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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS IN STRENGTHENING THE PANCASILA STUDENT PROFILE: IMPLEMENTATION IN MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH

[*1]Nyai Raodotul Janah, [2]Akhmad Affandi
[*1,2] UIN Siber Syekh Nur Jati Cirebon
[*1]aithea@mail.uinssc.ac.id, [2]akhmadaffandi@uinssc.ac.id

Abstract

This article examines the psychological and philosophical foundations embedded in the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile within the Merdeka Curriculum, with a particular focus on Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the study explores how educational psychology particularly the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky and educational philosophy, such as humanism and reconstructionism, inform student-centered learning, value internalization, and character formation. The findings reveal that project-based learning anchored in these foundations supports cognitive, affective, and moral development, aligned with the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. Furthermore, the article identifies contextual adaptation through religious and local values that reinforce the concept of *"rahmatan lil alamin"* as a core of Islamic character education.

Keywords: educational psychology, educational philosophy, Pancasila Student Profile

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji landasan psikologis dan filosofis yang terkandung dalam implementasi Profil Pelajar Pancasila pada Kurikulum Merdeka, dengan fokus khusus pada Madrasah Ibtidaiyah di Indonesia. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, studi ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana psikologi pendidikan khususnya teori Piaget dan Vygotsky serta filsafat pendidikan, seperti humanisme dan rekonstruksionisme, membentuk pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa, internalisasi nilai, dan pembentukan karakter. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran berbasis proyek yang berakar pada landasan tersebut mendukung perkembangan kognitif, afektif, dan moral, sejalan dengan enam dimensi Profil Pelajar Pancasila. Artikel ini juga mengidentifikasi adaptasi kontekstual melalui nilai-nilai keislaman dan lokal yang memperkuat konsep "rahmatan lil alamin" sebagai inti dari pendidikan karakter Islam.

Kata Kunci: *psikologi pendidikan, filsafat pendidikan, Profil Pelajar Pancasila*

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of Indonesia's education system through the Merdeka Curriculum demands a deep philosophical and psychological understanding of learning processes, particularly in Islamic elementary schools such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The Pancasila Student Profile provides a comprehensive framework for shaping character education that is aligned with the ideals of Indonesia's national ideology (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Philosophical and psychological dimensions play a foundational role in guiding educational practices that aim to produce individuals who are independent, critical, collaborative, and globally aware (Rogers, 1969; Maslow, 1943).

In this context, educational psychology contributes insights into children's developmental stages, while educational philosophy offers normative and ethical direction to schooling (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978). The integration of these two disciplines into project-based learning approaches underlines the Merdeka Curriculum's emphasis on holistic student growth (Counts, 1932). This article aims to elaborate the synergy of these elements in reinforcing the Pancasila Student Profile, contextualized through Islamic values in the spirit of "rahmatan lil alamin".

The Indonesian education system is undergoing a significant transformation through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which repositions students as active agents in their own learning journeys. This curriculum represents a shift away from rigid, standardized instruction toward a more dynamic, flexible, and student-centered approach. Central to this change is the introduction of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile), a comprehensive framework that aims to develop students with character, global competence, and rootedness in national values (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). This transformation requires a deep philosophical and psychological understanding of how children learn, especially in religious-based schools such as *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, which serve as important contexts for nurturing both academic and moral development.

Educational institutions with Islamic orientations, such as *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, face the dual task of preserving religious identity while embracing national educational reforms. The challenge is to implement the Pancasila Student Profile not merely as a formal policy, but as a lived educational practice that resonates with the daily experiences, developmental needs, and cultural-religious values of learners. In this context, two foundational disciplines educational psychology and philosophy of education become crucial. Psychology offers insights into how children grow cognitively and emotionally, while philosophy offers normative frameworks to define what education ought to achieve (Piaget, 1972; Rogers, 1969).

Previous research has focused extensively on the structural and administrative aspects of the Merdeka Curriculum, including its policy implementation, teacher readiness, and integration into school management (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). However, fewer studies have explored how the psychological and philosophical underpinnings of the curriculum shape students' character formation at the classroom level, especially within faith-based educational contexts. Additionally, there is a lack of empirical and theoretical work that

links Islamic educational values such as *rahmatan lil alamin* with the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile (Freire, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). This gap invites a closer investigation into how student-centered learning grounded in humanistic values can harmonize with Islamic character formation.

In particular, project-based learning emphasized in the Merdeka Curriculum offers a powerful method for integrating psychological insights into real classroom practices. This method allows students to construct knowledge meaningfully within their *Zone of Proximal Development* (Vygotsky, 1978), while also encouraging autonomy, cooperation, and critical thinking (Maslow, 1943). From a philosophical standpoint, it supports the ideals of humanism and reconstructionism, which advocate for the dignity, freedom, and moral responsibility of every learner (Counts, 1932; Rogers, 1969). The present study builds on this theoretical foundation to explore how these values are operationalized in *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* settings.

The purpose of this study is to examine how psychological and philosophical foundations inform the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile in Islamic elementary schools. Specifically, it aims to analyze how project-based, student-centered learning rooted in humanistic psychology and ethical philosophy supports the development of holistic competencies ranging from faith and morality to global citizenship and creativity (Maslow, 1943; Freire, 1970). The study also investigates how Islamic educational values, particularly *rahmatan lil alamin*, can be integrated meaningfully into national character education goals.

This inquiry is guided by two central questions: (1) How do psychological and philosophical perspectives shape the application of the Pancasila Student Profile in *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*? and (2) How can Islamic values enrich and contextualize the dimensions of the Profile in a culturally meaningful way? Addressing these questions is essential to ensuring that educational reforms do not remain abstract, but are translated into practical, values-driven pedagogy that respects the diverse social and spiritual realities of students (Piaget, 1972; Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

The anticipated scholarly contribution of this study lies in its interdisciplinary synthesis of educational psychology, educational philosophy, and Islamic values. It aims to offer a conceptual framework and pedagogical model that can guide educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in building classrooms that nurture not only academic excellence but also moral depth and cultural identity. By illuminating the psychological and philosophical foundations of character education in the Merdeka Curriculum, this study aspires to advance the discourse on culturally responsive and ethically grounded education in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method that is theoretically grounded in interpretivist epistemology, emphasizing meaning-making and contextual understanding. The approach is appropriate for examining abstract constructs such as educational psychology and philosophy, which require in-depth interpretation rather than empirical measurement (Creswell, 2016). By using this method, the study aims to construct a

conceptual synthesis between psychological theories (e.g., Piaget, Vygotsky) and philosophical frameworks (e.g., humanism, reconstructionism) as they relate to the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile in Islamic educational settings.

In its practical application, the study relies on library-based data collection**,** reviewing scholarly works and official documents related to the Merdeka Curriculum and *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*. The data were analyzed thematically by identifying patterns across educational values, learning models, and character formation strategies. The analysis focuses on how student-centered and project-based learning reflects core psychological and philosophical principles, while also adapting them to the cultural-religious context of Islamic schools. This methodological design supports the development of a theoretical model that can inform future pedagogical innovation in character education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The relevance of developmental psychology to educational reform has long been asserted by scholars such as Piaget and Vygotsky. Piaget (1972) emphasized that each stage of cognitive development must be understood and respected in instructional design, particularly in the primary years where students engage in concrete operations. This resonates with the age range of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* students, whose cognitive readiness is best served through structured, meaningful tasks. Vygotsky (1978), meanwhile, introduced the concept of the *Zone of Proximal Development*, which reinforces the significance of scaffolded learning a feature embedded in the project-based learning (PjBL) model. These insights provide a clear direction: to implement the Pancasila Student Profile effectively, learning strategies must be responsive to the psychological development of learners.

Maslow's (1943) theory further clarifies that learning can only be optimal when students' fundamental needs safety, belonging, esteem are met. In the setting of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, this implies that emotionally secure classrooms and relational trust with teachers are essential to actualizing the character competencies outlined in the Pancasila Student Profile. Psychological safety becomes not just a support mechanism but a foundation for the emergence of independence, critical thinking, and collaboration. The PjBL approach addresses these needs by placing learners at the center of inquiry, thereby cultivating confidence, peer respect, and self-expression.

From a philosophical standpoint, Rogers (1969) insists that education must be rooted in respect for the learner's autonomy and potential. His humanistic orientation aligns with the spirit of *Merdeka Belajar*, which promotes freedom in learning and teacher-student relationality. In practice, this is mirrored in how *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* integrates self-reflection, dialogue, and character-based activities, transforming the classroom from a site of passive knowledge transfer into a space for moral development. This approach validates the individuality of students while promoting collective responsibility core to the values of Pancasila.

Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy introduces a broader social dimension. He argues that learning should empower individuals to question, challenge, and transform their realities.

The reconstructionist philosophy he champions provides a philosophical pathway for Islamic schools to go beyond ritualistic instruction and embrace reflective learning that fosters social justice, mercy (*rahmah*), and community engagement. The integration of *rahmatan lil alamin* as an Islamic ethical construct offers a theological rationale for nurturing learners who are not only pious but socially responsible.

The convergence of these perspectives suggests a critical synthesis: psychological theories guide how learning should occur developmentally and affectively, while philosophical frameworks define why learning should matter in the broader human and social context. The findings from this study draw a clear thread that effective implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile in *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* is dependent on a triadic integration**:** psychological development, philosophical orientation, and contextual religious values.

The data and literature converge on the insight that the PjBL model is not merely a pedagogical trend but a reflective tool that aligns with both learner readiness and moral-spiritual goals. Its structure allows for task differentiation, peer collaboration, and contextual problem-solving conditions that are ideal for character development, especially when infused with Islamic ethical values (Counts, 1932; Kemendikbudristek, 2022). This model demonstrates that curriculum implementation must move beyond cognitive instruction toward the cultivation of whole-person education.

Thus, the direction of the data strongly affirms that integrating the psychological (Piaget, Vygotsky, Maslow), philosophical (Rogers, Freire), and theological (rahmatan lil alamin) dimensions into Pancasila-based education provides a coherent and contextually grounded framework. The synergy among these domains not only informs the *what* and *how* of instruction, but also enriches the *why* ensuring that character education in *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* remains pedagogically sound, philosophically justified, and spiritually authentic.

DISCUSSION

The present study reinforces longstanding theoretical assumptions regarding developmental learning by demonstrating the relevance of Piaget's and Vygotsky's frameworks within the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*. Piaget's emphasis on age-appropriate cognitive tasks (1972) and Vygotsky's concept of scaffolded learning within the Zone of Proximal Development (1978) are evident in how project-based learning has been adopted in these schools. Activities that require cooperation, discussion, and hands-on exploration are particularly effective at this stage of child development, confirming the importance of aligning pedagogy with cognitive and social readiness.

In parallel, the study affirms that Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs is not only theoretically relevant but practically observable in the classroom. Students participating in value-based, student-centered projects exhibit higher levels of self-confidence, motivation, and interpersonal engagement suggesting that emotional safety and belongingness are indeed prerequisites for deeper learning and character formation. This

confirms the critical role of psychological security in implementing the six core dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly independence, collaboration, and critical thinking.

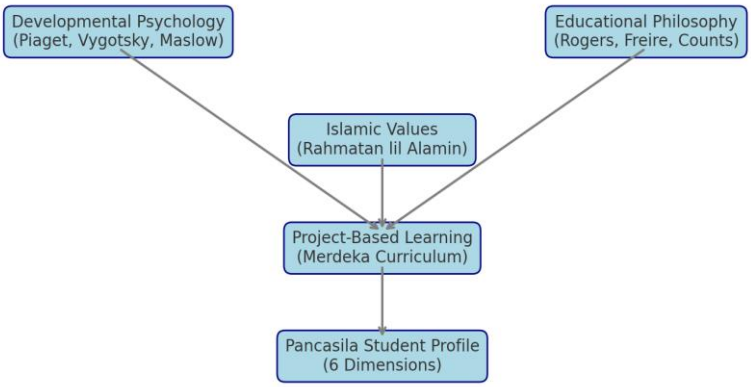
Moreover, the data highlight strong alignment with Rogers' (1969) humanistic theory of education, which advocates for learning environments grounded in empathy, respect, and autonomy. In the *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* context, teachers who employ dialogic methods and reflective questioning create space for student agency thus actualizing one of the key philosophical underpinnings of the Merdeka Curriculum. Freire's (1970) perspective on critical pedagogy also finds resonance in practices where students engage with real-world issues, such as environmental sustainability or community ethics, anchoring learning in lived experience and moral reflection.

The integration of Islamic values, especially the concept of *rahmatan lil alamin*, marks a contextual deepening of the theoretical frameworks applied. While previous studies often treat psychological and philosophical theories as secular frameworks, this research identifies a significant mediating role played by spiritual and religious values. It shows that values such as compassion, justice, and social responsibility are not only compatible with but also enhance the implementation of character education goals. This integration forms a bridge between national educational priorities and the moral-spiritual mission of Islamic schooling.

A key novelty of this study lies in its articulation of a contextualized pedagogical synthesis linking developmental psychology, educational philosophy, and Islamic ethics into a unified framework for implementing the Pancasila Student Profile. While previous research often separates these domains, this study provides a holistic model grounded in both theory and lived classroom practice. It demonstrates that project-based learning can serve as a vessel not only for cognitive development but also for spiritual-moral formation when embedded with culturally resonant values.

The scientific contribution of this research is twofold. First, it advances educational theory by presenting an integrated model of character education that is both philosophically grounded and religiously meaningful. Second, it offers practical pedagogical insights for educators in *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* and similar faith-based schools to implement national curriculum goals without sacrificing their institutional identity. This study therefore contributes to the broader discourse on culturally responsive pedagogy, character education, and curriculum localization in diverse educational settings. The following diagram illustrates the conceptual framework integrating developmental psychology, educational philosophy, and Islamic values within the implementation of project-based learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah to achieve the Pancasila Student Profile.

Figure 1. Framework integrating developmental psychology, educational philosophy, and Islamic values



The conceptual framework illustrates how the integration of developmental psychology, educational philosophy, and Islamic values provides a foundational basis for implementing project-based learning in *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*. The theories of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Maslow ensure that the cognitive and emotional needs of students are met in developmentally appropriate ways, while the philosophical insights of Rogers, Freire, and Counts emphasize learner agency, empathy, and critical consciousness. These elements converge through the Merdeka Curriculum's project-based learning model, which not only supports active and contextual learning but also allows the infusion of Islamic ethical principles, particularly the concept of *rahmatan lil alamin*. This integrative approach leads to the formation of learners who embody the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile faith and morality, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical thinking, and creativity thus aligning national educational goals with the moral and cultural identity of Islamic schooling.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the successful implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile in *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* requires a comprehensive integration of developmental psychology, educational philosophy, and Islamic ethical values. The theories of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Maslow provide foundational insights into students' cognitive and emotional development, ensuring that learning strategies are both age-appropriate and psychologically responsive. Philosophical frameworks from humanism and reconstructionism particularly those of Rogers and Freire further emphasize student agency, empathy, and critical awareness, all of which are essential for holistic character formation.

By adopting a project-based learning model rooted in the Merdeka Curriculum, educators are able to create learning environments that are not only active and student-centered, but also value-driven and socially transformative. When these frameworks are contextualized

through the Islamic concept of *rahmatan lil alamin*, character education becomes spiritually grounded and culturally relevant. Therefore, this research contributes to both theory and practice by offering a holistic pedagogical model that bridges psychological, philosophical, and theological domains in advancing character education within faith-based schools in Indonesia.

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