



# Strengthening Students' Ethics and Courtesy: The Implementation of Pancasila Values in An Urban Elementary School

*Avelisa Belmont Situmeang<sup>1,\*</sup>, Widia Valentina Br Sihotang<sup>1</sup>, Ignasya Rosari Omega Sinabariba<sup>1</sup>, Larasinda Silitonga<sup>1</sup>, Nazla Salsabila<sup>1</sup>, Lukas Nister Fatrisyah Zega<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

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## Correspondence

E-mail: [avelisasitumeang5@gmail.com](mailto:avelisasitumeang5@gmail.com)\*

## A B S T R A C T

Character education has become increasingly important in addressing issues related to students' ethics and politeness in elementary schools. While many studies have examined Pancasila-based character education, limited research has specifically focused on its role in shaping students' ethics and courtesy in a particular school context. This study aimed to analyze the implementation of Pancasila-based character values in shaping the ethical behavior and politeness of sixth-grade students at HKBP Maranatha Elementary School, Medan City. This study employed a quantitative survey method. The participants consisted of all 16 sixth-grade students, representing a school-based case study within a single class. Data were collected using a questionnaire containing 13 statements related to ethics and politeness and were analyzed using percentage analysis. The results showed that the implementation of Pancasila-based character values generally produced positive outcomes. Most students demonstrated tolerance, cooperation, and openness to criticism. A total of 81.25% of students often respected differences in religion, ethnicity, and family background, while 56.25% often helped classmates experiencing learning difficulties. Furthermore, 62.5% showed openness to criticism and suggestions. However, some aspects still require improvement, particularly self-control and empathy, as 62.5% of students admitted that they sometimes used harsh language while joking with friends. In conclusion, Pancasila-based character values play an important role in fostering students' ethics and courtesy. Continuous character development is needed to strengthen empathy, self-control, and polite communication among students.

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## 1. Introduction

Pancasila is the Indonesian nation's way of life and the core of its national identity. The values of Pancasila must be instilled in the souls of every Indonesian citizen from an early age so that the nation can realize its true identity and achieve its noble goals (Lazuarni et al., 2024). As a flexible yet solid foundation, Pancasila is not merely a state symbol, but a reflection of noble values that have lived within the hearts of the Indonesian people long before independence. The values of divinity, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice serve as the core that maintains national unity, ensuring that Indonesia remains anchored to its identity. Amidst the onslaught of foreign ideologies and rapid technological developments, Pancasila functions as a moral guide that helps society

navigate and remain grounded amidst the torrential flow of global interactions (Ramadhan et al., 2025).

The awareness of the importance of preserving the authenticity of these values drives the nation to take concrete steps: Pancasila must be studied systematically so that it is not eroded by time (Adetia et al., 2024). Consequently, the government has taken a strategic step by placing Pancasila as the primary foundation of the national education system. Through a structured curriculum, schools become the vehicle where these noble values are translated into the attitudes, behavior, and work ethic of students. By making education the spearhead, it is expected that every younger generation will be able to revive the spirit of Pancasila in their daily lives.

Education plays a significant role in nurturing a generation that is not only academically proficient but also possesses a noble character. Character refers to the values of human actions related to God Almighty, oneself, fellow human beings, the environment, and nationality, which are manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions (Akhwani et al., 2021). Character education is a learning process that emphasizes the essence and meaning of morals and ethics. Within the context of character education, many factors exert an influence, one of which is formal education. The inculcation of Pancasila-based character is crucial to initiate from the elementary school level because, during this phase, children undergo rapid social and moral growth. At this stage, they begin to learn to understand good behavior, social norms, and ways of interacting with others.

Education and character building at the elementary school level should be rooted in Pancasila values. Pancasila values play a role in shaping, directing, controlling, and determining a person's behavior so that it can be evaluated from the perspective of nation and state life. Pancasila plays a crucial role in students' character development, their intellectual progress after graduation, as well as the development of their attitudes and intelligence (Lazuarni et al., 2024). In the process of character formation, ethical behavior is an essential element that needs attention. This is not merely symbolic; rather, it reflects actions that align with social and cultural norms, embodying the principles of ethics, morality, and respect for others. Although not officially written, the norms of politeness act as an important social consensus in minimizing potential conflicts within society (Wulandari & Rahmawati, 2022).

However, in reality, many student behaviors are still found that do not reflect ethical values and noble character. Some of these include mocking peers, using harsh language when joking, refusing to admit mistakes, and a lack of empathy for friends facing difficulties. The Government of the Republic of Indonesia has identified six fundamental issues faced by the Indonesian nation regarding the character building of the younger generation, namely: 1) inconsistency and weak application of Pancasila values as the nation's principles and ideology; 2) the absence of an integrated policy to implement the essential values of Pancasila; 3) shifting ethical values in inter-ethnic and inter-group relations; 4) declining awareness of the nation's cultural heritage; 5) threats to national unity; and 6) the weakening of national independence (Nasrudin et al., 2024).

Several prior studies have examined the implementation of Pancasila values in shaping student character. The following is a comparison of five relevant studies from the past three years: First, a study by Lazuarni et al. (2024) entitled "Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Pancasila dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa di Sekolah Dasar" (Implementation of Pancasila Values in Shaping Student Character in Elementary Schools) examines the general application of Pancasila values in the elementary school environment. This study found that integrating Pancasila values into school culture positively influences student character; however, it has not specifically linked it to the dimensions of ethics and politeness in daily social interactions.

Second, Nasrudin et al. (2024) in their research "Penguatan Karakter Bangsa Melalui Pendidikan Pancasila di Era Digital" (Strengthening National Character Through Pancasila Education in the Digital Era) emphasize the importance of Pancasila education as a response to the challenges of the

digital era. This study highlights the threat of value disruption, but its focus remains on macro-level policies and has not touched upon concrete implementation at the elementary school level.

Third, Wulandari & Syahputra (2023) in "Peran Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Nilai Pancasila terhadap Perilaku Sosial Siswa SD" (The Role of Pancasila Value-Based Character Education on the Social Behavior of Elementary School Students) found that Pancasila-based character education can enhance students' pro-social behavior. Nevertheless, this study was conducted in a major urban area and did not cover schools with a distinctive background of cultural diversity, such as faith-based community schools.

Fourth, Sari & Hidayat (2023) through "Internalisasi Nilai Pancasila dalam Membentuk Etika Berkomunikasi Siswa Sekolah Dasar" (Internalization of Pancasila Values in Shaping the Communication Ethics of Elementary School Students) revealed that the internalization of Pancasila principles, especially the second and third tenets, contributes significantly to the formation of communication ethics. This study is relevant but limited to verbal communication aspects and has not fully explored the dimension of politeness in non-verbal behavior.

Fifth, Pratama & Kurniawan (2024) in "Efektivitas Pembelajaran PPKn Berbasis Pancasila dalam Meningkatkan Kesopanan Siswa Kelas VI" (The Effectiveness of Pancasila-Based Civic Education Learning in Improving the Politeness of Grade VI Students) found that Civic Education (PPKn) learning that integrates Pancasila values effectively improves the politeness of sixth-grade students. However, this study utilized a quantitative experimental approach and did not delve qualitatively into the process of value formation within a faith-based school.

Based on the review of the five studies above, there is a research gap that remains unanswered, namely an in-depth qualitative study on how Pancasila character values concretely shape the ethics and politeness of students, particularly in elementary schools based on religious communities. This study aims to fill that gap by examining the application of Pancasila-based character values in shaping the ethics and politeness of Grade VI students at SD HKBP Maranatha, Medan City, thereby generating more contextual and applicable findings.

Based on the background described above, the problem formulations in this study are: 1) How is the application of Pancasila-based character values at SD HKBP Maranatha, Medan City? 2) To what extent do Pancasila-based character values contribute to shaping the ethics and politeness of Grade VI students at SD HKBP Maranatha, Medan City? 3) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors in applying Pancasila-based character values at the school?

## 2. Research Methods

This study employed a descriptive case study research design as a scientific strategy to investigate, describe, and analyze in depth a contemporary phenomenon regarding students' ethics and manners in a real-life context (Nur'aini, 2020). The research was conducted at SD HKBP Maranatha Medan and involved sixteen sixth-grade students as the research subjects. Primary data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire consisting of thirteen statements concerning children's ethical behavior and politeness. This instrument was developed using the content validity technique to ensure its alignment with the operational indicators of children's ethical behavior. The response options provided in the questionnaire used a three-point scale: Often, Sometimes, and Never. After all respondent data had been collected, the data were analyzed using percentage-based descriptive analysis to identify measurable trends in students' ethical behavior.

The percentage formula used is as follows:  $\text{Percentage} = (\text{Number of students selecting a response} / \text{Total number of students}) \times 100\%$ . The following are the research instrument table and the research instrument indicator table:

**Table 1.** Research Instrument

Place a check mark (✓) in the column that matches your daily habits and attitudes.

No	Question	Often	Sometimes	Never
1	I continue to speak politely to teachers and friends even when we have different opinions or when I feel upset.			
2	I am willing to admit my mistakes without blaming others.			
3	I sincerely apologize when I make a mistake toward a friend or teacher.			
4	I do not mock, belittle, or embarrass friends who make mistakes in public.			
5	I respect friends who have different religions, ethnicities, habits, or family backgrounds.			
6	I laugh at friends who are punished by the teacher.			
7	I remain honest when completing assignments or tests even when I am not supervised by the teacher.			
8	I help friends who experience learning difficulties without expecting rewards or praise.			
9	I am able to control myself and avoid using harsh words or hurting my friends' feelings when joking.			
10	I am willing to work together in groups even when the group members are not my close friends.			
11	I accept criticism and suggestions from teachers or friends with an open attitude and without becoming angry.			
12	I help maintain the cleanliness of the classroom and school environment as a shared responsibility.			
13	I remain disciplined in obeying school rules even when no teacher is supervising.			

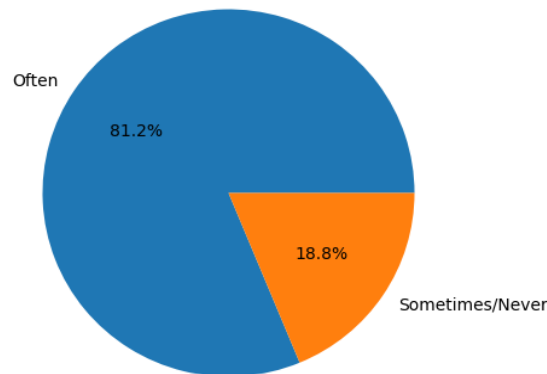
**Table 2.** Research Instrument Indicators

No	Indicator	Statement
1	Politeness in speaking	Speaking politely to teachers and friends
2	Responsibility	Admitting mistakes
3	Self-awareness	Apologizing when at fault
4	Empathy	Not mocking friends
5	Tolerance	Respecting differences
6	Social empathy	Not laughing at friends
7	Academic honesty	Being honest when completing assignments
8	Mutual cooperation	Helping friends learn
9	Self-control	Not using harsh words
10	Teamwork	Working in groups
11	Open-mindedness	Accepting criticism
12	Environmental responsibility	Maintaining classroom cleanliness
13	Discipline	Obeying school rules

### 3. Results and Discussion

The implementation of Pancasila-based character values at HKBP Maranatha Elementary School in Medan City has generally demonstrated positive outcomes in shaping students' ethics and politeness. Based on the questionnaire data collected from 16 sixth-grade students, the majority of respondents showed attitudes that reflect the fundamental values of Pancasila, particularly tolerance, cooperation, openness to criticism, and social responsibility. These findings indicate that character education programs implemented by the school have contributed positively to students' social interactions and moral development.

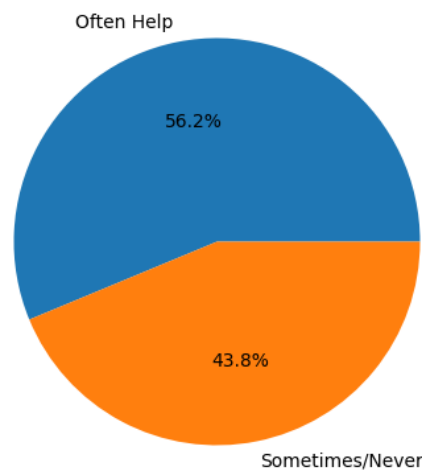
One of the most prominent findings concerns students' respect for diversity. A total of 81.25% of respondents stated that they often respect friends who have different religions, ethnic backgrounds, customs, habits, or family circumstances. This result suggests that the value of tolerance has been successfully internalized among students. Respecting differences is an important component of Pancasila character education because Indonesia is a multicultural nation consisting of diverse ethnicities, religions, languages, and cultural traditions. Through the development of tolerance, students learn to appreciate diversity and maintain harmonious relationships with others despite existing differences.



**Figure 1.** Students' Respect for Differences

The finding also reflects the implementation of the third principle of Pancasila, namely the Unity of Indonesia, which emphasizes national cohesion, mutual respect, and social harmony. Students who demonstrate tolerance in their daily interactions are more likely to contribute positively to a peaceful and inclusive school environment. This result supports previous research by Lazuardi et al. (2024), who found that the implementation of Pancasila values in elementary schools significantly contributes to strengthening students' attitudes of tolerance, respect, and appreciation of diversity. The consistency between the present findings and previous studies indicates that character education based on Pancasila remains relevant and effective in fostering positive social behavior among elementary school students.

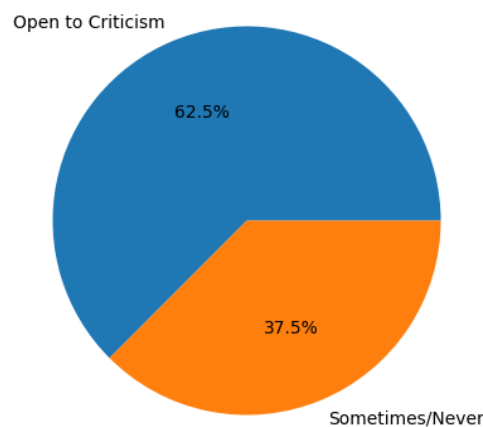
Another important finding relates to students' willingness to help classmates who experience learning difficulties. The data revealed that 56.25% of students often assist their peers without expecting rewards or praise. This behavior reflects the value of social concern and cooperation, which are closely associated with the concept of gotong royong. Mutual cooperation is one of the most important cultural values in Indonesian society and serves as a practical manifestation of Pancasila principles in everyday life.



**Figure 2.** Students' Social Concern and Cooperation

The willingness to support classmates academically demonstrates that students have developed an awareness of collective responsibility rather than focusing solely on personal achievement. Such behavior contributes to the creation of a collaborative learning environment where students can learn from one another and achieve common goals together. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Nasrudin et al. (2024), which concluded that Pancasila-based character education strengthens students' social awareness, empathy, cooperation, and willingness to help others. Therefore, the findings suggest that the implementation of character education at HKBP Maranatha Elementary School has been successful in fostering positive interpersonal relationships among students.

The study also examined students' openness to criticism and suggestions from teachers and peers. The results showed that 62.5% of students often accept criticism and feedback positively. This finding indicates that students are beginning to develop emotional maturity and reflective thinking skills. The ability to receive criticism constructively is an important aspect of character development because it allows individuals to recognize their weaknesses, improve their behavior, and build healthy social relationships.

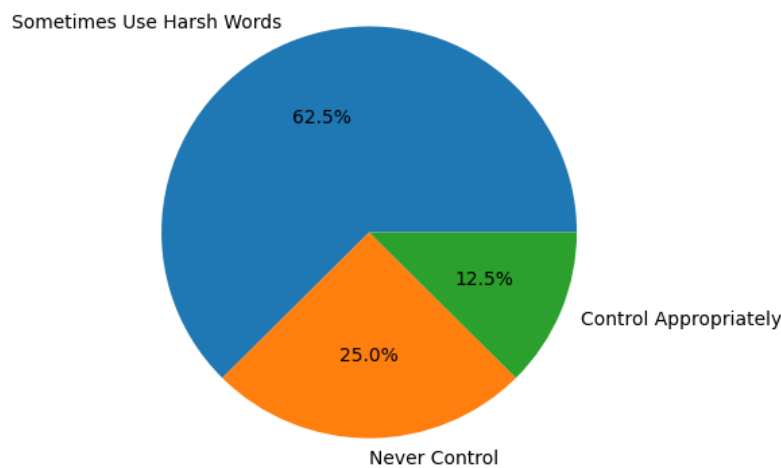


**Figure 3.** Students' Social Concern and Cooperation

Openness to criticism reflects a growth-oriented mindset and demonstrates that students are learning to view feedback as an opportunity for self-improvement rather than as a personal attack. In the educational context, this attitude supports the development of lifelong learning habits because students become more willing to evaluate themselves and make necessary changes. Furthermore, students who are open to feedback tend to exhibit better communication skills and greater respect for the opinions of others.

Despite these positive findings, the results also reveal several challenges related to personal ethics and self-regulation. One notable concern is students' ability to control their language during informal interactions. The data indicate that 62.5% of students sometimes use harsh or hurtful language while joking with friends, whereas 25% reported that they never control such behavior and 12,5% control appropriately. These findings suggest that although students generally understand the importance of respectful behavior, they may still experience difficulties applying these values consistently in spontaneous social situations.

In addition, several students admitted that they sometimes laugh at classmates who receive punishment from teachers. Such behavior indicates that empathy and emotional sensitivity toward others are still developing. Empathy plays a crucial role in character education because it enables individuals to understand and appreciate the feelings of others. Without sufficient empathy, students may unintentionally engage in behaviors that hurt or embarrass their peers.



**Figure 4.** Students' Self-Control in Verbal Communication

The findings related to self-control and empathy are consistent with the perspective presented by Wulandari and Rahmawati (2022), who explained that elementary school students are still in the process of moral and emotional development. At this stage, students may understand ethical principles theoretically but often encounter difficulties when applying them consistently in real-life situations. Moral values are not only learned through formal instruction but also require continuous practice, habituation, and reinforcement through daily experiences.

It is important to emphasize that the present study relied solely on questionnaire data. Therefore, the factors underlying students' difficulties in controlling their language or demonstrating empathy cannot be identified with certainty. Although various external influences may affect students' behavior, the current data do not provide sufficient evidence to determine the exact causes. Consequently, further studies involving classroom observations, interviews with teachers, students, and parents, as well as qualitative investigations, are necessary to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of these issues.

Overall, the findings indicate that the implementation of Pancasila-based character values at HKBP Maranatha Elementary School has been effective in promoting positive social attitudes among sixth-grade students. The high levels of tolerance, cooperation, and openness to criticism demonstrate that students have begun to internalize important character values that align with the principles of Pancasila. These positive outcomes suggest that character education programs implemented by the school have contributed significantly to the development of students' ethical and social behavior.

Nevertheless, the findings also highlight the need for continuous improvement, particularly in the areas of empathy, self-control, and polite communication. Schools should strengthen character education through consistent habituation activities, teacher role modelling, classroom discussions on ethical behavior, and collaboration with parents. By providing students with continuous opportunities to practice positive behaviors in both formal and informal situations, schools can help ensure that Pancasila values are not only understood conceptually but are also reflected consistently in students' daily actions and interactions. Future research is recommended to explore the relationship between family environment, peer interactions, digital media exposure, and students' ethical behavior using qualitative and mixed-method approaches to provide deeper insights into the development of character education in elementary schools.

#### 4. Conclusion

The implementation of Pancasila-based character values at HKBP Maranatha Elementary School in Medan City has generally been quite successful, particularly in shaping students' social behavior within the school environment. Research shows a high level of tolerance, with 81.25% of students

accustomed to respecting differences in religion, ethnicity, and culture. Furthermore, the spirit of mutual cooperation is evident in the actions of 56.25% of students who routinely help friends experiencing learning difficulties, as well as the openness of 62.5% of students in accepting criticism and suggestions. This indicates that the communal values of Pancasila have been successfully implemented in students' attitudes and behaviors in formal interactions. However, this study also identified challenges related to personal ethics and self-control. Some students still struggle to control rude language when joking (62.5% said sometimes) and have a tendency to laugh at friends who receive sanctions. This phenomenon suggests that despite strong collective values, internalizing politeness in spontaneous, informal interactions still needs improvement. To address this gap, the school is encouraged to develop a habituation program for polite language, consistently reinforced through daily routines and not limited to formal learning activities, so that students' self-control and empathy in informal interactions can be strengthened. In addition, future researchers are encouraged to employ qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or classroom observation, to explore more thoroughly the underlying reasons for students' use of harsh language and the influence of peer and digital media environments on their character development.

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