Promoting the Character of Respect for Each Other through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5): Educational Transformation in the Merdeka Curriculum Era

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze how the P5 in Merdeka Curriculum can strengthen students' mutual respect character. Using a qualitative approach based on documentation studies, this research examines curriculum documents, learning modules, project implementation reports, student reflections, and school evaluations to understand the implementation of P5 in depth. The results show that P5, through themes such as Local Wisdom and Unity in Diversity, provides opportunities for students to learn to recognize and appreciate diversity. Heterogeneous group-based projects are an effective medium in training students to collaborate, understand differences, and resolve conflicts constructively. Students' reflections showed positive changes in the way they viewed cultural and social differences. However, this study also found that the successful implementation of P5 is influenced by teacher readiness, resource availability, and educational policy support. The conclusion of this study is that P5 has great potential in shaping students' respectful character if

implemented with adequate support. It is recommended that schools improve teacher training, provide supporting facilities, and allocate sufficient time for project implementation. These interventions are important to ensure that the positive impact of P5 can be felt equally by all students.

Keywords: Merdeka Curriculum; P5; Respect; Teacher

INTRODUCTION

Education is the main foundation in building the nation's character. In Indonesia, the effort to create a generation that is not only intellectually smart but also strong in character has become a major concern in the national education system. One of the important values to be instilled through education is the character of mutual respect (Alhamuddin, 2024; Alhamuddin et al., 2022; Nuriten et al., 2016). This character is the key to creating a harmonious, tolerant society that is able to coexist in diversity (Alifuddin, Alhamuddin, Rosadi, et al., 2021). However, in the midst of globalization and technological disruption, the value of mutual respect is often marginalized by individualistic mindsets and increasingly fierce competition (Martinez, 2022).

A number of surveys have showed that cases of intolerance, bullying and discrimination are still common in educational settings. This phenomenon reflects a serious challenge in instilling the character of mutual respect among students. The PISA survey showed that 15% of adolescents and children in Indonesia experienced bullying, 19% were ostracized, 22% were insulted, 14% were threatened, 18% were pushed and hit by their friends, and 20% said they had experienced bullying at school, either directly or through social media (Schleicher A, 2019). Additionally, education in Indonesia also faces the challenge of presenting a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of the times, but still rooted in the noble values of the nation (Alhamuddin et al., 2020; Alhamuddin, 2019; Suprapto et al., 2021).

As a response to these challenges, the government launched the Merdeka Curriculum in 2022 which provides greater flexibility for schools and teachers in developing the learning process (Muhammad Rafi Zidan & Zaitun Qamariah, 2023). One of the key components of the Merdeka

Curriculum is the P5 (Ndari et al., 2023). This project is designed to moulid learners who are characterized by the values of Pancasila, including mutual respect. Through P5, students are invited to participate in collaborative projects that emphasize character development, 21st century skills and life skills (Alhamuddin, 2018; Martinez, 2022).

In the digital age, human interactions increasingly take place in virtual spaces that often minimize empathy and respect between individuals (Sanusi et al., 2024). Discussions on social media, for example, often turn into unhealthy debates, showing a lack of mutual respect. If not anticipated, this can have a negative impact on the character building of the younger generation. Therefore, education needs to take an active role in re-instilling the value of mutual respect as part of the effort to create a more inclusive and equitable society (Abdillah, 2024). P5 as a project-based learning approach provided a great opportunity to integrate Pancasila values in students' daily lives. The project is designed to build students' skills in collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving while still being grounded in the nation's noble values. The character of mutual respect can be instilled through activities that involve students in direct interaction with peers, teachers, and the local community. For example, through collaborative projects (Goldstein, 2016) involving various cultural backgrounds, students can learn to respect differences and understand the importance of togetherness.

Indonesia as a country with ethnic, religious and cultural diversity faces its own challenges in instilling the character of mutual respect (Huda, 2024). Social conflicts and intolerance that still arise in various regions are a reflection that the value of mutual respect has not been fully internalized in people's lives. School as a miniature society needs to be a safe and inclusive place where students can learn to appreciate differences from an early age. P5 provides a platform to realize this through activities that promote dialogue, cooperation and respect for diversity (Alifuddin, Alhamuddin, & Nurjannah, 2021; Alifuddin, Alhamuddin, Rosadi, et al., 2021; Alifuddin et al., 2022).

The philosophical foundation of strengthening the character of mutual respect through P5 is rooted in the values of Pancasila, especially the second and third principles, which emphasize fair and civilized humanity and Indonesian unity. Education in Indonesia should be a tool to build a

civilized and socially integrated society. In practice, P5 provides opportunities for students to internalize these values through hands-on experiences, such as collaborating with peers from different backgrounds or learning about other cultures in a real context. The implementation of P5 in strengthening the character of mutual respect requires full support from the teacher as a learning facilitator. Teachers not only act as material deliverers, but also as role models who demonstrate the value of mutual respect in everyday life (Alhamuddin et al., 2023). In addition, a school environment that supports the values of inclusiveness and tolerance is also very important. Schools need to create a culture that encourages students to respect each other, both inside and outside the classroom. Through this article, we will explore how the P5 in Merdeka Curriculum can be used as a tool to strengthen the character of mutual respect in students. By analyzing various approaches and implementations, this article hopes to provide new insights for educators, policymakers, and other relevant parties in designing more effective educational strategies for the future.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used qualitative approach with documentation study method to examine how the P5 can strengthen the character of mutual respect in students. The qualitative approach was chosen because the purpose of this research is to explore the deep meaning of the implementation of P5 in schools that implement it in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum. With this method, researchers seek to understand the processes, dynamics, and results that arise from the implementation of P5, as well as the challenges faced in strengthening the character of mutual respect among students (Miles, 1986).

The data for this study were collected through documents relevant to the implementation of P5. These documents include the Merdeka curriculum, learning modules, lesson plans, project implementation reports, as well as reflections and evaluations conducted by teachers and students. Researchers collected these documents to get a clearer picture of the design, implementation, and impact of the project on student character. The data collection processes were carried out by accessing various documents in schools involved in the implementation of P5. Researchers also conducted literature studies related to the concept of Merdeka

Curriculum and strengthening the Pancasila Learner Profile to deepen understanding of the theory underlying this project. After that, researchers analyzed project implementation reports and student reflections to explore changes in their attitudes and behaviors towards diversity and the importance of mutual respect.

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach. The researcher first compiled and organized the data based on relevant categories, such as diversity, collaboration, and the character of mutual respect. After the data was categorized, the researcher conducted coding to identify themes that emerged in the documents, such as how students interacted in groups and how they resolved differences of opinion or conflicts. This analysis process aimed to find patterns that could provide insights into how the value of mutual respect was introduced and applied in the project. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation techniques, where the researcher verified data from various documents to ensure consistency and validity of findings. By comparing project implementation reports, student reflections, and evaluations conducted by the school, the researcher was able to ensure that the findings obtained were an accurate picture of the influence of P5 on student character.

Overall, this research focuses on an in-depth understanding of how the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project can be an effective means of strengthening the character of mutual respect, taking into account the various factors that influence its success, such as teacher readiness, school resources, and support from education policy. Using qualitative methods and documentation studies, this research successfully describes the dynamics of P5 implementation and provides insights into the potentials and challenges faced in creating a more tolerant and respectful generation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Cultivating Respectful Character through P5

The value of mutual respect is illustrated explicitly as part of the global diversity element, one of the main components of the Pancasila Student Profile. The P5 approach emphasizes the importance of Indonesian students to respect the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, religions, and social backgrounds as a reflection of the value of Pancasila. Project themes in P5, such as Local Wisdom and Diversity in Diversity, provide ample space for

students to explore and apply the value of mutual respect in various experiential activities.

The reinforcement process starts from project planning, where teachers design activities that encourage collaboration between students from different backgrounds. In the school report document, it is mentioned that students are grouped heterogeneously based on various aspects, such as academic ability, personal characteristics and cultural origin. These groups then work together to complete projects that involve exploring local culture, such as the creation of miniature traditional houses, organizing cultural exhibitions or composing regional folklore. In this way, students not only learn about the culture of their peers but are also trained to communicate effectively, listen to the opinions of others, and manage differences within the group.

In the implementation stage, value reinforcement is done through direct interaction designed to develop tolerance and empathy. The teacher acts as a facilitator, ensuring each student has the opportunity to contribute and feel valued in the group. Some documents noted how teachers used a reflective approach to help students understand their experiences during the project. The implementation of the project was themed "Building a Culture of Mutual Respect in the School Environment." The project was designed to give students real experience in applying the value of mutual respect through cooperation and reflection. The project begins with the teacher providing an introduction to the importance of mutual respect in everyday life, both at home, school and society. Students are then invited to discuss various forms of mutual respect, such as respecting friends' opinions, working together in groups, and tolerance for differences.

After understanding the concept, students are grouped into five groups, each consisting of five to six people. Each group was tasked with designing a simple activity that could promote mutual respect in the school environment. Some of the ideas that came up included creating posters that promote messages of tolerance, producing a short video about mutual respect, and organizing a small campaign to raise awareness among other students about the importance of this value.

The project was carried out over three weeks. In the first week, students brainstormed ideas and developed a group work plan. The teacher acts as a facilitator who provides guidance and feedback on the ideas

presented. In the second week, students start implementing their projects, such as drawing posters, recording videos, or designing campaign materials. During this process, students are expected to show good cooperation and respect each other's contributions.

In the last week, each group presented the results of their project in front of the class. These presentations showcase not only the final results but also the process, including the challenges faced and how they overcame them with mutual respect. The teacher and other students give appreciation and feedback on each group's work, followed by a joint reflection. This reflection involves in-depth questions such as, "What did you learn from this activity?" and "How will you apply mutual respect beyond this project?"

The project ended with a discussion session to summarize the learning gained. Students are invited to write down their personal commitment in applying the values of mutual respect in their daily lives. The teacher praises the students' efforts and hard work during the project and reminds them that mutual respect is an important foundation to create a harmonious life in society.

In addition to the above activities, reinforcement is also done through project appreciation activities, where each group presents their work in front of the class or in a school exhibition. This activity is designed to give students recognition for their efforts while teaching the importance of appreciating the work of others. In this activity students give positive feedback to the work of other groups, which further strengthens the sense of mutual respect among them.

In additional, P5 activities are conducted using a case-based discussion method to deepen students' understanding of the value of mutual respect. One example is the use of real stories or situations that show conflicts due to lack of respect for diversity. Students are invited to analyze the case, discuss the solution, and reflect on its relevance to their lives. This method helps students understand the importance of respecting differences not only as an abstract concept but also as a necessity in everyday life. In the project evaluation document, it can be seen that the process of strengthening the character of mutual respect is also strengthened through observation and attitude assessment during the activity. The teacher records students' behavior, such as how they work together, how they resolve conflicts, and their ability to listen to the opinions of their groupmates. The

results of these observations are then used as discussion material in reflective meetings, where students are invited to realize and improve their attitudes.

With a combination of strategies that focus on direct experience, reflection, and recognition of work, P5 is expected to create a learning environment that supports the strengthening of the character of mutual respect. This process not only builds students' cognitive understanding of the value of mutual respect but also encourages the internalization of this value in real actions. Cultural diversity-based themes can be chosen by schools to support this character strengthening. For example, a project themed Knowing Regional Culture asks students to learn about the local culture in their neighborhood, including customs, traditional dances and typical food. In this project, students work in heterogeneous groups, allowing them to learn to appreciate diversity through collaboration. Students' reflection reports after completing the project reflected positive changes in their attitudes. One student revealed that through this project, he began to understand and respect the uniqueness of his friends' cultures, which he did not know before. P5 activities at school are in line with Vygotsky's constructivism learning theory (Mishra, 2023; Wibowo et al., 2025), which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in character building. Through group work and experiential projects, students not only learn about the value of mutual respect but also practice it directly in daily life. This also supports Kolb's experiential learning theory (Kavitha Devi & Thendral, 2023; Rossetti, 2023; Wijnen-Meijer et al., 2022), where learning through experience helps students understand and internalize the values taught (Alhamuddin et al., 2024).

Implementation Constraints and Obstacles

There were several obstacles in the implementation of the project. One of the main obstacles is time constraints. Schools often find it difficult to allocate enough time to complete the project optimally in the midst of busy academic activities. In addition, teacher readiness is also a challenge. Some teachers admitted that they lacked confidence in facilitating project-based activities because this approach was still relatively new to them. Limited facilities and resources are also a problem, especially in schools located in areas with limited access. It is recommended that schools maximize the implementation of P5 by providing continuous training for teachers to improve their skills in designing value-based projects. In

addition, additional time and resources should be allocated to ensure the success of the projects. Involving the local community in P5 activities can also strengthen the relevance of learning for students, so that the character of mutual respect can be developed more deeply.

P5 has great potential to internalize the value of mutual respect in students. With a project-based approach that is participatory and contextual, P5 can be an effective means of forming a young generation with Pancasila character in the Merdekat Curriculum era. In addition, this activity is one of the effective approaches to forming the character of mutual respect in students. P5 is not only designed as an experience-based thematic project, but also as a means to internalize the values of Pancasila, especially the value of global diversity which includes respect for differences.

At the curriculum level, themes in P5 such as Local Wisdom and Unity in Diversity are strategically chosen to provide a learning context relevant to Indonesia's diversity. With a focus on exploring local cultures, traditions and values, students are encouraged to not only recognize but also appreciate the cultural backgrounds and traditions of their peers. Theoretically, this is in line with the principles of constructivism, where learning occurs through social interaction and direct experience (Wibowo et al., 2025; Wijnen-Meijer et al., 2022).

The implementation of the project in various schools showed variations in results that were influenced by several factors. In schools with adequate resources and trained teachers (Alhamuddin et al., 2023). The implementation of P5 is able to create a learning environment that supports character strengthening. Students involved in heterogeneous group work were able to develop the ability to collaborate, discuss, and resolve conflicts constructively. Students' reflections analyzed showed that they felt they better understood the importance of respecting diversity after participating in the project.

In contrast, in schools facing resource constraints, P5 implementation tends to be hampered. Limited time, facilities and lack of teacher training are the main challenges that affect the effectiveness of the project. For example, some reports indicate that the project was only carried out symbolically without providing enough space for in-depth interaction between students. In this context, the value of mutual respect is difficult for

students to truly internalize due to the lack of significant experience in understanding and respecting differences.

Project-based learning such as P5 also relies on the readiness of the teacher as the main facilitator (Borah, 2013; Heyneman & Loxley, 1983). Teachers who are able to design and manage projects well can create meaningful learning experiences for students. Analysis of teacher training documents showed that schools that provided intensive training to teachers recorded better project outcomes, both in terms of student engagement and observed behavioral changes. Trained teachers are able to take advantage of reflection moments to help students understand their experiences during the project, so that the value of mutual respect can be internalized more deeply.

However, it is important to note that the success of P5 depends not only on curriculum design, but also on implementation in the field. Obstacles such as time constraints, lack of facilities, and lack of teacher training are challenges that need to be overcome so that the benefits of P5 can be felt equally. This analysis suggests the need for more targeted policies to support the implementation of P5, including the allocation of specific time in the learning schedule, procurement of supporting facilities, and continuous teacher training. In this discussion, it can be concluded that P5 is an educational innovation that has great potential to internalize the value of mutual respect among students. The experiential and collaborative approach applied in P5 is in line with experiential learning theory and constructivism (Mishra, 2023; Wijnen-Meijer et al., 2022), which places students as active subjects in learning. However, to ensure its success, the implementation of P5 needs to be supported by the commitment of various parties, including teachers, schools and the government, to overcome various obstacles. With adequate support, P5 can be a strong foundation for forming a young generation that respects diversity, as mandated by the values of Pancasila.

CONCLUSION

P5 activities in the Merdeka Curriculum play a role in internalizing the value of mutual respect in students. With a project-based learning approach that involves themes of diversity, such as Local Wisdom and Unity in Diversity, students are given direct experience to recognize and respect

differences in culture, traditions, and social backgrounds. Through heterogeneous group work, students learn to collaborate, appreciate different views and resolve conflicts constructively. The reflection process during and after project implementation strengthens students' understanding of the importance of mutual respect. Evaluation results showed that students involved in P5 became more tolerant, open, and proud of diversity.

However, the success of P5 implementation largely depends on the readiness of schools and teachers. Schools with adequate resources and well-trained teachers were able to implement the project more effectively, while time constraints, facilities and lack of training were constraints in some schools. To ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of P5, stronger policy support is needed, such as allocation of dedicated time in the learning schedule, provision of supporting facilities and continuous training for teachers. With the right interventions, P5 can be a strategic instrument in shaping the character of young people who respect diversity, as mandated by the values of Pancasila.

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