
Character Education, Local Wisdom, and the Profile of *Pancasila* Students: Challenges and Potential Approach

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Abstract

The present study examines challenges and approaches involved in improving character education, namely through the *Pancasila* Student Profile (P5), at junior high schools located in Semarang City. The data was gathered by employing a qualitative methodology, which involved classroom observations, focus group discussions, and interview. The findings reveal that Junior high schools encounter character challenges such as bullying, minor crimes, disrespect, and internet use are examples. Student discipline, responsibility, social contact, and social media/peer pressure are issues. Academic expectations increase stress. Character education is integrated into the curriculum, teacher training, and extracurricular activities to address these challenges by introducing local wisdom in traditional arts, folk games, and teamwork. Local wisdom-based understanding, role-playing, and social action initiatives are taught. Local wisdom-based character education shapes students' behaviour and attitudes, preparing them for future problems and conserving national traditions. Schools may foster well-rounded students by fostering positive character, student participation, and cultural diversity.

Keywords

Character education, local wisdom, profile of *Pancasila* students, challenges, potential approach

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Introduction

Amidst the current digital age, the significance of enhancing character education is growing exponentially. The extensive process of globalization introduces foreign values that frequently clash with the values and character of Indonesian society. The influence of globalization is evident in various domains of life, including education, social interactions, economic activities, cultural practices, political systems, ideological beliefs, and legal frameworks (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Today, it is evident that there are noticeable degradations in local values or the importance of Indonesian identity. In the present period, the prevailing cultural influence is largely derived from foreign and liberal cultures that are characterized by subjectivity.

Individuals who are unable to adjust to globalization will have challenges and a sense of perplexity. This occurs due to his inadequate proficiency in mastering science and technology. This inadequacy might result in behaviour that diverges from relevant standards, thereby emphasizing the significance of character development. Character formation encompasses an individual's holistic engagement with their surroundings, encompassing aspects of ethics, attitudes, and conduct. This character is a matter of values, specifically something that is regarded as true, meaningful, and beneficial. An instrumentation of values is character, which is demonstrated through attitudes and actions (Masrukhi et al., 2022). Therefore, the profile of *Pancasila* Students is focused on the integration of *Pancasila* values into the development of students' character. Understanding the characteristics of *Pancasila* students and incorporating character education into the school curriculum has a beneficial effect on students who are exposed to local wisdom during the learning process (Sukirno et al., 2023).

To enhance the profile of *Pancasila* Students in schools, it is necessary to involve all stakeholders, including the education components such as curriculum content, learning and assessment processes, the quality of the school's relationship with the student's family, and the quality of the school's relationship with the social environment (Elan & Solihati, 2022). Furthermore, it can employ local wisdom as a means to enhance *Pancasila* education. Local wisdom refers to the knowledge and understanding that is highly regarded and utilized by the local community as a guiding principle for their way of life that is employed in a sensible and cautious manner to ensure the long-term viability of the community (Arifin et al., 2023; Irsyadiah et al., 2024; Rahmawati et al., 2023; Rediyono, 2024; Role et al., 2024; Sakti et al., 2024; Utaya et al., 2024).

Junior high school students are figures who really need attention, especially in strengthening the profile of *Pancasila* Students. First, they have been able to penetrate digital life massively with its various excesses, both negative and positive. Second, at their young age, they do not yet have very established moral considerations to be used as references in their daily behaviour. Third, from a sociological perspective, they are categorized as a generation that will later fill an important role in the golden era of Indonesia in 2045. Several cases of conflict occurred with the perpetrators being junior high school students. In the researcher's notes, several incidents of social conflict can be identified that have economic and social impacts on the community. These justifications supporting this fact are derived from incidents that are not directly related to education, such as instances of violence, sexual abuse, corruption, and arbitrary behaviour in the classroom and engaging in humiliating behaviour

by the school administration may result in the implementation of extreme measures (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Nevertheless, due to their psychological development, adolescents in junior high school still exhibit a significant degree of connection and obedience towards their teachers and the school environment. This condition is a highly advantageous asset that may be utilized to enhance the reputation of *Pancasila* students, particularly those who are rooted in local wisdom values, specifically in Semarang City.

Enhancing character education is a crucial element in the realm of education, particularly when confronting the demands of globalization and societal transformation. Character issues encountered by students in junior high schools are a significant source of worry. Hence, the objective of this study is to identify and examine the challenges and approaches employed by schools to enhance character education. By gaining a more profound understanding of this issue, it is anticipated that effective strategies can be developed to enhance the reputation of *Pancasila* Students. Hence, the research inquiries comprise twofold questions, namely:

- What are the character-related challenges encountered in Junior high school?
- Which approaches does the school employ to enhance character education in enhancing *Pancasila* student profile based on local wisdom?

Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach because the researcher wants to understand the social situation or phenomenon in depth, find patterns or categories, and build theories based on data obtained in the field. The focus of this study is to examine the values of local wisdom that can contribute to strengthening the profile of *Pancasila* Students in junior high school students in Semarang City, as well as the local wisdom empowerment model to strengthen the profile of *Pancasila* Students in junior high school students in the city.

The data collection process in this study applied interview, observation and focused group discussion (FGD). Interview techniques was conducted with the principal of a junior high school, vice principal for student affairs, civics teachers and five junior high school students. The second instrument is observation to know the real situation of the learning process in the classroom. To test the validity of the data, the triangulation technique is used, namely checking the data by utilizing something outside the data itself for checking and comparison purposes.

Data analysis was carried out using an interactive analysis model, which involves three components: data reduction, data presentation, and data verification. This activity is carried out during the data collection process until a model of empowering local community social capital in strengthening the *Pancasila* ideology is found. If the conclusion (data verification) is deemed less than solid because there may be weaknesses in data reduction and presentation, further exploration of field notes is carried out.

To implement character strengthening using local wisdom, FGD was conducted to explore current character education practices in junior high schools. This FGD focused on developing a more inclusive and effective character education model based on local wisdom. FGD participants included 10 teachers from various subjects involved in character education, selected based on their involvement and experience in character education activities. The data

were transcribed and analysed thematically to provide recommendations in the development and implementation of the character education model.

Ethical considerations were applied by obtaining consent from all participants and maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of participant responses, where findings were used only for educational and improvement purposes.

Results and Discussion

Character-related challenges encountered in junior high school

The school is deeply concerned about the prevalence of character issues among students at Semarang State Junior High School. Based on interview results, the principal in one of State Junior high schools in Semarang disclosed the character issues in School as can be seen in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1.

“Character issues of junior high school students are highly varied, with bullying being one of the most prevalent problems, as students frequently encounter or engage in acts of intimidation. Furthermore, instances of minor criminal activity, such as theft, can occur within the school setting. Politeness issues frequently occur, as many children demonstrate a dearth of respect towards their teachers and acquaintances. The prevalence of internet accessibility has a profound impact on societal values, often leading to clashes with traditional cultural norms.”

The data above highlights several significant character issues among junior high school students, indicating a complex and multifaceted problem within this age group.

Bullying: Bullying emerges as one of the most prevalent issues. Students frequently find themselves either as victims or perpetrators of intimidation. This can manifest in various forms, such as physical aggression, verbal harassment, or cyberbullying. The pervasive nature of bullying can have severe psychological effects on students, including anxiety, depression, and a decline in academic performance.

Minor criminal activities: Instances of minor criminal activities, particularly theft, are reported within the school setting. This behaviour suggests underlying issues related to moral development and a lack of understanding of the consequences of such actions. The presence of theft within the school environment creates an atmosphere of mistrust and insecurity among students and staff.

Politeness and respect: There is a notable problem with students demonstrating a lack of respect towards their teachers and peers. This lack of politeness can be seen in disrespectful behaviour, refusal to follow instructions, and general disregard for authority and social norms. Such behaviour disrupts the learning environment and hinders the development of positive relationships within the school community.

Impact of internet accessibility: The easy access to the internet plays a substantial role in shaping students' values and behaviours. Exposure to diverse and sometimes conflicting values online can lead to clashes with traditional cultural norms and local values. This influence

can be seen in the adoption of behaviours and attitudes that are incongruent with the expected conduct within the school and broader community.

Overall, the data suggests that the character issues faced by junior high school students are deeply influenced by both internal factors, such as developmental stages and personal experiences, and external factors, like the pervasive influence of the internet. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes character education, stricter enforcement of school policies, and initiatives to foster a positive and respectful school culture. Meanwhile, the vice principal of students' affairs asserted the following effect of students' character issues in which the interview data as in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2:

“We frequently encounter numerous students who struggle with issues pertaining to discipline and accountability. They frequently exhibit tardiness, neglect to complete homework, or fail to adhere to school regulations diligently. Furthermore, certain kids encounter challenges in social engagement, struggling to collaborate or communicate proficiently with their peers. The detrimental effects of social media and the internet are more evident, as pupils are more susceptible to being influenced by non-educational content.”

According to interviews conducted with the vice principal of student affairs at a state junior high school in Semarang, children encounter several character challenges, including:

Issues pertaining to discipline and responsibility: A significant number of pupils frequently exhibit tardiness, fail to complete homework, or disregard school regulations. This signifies an issue regarding discipline and accountability that necessitates focused attention.

Social interaction challenges: Certain students struggle to collaborate or effectively interact with their peers. This issue can impede the process of collaborative learning and adversely affect the dynamics of the class.

Detrimental impact of social media and the internet: Students are susceptible to the influence of unverified and unreliable information found on social media and the Internet. This influence worsens discipline and social interaction issues and can hinder the development of kids' positive character.

Ultimately, adolescents in junior high school encounter substantial obstacles related to self-control, accountability, and interpersonal communication, further intensified by the detrimental impact of social media and the internet. In order to tackle this issue, it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive strategy for character education that entails increased oversight and guidance, along with the implementation of engaging and pertinent instructional techniques to steer students toward effective results.

Further interview data taken from students can be concluded as the following data. They encounter numerous character issues, including:

Difficulty maintaining politeness: Students encounter challenges in maintaining politeness, particularly when interacting with peers who exhibit inappropriate behaviour. This demonstrates that it is difficult to uphold ethical standards and courtesy in daily interactions.

Peer pressure: Students experience peer pressure to participate in negative behaviours, such as skipping school or perpetrating delinquent acts. One of the primary factors that influence student behaviour is peer influence.

Stress from academic demands: Students feel stressed as a result of the high academic expectations and demands placed on them by their parents. This burden results in them feeling stressed and having difficulty concentrating on positive things, which can subsequently impact their emotional well-being and academic performance.

In summary, junior high school students encounter obstacles in the form of academic demands and peer pressure, as well as in the development of positive character traits such as discipline and civility.

The approaches that the school employ to enhance character education in enhancing Pancasila students profile based on local wisdom

In order to address the issues that have been identified, comprehensive character education that involves all educational stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and students, necessitates an approach that establishes a learning environment that fosters the development of positive character, with a focus on local cultural values and strong ethics. The interview data with state junior high school principals in Semarang indicate that the character-building process is supported by local wisdom, as illustrated in Excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3

“As a formal educational institution, SMP Negeri 21 Semarang has carried out various kinds of strengthening, one of which is the implementation of strengthening the Pancasila student profile in accordance with the instructions from the Merdeka curriculum. We use a local wisdom approach as an important part of Indonesian society, because existing culture can shape and influence human behaviour.”

Educators have employed numerous strategies and approaches to enhance character education in schools. An effective approach involves incorporating character ideals rooted in local wisdom into all aspects of learning and school activities. This strategy encompasses not just teachers, but also all constituents of the school, in order to establish a conducive environment that fosters the development of student character. Several educational institutions have successfully adopted this methodology, demonstrating that character education can be effectively integrated with academic excellence. The aforementioned comment aligns with the findings from interviews conducted with teachers of citizenship education, as presented in Excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4

“We are very serious about implementing character education in junior high schools. The approach we use includes the integration of character values into the curriculum, teacher training, and extracurricular activities. Each subject is integrated with character values such as discipline, responsibility and cooperation. We also regularly hold training for teachers to improve their understanding and ability to teach character education. Apart from that, we encourage students to be active in various extracurricular activities that foster positive values, such as sports, arts and social activities.”

Furthermore, the application of character values based on local wisdom is accentuated by the results of interview data with the Principal of the School for Student Affairs (Excerpt 5).

Excerpt 5

“One of our main approaches is through the Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) program which is in accordance with the Merdeka curriculum. We use local wisdom as the main theme in implementing P5. In this program, students are involved in activities related to local culture, such as traditional arts, folk games, and mutual cooperation activities. We believe that by introducing and revitalizing local cultural values, students can develop strong characters in accordance with the values of Pancasila.”

The State Junior High Schools in Semarang employ a multifaceted approach to enhance character education. This approach includes integrating character values into all subjects through curriculum integration, providing teacher training to enhance their skills in teaching character education, and organising extracurricular activities that promote positive values and encourage student participation. In addition, this school also implements the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Programme (P5), which focuses on utilising indigenous knowledge to promote and restore local cultural values. The school conducts regular character education workshops weekly to address significant values such as honesty, discipline, and cooperation. During these sessions, teachers offer illustrations of exemplary conduct that students might imitate. The State Middle Schools in Semarang employ these strategies to establish a conducive environment that fosters the cultivation of robust and favourable character traits in all students. All education stakeholders are expected to take part in making a real contribution to the preservation of local culture in the region, especially for young people as the successors of national culture (Elan & Solihati, 2022; Srirahmawati & Hunaifi, 2022). Providing direction and appreciation to teachers is also considered necessary to motivate and increase teachers' understanding in applying and providing examples of character education based on local cultural wisdom.

Junior high schools have thus far included local wisdom into character education by integrating it into both classroom and extracurricular activities, such as local cultural preservation initiatives. The rationale for selecting culture as a subject of study is rooted in the fact that culture serves as the embodiment of the Indonesian nation's identity (Masrukhi et al., 2022; Ritonga et al., 2024; Sakban & Sundawa, 2023). Each culture within Indonesian society encompasses numerous commendable principles, and students are already intimately familiar with the cultural milieu in which they reside. These factors yield advantages to the learning process, one of which is the simplicity with which pupils comprehend the taught subject.

The way to implement the model is through three stages, including planning, implementation and evaluation. At the planning stage, ATP and also teaching modules are designed which are accompanied by the necessary attachments such as: teaching materials, LKPD, assessment sheets, and so on. In the second stage, namely implementation by conducting three stages through 3 models and 3 different meetings. Three stages include: Firstly, understanding by providing the material that is the main topic of discussion by providing stimulus in the form of videos that support the material and related to local wisdom in realizing the Pancasila student profile. After the stimulus is given, it is continued with the

provision of problem topics to be solved together with the group that has been determined. The results of the problem-solving discussion were then presented by the students in turn and together responded to each other from what had been conveyed by each group.

In the second meeting of the learning implementation activity, namely role playing. In role-playing, the learning process follows the syntax of the role-playing learning model, which includes warm-up, selecting players, preparing observers, arranging the stage, role-playing, discussion and evaluation, re-role-playing, finishing and second evaluation, and sharing experiences and conclusions. The purpose of the implementation of role-playing is so that students are able to feel and practice local wisdom directly through learning activities to improve the profile of Pancasila students. The evaluation system carried out in this second model is more about assessing character by observation.

In the third stage, it is the provision of projects in the form of social actions and can be carried out around the residential environment and are asked to make documentation of the social action activities in the form of videos. The social action carried out must be based on the values of local wisdom such as the attitude of teposliro, andap ashor, etc., in accordance with the design that has been made. Of the three stages, broadly speaking, 3 stages are carried out in conducting learning in order to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students, namely understanding, implementation and habituation. This is in line with what was conveyed by Lickona (2004) who said that there are at least three stages in getting used to good character, namely knowledge, implementation and evaluation. Based on the results of the presentation and also the model trial, teachers and students said that the program they tried to carry out was very interesting. This will help schools as formal institutions that are tasked with reinforcing the nation's character through local wisdom. Character education based on local cultural wisdom can also change the attitude and behaviour of existing human resources in order to increase work productivity to face various challenges in the future.

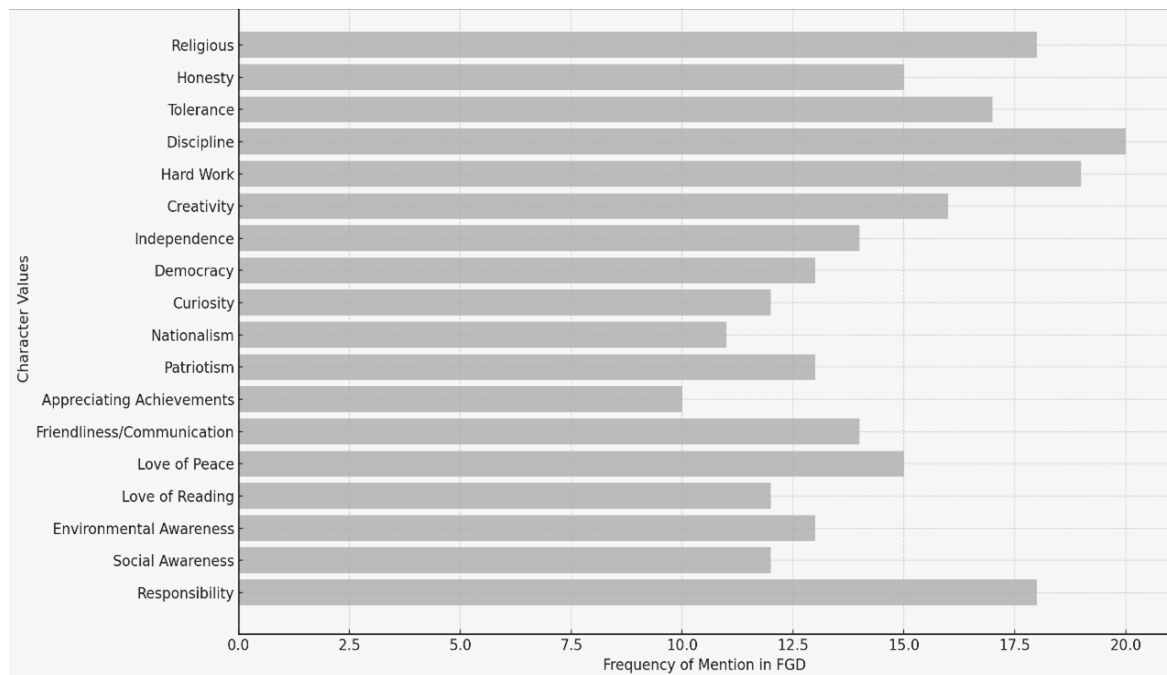
Based on the results of the research, it was found that students like learning that was carried out using a local wisdom approach. This is because students find it easy to understand and the class becomes interesting in discussing certain cultures. Although junior high school students belong to the millennial generation, they are very fond of culture. In addition to learning activities, the local wisdom approach is used in the implementation of the Strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile, as one of the agendas in the implementation of the Independent curriculum (Nofrita et al., 2023). State Junior High School in the city of Semarang chose the theme of local wisdom in the implementation of P5 in schools, with the aim of being able to introduce the minimum local culture around the students' residences. However, behind these successes there are still several obstacles experienced, one of which is regarding the right and appropriate model in learning, especially those that reflect local wisdom. The character-strengthening program based on local wisdom in junior high schools is very interesting and helps schools as formal institutions in reinforcing the nation's character. Character education based on local cultural wisdom can also change students' attitudes and behaviours, increase work productivity, and face various challenges in the future.

Local wisdom is an important part of Indonesian society, it has been implemented and believed decades ago so that it forms the identity of the nation (Arifin et al., 2023; Irsyadiah et al., 2024; Nurjannah, 2024; Za et al., 2024). Existing cultures can shape and influence human behaviour, and are passed down from generation to generation. Culture is a product of human

reason. So that wisdom is very appropriate if it is used as an approach in the implementation of character education.

The benefits of the implementation of a good culture can also increase the spirit of mutual cooperation, togetherness, openness to each other, develop a family spirit, build better communication, and be responsive to the development of the outside world. Culture is a source that will never be exhausted if it can be optimally preserved. In addition, if the state wants long-term profits, the alternative answer is to preserve culture by using the potential of youth, of course, without forgetting the participation of the elderly. Indonesia should now prioritise the reintroduction and implementation of local cultural practices that have been neglected for an extended period (Irsyadiah et al., 2024; Sakti et al., 2024). It is imperative to discard foreign cultural elements that are fundamentally incongruous with Indonesian culture. Furthermore, the research team seeks to explore and formulate together the right formula in implementing character strengthening using the local wisdom approach. The information was excavated by conducting an FGD with teachers at one of the State Junior High Schools in Semarang and also with students in a separate room. The purpose of holding this FGD is to discuss the strengthening model that is in accordance with the characteristics of current students. The character values based on local wisdom as a result of the FGD can be seen in Graph 1.

Graph 1. *Frequency of character values mentioned in FGD*



The bar graph above illustrates the frequency of character values mentioned during FGD. The character values are based on local wisdom and are aimed at enhancing the profile of Pancasila students. The values include traits such as religiousness, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, and others.

From the graph, it is evident that certain values like 'Discipline' and 'Responsibility' were mentioned more frequently, indicating their significance in the character education program. This visual representation helps in understanding which values are prioritized and can guide further implementation and reinforcement of character education based on local wisdom.

Incorporating local wisdom into teaching practices involves several key strategies. First, educators can integrate local culture and traditions by incorporating cultural stories, legends, and folktales into lessons to illustrate moral values and cultural heritage. They can also include traditional art forms, music, and dance in the curriculum to help students appreciate their cultural roots.

Second, utilizing local resources and environments is crucial. This can be done through organizing field trips to local historical sites, cultural centres, and natural environments, as well as engaging with community leaders and elders to share their knowledge and experiences. Project-based learning that involves researching and presenting local history, customs, and environmental practices can also be effective.

Third, embedding local wisdom in subject content is important. In language and literature lessons, educators can incorporate local proverbs, idioms, and literature to teach language skills and cultural values simultaneously. In social studies, teaching about local governance systems, traditional conflict resolution methods, and significant historical events can deepen students' understanding of their community.

Fourth, promoting local values and ethics can be achieved through character education programs that integrate values such as mutual respect, humility, and communal harmony. Highlighting local heroes and figures who embody positive values can also inspire students.

Fifth, encouraging local practices and skills involves including lessons on traditional crafts, agriculture, and other local skills to preserve and pass on practical knowledge. Teaching and encouraging the use of local languages alongside the national language can promote linguistic diversity and cultural pride.

Sixth, collaborating with the community is key. Educators can invite local experts, artisans, and elders to conduct workshops and speak to students about various aspects of local wisdom. Organizing community service activities that align with local practices and values, such as environmental conservation or cultural festivals, can also strengthen community ties. Lastly, developing contextual teaching materials that reflect local culture, traditions, and values can make learning more meaningful and relevant to students' lives. By incorporating these strategies, educators can create a more engaging and culturally enriching learning experience for their students.

Conclusion and Recommendations/Implications

Enhancing character education is essential to address the challenges posed by globalization and societal changes. Junior high students face significant character-related issues, and schools employ various approaches to improve character education, particularly by integrating local wisdom to enhance the Pancasila Students profile. By understanding these challenges and strategies, effective methods can be developed to promote better character education.

Character education in junior high schools, particularly in Semarang City, faces several challenges. These include bullying, minor criminal activities, lack of politeness and respect,

and the detrimental influence of internet accessibility. Students struggle with discipline, responsibility, social interaction, and are highly influenced by social media and peer pressure. Academic demands further contribute to their stress. Schools employ a comprehensive approach to address these issues, integrating character education into the curriculum, teacher training, and extracurricular activities.

The *Pancasila* student profile strengthening programme (P5) utilizes local wisdom, involving activities related to traditional arts, folk games, and mutual cooperation. This approach aims to develop strong character aligned with Pancasila values. Implementation involves planning, execution, and evaluation stages. The teaching modules incorporate understanding, role-playing, and social action projects based on local wisdom. The effectiveness of this approach is evident as students find learning through local wisdom engaging and easy to understand, although challenges remain in finding the right models reflecting local wisdom. Overall, character education based on local wisdom plays a vital role in shaping students' behaviour and attitudes, preparing them to face future challenges while preserving national cultures. Schools can effectively promote positive character development, enhance student engagement, and preserve cultural heritage, ultimately contributing to the cultivation of well-rounded individuals.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

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Biographical Notes

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MELYNDA is a dedicated teacher of Pancasila and Civic Education. She believes that educational activities can provide positive energy to students, teachers, and the entire school community, helping to strengthen students' character in alignment with the vision of the Pancasila Student Profile.

APRILIA RIZKI SAPUTRI is an academic whose her notable work includes the publication titled "Ketro Tourist Village: Community Empowerment Through the Village Tourism Program Economic Recovery Strategy to Welcome to The G20 Presidency." This work has been recognized and cited by peers in the field, reflecting her contribution to community empowerment and economic recovery strategies in the context of village tourism.