicate that teachers conceptualize Pancasila values as living behavioral norms rather than academic content, and integrate them through experiential methods including cooperative learning, role-playing, and storytelling. Assessment relied on direct behavioral observation, though standardized instruments were absent. Key challenges included students' difficulty with abstract concepts and inconsistent family support. The study concludes that meaningful progress has been made at the instructional level; however, systemic reinforcement through school policy, standardized assessment tools, teacher training, and family-school collaboration remains essential.

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INTRODUCTION

At the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) and Elementary School (SD) levels, Civic Education (Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan/PKn) constitutes a central component in the formation of student character. Civic Education serves not merely as a subject devoted to acquiring civic knowledge, but as a vital instrument for cultivating attitudes, morals, and ethical dispositions consonant with Pancasila – the ideological foundation and living paradigm of the Indonesian state. These values are instilled during the formative stages of life through learning processes that encompass cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. Inculcating Pancasila values at the MI/SD level is therefore paramount, as students at this stage are particularly susceptible to environmental and experiential influences. Civic Education at this level ought not to be directed solely toward memorisation proficiency; rather, it should aim at the construction of enduring attitudes, teacher modelling, and experiential learning in the realities of daily life, both within school and in the domestic sphere.

Despite this imperative, a considerable number of students merely memorize Pancasila values without applying them in daily life, indicating that prevailing instructional processes remain predominantly cognitive and have not yet optimally cultivated deep and enduring values. Winarno (2020) corroborates this concern, noting that PKn instruction in Indonesian elementary schools frequently defaults to content-delivery approaches prioritizing declarative knowledge over behavioral formation. Similarly, Rahayu and Nugroho (2021) found that the gap between students' cognitive understanding and actual behavioral conduct represents one of the most persistent challenges in Indonesian moral education.

The inculcation of Pancasila values has become increasingly precarious in light of globalization and accelerating information technology, which shape students' perceptions of values, norms, and culture, thereby risking an erosion of Pancasila's noble principles unless balanced character education is consistently implemented. Within this paradigm, teachers occupy a central role in facilitating, guiding, and serving as role models for value inculcation through innovative and contextual instructional methods. Berkowitz and Bier (2014) argue that effective character education requires a whole-school approach in which instructional strategies, school culture, and family engagement are systematically aligned.

Despite the growing body of literature on character education in Indonesia, existing studies have largely concentrated on urban school settings, curriculum policy analysis, or technology-mediated instruction (Fadlillah, 2022; Kemendikbud, 2020). Comparative, field-based investigations of how teachers in geographically diverse and semi-rural elementary schools understand and operationalize Pancasila values in day-to-day instruction remain scarce. Furthermore, limited scholarly attention has been paid to the assessment instruments teachers actually employ when evaluating character development. This study addresses these gaps by drawing on direct interview evidence from three distinct schools across different regions of Lampung Province.

The findings carry practical and theoretical significance for multiple stakeholders. For teachers and school administrators, the study offers evidence-based insights into instructional strategies that support genuine value internalization and identifies systemic weaknesses in current assessment practices. For policymakers and curriculum designers, the study highlights the need for structured institutional mechanisms including teacher professional development programs, school-level character education frameworks, and parent engagement protocols. Theoretically, this study contributes to research on citizenship education, moral development, and experiential learning in low-resource educational environments, providing an empirical basis for the contextualised application of international character education theories to the Indonesian educational landscape.

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative mini-research design. The qualitative approach was selected because the primary object of inquiry involves gaining a detailed understanding of a social phenomenon

— namely, the implementation of Pancasila values within the PKn learning process — and does not concern itself with numerical data or statistical analysis (Sugiyono, 2018). The methodological orientation aligns with the interpretive tradition in educational research, which holds that participants socially construct meaning through lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study was conducted at three elementary school sites across distinct administrative regions of Lampung Province: SDN 01 Negara Mulya (Pekon Negara Mulya, Kec. Negara Batin, Kab. Way Kanan); SDN 10 Krui (Pekonmon, Kec. Ngambur, Kab. Pesisir Barat); and MIN 1 Lampung Barat (Pekon Balak Padang Cahya, Kec. Balik Bukit, Kab. Lampung Barat). These sites were selected to obtain diverse, representative data and enable comparison of instructional practices across geographically varied institutions. Data collection was carried out between 25–27 March 2026.

The principal data collection technique was the in-depth semi-structured interview. A semi-structured format — consistent with the approach described by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) as enabling both systematic coverage of key themes and flexible exploration of emergent issues — was deliberately employed so that data would capture actual field conditions rather than only formal responses. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes. Key themes explored included: teacher knowledge regarding Pancasila values within PKn instruction; the application of Pancasila values in classroom learning activities; strategies and methods employed to instill these values; challenges encountered and efforts undertaken to address them; and the impact of implementation on student attitudes and behavior.

Research participants were three classroom teachers selected through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, as articulated by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and reaffirmed by Creswell and Poth (2018), is well-suited to studies in which the researcher seeks information-rich cases that illuminate the phenomenon under investigation. Teachers were selected because they have direct experience managing classroom processes, including preparing instructional materials, applying pedagogical methods, and managing challenges that arise during learning. Data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis, with findings interpreted in relation to relevant theoretical frameworks from both Indonesian and international scholarship.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher Conceptual Understanding and Value Integration

Interview findings indicate that educators conceptualize Pancasila values as practical behavioral guidelines to be applied in daily life, rather than content to be memorized. Informant 1 articulated this position clearly:

“The values of Pancasila must be embedded in the minds and behavior of students. These values are not merely to be remembered, but must be applied in their daily lives — both at school and at home.” (Interview with Informant 1, 25 March 2026)

This perspective aligns with Syarbaini and Rahman’s argument that Civic Education is expected to produce citizens with elevated moral and ethical standards grounded in Pancasila values. In translating this understanding into instructional practice, educators employ an experiential learning approach a pedagogical orientation grounded in direct experience enabling students to develop deeper comprehension of these principles. Santoso (2019) argues that character education is most effectively achieved through habitual practices and direct engagement in daily activities. Across a range of classroom activities, including group work, discussion forums, daily assignments, and the mediation of interpersonal conflicts, Pancasila values may be observed in operation. Informant 1 stated that implementation is realized through “group work, class discussions, daily assignments, and also in the management of conflicts among students” (Interview with Informant 1, 25 March 2026).

The conceptual stance articulated by participating teachers that Pancasila values must be behaviorally lived rather than cognitively stored reflects a pedagogical orientation aligned with what Lickona (2021) describes as the tripartite model of character development: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. The teachers’ emphasis on applying values in everyday settings shows an

implicit awareness that declarative knowledge alone is insufficient for genuine character formation, consistent with Winarno (2020) and Setyaningrum and Yuliyanto (2022). A comparison with regional studies further contextualizes these findings: Rahayu and Nugroho (2021) reported that elementary school teachers in Central Java demonstrated similar value-centered conceptions of PKn yet struggled to systematize them into coherent instructional sequences a parallel challenge evident across the present study's research sites.

However, findings also reveal that implementation remains heavily dependent on individual teacher competence and awareness, as there is no comprehensive school-level system in place to systematize this practice. This resonates with Berkowitz and Bier (2014), who conclude that the most effective character education interventions share a systemic, whole-school orientation. The individualized and non-institutionalized character of the practice observed therefore represents not a teacher failure, but a systemic gap requiring deliberate institutional design.

Instructional Approaches and Assessment Practices

Interview findings reveal that educators employ a variety of instructional methods — including discussion, role-playing, storytelling, and cooperative games to promote and reinforce Pancasila values. Informant 1 stated: “In order to make the content easier for children to understand, I usually employ real-world examples, stories, games, and sometimes role-playing” (Interview with Informant 1, 25 March 2026). Informant 3 further explained that storytelling and cooperative games are frequently utilized to foster social interaction among students.

This instructional repertoire is broadly consistent with the principles of constructivist pedagogy as articulated by Vygotsky (1978) and Dewey (1938/1997), both of whom argued that meaningful learning arises through active engagement with social and environmental contexts. Storytelling, in particular, contemporary character education research identifies as uniquely effective for conveying moral frameworks to young learners, as it allows abstract values to take on narrative form and become emotionally accessible (Narvaez et al., 2004; Fadlillah, 2022). The use of cooperative learning aligns with Johnson and Johnson's (2009) well-established model, in which interdependent group structures naturally generate social skills including communication, negotiation, and empathy — that underpin Pancasila's civic values. Setyaningrum and Yuliyanto (2022) similarly found that elementary school PKn teachers employing collaborative instructional formats reported more observable improvements in student prosocial behavior than those relying on lecture-based methods.

With regard to assessment, educators place greater emphasis on the direct observation of student behavior than on written examinations. Informant 2 explained that assessment is conducted through “the attitudes and behavior of students such as being honest, cooperative, disciplined, and responsible” (Interview with Informant 2, 27 March 2026). This approach corresponds to authentic assessment as characterized by Stiggins (2005) and Brookhart (2013) — a paradigm that evaluates students on the basis of demonstrated competencies in naturalistic contexts. The conceptual alignment between this approach and the goals of character education is sound: if the objective is to develop students who act with honesty, responsibility, and cooperation in real life, then behavioral observation is a more ecologically valid assessment tool than written examination.

Nevertheless, this study finds that certain weaknesses persist in the assessment process, as standardized instruments have not yet been developed. Where assessment relies solely on teacher observation, there exists a risk of subjectivity, meaning that evaluation outcomes may not be entirely fair or consistently measurable. Andrade and Valtcheva (2009) emphasize that without clear, shared rubrics, behavioral observation tends to be impressionistic and inconsistent across evaluators — a concern directly applicable to the assessment practices documented here. Schools should therefore invest in co-developing behavioral assessment rubrics that define observable indicators for each of the five Pancasila principles at developmentally appropriate levels, potentially supplemented by portfolio-based documentation and peer assessment components.

Challenges, Adaptive Strategies, and Observed Impact

Interview findings indicate that the principal obstacles in implementing Pancasila values originate from both internal factors related to students and external factors related to the family environment. Informant 2 stated: “There are students who are undisciplined or have poor self-control, particularly when they have not been accustomed to such behavior at home” (Interview with Informant 2, 27 March 2026). Informant 3 noted that elementary school students frequently encounter difficulties in grasping abstract concepts, necessitating repeated explanation using examples drawn from everyday life.

These findings are best understood through the lens of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) bioecological systems theory, which conceptualizes child development as a product of the dynamic interplay between the individual and nested environmental contexts. The observation that students not accustomed to disciplined or values-based behavior at home exhibit corresponding difficulties at school is a direct illustration of mesosystem dysfunction – the failure of the home-school interface to generate mutually reinforcing behavioral expectations. This insight points toward family-school collaboration as the most strategically important site of intervention for sustainable character formation.

In addressing these challenges, teachers employ positive reinforcement, personal modeling, consistency, and individualized approaches. Informant 1 explained: “In helping students to develop a better understanding, I usually provide concrete examples – such as offering gentle guidance and, when necessary, speaking with them individually and privately” (Interview with Informant 1, 25 March 2026). This strategy is consonant with Lickona’s (2021) integrated approach to character education, which regards the teacher as a moral exemplar occupying a central role in shaping students’ moral development, simultaneously addressing moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action.

The most visible manifestation of these approaches is reflected in observable changes in student behavior. Informant 3 reported: “The students are now more polite, more willing to share, and also more caring toward their classmates” (Interview with Informant 3, 26 March 2026). These findings indicate that Pancasila value inculcation through PKn instruction demonstrably enhances students’ social attitudes. Berkowitz and Bier (2014) similarly report that sustained, multi-component character education programs produce measurable improvements in students’ prosocial behaviour, self-regulation, and interpersonal empathy. However, as Ryan and Bohlin (1999) caution, the durability of such change is contingent on the consistency and coherence of the moral environment to which students are exposed across settings – a condition difficult to sustain when character education rests on individual teacher initiative rather than systemic institutional commitment.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that elementary school teachers in Lampung Province have internalized a behavioral rather than cognitive conceptualization of Pancasila values and are actively working to integrate these values into PKn instruction through experiential instructional methods including cooperative learning, role-playing, and storytelling. Assessment practices are predominantly behavior-based and aligned with authentic assessment principles, yet remain constrained by the absence of standardized instruments, introducing a risk of evaluative subjectivity. The principal challenges encountered students’ difficulty with abstract concepts and inconsistent family support are most effectively addressed through teachers’ adaptive strategies of personal modeling, individualized counseling, and positive behavioral reinforcement. Observable improvements in students’ prosocial behavior indicate that these individual efforts are generating meaningful outcomes.

However, the study also reveals a critical systemic gap: the implementation of Pancasila values remains predominantly dependent on individual teacher initiative and has not yet been institutionalized at the school level. For this character-building process to be sustainable, equitable, and measurable, systemic reinforcement is essential. This includes the development of standardized behavioral assessment rubrics, school-level character education policies, structured teacher professional

development programs, and formal family-school-community collaboration frameworks. These institutional mechanisms are necessary to transform individual pedagogical efforts into a coherent, whole-school character formation program capable of producing durable outcomes across diverse educational contexts.

On the basis of these findings, the following recommendations are offered: (1) teachers should develop Lesson Plans (RPP) that explicitly connect Pancasila values to contemporary real-world issues and employ project-based learning models; (2) schools should develop standardized behavioral assessment rubrics with observable indicators for each Pancasila principle; (3) educational administrators should establish structured family engagement programs and regular teacher professional development in character education; and (4) policymakers should design institutional frameworks that systematize value integration across school, family, and community contexts. Future research should examine the long-term behavioral outcomes of Pancasila value integration programs, with particular attention to the effectiveness of structured family-school collaboration models in diverse Indonesian educational settings.

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