

Pancasila and Kampus Merdeka: Striking the Right Balance

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Abstract

This philosophical cornerstone of Indonesian culture 'Pancasila' comprises five principles that serve as the nation's fundamental values. These principles are designed to guide Indonesia's political, social and cultural spheres by fostering national unity and identity. This paper investigates challenges Indonesian educators, practitioners and civil society encounter in delineating culturally pertinent conceptions of 'attitudes' within the 'Kampus Merdeka' framework. The authors examine the construction and practical articulation of these attitudes within an Indonesian context. The discussion also elucidates potential obstacles and opportunities in cultivating vocational attitudes that incorporate broader Indonesian cultural values. In this endeavour, 'Pancasila' is the guiding principle behind Indonesian character development, however, in the context of an educational policy focussing on developing the correct 'attitude' for work and working life, the Pancasila character development is being challenged. While our literature search revealed a breadth of conceptual findings, theories, opinions and views, four dominant themes emerged.

Keywords: Pancasila, Kampus Merdeka, Cultural, Nation Building.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, Indonesian further education systems have commonly embraced Western-centric frameworks, which have been introduced primarily through international aid programs aimed to enhance collaboration among Higher Learning institutions, industry and communities. These frameworks and models typically prioritise the competency triangle comprising knowledge, skills and attitudes. However, while significant attention has been directed towards addressing the knowledge and skills components, the concept of 'attitudes' has been relatively overlooked, particularly from an Indonesian cultural standpoint. Since achieving independence, Indonesia has progressively consolidated a universal value system encapsulated in what is termed 'Pancasila'. This philosophical cornerstone of Indonesian culture comprises five principles that serve as the nation's fundamental values. These principles are designed to guide Indonesia's political, social and cultural spheres by fostering national unity and identity.

It is widely acknowledged that education is crucial to nation-building in the modern era (Ananda, Jama, & Montessori, 2019; Bereketeab, 2020; Cinnirella & Schueler, 2018). Tilaar (1998) opines that, in this context, education and training planning should be directed toward achieving societally agreed goals and normative visions, which are crucial for national development. There's a consensus that education aims to ready individuals for continual learning throughout their lives and to bolster the nation's prosperity (Benavot, 2017). In this regard, Surakhmad (2009) emphasises that education must prioritise efforts to humanise and civilise the students, being aware of the needs and cultural development of the Indonesian nation, not just producing work-ready human resources. However, in order to realise such ambitious nation-building goals, it is evident that an effective and balanced education and training system is needed, which is adequately supported by high-quality learning materials and training processes (Tilaar, 1998). This is illustrated through Kampus Merdeka's vision of requiring students to engage fully with civil society, which can be achieved by developing appropriate social and community activities (Wibisono & Umiyati, 2023).

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The Kampus Merdeka program aims to provide learning experiences for students as they engage with aspects of industry and the community (Tohir, 2020). Students are expected to collaborate with communities to identify common problems and consequently formulate acceptable solutions (Voak, Fairman, Helmy, & Afriansyah, 2023). Such a program development approach envisages that students who work through a work-integrated learning (WIL) program will develop relevant soft skills which include communication and collaboration, building and establishing partnerships and cross-disciplinary cooperation, whilst honing their leadership skills (Voak, Helmy, Fairman, & Afriansyah, 2024).

In this context, the Kampus Merdeka policy offers avenues for students to acquire diverse learning encounters, aimed at fostering graduates who are equipped to tackle the ever-evolving challenges of the 21st Century (Afriansyah, Voak, Fairman, Suryono, & Muslim, 2022). Further, Junaidi (2020) Indonesian universities must adapt their curricula to enhance learning quality and focus. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's SN-Dikti program facilitates the implementation of the Kampus Merdeka initiative by outlining curriculum changes necessary for fostering new literacies. These include acquiring data for social comprehension, engaging with advanced technology, understanding human behaviour, and cultivating noble character through religious beliefs. (Junaidi, 2020).

Nanggala and Suryadi (2020) noted that Kampus Merdeka, whilst focusing on entrepreneurial activities, humanitarian projects, independent civic projects and village building, has relevance in the development of community education, including the much-needed socio-cultural dimensions of learning. Citizenship education, as described by Nanggala and Suryadi (2021), focuses on efforts to shape individuals, through the articulation of the elements of Pancasila. These five basic elements have been identified as Divinity, Humanity, Unity, Democracy and Justice. It is widely held that the practising and valuing of these 'sila' values, is paramount to achieving 'Unity in Diversity', and Nanggala and Suryadi (2021) contend that such citizenship education emphasizes social justice values. Meeting these desiderata requires strong collaboration from government, academia, community, industry and the media in order to achieve these values in a systematic and coordinated way (Nanggala & Suryadi, 2021).

As previously noted, the phrase "Unity in Diversity" is the Indonesian National motif, and in this respect, Latif (2018) holds that Pancasila was chosen as the State's approach to achieving this National principle. The five principles ('sila') of Pancasila are a synthesis of the diversity of beliefs, understandings and hopes of Indonesia (Morfit, 1981). The first sila recommends the embracing and tolerance of all religions and beliefs; the second sila encompasses the acceptance of all transnational social and humanitarian ideals whilst the third sila promotes the acceptance and integration of ethnic diversity into national unity; the fourth sila recognizes and supports Indonesian sovereignty; and the fifth sila, which provides the ethical and moral foundation, is rooted in the belief in God Almighty, who advocates for a just and civilized humanity and whose ideas shape the public framework. Collectively, the sila precepts form a synthetic formulation of socio-economic justice (Latif, 2014). In this summary, the Pancasila principles aim to foster the collective welfare, striving for independence, unity, sovereignty, justice, and national prosperity. Latif (2018) also argues that National unity is hard-earned, and as such, relies heavily on the notion of social justice for all Indonesian people. That said, this adherence to the Pancasila essentially underpins all Indonesian pedagogy.

Crimmins et al. (2022) argue that university graduates need networks, confidence and the ability to adapt their approaches when dealing with uncertain and dynamic work situations. In this regard, the curriculum should equip students to navigate diverse sectors, industries, career paths, and ideological landscapes (Voak et al., 2024). In this context, Kodrat (2021) highlights that the key positioning of the role of industry in the designed intentions of Kampus Merdeka, initially appears to conflict with the purpose of National education outlined in the 2003 National Education System Law. This conflict arises in the elevation of the need for shaping character and personality in conjunction with the making of skilled workers for industry. Kodrat (2021) further posits that Kampus Merdeka policy is primarily designed to provide manpower for the business and industrial world at the expense of character development, and the challenge for the current educational community is to balance these two competing interests, looking more closely at how the character, or more loosely the attitudes, of graduates, can be shaped without damaging the achievement of work-ready principles.

This paper explores the challenges and potential opportunities for Indonesian educators, practitioners and, more broadly, civil society as they all attempt to articulate the appropriate, responsive and culturally relevant notions of 'attitudes' through the WIL programs of Kampus Merdeka. This research further aims to examine the integration of Pancasila values within the Kampus Merdeka framework to enhance educational practices and Nation-building efforts in Indonesia. By exploring how the philosophical foundations of Pancasila can be effectively embedded in Kampus Merdeka's approach to education, this study seeks to identify strategies for cultivating a culturally relevant and holistic educational environment. The research will also analyse the potential impact of this integration on students' development of competencies, particularly in terms of their attitude development, and how these competencies can contribute to the broader goals and balance of National development and social cohesion.

METHODOLOGY

To examine the integration of Pancasila values within the Kampus Merdeka framework and its impact on educational practices and Nation-building in Indonesia, this research employs a thematic literature review. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of existing literature, identifying key themes and gaps relevant to the research. This exploratory method, when purposively deployed, serves to reveal the majority of available literature since the concept of Kampus Merdeka is a policy initiative in its infancy (Swedberg, 2020). Further, the author's respectful regard for the actualisation and embodiment of Pancasila values in the implementation of Kampus Merdeka policy appreciates the approach to be a significant societal initiative that consequently needs to embody greater flexibility as to the types of literature sourced to embrace broader perspectives. The authors contend that this broader literature review is a more authentic way of collecting and synthesising all available relevant research (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003).

A systematic search of Google Scholar to gather relevant literature using key search terms including "Pancasila in education," "Kampus Merdeka," "Indonesian education system," "nation-building," and "educational values" was undertaken. The inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, books and official reports published within the last 20 years to ensure modern relevance. These sources specifically focus on Pancasila, Kampus Merdeka, individually or together. Using Braun and Clarke (2006) framework for thematic analysis, the collected literature was coded and categorised into themes. This involved; familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. Initial coding will involve identifying passages that discuss the role of Pancasila in the Indonesian education system (Dewantara, Suhendar, Rosyid, & Atmaja, 2019; Silalahi & Yuwono, 2018), principles and objectives of Kampus Merdeka (Gasong & Sirande, 2024; Prahani et al., 2020; Supriati, Dewi, Supriyanti, & Azizah, 2022) and the intersection of educational practices and nation-building (Liadi & Faridah, 2023; Permana & Rahmawati, 2023)

Through this method, the research examined the link between work-integrated learning and character development. Pancasila, as the foundation of Indonesian character development, is being tested within an educational policy emphasising the cultivation of the right 'attitude' for work life. This approach offers a comprehensive analysis of how Pancasila values are integrated into Kampus Merdeka, endeavouring to enrich discussions on educational strategies and Nation-building in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

While the literature revealed a breadth of conceptual findings, theories, opinions, and views concerning the overall implementation and deployment of the Kampus Merdeka policy and its interconnectedness with Pancasila, four dominant themes, emerged. These were (i) the Philosophical Foundations of Pancasila, (ii) the Implementation of Kampus Merdeka – The Leadership Paradigm, (iii) the Integration of Values and Competencies and (iv) its Impact on Nation-Building.

Philosophical Foundations of Pancasila

The literature analysis indicates that Pancasila, serving as Indonesia's ideological bedrock, profoundly shapes the educational system by instilling fundamental values such as faith in a supreme deity, a fair and civilized

society, national unity, democracy guided by informed deliberation, and equitable social justice for all Indonesians (Dewantara et al., 2019). These values are designed to cultivate a holistic educational experience that balances cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, thereby fostering the development of well-rounded individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also morally upright and socially responsible (Huda, Selamat, & Salem, 2024; Kalidjernih, 2005). Saifuddin, writing in “Revitalising Pancasila Values” (Annafi, 2012) argues that the Reformation era (post-1968 to the present) is the antithesis of previous eras, since it focuses on campaigns for democratisation and anti-authoritarianism. In Saifuddin's view (2012), Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution remain central to the modern Indonesian State. The values articulated must be practised in real life, and must not simply be consigned to mere rhetoric. The guiding principles for this work are embodied in the concept of the Four Pillars, which include: (i) Pancasila; (ii) the 1945 Constitution; (iii) the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and; (iv) ‘Unity in Diversity’ (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*). Therefore, in the view of Iswara, writing in the *Relevansi Sosial-Intelektual Pancasila* (Annafi, 2012), Pancasila provides the fabric that binds Indonesian life. In this regard, it can be imagined as a lasting agreement among the Indonesian people, and thus, in this way, Pancasila not only provides a common ground for society to justify social and political institutions but also helps ensure stability throughout the generations.

According to Latif (2011), establishing Pancasila as the foundation of the State's Philosophy has pre-emptively considered the potential negative impacts of globalization. Latif (2011) also argues that, in the economic field, under Pancasila, the State must actively seek social justice, in order to (i) overcome and balance inequalities that naturally occur in the market, (ii) to maintain a healthy competitive climate, (iii) defend the weak in society, and (iv) investing in public goods which meet the requirements for all people's livelihood. As noted earlier, educationalists struggle to find the ‘path’ between developing these ‘sila’ values and meeting the policy expectations as articulated in Kampus Merdeka, and the authors openly acknowledge the considerable potential barriers, challenges and opportunities faced when attempting to develop vocational attitudes whilst integrating the broader Indonesian cultural values into educational provision.

However, it must be stated that in the context of Kampus Merdeka, these philosophical foundations are crucial elements. Kampus Merdeka emphasizes the freedom of learning and innovation, providing an opportunity to reinforce Pancasila values in practical and meaningful ways. In his opening remarks in *Tunas Pancasila (Wahyuningsih, Zuchron, & Purnawinarni, 2021)* the then Minister of Education, Nadiem Makarim, stated that maintaining and instilling the values of Pancasila is an integral part of Indonesian education. In this context, Minister Makarim opined that all students must realise that the framework of Pancasila provides a system of teaching that is a living entity in their educational environment. Pancasila, according to Makarim, is a feeling of ‘goodness’ in education and not just ‘rote memorization’ and, as such, it can be firmly entrenched in their souls and hearts, leading to the understanding that preparing the Indonesian people for life as a whole is the main mission of education (Kementerian Pendidikan, 2021). In this regard, Raharja (2019) contended that the tenets of Pancasila serve as essential elements in fostering soft skills development, which is imperative for upholding the integrity of human resources in modern industries. Additionally, it was emphasized that various soft skills, including communication, critical thinking, teamwork, continuous learning, information management, ethical conduct, professionalism, and leadership abilities, are intricately linked to Pancasila's values. Raharja (2019) further opined that the application of Pancasila can be used as the basis for developing soft skills, including appropriate ‘attitudes’, in line with the demands of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. It is noted that this requires collaboration in developing the social aspects of businesses, which balances their development in being responsive to technology (Rahaja 2019). From an Indonesian perspective, Pancasila is presented as a firm foundation for responding to future challenges, namely in the technology-based and automation-based business world.

It is agreed that Indonesian students can develop the soft skills of working together, including carrying out voluntary activities, in efficient and meaningful ways. Such activities are described in the “*gotong royong*” (mutual assistance) section of the Study on the Development of the Pancasila Student Profile (Wahyuningsih et al., 2021). These mutual assistance programs are educational interventions designed specifically to impact the communities that the students will serve. As a consequence, the students involved in these mutual assistance programs are aided to (i) develop abilities and attitudes to engage with communities, which is a central principle

of Pancasila, and (ii) to facilitating competencies such as being reliable, responsible, caring, compassionate, and generous, displaying fairness and showing respect for fellow humans. The ability of “*gotong royong*” in Indonesian students also makes them better able to collaborate with other students and to proactively impact on the welfare and happiness of people in the communities they serve.

Riyanti and Prasetyo (2020) stated that, in the context of higher education, incorporation of Pancasila is effective when using a contextual approach by developing academic potential, preparing for coexistence in society, and building a ‘culture of living’ developed in accordance with Pancasila values (Riyanti & Prasetyo, 2020). Furthermore, the integration and rejuvenation of Pancasila within higher education can be promoted through: (i) imparting understanding of Pancasila as the national ideology to enable students to eschew alternative ideologies; (ii) showcasing exemplary behaviours such as discipline, tolerance, and religious attitudes; (iii) examining successful village integration initiatives based on Pancasila; and (iv) formulating tangible strategies for implementation. Pancasila values within social service activities. In this way, Pancasila establishes the ‘moral’ and ‘ethical’ background for character development, and this aim is achievable with strong leadership within the university when implementing Kampus Merdeka (Afriansyah et al., 2022).

In the context of Kampus Merdeka, these philosophical foundations are crucial, since this program emphasises the freedom of learning and innovation, providing an opportunity to reinforce the capsulated values in practical and meaningful ways. Aligning educational practices with Pancasila, can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, producing graduates who are competent in their fields and simultaneously committed to democratic values, justice and social welfare (Akhuai et al., 2022; Fearnley-Sander & Yulaelawati, 2008; Meinarno & Saleh, 2017). This alignment ensures that education remains a balanced tool for Nation-building, being deeply rooted in Indonesia's cultural and ideological heritage (Arfani & Nakaya, 2020).

Implementation of Kampus Merdeka: the Leadership Paradigm

There is concern that the implementation of Kampus Merdeka presents several challenges, particularly in aligning it with traditional educational values and practices. In particular, are the difficulties involved in transitioning from a rigid, curriculum-based system, to one that allows students to explore diverse learning experiences outside the conventional classroom setting (Permono, Putra, Anggita, & Nugroho, 2021; Puspitasari & Nugroho, 2021). This transition requires significant changes in institutional policies, teaching methodologies and assessment strategies (Voak et al., 2023).

Indonesia, as with many ASEAN countries, faces increasing pressure to comply with international norms of leadership styles relevant to the global marketplace. At the same time, they must begin to embrace modern versions of leadership styles, often at the expense of forgoing indigenous and nuanced versions of leadership, which are more culturally and ideologically appropriate (Fairman, Voak, & Babacan, 2022). These modern versions are exemplified through values such as (i) leaders should be models, (ii) leaders should model appropriate behaviour, and (iii) leaders should mentor and support from ‘behind’. However, these values and approaches, although appearing quite reasonable, are often indirectly challenged, with some educators suggesting that the current state of education is that ‘You go on but NOT me’. In essence, it has been noted that Indonesian leaders often fail to follow through with their professed principles, indicating a need to reassess leadership attitudes within the framework of Kampus Merdeka for potential improvement in this regard (Siminjutak, Voak, & Fairman, 2022).

Junker and van Dick (2014) propose leadership can be categorized into two distinct groups referred to as the ‘norm’ and the ‘valence’ of prototypes. In a similar vein, Suryani et al. (2012), in their Indonesian study on leadership, identified both etic (universal) and emic (culture-specific) leadership behavioural patterns. In this respect, Galperin et al. (2022) the “emic” approach involves starting with a clean slate, allowing respondents to define and elucidate the concepts of interest in their own terms. Conversely, the “etic” approach relies on predefined definitions and explanations sourced from all countries involved in the research. These definitions can be readily integrated into a survey instrument for use in a cross-cultural, multinational study. The research of Suryani et al. (2012) discovered that Indonesian leadership comprises two elements: the first encompasses a

localized modernization spectrum, spanning from traditional paternalistic approaches to contemporary transformational leadership, while the second delineates a broader individual versus team-oriented leadership dynamic.

In this scenario, certain prevailing Javanese leadership principles are noted as having the greatest propensity to impact wider Indonesian leadership traits. These are merit (*Hasta Brata*), obligation (*Tri Brata Mangkunegara*) and education (*Tri Prakarti Utomo*) (Suryani et al., 2012). In the education context, Hermawati et al. (2020) asserted that education comprises a trio of perspectives in educational leadership, which includes Pancasila leadership (Hermawati et al., 2020). Pancasila leadership has a virtuous character and is based on the leadership trilogy; (i) Giving an example (*ing ngarsa sun tuladha*); (ii) Raising awareness and leading others to create something useful (*ing madya mangun karsa*); and (iii) Encouraging others to carry out their duties properly and responsibly (Hermawati et al., 2020).

Through the Teaching Campus program, students are required to be able to establish effective communication and collaborate with friends, teachers, lecturers and policymakers. In addition, students are also required to be able to solve complex problems and are also required to display social consciousness, combined with care and love for the homeland (Sumani, Kadafi, Purnomosasi, & Prasasti, 2022). Rahmadani (2022) illustrated that, engaging leadership styles would require the four core dimensions, namely (i) strengthening, (ii) connecting, (iii) empowering, and (iv) inspiring and moderating by respect, known as "*diuwongke*". This is a Javanese term describing the employee's perception of their leaders and refers to their conception of being treated with dignity and reciprocal respect. Increased levels of "*diuwongke*" are expected to enhance work engagement and serve as a fundamental measure of relationship quality rooted in core human values (Rahmadani & Schaufeli, 2022). Hence, "*diuwongke*" is expected to play a key role in creating and maintaining positive relationships between employees and leaders in the Indonesian work context.

According to A'yuninnisa et al. (2020), leadership character requires four themes for describing leadership prototypes; these are morality, general competency, charisma and conscientiousness. Of these prototypes, *morality* is considered an important aspect by participants since it defines the essential characteristics of leadership. In this prototype, it is assumed that taking responsibility for one's actions, being honest with oneself and other members of the group, being attentive to the needs and wishes of followers, and being protective of others. Participants also highlighted the significance of general competency as a leadership prototype, emphasizing its essential nature in this regard. A'yuninnisa et al. (2020) considered the required competency characteristics of leadership to be intelligence, demonstration of technical ability, and ability to build social relationships. Participants also emphasised charisma as a vital leadership trait, delineating various subthemes within it: wise decision-making, guiding others, motivating and inspiring, and serving as a positive role model.

There is consensus on the overarching aim of the Independent Campus initiative, Kampus Merdeka, which is to enhance graduates' competencies in both soft and hard skills, equipping them for the professional sphere (Siminjutak et al., 2022). It is expected that Kampus Merdeka will assist graduates in becoming future leaders of the nation, equipping them with extensive knowledge and charismatic attributes. The form of learning activities required for this outcome are referred to in Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020 Article 15 Paragraph 1 (Nanggala & Suryadi, 2020), where it is stated that development should be done both inside the study program and outside the study program. The latter area includes (i) student exchange, (ii) internship and appropriate work practice and (iii) building a thematic real work concept. Susanti (2013) notes that, in addition, all lecturers of the course should be transparent role models, who practice appropriate character building in all activities both in the classroom as well as outside the formal education environment.

The success of Kampus Merdeka hinges on educators and institutions integrating changes in the educational framework with the local cultural mores and the philosophical values of the Nation. In the introduction of these changes, Wijaya (2022) highlights that resistance from educators accustomed to traditional methods is a significant barrier, which is often due to a lack of training or resources. In moving forward and overcoming these challenges, it is required that continuous professional development and support for educators is made available, allowing the advised fostering of innovation and collaboration (Wijaya, 2022; Ardiansyah, 2021). This

approach will ensure Kampus Merdeka will have a chance to create a dynamic and responsive education system suited to the rapidly changing modern world.

Integration of Values and Competencies

Reflection on this changing scenario suggests that the integration of Pancasila values into the Kampus Merdeka framework will require a balanced approach to developing appropriate knowledge, skill and attitude. While technical competencies are crucial, the development of ethical and moral attitudes is seen as equally important for producing well-rounded graduates (Razali, Sundana, & Ramli, 2024; Sandra, Suryana, & Indrayanti, 2023; Saputra, Haikal, Wibowo, & Putri, 2023). The introduction of this holistic approach will ensure that students are given the best opportunity to not only become capable professionals but also to be responsible citizens who can contribute positively to society (Permana & Rahmawati, 2023; Ridwan et al., 2022).

In this area, character building plays a central role in Indonesian education, and works by strengthening the ability to be a good citizen and to be a functioning member of the community as a noble and moral community member and worker. However, there are gaps in the required knowledge and practice of these higher-order values in Indonesian daily life, requiring us to ask: (i) What are the specific values and attitudes that are needed by students when they engage in Industry in Indonesia? (ii) What are the appropriate values and attitudes needed by students in a global context? And (iii) How will the duality of ‘Character for Industry’ and the “Character of Pancasila” engage in a meaningful and productive way? In light of these questions, educational institutions in Indonesia are being challenged to develop programs that achieve these higher-order values in the context of required work-related knowledge, skills and attitudes. Fadilah (2019) also has enunciated the need to develop a grounded understanding of Pancasila to avoid the possibility of exclusivism and social inequality. Fadilah (2019) further contends there is still a significant gap between ideal-normative values in Pancasila as an ideology and the actualisation of these values in actual empirical reality.

Hanum (2019) opines that the developmental orientation that is currently occurring in Indonesia is heavily focused on industrial development efforts, and as such, this has a tendency to cause the development of the Nation's citizenship qualities to diminish (Hanum, 2019). Hanum (2019) argues that there is currently a need for a specific reorientation in activities that refer to the Pancasila philosophy to maintain the Nation's core identity. Pancasila, as the expression of Indonesian ideology, should not only be presented in wordy statements but be internalized by the population and implemented in everyday life (Karsayuda & Tektona, 2021). Karsayuda and Tektona (2021) further suggest that for the government to be able to realize National ideals that adhere to the Pancasila ideology, it must act to encourage the internalization of these values from a relatively early age. That said, it is necessary to make considerable efforts towards increasing the recognition of workers' rights, both physically and technically, as well as deploying and normalising social and economic protections to ensure the Pancasila philosophy is a lived experience (Taryono, Purnomosidi, & Riyanti, 2019).

To focus attention on developing the Pancasila values, in 2017 the Government of Indonesia, through Presidential Regulation (Perpres) No. 87/2017, released a policy titled *Strengthening Character Education*. This action of strengthening the character of education is part of the National Movement for the Mental Revolution (Saiful, Basyah, & Akhyar, 2018) Promoting the implementation of Pancasila values involves instilling honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, and religious values. It also entails fostering curiosity, democracy, national spirit, love for the country, respect for achievement, effective communication, advocacy for peace, stewardship of the environment, social care, and the fostering of social responsibility. Developing these important characteristics meets the criteria of Article Three in the National Movement for the Mental Revolution.

Further, a program such as this requires significant collaboration between educational institutions, family units and elements of civil society. Even though the values encapsulated in this scheme are clearly desirable, the practical optimization of character education has not been developed enough within educational institutions despite the Socialisation of Presidential Regulation (*Perpres*). However, developing learning programs that embody these values, known more universally as developing the ‘hidden curriculum’, remains somewhat elusive. One of the main problems is that these various values are difficult to implement, because of the contradiction

between what is taught in the educational setting and its relationship to the real world and everyday reality. These contradictions, which need to be engaged with by students, are made relevant by witnessing various actions that marginalize humanity in everyday life. In addition, in the school environment, students are encouraged to adhere to these Pancasila values. However, the Ministry of Education faces challenges in implementing character education, and schools also face significant hurdles in attempting to operationalise these values in the student's educational experience. It is held that the lack of discourse around strengthening character education remains one of the contributors to the failure of its implementation. In this respect, Driyarkara (2006) elucidates that education is fundamental to initiating change, and for providing personal direction and guidance for self-awareness, developing critical views and providing the parameters to define their destiny. Humanistic educational pedagogy is the foundation for values development, and, according to Driyarkara (2006), Indonesian education requires the development of humanistic pedagogical reform. This required model not only prioritizes the formation of humans who have technological skills but also pays equal attention to personal and character education.

Pancasila values can be incorporated into various aspects of the curriculum, ranging from classroom instruction to extracurricular activities (Santoso & Murod, 2021). For example, community service projects and internships provide students with practical experiences that reinforce the values of social justice and communal harmony (Benawa, Lusia, Alwino, Irawan, & Witono, 2023; Darfin & Evawati, 2022), and by embedding these values into everyday learning experiences, Kampus Merdeka helps students internalize Pancasila principles and apply them in their personal and professional lives. This approach not only enhances the quality of their education but also strengthens the moral fabric of society, fostering a culture of integrity and respect (Siregar, Putera, Djumadin, & Wibisono, 2019).

Impact on Nation-Building

The integration of Pancasila values within the Kampus Merdeka framework has significant implications for nation-building. Education is instrumental in moulding the identity and principles of upcoming generations, shaping the holistic progress of the country. (Pradana, Mahfud, Hermawan, & Susanti, 2020). By embedding Pancasila values into the education system, Indonesia can cultivate a sense of National identity and unity among its citizens, essential for achieving ongoing social cohesion and stability (Siregar et al., 2019).

Because Pancasila is the basis of the state's educational philosophy, it involves National ideology, the National view of moral living, and is a key unifier for the Indonesian Nation and state (Yudi Latif, 2011). Latif (2012) also argues that this broad National principle leads to the general internalisation of the notion of 'world brotherhood' and leads to a strong commitment to glorifying universal human values. During the era of the Joko Widodo presidency, there have been efforts to help Indonesian students build a Pancasila Student Profile (Wahyuningsih et al., 2021). This vision for Indonesian education was crafted to contribute to the achievement of a progressive, self-reliant Indonesia, fostering a unified persona and identity. The Pancasila Student Profile stated, "Indonesian students are lifelong students who are competent, have character, and behave according to the values of Pancasila". The Pancasila Student Profile is a character development strategy that supports an ability to meet educational techniques that are built for enhancing everyday life and are brought to life in one's actions and efforts (Wahyuningsih et al., 2021).

Nishimura (1995), opines Pancasila has evolved into a fundamental philosophical principle in formal Indonesian education. A comprehensive grasp of Pancasila's core tenets is now indispensable for comprehending the underlying philosophy guiding Indonesia's education agenda towards independence. In this regard, Nishimura (1995) elucidates that within the historical framework of moral education, Pancasila played a pivotal role in fostering national unity through school education. This significance of Pancasila was further reinforced and solidified with the enactment of the National Education System Law.

The success of nation-building efforts depends on the education system's ability to produce individuals who are skilled and knowledgeable and are committed to democratic values, justice and social welfare (Kalidjernih, 2005). This outcome will require aligning educational policies and practices with broader national development goals (Siminjutak et al., 2022). By fostering a culture of ethical and responsible behaviour, Kampus Merdeka

can contribute to creating a more just and equitable society, where all citizens have the opportunity to thrive and contribute to the common good (Adha, Budimansyah, Kartadinata, & Sundawa, 2019; Razali et al., 2024).

Concluding Remarks

The integration of Pancasila values within the Kampus Merdeka framework represents a significant shift in Indonesian educational philosophy and practice, which aims to create a more culturally relevant and ethically grounded education system. This research has highlighted the historical importance of Pancasila as a foundational value system that guides the ethical and philosophical underpinnings of Indonesian society and education. By embedding these key values into the Kampus Merdeka initiative, educators and policymakers seek to foster a holistic development of students that includes not only academic and vocational skills but also the cultivation of moral and civic virtues essential for Nation-building. This approach addresses the previously overlooked aspect of attitudes within the Western-centric competency triangle, ensuring that a strong ethical framework complements the development of knowledge and skills.

By addressing these areas, future studies can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how Pancasila values can be operationalised within educational frameworks to promote comprehensive development. This research underscores the importance of ethical education in fostering a resilient and morally grounded society, aligning with Indonesia's National identity and cultural heritage. The ongoing evolution of the Kampus Merdeka initiative offers a unique opportunity to re-examine and reinforce these values, ensuring that Indonesia's educational reforms not only enhance academic and vocational competencies, but also deeply root students in the ethical and cultural fabric of the Nation. Future research should explore the practical implications of these reforms on educational practices and outcomes, providing valuable insights into how these initiatives can be optimised for greater impact.

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