

## *Implementing Pancasila Philosophy in Early Childhood Education: An Indonesian Educational Model Study*

### **Implementasi Filsafat Pancasila Dalam Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini: Studi Model Pendidikan Indonesia**

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##### History:

Submitted: 01-02-2026

Revised: 01-03-2026

Accepted: 10-03-2026

##### Keyword:

Early Childhood Education; Pancasila; Character; Curriculum.

##### Kata Kunci:

Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini; Pancasila; Karakter; Kurikulum.

#### Abstract

*This study examines the philosophical transformation of early childhood education in the smart pedagogy era through ontological, epistemological, and axiological analysis of the Merdeka curriculum based on Pancasila. Smart technology disruptions and globalization dynamics demand a recalibration of the educational system that does not merely focus on technological proficiency, but also on moral character resilience. Using a qualitative integrative literature review method, this research confronts the Western materialism framework with Pancasila philosophy. The results indicate that ontologically, Pancasila positions children as monopluralist entities with sacred purity. Epistemologically, knowledge transmission is realized through backward learning design based on dialectical inquiry, subordinating digital instruments under strict pedagogical control. Axiologically, this technological innovation must be calibrated to manifest the Pancasila Student Profile as a defense mechanism against the social degradation of contemporary cyber civilization. Conclusively, harmonious synergy between noble Pancasila values and smart pedagogy innovation constitutes an absolute prerequisite to sculpt superior character.*

#### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji transformasi filosofis pendidikan anak usia dini di era pedagogi cerdas melalui analisis ontologis, epistemologis, dan aksiologis terhadap Kurikulum Merdeka berbasis Pancasila. Disrupsi teknologi cerdas dan dinamika globalisasi menuntut rekalisasi sistem pendidikan yang tidak sekadar berfokus pada kecakapan teknologis, melainkan juga pada ketahanan karakter moral. Menggunakan metode kajian pustaka integratif kualitatif, penelitian ini mengonfrontasikan kerangka pemikiran materialisme Barat dengan filsafat Pancasila. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa secara ontologis, Pancasila memosisikan anak sebagai entitas monopluralis dengan fitrah suci. Secara epistemologis, transmisi pengetahuan diwujudkan melalui desain pembelajaran mundur berbasis inkuiri dialektis, menundukkan instrumen digital di bawah kendali pedagogik. Secara aksiologis, inovasi teknologi ini mutlak dikalibrasi guna mewujudkan Profil Pelajar Pancasila sebagai mekanisme pertahanan atas degradasi sosial peradaban siber kontemporer. Kesimpulannya, sinergi harmonis antara nilai luhur Pancasila dan inovasi pedagogi cerdas merupakan prasyarat mutlak untuk memahat resiliensi karakter unggul bagi seluruh generasi penerus bangsa di Republik Indonesia pada abad dua puluh satu ini.



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 <https://doi.org/10.65101/spedu.v1i4.243>

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Background**

Education and philosophy share an absolute and inseparable dialectical relationship, wherein education fundamentally constitutes the praxis and operationalization of its underlying philosophical frameworks. Within the comprehensive landscape of educational sciences, philosophy serves as a crucial foundational cornerstone, providing direction, a rational basis, and macro-level interpretations of pedagogical concepts, which are subsequently applied to formulate holistic educational objectives and strategies.<sup>1</sup> In the absence of a robust, structured, and collectively internalized philosophical foundation, an educational system risks descending into paradigmatic chaos and directional disorientation, ultimately threatening a nation's existence, survival, and cultural identity. Such disarray in pedagogical reasoning has the profound potential to precipitate a multidimensional crisis, ranging from skepticism toward fundamental and religious values, disregard for civic obligations, and subversion of moral and ethical norms, to the infiltration of foreign cultures promoting hedonistic and individualistic lifestyles. Consequently, these factors will slowly but inevitably erode and dismantle the identity of future generations.

Amidst the sweeping wave of globalization and massive digital transformation in the third decade of the 21st century, educational institutions particularly at the Early Childhood Education (ECE) level are confronted with highly complex existential challenges. The modern educational ecosystem is compelled to preserve national identity while proactively adapting to the demands of 21st-century competencies and the disruptions of smart technologies.<sup>2</sup> The era of smart pedagogy, characterized by the proliferation of Artificial Intelligence (AI), learning analytics, and ubiquitous digital media, has established a novel media ecology that fundamentally transforms how individuals interact, learn, and construct knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Henricus Suparlan, "Filsafat Pendidikan Ki Hadjar Dewantara Dan Sumbangannya Bagi Pendidikan Indonesia," *Jurnal Filsafat* 25, no. 1 (August 14, 2016): 56–74, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jf.12614>.

<sup>2</sup> Ali Miftakhu Rosyad and Siti Fatahiyah Mahamood, "A Systematic Literature Review of Pancasila Education in Higher Education: Trends, Pedagogical Innovations, and Learner Competencies," *International Journal of Science Education and Cultural Studies* 4, no. 2 (January 3, 2026): 28–46, <https://doi.org/10.58291/ijsecs.v4i2.459>.

<sup>3</sup> Ari Hidayat and Nurul Zaman, "Strategies for Developing Social Science Education Curricula Within the Modern Digital Era," *Journal of Smart Pedagogy and Education* 1, no. 2 (October 29, 2025): 152–72, <https://doi.org/10.65101/spedu.v1i2.164>.

This new reality necessitates a recalibration of the educational system, focusing not merely on technological proficiency, but also on character resilience and ethical literacy. As a sovereign nation with profound historical and cultural roots, Indonesia anchors the entire construct of its educational system upon the state philosophy and ideology, Pancasila. Each precept of Pancasila is not a hollow dogma, but rather the culmination of high-order philosophical reasoning, derived from the deep, authentic spiritual, social, and cultural values of the Indonesian people.<sup>4</sup>

The educational paradigm rooted in the philosophy of Pancasila stands in stark contrast to, and frequently diverges from, the constructs of secular Western educational thought, which tend to be distinctly rationalistic, empiricist, and materialistic, often establishing a rigid dichotomy between the scientific and the transcendental spiritual dimensions.<sup>5</sup> Within the context of early childhood education, the philosophy of Pancasila accords children a profoundly dignified status; they are not perceived as miniature adults whose cognitive capacities can be exploited, nor are they to be mechanically molded akin to industrial machinery. Instead, children are viewed as spiritual and biological entities born in a state of *fitrah* (inherent purity), possessing a sacred, innate potential that must be nurtured and cultivated in harmonious alignment with natural laws and divine value.<sup>6</sup>

This philosophical conceptualization is highly congruent with the seminal framework of Indonesian national education luminary Ki Hadjar Dewantara regarding the concept of *trisakti jiwa* (the three powers of the soul). Encompassing *cipta* (cognitive power and intellect), *rasa* (affective power and emotion), and *karsa* (conative power and volition), this paradigm necessitates the implementation of a holistic and humanistic educational approach that is fundamentally centered on the innate disposition of the learner.<sup>7</sup> The significance and urgency of integrating the philosophy of Pancasila have

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<sup>4</sup> Esty Setyo Utaminingsih, Aldi Ihsandi, and Intan Shih Mutiarawati, "Pancasila Philosophy as the Basis of Education and National Character," *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan* 8, no. 4 (November 13, 2023): 2443–49, <https://doi.org/10.29303/jipp.v8i4.1752>.

<sup>5</sup> Garin Ocshela Anggraini and Wiryanto Wiryanto, "Analysis of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Humanistic Education in the Concept of Independent Learning Curriculum," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan* 15, no. 1 (March 30, 2022): 33–45, <https://doi.org/10.21831/jpipfip.v15i1.41549>.

<sup>6</sup> Dita Puspita Dewi et al., "Revitalizing Character Education in The Digital Age Based on The Principle of 'Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha' by Ki Hajar Dewantara," *PAEDAGOGIA* 28, no. 2 (June 2025): 293, <https://doi.org/10.20961/paedagogia.v28i2.102125>.

<sup>7</sup> Lia Hardiani, Yusuf Tri Herlambang, and Tatang Muhtar, "Peran Guru Dalam Keberhasilan Penerapan Merdeka Belajar Di Sekolah Dasar: Tinjauan Dalam Konsepsi Ki Hadjar Dewantara Peran Guru Dalam Keberhasilan Penerapan Merdeka Belajar Di Sekolah Dasar: Tinjauan Dalam Konsepsi Ki Hadjar Dewantara," *Ideguru: Jurnal Karya Ilmiah Guru* 10, no. 3 (October 31, 2025): 1928–37, <https://doi.org/10.51169/ideguru.v10i3.1849>.

gained historical momentum through the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Emancipated Curriculum) policy, which explicitly, structurally, and systematically aims to cultivate the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile). This ideal profile envisions a generation characterized by faith and piety, global multicultural awareness, independence, a spirit of mutual collaboration (*gotong royong*), critical reasoning, and creativity in navigating contemporary challenges.<sup>8</sup>

Research concerning the integration of Pancasila values within education and the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in the digital era has ignited intense academic discourse, yielding various literature reviews and empirical studies in recent years. Specifically, three prior studies exhibit a profound intersection with the present research. First is a comprehensive empirical study conducted by Fitrati and Saleha (2025), which examined the impact of social media on adolescents' social interaction patterns within Indonesia's digital educational landscape.<sup>9</sup> Through a systematic literature review guided by the theories of Media Ecology and Social Capital, the study revealed that while digital connectivity globally expands bridging social capital on the one hand, it simultaneously and aggressively erodes bonding social capital and the quality of face-to-face communication on the other. The emergence of scroll culture and phubbing behaviors has precipitated a drastic decline in interpersonal empathy, engendering a "digital native paradox" wherein technical proficiency is not commensurate with ethical literacy.

Second, a classroom action and qualitative descriptive study by Saputri et al. (2025) underscores the efficacy of the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach in reinforcing the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile), specifically within the dimension of global multicultural awareness. This study integrates a local art form, specifically the traditional Bekakak sculpture, and demonstrates that an authentic cultural approach is highly effective in cultivating tolerance and collaborative empathy. Furthermore, it successfully bridges local cultural values with universal principles amidst global cultural hegemony.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Muhammad Hasbi, Fitri, and Ahmad Mukhtar, "Character Building Profile of Pancasila Students As An Effort to Realize National Character," *ETDC: Indonesian Journal of Research and Educational Review* 2, no. 4 (September 27, 2023): 70–83, <https://doi.org/10.51574/ijrer.v2i4.938>.

<sup>9</sup> Kafina Agni Fitrati and Rehany Saleha, "Impact of Social Media on Adolescent Social Interaction Patterns in Digital Education," *Journal of Smart Pedagogy and Education* 1, no. 2 (October 27, 2025): 113–25, <https://doi.org/10.65101/spedu.v1i2.150>.

<sup>10</sup> Tiza Ariesta Saputri et al., "Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students in the Dimension of Global Diversity Through a CRT Approach Based on Bekakak Sculpture Art," *Jurnal Ilmiah Sekolah Dasar* 9, no. 3 (August 25, 2025): 435–46, <https://doi.org/10.23887/jisd.v9i3.97910>.

Third, a philosophical study conducted by Anggreni et al. (2024) offers a critical examination of the implementation of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile) within the structure of formal education curricula.<sup>11</sup> The study revealed that while this policy significantly impacts the moral character formation of the younger generation, its implementation remains encumbered by systemic challenges, notably cultural resistance to paradigm shifts and inconsistencies in teachers' ontological comprehension regarding the essence of Pancasila values.

The fundamental difference and novelty of this present article compared to the three aforementioned research constellations lie in the scale of its holistic philosophical synthesis and its acute contextualization within the media ecology architecture of smart pedagogy. While previous studies have tended to be partial merely highlighting the impacts of social media, examining a single specific method like CRT, or macro-evaluating the curriculum this research exclusively and comprehensively dissects the anatomy of early childhood education utilizing the tripartite framework of the philosophy of science: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. This study synthesizes and critically examines the legal foundations of the national educational system against the disruptions brought about by smart technologies, such as artificial intelligence and the realities of cyber media. This in-depth analysis aims to formulate a new epistemology within the framework of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* that is capable of preserving the ontological purity of children as entities of inherent purity (*fitrah*), while simultaneously equipping them axiologically to navigate and flourish within the era of the digital native paradox.

To conclude this background section, the primary findings of the present study can be briefly outlined. The analytical synthesis of this study reveals that, ontologically, Pancasila positions young children as sacred and holistic monopluralist entities, whose development must not be reduced by Western instrumentalist paradigms. Epistemologically, the transmission of knowledge in the era of smart pedagogy must abandon linear instruction models in favor of a culturally responsive, dialectical project-based backward design, which subordinates digital instruments (such as AI and social media) under rigorous pedagogical control. Axiologically, all these educational strategies and technological innovations are recalibrated toward a single, absolute objective:

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<sup>11</sup> Ni Luh Putu Yesy Anggreni, I Wayan Suastra, and Made Deni Pramanta, "Review of Educational Philosophy: A Critical Analysis of the Implementation of Pancasila Profiles in the School Curriculum," *Indonesian Journal of Educational Development (IJED)* 5, no. 2 (August 12, 2024): 272-81, <https://doi.org/10.59672/ijed.v5i2.3518>.

actualizing the indicators of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* as a moral defense mechanism (filtering function) against the erosion of social empathy and ethical degradation in the era of cyber civilization.

## **2. Research Questions**

Following the exploration of the aforementioned background, technological disruption, coupled with the paradigmatic shift in the national curriculum, necessitates a comprehensive philosophical reevaluation of the architecture of early childhood education in Indonesia. These dynamics engender an imperative to critically reexamine the fundamental foundations of educational praxis through both legal and philosophical lenses. Consequently, the research questions in this study are structured into three interwoven philosophical inquiries that culminate in the legal-normative aspects of the educational system, thereby serving as the primary analytical trajectory throughout the discussion:

- a. Ontologically and normatively, how is the existential essence of early childhood conceptualized within the frameworks of the Pancasila philosophy and the National Education System Law when contrasted with the constructs of Western educational materialism, and what are the implications for the paradigm of pedagogical treatment during the golden age?
- b. Epistemologically, how must the strategies, methods, and approaches to knowledge transmission within the *Kurikulum Merdeka* be constructed to ensure relevance amidst the integration of smart pedagogy and digital technologies, without uprooting children from their foundational cultural identities?
- c. Axiologically, what are the fundamental value orientations and ultimate objectives of early childhood education grounded in the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, specifically in mitigating the threats of moral degradation, the disruption of social interactions, and the paradoxes of the digital media ecology that undermine the social cohesion of the nation's civilization?

## **3. Research Methods**

Methodologically, this study is constructed utilizing an integrative literature review approach, rooted in a qualitative-normative research paradigm and philosophical

inquiry.<sup>12</sup> The selection of this method is predicated on the argument that an integrative literature review possesses superior analytical capacity to comprehensively examine, critique, synthesize, and reconceptualize literature representing complex phenomena. Within this context, the method is optimized to construct a novel theoretical framework and perspective regarding the architecture of alternative learning models and the adaptation of early childhood education curricula amidst the transition toward the era of smart pedagogy. The primary theoretical frameworks employed as analytical lenses encompass Media Ecology Theory, Social Capital Theory, and Tyler's Curriculum Theory concerning backward design.

Data collection techniques were executed through a systematic and multi-layered search across various high-repute academic databases, both at the global and national levels. The rigorous literature curation and selection process strictly adopted the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework protocol.<sup>13</sup> The applied inclusion criteria restricted the literature to peer-reviewed journal articles, international conference proceedings, government policy reports, and dissertations, predominantly published within the last decade (2015–2025). Search parameters focused on the intersection of "Pancasila philosophy," "early childhood education," "Kurikulum Merdeka," "smart pedagogy," "artificial intelligence in education," and the "Profil Pelajar Pancasila." This extensive screening process involved filtering hundreds of articles to isolate dozens of specific studies evaluating the efficacy of project-based pedagogy and the sociocultural impacts of digital technology interventions in Indonesian schools.

Data analysis techniques rely on qualitative-normative content analysis, elaborated through a deductive reasoning approach to examine empirical pedagogical phenomena through the lens of Pancasila philosophy. The analytical procedure follows the interactive data analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman, which mandates three dialectically overlapping stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During the data reduction phase, complex information from the literature ranging from project-based learning (PBL) effectiveness and adolescent social media interaction metrics to the evaluation of P5 (*Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar*

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<sup>12</sup> J. F. Hair et al., *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 8th ed. (Cengage Learning, 2019). Hal, 73.

<sup>13</sup> Rosyad and Mahamood, "A Systematic Literature Review of Pancasila Education in Higher Education: Trends, Pedagogical Innovations, and Learner Competencies."

*Pancasila*) implementation is filtered, patterned, and strictly categorized into three philosophical dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. The data display phase is executed by constructing narrative constellations supported by matrices and comparative tables to visualize paradigmatic contrasts and synthesize the effectiveness of learning strategies. Conclusions are drawn iteratively by verifying empirical findings against primary juridical references, specifically Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and its derivative regulations regarding *Kurikulum Merdeka* standards. This comprehensive methodology is orchestrated to ensure that the resulting philosophical synthesis maintains robust logical validity and academically rigorous empirical ground.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

The discussion in this scholarly report is structured according to the sequence of research questions and the philosophical elements that serve as the primary components of this inquiry. From a legal-formal perspective, Indonesian national education is anchored in constitutional supremacy, as explicitly articulated in Article 1, Paragraph 2, and Article 3 of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which mandates that national education must be grounded in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the State of the Republic of Indonesia. This regulation serves not merely as an administrative framework but as a philosophical proclamation that obligates all educational instruments to remain aligned with religious values and national culture while proactively responding to civilizational transformations. Consequently, educational praxis is inextricably linked to an in-depth examination of the three primary pillars of the philosophy of science: the nature of the reality of the learner (ontology), the sources and methods of valid knowledge acquisition (epistemology), and the value orientations and utility of said knowledge (axiology).

### **1. Ontological Perspectives: The Normative and Philosophical Essence of Early Childhood**

Ontological inquiry aims to unveil the essence of being, fundamental reality, and the basic nature of human existence. Within the discourse of early childhood education, the failure to formulate precise ontological postulates leads to pedagogical dysfunction, as the conceptualization of a child's nature fundamentally dictates the methodology of their treatment. Drawing upon the philosophy of Pancasila as the national worldview, the

Indonesian human ontology is conceptualized as a "monopluralist" being. This philosophical terminology asserts that humans including children in the early childhood phase—despite their complex multidimensionality, are fundamentally a holistic and inseparable existential unity. This unity encompasses a harmonious integration of the soul (spiritual dimension) and the body (physical dimension), the duality of the autonomous individual and the social being embedded within a community, and the ultimate status as a *creatura*, or a being created by the Almighty God.<sup>14</sup>

A direct manifestation of this monopluralist ontological understanding is the philosophical recognition that every young child is born in a state of *fitrah* a condition of natural purity endowed with extraordinary inherent potential for goodness. Within this ontological framework, children are not perceived as miniature adults whose cognitive and emotional structures may be molded, manipulated, or exploited according to mechanistic adult ambitions. This perspective resonates perfectly with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's humanist educational paradigm, which conceptualizes the child as a holistic entity animated by the *trisakti jiwa* (the three powers of the soul) a trinity of faculties comprising *cipta* (cognition: reasoning and imagination), *rasa* (affect: empathy and aesthetics), and *karsa* (conation: volition and resilience).<sup>15</sup> The primary mandate of education is not to sculpt the child as one would an inanimate stone, but rather to provide a conducive sociocultural ecosystem that allows their *fitrah* (innate purity) and *trisakti jiwa* (the three soul powers) to flourish optimally, in alignment with both their natural disposition (*kodrat alam*) and the exigencies of the era (*kodrat zaman*).

The ontological position of the Pancasila educational philosophy establishes a definitive demarcation when compared to the dominant ontological paradigms inherited from Western empiricist and rationalist constructs. Western philosophical traditions frequently conceptualize the world as an entirely mechanical, measurable, and material realm, in which religious consciousness and transcendental spirituality are often relegated to secondary stages or characterized as irrational anomalies occurring late in the trajectory of human intellectual evolution. This Western paradigm sharply dichotomizes the sacred and the profane, segregating the body from the soul, and

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<sup>14</sup> Rukiyati Rukiyati, "Tujuan Pendidikan Nasional Dalam Perspektif Pancasila," *HUMANIKA* 19, no. 1 (February 12, 2020): 56–69, <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v19i1.30160>.

<sup>15</sup> Rochmimah Harini, Nurul Istiq'faroh, and Hendratno, "Konsep Pendidikan Ki Hadjar Dewantara Dan Implementasinya Di Sekolah Dasar Di Indonesia," *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Primary Education* 1, no. 2 (December 16, 2023): 81–94, <https://doi.org/10.61476/yp2yaf42>.

ultimately engendering educational systems that are profoundly utilitarian, competitive, and secular in nature.<sup>16</sup> To visualize this philosophical polarization and underscore the superiority of the Pancasila paradigm in safeguarding humanity, the following comparative matrix delineates a synthesis of these conceptual frameworks:

**Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Western Ontological Constructs and Pancasila Philosophy within Educational Contexts**

| <b>Ontological &amp; Philosophical Dimensions</b> | <b>Western Paradigm (Empiricist-Rationalist Construct)</b>   | <b>Pancasila Paradigm (Monopluralist-Holistic Construct)</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Nature of Human Existence</b>                  | Dichotomy of soul and body; individuals are perceived as fragmented biological-cognitive entities oriented toward dynamic material progress.       | "Monopluralist" beings; a holistic unity of soul-body and individual-social dimensions, existing in harmony as dignified creations of God.   |
| <b>Fundamental Episteme of Truth</b>              | Relies absolutely on pure empirical rationality; tends to reject or subordinate "irrational" elements, religion, and metaphysics within cognition. | Dialectical integration of intellectual rationality and irrational-transcendental values (religion) as the pillars of moral character ( <i>budi pekerti</i> ).                                 |
| <b>Orientation of Life Objectives</b>             | Oriented toward physical optimization, material accumulation, paternalistic freedom, and mechanical discipline to conquer nature.                  | Oriented toward the purification of the soul ( <i>fitrah</i> ), mutual cooperation ( <i>gotong royong</i> ), ecological justice, and religious social civility.                                |
| <b>Ontological Status of Early Childhood</b>      | <i>Tabula rasa</i> entities or immature cognitions that must be externally reconstructed to meet adult functional standards.                       | <i>Fitrah</i> entities (innate purity) animated by the trisakti jiwa ( <i>cipta, rasa, karsa</i> ) from birth, developing in accordance with their natural disposition ( <i>kodrat alam</i> ). |
| <b>Position of Divine Values</b>                  | Often reduced to the private sphere (secularism) or negated (atheism) within   | Functions as the <i>causa prima</i> (primary cause) that animates, underlies, and directs all life and educational activities.   |

<sup>16</sup> Deodatus Kolek et al., "An Epistemological Study of Pancasila as the Philosophical Foundation of Curriculum Development in Indonesia," *Inovasi Kurikulum* 22, no. 1 (February 28, 2025): 493-510, <https://doi.org/10.17509/jik.v22i1.79525>.

the scientific and  
educational curriculum.

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The preceding table articulates with profound clarity that the imposition of a secular educational system in Indonesia represents a fundamental ontological flaw. Within the Pancasila ecosystem, the First Principle (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*) serves as the *causa prima* or the absolute foundation that radiates spiritual energy throughout the remaining four principles. For early childhood educators, this conceptual framework mandates that the primary pedagogical engagement should not involve the forced instruction of *calistung* (reading, writing, and arithmetic) for the sake of mere cognitive-rational achievement. Instead, it should prioritize fostering an awareness of the Creator's existence, the purity of the soul (*fitrah*), and social harmony. By positioning the child as a monopluralist creation of God, Indonesia's educational legal architecture necessitates that all forms of pedagogical intervention including technological integration in the digital era must be subordinate to the principle of preserving this innate human purity. This, in turn, becomes an absolute prerequisite for the transition toward contemporary learning methodologies.

## **2. Epistemological Frameworks: Smart Pedagogy and the Dynamics of the *Kurikulum Merdeka***

While ontology defines "what" is being educated, epistemology serves to answer "how" knowledge, skills, and wisdom are acquired, validated, and transmitted to young children within the framework of achieving educational objectives. Contemporary epistemological discourse in early childhood education is inextricably linked to global curricular methodological revolutions and the imperative for exponential technological adoption. Systematic literature reviews focusing on educational dynamics in developing nations and across continents (e.g., comparative studies of Indonesia and Turkey) identify a fundamental epistemological shift from forward-oriented curriculum designs traditionally constrained by theoretical content transmission toward backward design, which is rigorously oriented toward holistic, outcome-based competency achievement.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Zuhriyyah Hidayati, Kusaeri Kusaeri, and Evi Fatimatur Rusydiyah, "Early Childhood Education at the Intersection of East and West: An Analysis of Curriculum Shifts in Indonesia and Turkey," *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 9, no. 1 (February 7, 2025): 175-89, <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v9i1.6475>.

In Indonesia, this large-scale epistemological shift is codified through the reformative *Kurikulum Merdeka* policy. The *Kurikulum Merdeka* transcends a mere administrative overhaul; it represents an epistemological re-engineering that grants radical autonomy and flexibility to both educators and learners, enabling them to construct knowledge by transforming the surrounding environment into a living laboratory.<sup>18</sup> By virtue of the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture, learning methodologies have been reconfigured to move beyond monologue-based approaches or rigid classroom boundaries. Instead, knowledge acquisition focuses on the process of internalizing values through the Project for Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (*Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, hereafter P5). Empirically, a systematic literature review analyzing 45 peer-reviewed articles from 2015 to 2024 reveals that the adoption of active, experiential pedagogy such as project-based learning (PBL), service-learning, and dialectical approaches consistently demonstrates significantly superior effectiveness (with statistical effect sizes ranging from  $d=0.62$   $d=1.42$ ) in fostering applied competencies compared to conventional lecture-based instruction.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, this epistemological framework confronts emergent complexities when juxtaposed with the imperative for smart pedagogy adoption. The era of smart pedagogy necessitates a rigorous synthesis between local wisdom and disruptive technological innovations, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), learning analytics, and cross-platform digital media.<sup>20</sup> The integration of AI within Indonesian classrooms promises an unprecedented level of personalized learning experiences, wherein algorithms facilitate the mapping of unique learning styles for individual early childhood learners. Nevertheless, literature reviews concerning AI integration underscore persistent structural challenges, specifically regarding disparities in digital infrastructure readiness, gaps in teacher pedagogical competence for designing cyber-based curricula, and institutional resistance to shifting away from traditional instructional paradigms.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ni Putu Yuniarika Parwati and I Wayan Suastra, "Critical Study of Educational Philosophy: Implementation of Character Education in the Pancasila Student Profile," *Indonesian Journal of Educational Development (IJED)* 4, no. 4 (February 28, 2024): 492–99, <https://doi.org/10.59672/ijed.v4i4.3397>.

<sup>19</sup> Rosyad and Mahamood, "A Systematic Literature Review of Pancasila Education in Higher Education: Trends, Pedagogical Innovations, and Learner Competencies."

<sup>20</sup> Hidayat and Zaman, "Strategies for Developing Social Science Education Curricula Within the Modern Digital Era."

<sup>21</sup> Olga Arranz Garcia, María del Carmen Romero García, and Vidal Alonso-Secades, "Perceptions, Strategies, and Challenges of Teachers in the Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Primary Education: A Systematic Review," *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research* 24 (2025): 006, <https://doi.org/10.28945/5458>.

Consequently, Pancasila epistemology intervenes with the postulate that knowledge acquisition must not be achieved through the alienation of the subject from their cultural roots. Technology must be demystified and subordinated to align with a "learning-by-doing" model one that fosters participatory engagement, opens avenues for critical inquiry, and enables children to construct meaning through a constructivist framework.

An empirical manifestation of the epistemological fusion between contemporary methodologies and local wisdom is evident in the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). A comprehensive study by Saputri et al. (2025) provides robust empirical evidence regarding the efficacy of the CRT approach, utilizing traditional sculpture (*Seni Bekakak*) as a pedagogical medium to internalize the "global diversity" (*kebinekaan global*) dimension of the Pancasila Student Profile.<sup>22</sup> Utilizing Miles and Huberman’s interactive data reduction cycle, the research confirms that children’s active engagement in constructing local cultural artifacts directly stimulates inclusive collaborative behaviors, dismantles cultural biases, and establishes cognitive bridges between local traditions and a universal respect for global diversity. Furthermore, the adoption of digital media, such as podcasts within dialectical learning frameworks, has proven significant in fostering critical dispositions toward national values. This shift effectively transforms mechanistic political indoctrination a common critique of past conventional curricula into meaningful civic dialogue.<sup>23</sup>

To operationally map how Pancasila epistemology and the *Kurikulum Merdeka* design knowledge acquisition strategies within a smart pedagogy ecosystem, the following methodological mapping matrix is presented:

**Table 2. Epistemological Strategies of Smart Pedagogy for Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile in Early Childhood Education**

| <b>Pancasila Student Profile Dimensions</b>     | <b>Target Cognitive/Affective Competencies</b>                              | <b>Epistemological Strategies &amp; Smart Pedagogy Integration</b>               |
|---|---|--|
| <b>1. Faith, Piety toward the Almighty God,</b> | Spiritual understanding, moral-ethical formation, social empathy, emotional | Habitual collective prayer, open-air explorations of scientific wonders, and the |

<sup>22</sup> Saputri et al., "Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students in the Dimension of Global Diversity Through a CRT Approach Based on Bekakak Sculpture Art."

<sup>23</sup> Endang Prihatin et al., "Promoting Pancasila Values through Dialectical Project-Based Learning for Indonesian Youth," *Jurnal Konseling Dan Pendidikan* 12, no. 3 (October 31, 2024): 156-65, <https://doi.org/10.29210/1119100>.

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|                              |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>and Noble Character</b>   | regulation, and authentic stewardship of nature.  | utilization of curated interactive digital storybooks to instill religious-moral literacy.  |
| <b>2. Global Diversity</b>   | Robust national identity awareness, multicultural tolerance, appreciation of traditions, and cross-cultural communication skills.     | Implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT); e.g., integrating collaborative projects on local cultural crafts (such as Bekakak traditional sculpture) to mitigate the penetration of digital monoculture. |
| <b>3. Independence</b>       | Metacognition (self-awareness), self-affective regulation, personal initiative, resilience, and autonomy in executing daily routines. | Discovery learning designs with minimal intervention, classroom management through delegated responsibilities (self-help), and narrative-based e-portfolio assessments.   |
| <b>4. Mutual Cooperation</b> | Negotiation skills, collaborative synergy, social sacrifice, philanthropy, and the capacity to strengthen communal social capital.    | Structured group interactions, adaptive simulation games (blending traditional and digital elements), and micro-scale community service projects to reinforce bonding social capital.                                 |
| <b>5. Critical Reasoning</b> | Objective data processing, anomaly identification, logical argument evaluation, hoax mitigation, and precise conflict resolution.     | Dialectical inquiry approaches (dialectical project-based learning), case-study simulations via podcasts, and simple media algorithm analysis to deconstruct digital information bias.                                |
| <b>6. Creativity</b>         | Capacity for "out-of-the-box" idea modification, creation of original artifacts, and artistic expression with broad social resonance. | Integration of foundational STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) education, craft workshops using recycled materials, and unplugged preschool robotic/coding engineering.                   |

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The aforementioned methodological mapping demonstrates that, epistemologically, early childhood learners are facilitated to acquire knowledge not as passive recipients, but as active producers of meaning. Findings from the study by Asri et al. on collaborative learning dynamics in Indonesia utilizing validated questionnaire instruments within collaborative learning groups reveal that a well-orchestrated group climate, inclusive participation, and affect-supportive communication correlate significantly with substantial surges in student satisfaction and cognitive outcomes.<sup>24</sup> These findings provide robust justification that the values of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and humanism the primary pillars of Pancasila must be integrated as the operational foundation for 21st-century learning methodologies. In principle, artificial intelligence, interactive devices, and cyber platforms do not hold the prerogative to dictate the curriculum; digital innovation must always be positioned as an auxiliary pedagogical instrument that remains subordinate to the laws of a child's *fitrah* (innate purity) and the cultural value-integration strategies enshrined in the Indonesian national education system.

### **3. Axiological Perspectives: Cultivating Character Resilience Amidst the Digital Media Ecology Paradox**

The pinnacle of the architecture of educational philosophy resides within the realm of axiology, which bears the fundamental responsibility of interrogating value orientations, moral justifications, and the essence of the ultimate objectives underlying educational praxis. Without a precisely calibrated axiological compass, the entire ontological construct of *fitrah* and the sophistication of epistemological instruments such as AI would be reduced to a soulless bureaucratic production machine. From a juridical-jurisprudential standpoint, the axiological direction of Indonesian education is firmly established by Article 3 of Law Number 20 of 2003, which explicitly mandates that national education functions to nurture a dignified national civilization with the aim of cultivating the potential of the Indonesian people to become individuals who are faithful, possess noble character, and are intelligent, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible. This legal postulate serves as a literal translation of the five principles of Pancasila, providing an axiological guarantee that the ultimate goal of national education

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<sup>24</sup> Asri Asri, Badaruddin Badaruddin, and Muhammad Idris, "Relational and Cognitive Dynamics in Collaborative Learning: Lessons from Pancasila Integration in Indonesia," *Frontiers in Education* 10 (June 18, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2025.1572715>.

is the formation of holistic humanity (the complete Indonesian human) devoid of moral-intellectual defects, wherein the Principle of Divinity always serves as the *prima causa* that inspires spiritual development, social cohesion, deliberation, and the establishment of social justice.

In the ecosystem of Early Childhood Education, this axiological imperative is critical and irreplaceable, as early childhood is neuroscientifically recognized as the "golden age." During this stage, brain plasticity operates at its peak to carve the blueprint of character, moral perception, and lifelong sociocultural frameworks. Pancasila axiology mandates that the entire spectrum of child development encompassing religious and moral values, physical-motor skills, spatial cognition, language literacy, socio-emotional maturity, and artistic expression must be permeated and bound by the ideological essence of Pancasila. For instance, the Second Principle must be absolutely reflected in a child's capacity to cultivate affective empathy toward peers; the Third Principle is mirrored in the mastery of the national unifying language and solid physical coordination in group play; the Fourth Principle manifests when children are trained to delay personal gratification in favor of negotiation and deliberation (*musyawarah*) to resolve playground conflicts; while the Fifth Principle emerges through a child's sensitivity toward the equitable distribution of play resources and a genuine concern for environmental sustainability.

Despite the theoretical robustness of this axiological blueprint, empirical realities on the ground indicate that the realization of the Pancasila Student Profile is facing a significant onslaught from the transformation of contemporary media ecology. The rapid penetration of the internet and the massive expansion of disruptive social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and e-sports have re-engineered the landscape through which children and adolescents establish their social interaction patterns.<sup>25</sup> Through the analytical lenses of Media Ecology Theory and Social Capital Theory, contemporary literature warns of a concerning phenomenon known as the "digital native paradox." On one hand, limitless cyber-interconnectivity facilitates the expansion of bridging social capital, enabling students to access global networks and diverse information within milliseconds. Conversely, however, social media algorithms trigger significant internal destruction: they aggressively erode the bonding social capital of

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<sup>25</sup> Fitrati and Rehany Saleha, "Impact of Social Media on Adolescent Social Interaction Patterns in Digital Education."

primary communities and undermine the pedagogical quality of face-to-face communication.

A cultural epidemic currently prevalent among students is the "scroll culture," which manipulates instantaneous dopamine release, alongside the "phubbing" phenomenon the habituated practice of ignoring one's interlocutor to focus on a device screen. This epidemic directly results in a significant decline in children's interpersonal empathy, exacerbates academic focus deficits, and triggers psychopathological vulnerabilities such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and cyberbullying.<sup>26</sup> This state of decadence validates the axiological thesis that high-level technological proficiency, if unaccompanied by robust moral-ethical literacy, will yield a brilliant generation that is socially alienated and emotionally parched. The cherished values of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), social justice, and *musyawarah* (deliberation) enshrined in Pancasila are literally undergoing a process of corrosion at the altar of the touchscreen.

At this critical juncture, the axiological function of Pancasila educational philosophy must be activated as a precision moral filtering mechanism. Character education rooted in local wisdom, from a Pancasila perspective, serves to selectively discern between constructive global cultural assimilation and destructive foreign hegemonic penetration that is antithetical to national dignity.<sup>27</sup> In addressing this onslaught, the curricular mitigation measures put forward by the *Merdeka Belajar* (Emancipated Learning) framework cannot operate in isolation; they necessitate a robust multisectoral synergy that integrates strategic governmental regulations, widespread digital literacy initiatives, and organic collaboration between educators in schools and parents within the home environment.

From the standpoint of pedagogical evaluation, this axiological foundation fundamentally dismantles obsolete assessment traditions that exclusively prioritize quantitative metrics on cognitive report cards. The *Kurikulum Merdeka* in early childhood education initiates a systemic revolution in evaluation, transitioning toward comprehensive character-based assessment (*e-character assessment*) conducted through

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<sup>26</sup> Fitrati and Rehany Saleha.

<sup>27</sup> Nina Damayanti et al., "Evaluating Kindergarten Teachers' Assessment Practices: Analyzing Methods, Instruments, and Challenges, in the Era of the Merdeka Curriculum," in *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Educational Science in Industry Era 5.0, ICONSEIR 2024, November 28th, 2024, Medan, Indonesia* (EAI, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.28-11-2024.2355440>.

continuous, longitudinal daily behavioral observations.<sup>28</sup> These assessments of spiritual and social attitudes are documented through narrative reports and electronic portfolios (e-portfolios), which provide an authentic record of the metamorphosis of the child's *trisakti jiwa* (the triad of cognition, affection, and volition) throughout their learning trajectory.<sup>29</sup> Findings from Tupalessy, employing a Likert-scale questionnaire to gauge the perceptions of Indonesian primary and early childhood education (ECE) teachers, confirm a high acceptance rate (with 64% of teachers strongly agreeing and 31% agreeing) regarding the effectiveness of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* implementation. This positive perception stems from the curriculum's success in liberating educators from mechanical administrative constraints, thereby granting them the autonomy to prioritize character refinement (*akhlak*), emotional stimulation, and the cultivation of the noble values of Pancasila.<sup>30</sup>

In the final conclusion of this axiological discourse, it is affirmed that the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, with its central focus on reinforcing the Pancasila Student Profile within early childhood education, represents a manifestation of cultural *ijtihad* (a creative intellectual endeavor). The objective is not to produce robotic children who are merely compliant in their cognitive innocence, but rather to cultivate pioneering seeds of humanity who are intellectually emancipated, possess solid cultural resilience, and exhibit high moral integrity. This idealized generation will be equipped with the capability to navigate the civilizational waves of smart pedagogy, harnessing advancements in artificial intelligence to honor and elevate global humanity. Concurrently, their spiritual roots, the ethos of *gotong royong*, and their noble Indonesian identity will remain deeply anchored and firmly rooted in their native soil.

### C. CONCLUSIONS

This theoretical and comparative study concludes that, from ontological, normative, and philosophical perspectives, the National Education System Act rooted in the Pancasila philosophy conceptualizes early childhood learners as monopluralist, sacred, and holistic

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<sup>28</sup> Nina Nurhasanah, Iva Sarifah, and Uswatun Hasanah, "E-Character Assessment Based on Profil Pelajar Pancasila for Elementary School," *Al-Bidayah : Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam* 16, no. 1 (June 30, 2024): 129–50, <https://doi.org/10.14421/al-bidayah.v16i1.9582>.

<sup>29</sup> Hidayati, Kusaeri, and Rusydiyah, "Early Childhood Education at the Intersection of East and West: An Analysis of Curriculum Shifts in Indonesia and Turkey."

<sup>30</sup> Pricilia Tupalessy, "The Implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka in Indonesia Early Childhood Education (PAUD): A Literature Review," *HUELE: Journal of Applied Linguistics, Literature and Culture* 4, no. 1 (January 17, 2024): 49–54, <https://doi.org/10.30598/huele.v4.i1.p49-54>.

entities born with an innate spiritual potential (*fitrah*). This conceptualization mandates educators to nurture and guide these natural dispositions without the mechanistic coercion characteristic of Western empirical reductionism. Within the epistemological domain, the reality of digital transformation disruption necessitates the adoption of smart pedagogy frameworks within the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which converts passive instruction into inquiry-based backward design, integrating adaptive technology and authentic cultural responsiveness to facilitate knowledge acquisition without uprooting the learners' identity. From an axiological perspective, any utilization of artificial intelligence, cyber media, or pedagogical innovations must be strictly oriented toward and bound by the six fundamental dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. This profile serves as a robust filtering mechanism and the ultimate ethical compass to neutralize the threats of scroll culture, the communication pathology of phubbing, and the degradation of social capital within the new media ecology landscape. Consequently, the harmonious dialectic between the profound values of Pancasila philosophy and the agility of smart pedagogy innovation will not only ensure the fulfillment of national education mandates but also successfully forge the architecture of moral resilience for Indonesia's youth a primary prerequisite for leading human civilization in the cyber century.

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