

The Role of Pancasila and Civic Education in Shaping Tolerance and Bhineka Tunggal Ika Attitudes Among Generation Z at Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Palangka Raya

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) in shaping attitudes of tolerance and the values of Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) in Generation Z students at Muhammadiyah Junior High School, Palangka Raya. This study used a qualitative case study design with 13 informants: 9 students (grades VII, VIII, and IX), 2 PPKn teachers, 1 school counselor, and 1 administrative staff member. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Data were analyzed using a thematic approach, including transcription, coding, identification of main themes, interpretation of findings, and preparation of narrative descriptions. The results showed that PPKn learning played a significant role in internalizing Pancasila values through group strategy discussions, contextual examples, and reflection activities. Students' tolerance attitudes were formed through formal learning and social interactions in the school environment, with the level of understanding developing with grade level. The value of Bhineka Tunggal Ika was reinforced through a school culture that supports diversity, flag ceremonies, national day commemorations, and collaborative projects. Exemplary teachers, supportive guidance and counseling services, and inclusive school policies create a conducive educational environment for student character development. This study confirms that PPKn serves as an important vehicle for instilling the values of tolerance and Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) in Generation Z, emphasizing the need to strengthen meaningful learning supported by a consistent school culture to develop citizens capable of living harmoniously in a multicultural society and possessing a strong commitment to national unity.

Keywords: Pancasila Education, Civic Education, Tolerance, Bhineka Tunggal Ika, Generation Z, Junior High School



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INTRODUCTION

Civic education is essential for shaping national awareness among the younger generation, particularly by fostering their understanding of national identity and democratic values (Purwadi et al., 2024). As a philosophical system, Pancasila is the main characteristic of the Indonesian state, underpinning the entire concept of civic education and requiring implementation in national and state life, especially in the formation of character and civic values. (Dewantara et al., 2019). However, the emergence of Generation Z presents unique pedagogical challenges. Gen Z has a strong affinity for technology, dynamic social interaction patterns, and a global perspective shaped by international connectivity. This combination of factors demands a rethinking of traditional educational methods to align with the needs and characteristics of this generation (Wajdi et al., 2024). Indonesia is a democratic nation marked by diversity, with a population drawn from various ethnicities, races, cultures, languages, religions, and political ideologies. In this context, the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity) provides an appropriate foundation for the Indonesian people to maintain unity amid diversity (Riyanto et al., 2022). This principle has historically served as a unifying force in Indonesia. Contemporary research reveals that Bhinneka Tunggal Ika has been reduced to a mere symbolic slogan with no practical meaning in the lives of many students (Kewuel et al., 2022). Recent studies have documented concerning trends among Indonesian youth. A 2025 study found that Generation Z is more influenced by digital culture and individualism than the Millennial generation, leading to decreased internalization of Pancasila values and a reduced understanding of national identity (Handayani et al., 2025). Due to the decline in patriotism and nationalism among young people, this has encouraged a re-emphasis on contextual and experience-based learning approaches, rather than just the delivery of knowledge. SMP Muhammadiyah Palangka Raya, as a secondary educational institution serving the Palangka Raya community, plays a pivotal role in the civic formation of Generation Z students from diverse ethnic, religious, and

socioeconomic backgrounds. Muhammadiyah Junior High School, Palangka Raya, plays a crucial role in shaping the civic character of Generation Z students from diverse ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Understanding how Pancasila and Civic Education effectively shape attitudes of tolerance and a sense of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) at this school will provide valuable insights for improving pedagogical practices and educational policies in similar contexts across Indonesia. This research is situated within the broader literature on character education, expanding on previous studies by examining the specific context of Generation Z students at Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Palangka Raya. While existing research has documented the importance of Pancasila education and identified challenges in its implementation, few studies have conducted an in-depth investigation of the mechanisms through which Civic Education fosters tolerance and a sense of unity in this specific demographic.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative case study design to explore in depth the role of Pancasila and Citizenship Education in shaping attitudes of tolerance and Bhineka Tunggal Ika among Generation Z at Muhammadiyah Junior High School, Palangka Raya. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the phenomenon in depth through participants' perspectives and direct experiences. The study was conducted at Muhammadiyah Junior High School, Palangka Raya. The study population consisted of all students enrolled in grades VII, VIII, and IX (approximately 450 students) representing various ethnic backgrounds, including Dayak, Javanese, Banjar, and other groups and using a purposive sampling technique with a total of 13 informants, consisting of: Students: 3 students from grade 7, 3 students from grade 8, and 3 students from grade 9, a total of 9 students, Pancasila and Citizenship Education Teachers: 2 people, School counselor: 1 person, School administration staff: 1 person. The number of participants in this study is guided by the principles of adequacy and appropriateness in qualitative research, where data saturation is usually achieved with 13 informants for a relatively homogeneous group. Students were chosen as key informants because they are the direct subjects of Pancasila values education. At the same time, teachers, counselors, and administrative staff served as supporting informants, providing perspectives on the implementation of educational programs. Data collection techniques used several methods, namely in-depth interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at least twice with each informant to obtain comprehensive data and validate the information received, conducted with students to explore their understanding of the principles of Pancasila, tolerance, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, national identity, and their experiences in learning PPKn, then with teachers focusing on pedagogical strategies, challenges of curriculum implementation, and the perceived effectiveness of various teaching approaches, then with counselors to obtain data on students' social-emotional behavior, especially in responding to differences and resolving conflicts in the school environment, while with administrative staff to explore information related to school policies and systems that support the implementation of tolerance values and the principles of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika as part of the school culture. Then Participatory Observation: Direct observation of the Civics learning process, school activities, and student interactions in daily life at school. And Document analysis: Review of the syllabus, RPS, Civics learning materials, and school policy documents related to character education and Pancasila values. Data analysis techniques. The collected data were analyzed using a thematic approach with the following stages: (1) transcription of interview results, (2) data coding, (3) identification of main themes related to tolerance and Bhineka Tunggal Ika, (4) interpretation of findings, and (5) preparation of narrative descriptions. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources (students, teachers, counselors, and administration) and member checking, inviting participants to provide feedback on the interpretation of the analyzed data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Internalization of Pancasila Values through the Learning Process

Research results show that Civics (PPKn) learning plays a crucial role in introducing and internalizing Pancasila values to students. Teachers consistently integrate the values of tolerance, respect for diversity, and unity into classroom learning activities. Learning strategies such as group discussions, contextual examples, and reflection activities help students understand Pancasila not only as a normative concept but also as a guideline for behavior in everyday life.

Students from all grade levels stated that Civics (PPKn) learning helped them realize the importance of respecting differences in religion, ethnicity, opinion, and social background. Seventh-grade students tended to emphasize basic forms of tolerance, such as respecting peers' opinions and refraining from bullying. Meanwhile, eighth-grade students demonstrated a deeper understanding by linking tolerance to cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution. Ninth-grade students displayed a more mature understanding, viewing tolerance as the foundation for social harmony and national unity.

2. Developing Tolerance in Generation Z Students

Research findings indicate that students' tolerance is shaped by formal classroom instruction and social interactions within the school environment. Civics (PPKn) learning instills values of mutual respect, empathy, and justice, which students then practice

in their daily lives. Students reported being more open to differences and more accepting of diversity after participating in lessons that discussed national diversity and civic responsibility.

School counselors corroborated these findings by stating that students who actively participate in Civics learning generally demonstrate better emotional regulation and social skills. Conflicts between students tend to be resolved through dialogue and deliberation, reflecting the values of tolerance learned in Civics.

3. Strengthening the Unity in Diversity Attitude through School Culture

Research results also show that Civics (PPKn) plays a role in strengthening the Unity in Diversity attitude through a school culture that supports it. School activities such as flag ceremonies, national holiday commemorations, and collaborative student projects provide a concrete platform for students to practice the value of unity.

Civics (PPKn) teachers emphasized that the principle of Unity in Diversity is consistently emphasized in learning materials, particularly on the topics of national identity and pluralism. Students are encouraged to view diversity as a strength, not a source of division. School administrators also conveyed that school policies support inclusive practices by providing equal treatment and opportunities for all students.

4. The Role of Teachers and School Support Systems

Teachers play a strategic role as role models in shaping students' attitudes. Two Civics teachers who served as informants emphasized the importance of displaying tolerance, fairness, and mutual respect in every interaction within the school environment. These teachers' exemplary behavior is directly felt by students and is considered influential in shaping their attitudes. Furthermore, collaboration among teachers, school counselors, and administrative staff contributes to creating a conducive school environment that strengthens character education. Guidance and counseling services strengthen tolerance by providing social-emotional support to students, while school administrative policies foster an inclusive and equitable school climate.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) play a significant role in fostering tolerance and the values of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) among Generation Z students at Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Palangka Raya. This finding is reinforced by direct statements from students and educators who served as research informants. One ninth-grade student stated that learning PPKn helped him better understand the importance of respecting differences, as follows: "In PPKn class, we are often invited to discuss differences. From that, I learned that even though we have different opinions or backgrounds, we must still respect each other." This statement demonstrates that the dialogic learning process can encourage the reflective internalization of the value of tolerance. This finding aligns with the character education theory proposed by Thomas Lickona, which emphasizes that character formation involves moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Lickona, 1991, 2012). In this context, PPKn learning not only provides a cognitive understanding of Pancasila values but also builds affective awareness and encourages tolerant behavior in everyday life.

Teacher role models also influence students' tolerance development. One Civics teacher stated, "Children imitate more easily than listen to lectures. If teachers demonstrate fairness and respect for all students, they will do the same." This statement reinforces the view that teachers' role as value models is significant in character education. The results of this study support previous research findings that suggest Civics teachers play a strategic role in instilling values of tolerance and diversity through daily interactions and a humanistic learning approach. Research by Hidayat (2023) shows that schools can strengthen students' tolerant character by holistically integrating learning, routine activities, and other school activities through collaboration among teachers and school stakeholders.

The strengthening of the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika attitude in this study is evident in the synergy between classroom learning and school culture. A seventh-grade student said, "Even though we are different, at school we are taught to remain united and not discriminate against our friends." This statement indicates that the value of unity has been instilled from an early age through habituation in the school environment. This finding aligns with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's view that education is a process of acculturation that occurs through role models and habituation within the educational environment. Research by Rais et al. (2025) shows that character education in multicultural schools requires strategies that respect social diversity and foster student interactions in the learning environment. An inclusive school culture reinforces the values conveyed in PPKn learning, making it easier for students to internalize the principles of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

The school support system is also an important factor in shaping student attitudes. The school counselor stated, "When there is conflict between students, we always direct them to dialogue and mutual understanding, rather than blaming each other." This shows that guidance and counseling services reinforce the tolerance values instilled through learning. This finding is relevant to the research results of Sumarno et al. (2025), who found that the implementation of a positive school culture, including strengthening values, character building, and educator role models, plays an important role in the holistic formation of student character. A holistic approach involving teachers, counselors, and education staff creates a consistent learning environment in instilling national values.

Overall, this discussion confirms that Pancasila and Citizenship Education play a strategic role in shaping the attitudes of tolerance and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika among Generation Z students. Through meaningful learning, exemplary educators, and support from school culture and systems, Pancasila values are not only understood conceptually but also manifested in students' real attitudes and behavior.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) play a significant and strategic role in fostering tolerance and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) among Generation Z students at Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Palangka Raya. This role is evident through the integrated internalization of Pancasila values in classroom learning, student social interactions, and a school culture that supports diversity and unity. Contextual, dialogic, and participatory PPKn learning helps students understand the value of tolerance not only cognitively but also in the affective and behavioral domains. Students from various grade levels demonstrated a growing understanding of the importance of respecting differences, working together, and maintaining harmony in community life. This demonstrates that the values of tolerance and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika develop gradually over time as the educational process unfolds. In addition to classroom learning, the exemplary role of PPKn teachers, the role of school counselors, and the support of school policies and administration contribute to strengthening student attitudes. Collaboration among school components creates an inclusive and conducive educational environment that strengthens Pancasila-based character education. Thus, Pancasila and Civics Education (PPKn) does not stand alone as a subject but rather becomes part of an educational ecosystem oriented towards developing tolerant and nationally minded citizens. Overall, this study confirms that Pancasila and Civics Education serves as an important vehicle for instilling the values of tolerance and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) in Generation Z. These findings imply that meaningful reinforcement of PPKn learning, supported by a consistent school culture, needs to be continuously developed to develop students capable of living harmoniously in a multicultural society and possessing a strong commitment to national unity.

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