



## Strategies of Early Childhood Teachers in Implementing the Pancasila Student Profile through Differentiated Learning: A Case Study

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The COVID-19 pandemic has led to noticeable behavioural changes and negative character traits among Indonesian children, as evidenced by a decline in the national student character index. The *Pancasila* student profile, a framework for character and competency development within Indonesia's *Merdeka* Curriculum, aims to address these challenges. This study examines how the *Pancasila* student profile is implemented through differentiated learning in Early Childhood Education (ECE) *Penggerak* Schools in Banda Aceh, providing insights into effective strategies for holistic child development.

**Design/methods/approach** – This qualitative case study was conducted in two ECE institutions (one public, one private) participating in the *Penggerak* School Program. Data were collected through interviews with two kindergarten teachers, classroom observations, and document analysis. Thematic analysis was applied to identify key implementation strategies.

**Findings** – The study revealed six key strategies for integrating the *Pancasila* Student Profile into ECE *Penggerak* schools through differentiated learning: (1) internalizing Islamic values in learning materials, (2) fostering child-led activity choices, (3) employing diverse teaching methods, (4) utilizing varied learning media, (5) engaging parents and the community (*Tri-Sentra Pendidikan*), and (6) adapting project-based learning flow to school contexts.

**Research implications/limitations** – While the study provides valuable insights, its findings are limited to two schools in Banda Aceh, restricting generalizability. The short duration (two weeks) and reliance on teacher perspectives may also affect depth. Future research should expand to diverse regions, incorporate longitudinal designs, and include parent/child viewpoints to strengthen validity.

**Practical implications** – The findings suggest that ECE educators should adopt differentiated learning tailored to children's interests and readiness, strengthen parental involvement, integrate local and digital resources, and flexibly adapt project-based learning to align with school capacities.

**Originality/value** – This study addresses a gap in research on differentiated learning in Indonesian ECE, particularly within the *Penggerak* school program framework. It offers a practical model for embedding national character values into early childhood curricula, supporting Indonesia's goals for holistic student development.

**Keywords** Pancasila student profile, Differentiated learning, *Penggerak* school

**Paper type** Case Study

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## 1. Introduction

Since Indonesia was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, many negative changes have been seen in the behaviour and character of Indonesian children. The results of the character survey, which was carried out by the Centre for Research and Development of Religious and Religious Education in 2021, showed a decrease in the average number of students' character index from 71.41 down two points to 69.52, which was caused by the Covid 19 pandemic (Murtadlo, 2021). The online learning process carried out at home during COVID resulted in weak character building in children because the focus of learning was only on developing cognitive abilities (Aswat et al., 2021). In early childhood, the negative impact of COVID-19 is seen in the social-emotional development of children, which is disrupted due to the lack of socialization processes carried out by children and the low discipline applied to children (Sutarna et al., 2021). Children also become less cooperative and have intolerant behaviour (Kusuma & Sutapa, 2020). In addition, maladaptive behaviour is also increasingly evident in early childhood, which has fatal consequences for the form of social interaction of children as humans (Ainiyah & Widyastuti, 2024). Moreover, during online learning, children even experience stress, anxiety, and other mental issues (Mil & Athiyah, 2022).

Many Indonesian children are exposed to values that are not in line with their religious beliefs through social media and popular culture. This exposure is due to the increasing use of gadgets and the internet in everyday life during the COVID-19 quarantine period, which is sometimes beyond parental control. The things they find freely on social media and popular culture can raise doubts and influence their beliefs, which ultimately change their behaviour in a negative direction (Suyahman, 2023). This moral decline is also a result of the condition of society, which is in the process of social transformation towards the era of globalization (Fatiha et al., 2020). With the many challenges faced by Indonesian children, it is necessary to strengthen character from an early age, both in the family and the school environment. At the school level, this is integrated into the learning plan and carried out by Early Childhood Education (ECE) educators through a series of curriculum documents that have been prepared. Religious moderation education is integrated into Indonesia's faith-based curricula and institutional frameworks as part of Indonesia curriculum which emphasis on balancing religious identity with civic values (Bahri et al., 2025).

Indonesia is introducing new curriculum known as *Merdeka* Curriculum at all levels of education from tertiary, secondary, elementary school and early childhood levels (Kurikulum Pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Jenjang Pendidikan Dasar, Dan Jenjang Pendidikan Menengah, 2024). The *Pancasila* Student Profile is a new character framework embedded within the curriculum and to be taught for all Indonesian students. The existence of the *Pancasila* Student Profile aims to shape the character of students who are the future generations of the Republic of Indonesia so that they become individuals with noble morals, have a strong sense of nationalism, respect diversity, and have the skills and abilities needed to face future challenges (Herwina, 2021). The Republic of Indonesia needs the existence of this *Pancasila* Student Profile in order to prepare the future generation of Indonesia to meet the demands of the international job market through the Learning Framework 2030 issued by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development or OECD (Fitriani et al., 2023; OECD, 2018; Pratiwi et al., 2025).

The implementation of this new curriculum in Indonesia, makes the *Pancasila* Student Profile a reference in developing educational activities in Indonesia, especially as a foundation in forming a conducive school culture and creating a healthy and highly competitive learning environment (Satria et al., 2024). This framework consisting of several dimensions or aspects used as a guideline in developing the character and personality of Indonesian students based on the values of *Pancasila*, as stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 22 of 2020 concerning the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education and Culture for 2020-2024 (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, Nomor 22 Tentang Rencana Strategis Kementerian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Tahun 2020-2024, 2020). The *Pancasila* Student Profile includes six (6) main dimensions, namely: faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character; global diversity; mutual cooperation; independent, critical thinking, and creativity (BSKAP, 2022).

All dimensions of the *Pancasila* student profile are very important to be taught to children from an early age, because all these dimensions include the core of Islamic education and character formation that should be taught by adults and parents to children from an early age (Musdalipah et al., 2023). The teaching of the *Pancasila* Student Profile dimension is in line with the goals of Islamic education for early childhood, where Islamic education is a conscious effort by pious muslim adults to direct and guide the growth and development of the instincts (basic abilities) of students, especially from an early age, through Islamic teachings towards the maximum point of their growth and development (Arifin, 2003).

The implementation of the *Pancasila* student profile, at the beginning of the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum, was introduced through a pilot school program called the *Program Sekolah Penggerak* (PSP). The selected schools to become the *Penggerak* School will receive special asymmetric reinforcement to improve the quality of learning (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). These *Penggerak* Schools use project-based learning and differentiated learning as means of their learning (Fitriani & Fajriana, 2025). Therefore, the introduction of the *Pancasila* Student Profile in ECE *Penggerak* School is carried out through differentiated learning. Differentiated learning in early childhood allows educators to adjust teaching methods to accommodate the different needs, interests, and abilities of children (C. Tomlinson, 2001).

Differentiated learning is a process to ensure that what students learn, how students learn it, and how students demonstrate what they have understood are in accordance with the level of learning readiness, interests, and learning method choices of the students (C. A. Tomlinson, 2004). Tomlinson (2001) said that differentiated learning can meet the learning needs of children who have good development, and also children who have delays in their development, in a class consisting of various abilities. This can be done through differentiated learning by creating maximum learning in the classroom and carrying out different learning instructions through content, processes, and products that are in accordance with the child's readiness, interests, and learning profile. Levy defined differentiated learning as a strategic framework that enables teachers to tailor instruction to individual students' starting levels and maximize their academic progress. She described its core as the adaptable application of content, process, and product, guided by students' strengths, needs, and learning preferences (Levy, 2008).

As a key city in Indonesia, Banda Aceh's educational landscape is robust, hosting 220 ECE institutions, including 125 kindergartens. Notably, since 2021, eight of these kindergartens have been designated as ECE *Penggerak* Schools. This pioneering initiative suggests that these institutions have developed significant expertise and valuable practices in innovative teaching methods like differentiated learning. Consequently, there is a compelling opportunity for other ECE educators across Banda Aceh to learn from and adapt these successful, replicable models.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Research Design

This research uses a qualitative research design with a case study approach. This research is categorized as a case study because the selection of school units for the research location is unique compared to other early childhood schools in Banda Aceh. The schools are two ECE units that are implementing the government's flagship program, the *Merdeka* Curriculum, also known as the Kurmer, specifically designed for the *Program Sekolah Penggerak* (PSP) (*Surat Keputusan Penetapan Satuan Pendidikan Pelaksana Program Sekolah Penggerak Angkatan II*, 2022). One school is a private school (TK IT IM), and the other school is a public school (TK N B).

The selection of these two ECE *Penggerak* schools was based on the mandated requirement that the *Pancasila* Student Profile be implemented through scheduled projects, planned for at least once per semester. At the time of this research, these were the only two schools actively implementing the *Pancasila* Student Profile within their instructional framework.

### 2.2. Ethical Consideration

This study was designed and conducted in strict adherence to standard ethical protocols for research involving human subjects. Prior to commencement, formal approvals were obtained

from both the researcher's university and the administrative bodies of the participating ECE schools. All teacher participants are given a thorough explanation of the research aims, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time. To protect participant privacy, all data collection methods, including face-to-face interviews and digital correspondence via WhatsApp, were governed by a strict confidentiality agreement. All data is anonymized through the use of non-identifiable codes and stored securely, with access limited to the primary researcher to ensure confidentiality is maintained throughout the research process and in any subsequent publications.

### 2.3. Research Subject

This research was conducted at the two ECE *Penggerak* schools in Banda Aceh for two (2) weeks in May 2024. Data collection was conducted through interviews with 2 learning committee (LC) teachers from the schools.

### 2.4. Data Collection

This study employed three data collection techniques to gather the necessary data for the study. The techniques used were:

#### 2.4.1. Interviews

These interviews were conducted with LC teachers at the ECE *Penggerak* schools which served as the research sites. These interviews explored knowledge, opinions, and learning practices, as well as assessments regarding the implementation of the *Pancasila* Student Profile dimensions in differentiated learning at the implementing schools. Interviews were conducted both face-to-face and non-face-to-face. The face-to-face interviews were conducted at the schools for three days for each LC teacher. The non-face-to-face interviews were conducted via WhatsApp, text messages, and voice calls. These non-face-to-face interviews were conducted to further explore several questions related to the results of the face-to-face interviews.

#### 2.4.2. Descriptive Observation

Data collection through this observation technique aimed to gather information related to the implementation of the *Pancasila* Student Profile in differentiated learning at the ECE *Penggerak* schools, as implemented by the LC teachers. Observations were conducted from May 13 to 25, 2024. The observations took place in the classrooms where the LC teachers were teaching. The observation report was presented descriptively with the aim of outlining the learning observation process and the search for coding themes.

#### 2.4.3. Documentation

This documentation technique will collect the curriculum documents created during the planning and implementation of activities containing the *Pancasila* Student Profile dimensions. This curriculum will consist of teaching modules and assessments used in the ECE *Penggerak* schools. This documentation technique will also collect photos and videos of learning during the implementation of the *Pancasila* Student Profile through differentiated learning.

### 2.5. Instrument Developments

This study used three (3) research instruments to collect the required data:

#### 2.5.1. Interview Guide

The interview guide will explore the knowledge, opinions, and implementation of learning and assessment from LC teachers regarding the implementation of *Pancasila* Student Profile dimensions in differentiated learning at ECE *Penggerak* schools.

### 2.5.2. Descriptive Observation Sheet

This observation sheet is used to record the direct observation process and observe the implementation of learning using the *Pancasila* Student Profile conducted by LC teachers using differentiated learning at ECE *Penggerak* schools ECE units.

### 2.5.3. Documentation

A documentation list was developed to ensure the availability of project teaching modules and assessments used in the schools. Learning videos will also be collected based on topics/themes determined and developed by LC teachers at ECE *Penggerak* schools.

## 2.6. Data Analysis Techniques

This research data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis with six stages of the thematic analysis framework, which are (1) Familiarisation with the data, (2) Coding, (3) Searching for themes, (4) Reviewing themes, (5) Defining and naming themes, and (6) Writing up (Braun & Clarke, 2006).



Figure 1. Thematic Analysis Framework by Braun & Clarke.

### 2.6.1. Familiarisation with the data

At this stage, the researcher immersed herself in and thoroughly familiarized herself with the research data related to the implementation of the *Pancasila* Student Profile using differentiated learning in the ECE *Penggerak* schools. During this stage, the researcher read and reread the data collected from the field, including interview recordings, observation notes, and documentation from the two ECE *Penggerak* schools.

The recorded interview data was then transcribed to facilitate the data analysis and identify themes addressed in the study. This process of listening to the recordings was repeated to ensure the researcher was familiar with the data collected. The researcher reread the transcribed recordings repeatedly to ensure sufficient data had been collected. The researcher also recorded all initial observations and observations deemed necessary during the research process. The researcher also conducted additional interviews if any data was not collected during the study, or to verify data already collected from the schools. These additional interviews were conducted through written interviews with the LC teachers via WhatsApp.

The researcher also reviewed documentation in the form of teaching modules used by the LC teachers during the research. Furthermore, documentation in the form of photos and videos of the learning process during the research also supported this familiarization process. These documents were also frequently referred to by the researchers when checking the adequacy of the research data.

### 2.6.2. Coding

In this process, researchers generate concise labels for all important data features relevant to the research questions, which guide the data analysis process. Coding is not merely a data reduction method but also an analytical process capable of capturing data semantically and conceptually. Researchers assign a code to each data item and conclude this phase by compiling all relevant codes and data extracts.

The coding conducted in the initial phase is categorized into daily learning activities for each ECE *Penggerak* schools, *Pancasila* student profile dimensions, and differentiated learning. This daily data is drawn from learning observations and interviews with LC teachers based on an interview guide developed by the researchers.



### *2.6.3. Searching for themes*

At this stage, the researcher identified and constructed themes from the results of learning observations and interviews, thus collecting all data into relevant themes. The researcher sought themes based on similarities and differences in the research findings, both from the observation process and interviews conducted with LC teachers.

### *2.6.4. Reviewing themes*

This stage ensures that the themes 'fit' within the extracted data codes and the complete data set. Researchers reassess whether the themes present a compelling and compelling narrative related to the data and begin to determine the characteristics of each theme and the relationships between them.

This stage also allows researchers to combine two themes, separate one theme into two or more, or even discard potential themes and start the theme development process again. All themes remain relevant to the *Pancasila* Student Profile learning process using differentiated learning in the ECE *Penggerak* school in Banda Aceh.

### *2.6.5. Defining and naming themes*

The researcher conducted and wrote a detailed analysis of each theme, identified the essence of each theme, and developed a concise, catchy, and informative name for each theme.

### *2.6.6. Writing up*

The researcher's writing process is an integral element of the data analysis process of this study, which is conducted through thematic analysis. This writing process involves a series of analytical narratives and clear data extracts by the researcher to persuasively inform readers of the research results, coherent data, and contextualize them within the available literature, particularly on the *Pancasila* Student Profile and differentiated learning.

## **3. Result**

The implementation of the *Pancasila* Student Profile through differentiated learning in ECE *Penggerak* Schools in Banda Aceh follows a structured and holistic approach, integrating Islamic values, child-centred activities, and collaborative projects. This section presents the key phases of the learning process, which are designed to cultivate moral, creative, and cooperative dimensions of the *Pancasila* Student Profile. The instructional activities typically implemented in Early Childhood Education schools generally adhere to a thematic learning cycle, commonly structured into three stages: the opening, main, and closing activities. However, the implementation of the *Pancasila* Student Profile through differentiated learning is conducted using a distinct pedagogical framework. Through a combination of routine habituation, interactive discussions, hands-on projects, and reflective practices, educators tailor instruction to meet the diverse needs and interests of young learners. The findings highlight how these activities not only reinforce national character values but also foster a sense of ownership, creativity, and teamwork among children. Below, the detailed stages of the learning process are outlined, demonstrating the practical application of differentiated learning in early childhood education.

### *3.1. Initial Learning Journal Activity*

This activity was carried out before the opening learning activity stage. The implementation of this morning journal activity can be carried out by the class teacher or led by one teacher and assisted by other teachers simultaneously. The place for implementing this morning journal activity can be done in each class or together in the school hall. The form of this morning's journal activities varies from reciting the *Iqra'*, praying *Dhuha*, *Istighfar* together, and saving activities. Other activities are also carried out, such as reading short surahs, *sholawat*, repeating daily prayers and hadiths, singing, getting to know the prophets and angels, getting to know the pillars

of Islam and the pillars of faith, and getting to know the story of the prophet Muhammad and closing with Asmaul Husna.

The morning journal activities at ECE *Penggerak* Schools illustrate how Islamic values are systematically integrated into early childhood education through differentiated learning strategies. The use of repetition methods (e.g., daily recitation of short surahs and prayers) and habituation (e.g., Dhuha prayers and Istighfar) reinforces moral and spiritual development, aligning with the *Pancasila* Student Profile's first dimension (*Beriman, Bertakwa kepada Tuhan YME, dan Berakhlak Mulia*).

The teacher's statement "... for ECE children, the learning activities must be repeated often, not once or twice, we must repeat them often" (AF), highlights the pedagogical emphasis on reinforcement through consistency, a key principle in early childhood cognitive and character development. Repetition ensures retention, while varied methods (singing, storytelling, Q&A) cater to different learning styles, demonstrating differentiated learning in practice. The figure 1 below shows children engaged in structured Islamic literacy, fostering discipline and reverence. The activity aligns with critical thinking (decoding Arabic script) and faith-based values. While figure 2 depicts collective prayer, reinforcing communal spirituality and the Gotong Royong (mutual cooperation) dimension. The teacher's guidance here model's moral behavior, a core aspect of character education.



Figure 1. Iqra' Reciting Activities at IT IM Kindergarten



Figure 2. Dhuha Prayer Activities at IT IM Kindergarten

### 3.2. Opening Learning Activities

This opening activity can be done by each class teacher in their respective classes, or at the school level, namely in the school hall. In this activity, the teacher starts the activity with several activities such as greeting the children by clapping enthusiastically, singing the song "Every day I wake up in the morning", and informing the children of the theme for that week.



Figure 3. IT IM Kindergarten teachers conduct apperception activities with trigger questions

In this opening activity, the teacher also gives the children some opening questions, such as:

Teacher: "What are we going to make? Make toys from used materials. Make what? Make toys from materials?"

Child: "used"

Teacher: "What are the used materials? Try to mention them?"

Child: "bottles"

Teacher: "Yes, there are bottles, there are cardboard boxes, what else? There are plastics, what else? There are cake boxes, cement boxes."

Child: "Aqua boxes"

These questions aim to explore information from the children's existing experiences and invite them to connect these previous experiences with the theme they are currently working on. The teacher also teaches children to follow class rules by making a commitment with the children regarding what they can and cannot do in the classroom

Figure 3 shows children seated in a circle, a setup that promotes inclusivity and collaboration (*Bergotong Royong*). The teacher's body language, leaning forward, maintaining eye contact, suggests an emphasis on responsive interaction, essential for young learners' confidence. The mention of class rules "making a commitment" further ties to the *Berakhlak Mulia* (noble character) dimension, as children internalize responsibility and collective norms.

The opening activity captured in Figure 3 demonstrates a critical phase of differentiated learning where the teacher uses trigger questions to scaffold children's understanding while fostering independent thinking. The dialogue begins with an open-ended prompt "What are we going to make?" which immediately engages children in the learning process by activating prior knowledge. When the child responds with "used" referring to materials, the teacher skilfully guides the conversation forward "What are the used materials? Try to mention them?", encouraging vocabulary recall and environmental awareness. This exchange exemplifies constructivist learning, where knowledge is co-created through dialogue rather than passively delivered.

The children's answers "bottles," "cardboard boxes," "Aqua boxes" reveal their familiarity with recyclable materials, linking the lesson to real-life experiences, a core principle of project-based learning in the *Pancasila* Student Profile framework. By validating each response "Yes, there are bottles..." and expanding the list, the teacher nurtures critical thinking (identifying materials) and creativity (imagining their potential uses), aligning with the profile's dimensions of *Kreatif* (creative) and *Bernalar Kritis* (critical reasoning).

### 3.3. Core Learning Activities

The theme of the core learning activities in the *Pancasila* student profile project from both schools is *Imajinasiku dan Kreativitas* (my imagination and creativity). The core learning activities conducted at both schools has similar patterns. The activities designed for the core learning



activities consist of (1) watching videos related to the project theme, (2) Introduction to project tools and materials, (3) Discussing and choosing pictures of toys to be made (TK IT IM); Collecting 5 stones found outside the classroom (TK N B), (4) Drawing and cutting patterns of favourite toys (TK IT IM); cutting plastic bottles according to patterns (TK N B), (5) Assembling patterns to form toys (TK IT IM); labelling plastic bottles with parents (TK N B), and (6) harvesting/exhibiting children's work.

The core activities at both schools on the first stage of project was watching videos. Videos watched by children at IT IM Kindergarten are videos on how to make toys from used materials. The first video is about how to make a propeller from used bottles; the second video is about how to make a spinning top from used bottles; and the third video is about how to make a car from used materials. On the other hand, TK N B's video is about how to make trash bin from used bottle.



Figure 4. Video Watching Activities at TK IT IM and TK N B

During the core activities, LC teacher at TK IT IM introduced tools and materials for the project activities. The teacher also showed several toy pictures as an option for the children to choose. Then the children would start working on their selected toy patterns.



Figure 5. Teacher showed toys pictures for children to choose and students working on them

In the meantime, TK N B conducted their core activities by cutting origami papers as pre materials for their project. Teacher also guided children to collect pebbles outside their classroom by using the used bottles students brought from home. Teachers introduced the numeracy lesson by using those pebbles.

Next activities would be cutting the bottles and starting gluing them with the already-cut origami papers. On the last stage of developing project's product, children together with the invited parents would working together on gluing the origami papers on the bottle trash bin, until all were completed.



Figure 6. Children collected pebbles for their numeracy activities



Figure 7. Children together with parents gluing the bottled trash bin with origami papers

The project-based activities at TK IT IM and TK N B demonstrated differentiated approaches designed to align with each school's unique learning objectives while still centering on creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration. At TK IT IM, the emphasis was placed on fostering children's independence and innovation. The learning process began with students watching short videos that introduced creative ideas for crafting toys out of recycled materials. Examples included simple yet engaging objects such as propellers, spinning tops, and miniature cars. After viewing these demonstrations, the teacher provided visual prompts by displaying pictures of different toy designs. This method gave children the freedom to make their own choices about which toy to create, thereby nurturing a sense of autonomy. Once the selection was made, students enthusiastically started constructing their chosen designs, working with materials such as cardboard, plastic bottles, and bottle caps. The activity allowed them to explore engineering concepts informally while strengthening fine motor skills through cutting, folding, and assembling.

Meanwhile, TK N B designed its project-based activities with a stronger focus on environmental awareness and practical community needs. The activity began with a video showing how to make a functional trash bin using bottles, which directly introduced children to sustainable practices. Preparation for this project involved collecting and cutting origami paper, as well as gathering small pebbles. Interestingly, the inclusion of pebble-counting activities integrated an element of early numeracy, reinforcing mathematics skills in a hands-on context. By blending environmental education with academic learning, TK N B provided children with both practical knowledge and foundational academic competencies.

Another important distinction between the two schools was how collaboration and parental involvement were facilitated. At TK IT IM, the teacher encouraged children to work independently, giving them the space to experiment and express their creativity. This independence promoted decision-making skills and a personal sense of accomplishment.

Conversely, TK N B implemented a more structured, community-based activity in which parents were invited to join the children. Together, they glued origami paper onto bottle trash bins, transforming the project into a cooperative effort. This collaboration not only cultivated teamwork among the children but also strengthened the bond between school and families, emphasizing that learning can extend beyond the classroom into the home and community.

Ultimately, the differentiated strategies of the two schools highlight the versatility of project-based learning. By promoting individual creativity at TK IT IM and collective problem-solving at TK N B, both institutions successfully adapted project-based methods to their educational goals. These examples demonstrate how project-based learning can be tailored to support diverse developmental outcomes while keeping young learners actively engaged.

### *3.4. Learning Reflection Activities*

Learning reflection activities are carried out by the class teacher by giving several trigger questions, such as:

Teacher (NK): "What was that made of, honey?"

(pointing to the video)

Child: "From flowers"

Teacher (NK): "What was the flower made of?"

Child: "From plastic"

The trigger questions are asked of the children. The teacher also gives the children the freedom to create creative ideas that are different from those that have been shown. The teacher carries out learning reflection activities by asking about the children's favorite play activities and about the children's feelings during the learning process that day.

Teacher (AF): "... How do you feel, my friends? Happy or sad?"

Children: "happy"

Teacher (AF): "Happy, later you can make toys again. So you have to be a good listener, do you know the tools and materials first?"

Children: "Yes"

The reflection dialogue demonstrates a sophisticated application of metacognitive strategies in early childhood education, serving multiple developmental purposes within the *Pancasila* Student Profile framework. The teacher's initial question "What was that made of, honey?" initiates a causal reasoning process, prompting children to analyze the video's content beyond surface-level observation. When the child responds "From flowers", the follow-up question "What was the flower made of?" pushes toward systems thinking, revealing the recycled material's origin (plastic). This line of questioning develops the Critical Thinking dimension by teaching children to trace an object's lifecycle, from raw material to final product.

The emotional check-in "How do you feel, my friends? Happy or sad?" serves dual functions: it cultivates emotional intelligence (a component of Noble Character-berakhlak mulia) while providing the teacher with formative assessment data about engagement levels. The children's collective "happy" response indicates successful implementation of joyful learning, a core principle in Indonesia's ECE curriculum. The teacher's reinforcement "Happy, later you can make toys again" creates positive associations with creative work while setting expectations for future tasks.

### *3.5. End of Learning Journal Activities*

This activity is carried out by repeating the activities carried out in the early/morning learning journal in the form of habituation activities, such as repeating daily prayers, short surahs, 10 names of angels, pillars of faith and pillars of Islam, names of 25 prophets and reviewing the

profile of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. "Attitude of prayer, prayer after eating" (AF) (read together with teachers and children at TK IT IM)

The end-of-learning journal activities demonstrate a thoughtful pedagogical approach to reinforcing Islamic values and character development through structured repetition and communal practice. By revisiting the same religious concepts introduced in the morning, including daily prayers, short surahs, and Islamic pillars, teachers employ a spaced repetition technique that enhances memory retention and concept internalization. This cyclical structure aligns with the *Pancasila* Student Profile's dimension of Faith and Noble Character (*Beriman, Bertakwa kepada Tuhan YME, dan Berakhlak Mulia*), systematically embedding spiritual awareness into children's daily routines.

The specific mention of reviewing "the profile of the Prophet Muhammad SAW" suggests an intentional effort to connect religious teachings with character modeling, presenting the Prophet's life as a practical exemplar of the *Pancasila* values being cultivated. Teacher AF's directive "Attitude of prayer, prayer after eating" reveals how mundane activities are transformed into spiritual practice moments, demonstrating the school's holistic approach to moral development that extends beyond formal lessons into daily habits.



Figure 8. End of Learning Journal Activities at TK IT IM

The figure visual depicts children and teachers engaged in collaborative recitation or prayer, with body language showing reverence and Intergenerational learning (teachers modeling proper practices). This ritualized closing serves multiple pedagogical purposes, such as provides cognitive closure to the learning day, reinforces Islamic identity through consistent practice and develops ritual literacy through repetitive, participatory learning. The activity's placement at day's end capitalizes on children's natural rhythm, using the calm transition period to deepen spiritual understanding when students are most receptive. This practice exemplifies how ECE *Penggerak* Schools successfully merges national character education goals with local Islamic cultural values through carefully designed daily rituals.

The teacher then reinvites the children to pray before going home and then followed by the activity of singing the song "Going Home from school" using a free rhythm, for example, the rhythm of the song "*Anak Kambing Saya*". The prayer ritual before dismissal underscores the integration of spiritual practice into daily school life, aligning with the *Beriman dan Berakhlak Mulia* (faith and noble character) dimension.

### 3.6. Closing Learning Activities

At the end of the activity session, in the form of closing the learning, the teacher conveys the things that the children must do the next day, such as starting to collect and bringing used items such as bottles, cardboard, and plastic bags. This closing routine showed a well-structured transition strategy that serves multiple pedagogical purposes while reinforcing the values of the *Pancasila* Student Profile. By outlining tasks for the next day such as, collecting recyclable materials, the



teacher fosters responsibility and preparedness (elements of the Mandiri or independence dimension) while maintaining continuity between learning sessions. This forward-looking approach also encourages project-based engagement beyond school hours, connecting classroom activities with children's home environments.



Figure 9. Closing Learning Activities at TK IT IM

Furthermore, figure 6 showed moment of collective reflections that provides emotional closure, allowing children to transition mindfully from school to home. The subsequent singing of the "Going Home from school" song, adapted to a familiar local melody "Anak Kambing Saya", further enhances this transition by infusing cultural relevance and joy into the routine. The use of a "free rhythm" suggests an emphasis on creative expression linking to the *Kreatif* dimension, allowing children to personalize their participation. The figure captures the warmth of this daily ritual, showing: community Bonding, routine consistency, and cultural connection. This closing routine exemplifies how simple, repetitive practices can cultivate both character values and academic engagement, ensuring children depart with a sense of accomplishment and anticipation for continued learning.

### 3.7. Exhibition of Children Works

The series of activities for the *Pancasila* profile project ended with a harvest/exhibition of the work carried out in each school. The harvest/exhibition of the work was carried out in each class. In this activity, the children exhibited the work they had completed during the process of working on the *Pancasila* student profile project according to the theme of each school. The differences between the two schools are: in TK IM, each class has a different product from the other classes, while in TK N Banda Aceh, all classes have the same work product.

The culminating exhibition of student work represents a powerful demonstration of project-based learning outcomes aligned with the *Pancasila* Student Profile. This "harvest" phase serves multiple pedagogical functions, functioning as both an assessment tool and a celebration of children's achievements. The variation in implementation between the two schools, differentiated products at TK IT IM versus unified products at TK N B, reveals an intentional flexibility in applying the *Pancasila* framework to different institutional contexts.

At TK IT IM (Figure 10), the diversity of class products reflects the school's emphasis on individual creativity and child-centered learning (the *Kreatif* dimension). This approach likely fostered greater ownership and self-expression among students, as each class developed unique interpretations of the project theme. The visual evidence in Figure 10 probably shows children proudly presenting their creations, with facial expressions and body language conveying confidence and accomplishment, key indicators of successful character development. Conversely, TK N B uniform products (Figure 11) emphasize the *Bergotong Royong* (mutual cooperation) dimension, demonstrating how collective effort can create cohesive outcomes. This approach may have strengthened community bonds and shared purpose among students. Figure 8 likely depicts a more standardized display, with children learning the value of teamwork and coordinated effort.





Figure 10. TK IT IM Children Harvest Their Work



Figure 11. Children's Work Exhibition Activities at TK N B

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Strategy for Implementing the Pancasila Student Profile Through Differentiated Learning Approaches in Early Childhood Education at Banda Aceh's Penggerak School

The learning process of the *Pancasila* student profile implemented at the two ECE *Penggerak* schools carry out the national project theme "*Imajinasi dan Kreativitasku/My imagination and Creativity*". The implementation was carried out through co-curricular activities planned in the project teaching module and included children's competencies (Learning Achievements/CP), learning content, and learning load for early childhood. The dimensions of the *Pancasila* Student Profile used in the project at both schools are the first dimension, the third dimension, and the sixth dimension. The three are (1) *Beriman Bertakwa kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa dan Berakhlak Mulia/Having faith in God Almighty and having noble character*, (2) *Bergotong Royong/Working together* and (3) *Kreatif/Creative*. The following are some of the strategies implemented by the two ECE *Penggerak* schools:

#### 4.1.1. Internalization of Islamic values in learning materials

The values of the *Pancasila* student profile are integrated in their implementation by the two ECE *Penggerak* schools through materials that have been planned in teaching modules and taught by teachers to early childhood (Maryani & Sayekti, 2023) through differentiated learning (Fitriani & Fajriana, 2025). The values of each dimension of the *Pancasila* Student Profile raised in each school are presented through the determination of materials in the teaching modules. The materials that appear in the planning of the teaching modules of the two schools are Islamic materials taught in the form of short surahs, daily hadiths, daily prayers, names of angels, *Asmaul Husna*, and prayer practices. These materials are given to early childhood every day during the learning process as a form of habituation ('Ulwan, 2015). These materials appear in the initial journal activities and final journals of learning on each day that the *Pancasila* Student Profile strengthening project activities are carried out at school. These materials integrate Islamic values in learning with character values in the *Pancasila* Student Profile dimension.

The integration of Islamic values reflects the first dimension of the *Pancasila* Student Profile, namely the Dimension of Beriman, Bertakwa kepada Tuhan YME dan Berakhlak Mulia. All dimensions in the *Pancasila* student profile, when associated with Islamic teachings, feel very closely related (Musdalipah et al., 2023). The implementation of these Islamic dimensional values is applied during the initial learning journal activities, such as the activities of reciting the Iqra' and the Iqra' deposit. The process of internalizing Islamic values is reintegrated into the routine activities of reading short surahs and daily prayers, recognizing *Asmaul Husna*, recognizing the names of prophets and angels, the pillars of Islam, and the pillars of faith. As taught by teacher AF, "Attitude of praying! Praying after eating." The habit of praying together every Friday is also a reflection of the implementation of the appreciation of the attributes of Allah in daily worship rituals. In this activity, teachers integrate the values of appreciation of the attributes of Allah, which are the basis for carrying out worship rituals throughout their lives. The implementation of these Islamic dimension values is also carried out during the istighfar activity process after prayer. The process of internalizing values that is carried out provides deep meaning to the formation of moral values that will help them in the future, as stated by Irfan and Sain "Islamic education nurtures a sense of inner peace and contentment within children, enabling them to find solace and fulfilment amidst the complexities of the modern world (Irfan & Sain, 2024).

#### 4.1.2. Creating a Sense of Belonging to Learning Activities

Presenting a sense of ownership in the learning process of the *Pancasila* Student Profile is important, especially with the implementation of the learning process through differentiated learning. This sense of belonging is created by the teacher in the child towards ownership of learning activities in the classroom. This is fostered by the class teacher in the opening of the learning activity by conducting discussion and question-and-answer activities with the children about what play activities they will plan and carry out in the classroom. The teacher provides opportunities for children to express their choice of play activities. The teacher will also later provide an opportunity for children to propose what objects they will bring from home as their teaching media. The process of using these trigger questions provides an opportunity for children to express their thoughts and interests (Brady et al., 1999; Jirout & Klahr, 2020; Murray, 2022; Pandu et al., 2023; Winarti & Kurniastuti, 2023), thus encouraging a sense of ownership of the play activities they do. In addition, the freedom that arises in the process of asking and answering these trigger questions fosters key elements of the *Kreatif* dimension of the *Pancasila* Student Profile, namely *Menghasilkan karya dan Tindakan yang Orisinal*. Children are encouraged to produce work according to their interests and preferences when starting project activities together with the class teacher.

This can be seen from the opportunity to choose the child's favourite picture/pattern before they make a project. Children are given the freedom to choose a picture of an airplane, rocket, car, or doll for each of their works, according to the agreement on the type of work that the child wants to produce themselves. This is due to the support of a sense of pleasure and interest that arises from the freedom to express ideas and choose activities, as stated by Djamarah (2011) that children will be actively involved, diligent and disciplined in learning and diligent in activities if they feel happy and interested in the activities they do (Putri & Adirakasiwi, 2021).

#### 4.1.3. Application of various learning methods for children

Differentiation is also applied by these two ECE *Penggerak* schools in implementing the *Pancasila* Student Profile through the use of different early childhood learning methods (Fitriani & Fajriana, 2025). The variation in the use of early childhood learning methods during learning provides a learning atmosphere that involves all children's learning profiles (Deluma et al., 2023) (Bin Abd Aziz et al., 2022; Jayanti et al., 2023), question and answer methods (Muti & Nuraeni, 2023; Muzdalifah & Novitawati, 2024), singing methods (Dean, 2021; Kultti, 2013; Mukti et al., 2023; Novianti & Watini, 2022; Winsler et al., 2011), storytelling methods (Brown et al., 2011; Fitriani et al., 2021; Mariam & Lestari, 2021; Tillott et al., 2024; Walan & Enochsson, 2019), outbound methods (Fitriani et al., 2022), habituation methods (Anggraeni et al., 2021; Colombo et al., 2004;

Nurhayati et al., 2024; Wulandari et al., 2024), and demonstration methods (Cardon, 2013; Erna et al., 2024; Hariyani et al., 2024; Krcmar, 2011; Plummer & Ricketts, 2023).

The high intensity of the use of learning methods during this learning process gives rise to a tendency for children to do activities together according to their profiles and talents. Children will even be more willing to be involved in learning activities that are able to bring up key elements of collaboration, caring, and sharing from the values of the Dimension of *Bergotong Royong*. The values of the cooperation dimension emerged in TK IT IM when the children brought some of the learning media materials collected from their respective homes with their parents. This dimension was also seen during the process of using glue guns in TK IT IM, where the teacher helped the children assemble patterns and use glue guns. Meanwhile, in TK N B, the values of the *Bergotong Royong* dimension emerged in the learning process, such as children often helping each other in distributing the necessary items for activities, which they often call "mutual passing". Children also provide assistance to other children if they need help and share items with each other, for example when the teacher asks children to bring plastic bottles and it turns out that some children bring them and some do not, then the child who brings more will share them with friends who do not bring them.

#### 4.1.4. Provision of a Variety of Media and Learning Resources for Children

This study found that the dominant use of learning resources in the ECE *Penggerak* school was in the form of videos from YouTube (Amada & Hakim, 2022; Castonguay & Messina, 2022; Dong, 2025; Kher Jaggi & Sahu, 2025; Panjaitan et al., 2023), image media (Angraini et al., 2019; Wahyundari & Handayani, 2021), followed by the use of the school environment (Alcántara-Porcuna et al., 2022; Fitri & Hadiyanto, 2022; Havu-Nuutinen & Niikko, 2014; Mayar et al., 2022) and teachers (Faiz & Faridah, 2022; Fang et al., 2024; Komalasari, 2019; Lee et al., 2018; Rüdisüli et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2025). Differentiated learning requires the provision of varied media and learning resources (Susdamayanti, 2024). This is intended to provide learning opportunities and opportunities for children to understand, based on the different learning needs of each child. Digital media such as YouTube videos are used to show children various videos related to various types of work, from used materials and how to make them and show videos related to environmental cleanliness and maintaining environmental cleanliness so that diseases do not come through flies so that the video shown is the life cycle of flies. For the surrounding environment, the teacher invites children to play while learning to count by inviting them to look for small stones or pebbles that are put into plastic bottles and then count them together.

#### 4.1.5. Implementation of Tri-Sentra Education from the Beginning of Learning

The values of the *Pancasila* Student Profile are also implemented at the ECE *Penggerak* schools by ensuring the involvement of parents/guardians in learning. The class also involves cooperation between parents and children, namely by inviting parents to work on and produce works from used goods to be exhibited or sold at the peak of the project activities later. This is a reflection of the implementation of the tri-sentra education, which is a reflection of Bronfenbrenner's theory (Farineau, 2016; Fitriani et al., 2023). Tri-Sentra pendidikan, also known as Three centres of education are school efforts to involve the environment around the school and also parents to be involved in the learning process for early childhood (Madya Gerda et al., 2021; Mufidah, 2022). Parental involvement is carried out through the WhatsApp group (Jordan, 2023; Moodley, 2019; Nellyana et al., 2024). Teachers involve parents from the beginning of the P5 project learning process. Teachers also urge parents to bring tools and materials that can be used when the project is carried out. Communication is carried out from the beginning of the project learning process by informing the participants of the purpose of the activity and requesting that they bring some media that can be used during the project activities. Parents of students are again involved when the project work process is carried out, although very few parents are present. Parental involvement is again seen when the exhibition of children's work is carried out at school.

#### 4.1.6. Modification of Project Flow Implementation

The implementation of differentiated learning of the *Pancasila* Student Profile flow can also be done with different flow stages. The results of the study showed that the two schools used different flow stages in implementing their P5 project. The teacher designed a project teaching module containing the stages of the *Pancasila* Student Profile project at TK IT IM with five stages, namely (1) preparation stage, (2) preliminary stage, (3) field experience stage, (4) problem processing stage, and (5) exhibition/action stage. Meanwhile, the implementation of the flow at TK N B Banda Aceh has three (3) stages, namely (1) initial stage, (2) development stage, and (3) conclusion stage. The implementation of this different flow shows the differentiation process carried out at the school stage. This is also shown in other schools with a project duration of 2 weeks and using 4 stages, namely (1) recognize stage, (2) investigate stage, (3) do stage, and (5) share stage (Maryani & Sayekti, 2023).

#### 4.2. Research Contribution

This research makes several significant contributions to the field of early childhood education, particularly in the context of character development and differentiated learning in Indonesia. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on post-pandemic character education and differentiated learning in early childhood settings. By examining the implementation of the *Pancasila* Student Profile in ECE *Penggerak* Schools, it provides a model for integrating national values, Islamic education, and child-centered pedagogy. The principles of differentiated instruction observed in the *Penggerak* schools could be analytically framed through the seminal work of Carol Tomlinson, particularly her concepts of differentiating content, process, product, and learning environment based on student readiness, interest, and learning profile. Furthermore, the Profil Pelajar Pancasila shares a fundamental correlation with the OECD's Learning Compass 2030, as both frameworks prioritize the development of holistic student competencies, such as cognitive, social, and emotional skills, required to thrive in a complex and rapidly changing world. Similarly, this Indonesian initiative aligns with UNESCO's emphasis on education that fosters global citizenship, sustainable development, and a culture of peace, reflecting a common international commitment to value-based education.

#### 4.3. Limitations

This study provides valuable insights into the implementation of the *Pancasila* Student Profile through differentiated learning at ECE *Penggerak* Schools in Banda Aceh. However, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted in only two schools, one public and one private, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other ECE institutions in Indonesia. A broader sample size, including more schools from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, would strengthen the validity of the results. Then, the study relied heavily on teacher interviews and observations over a short period (two weeks), which may not fully capture the long-term effects of differentiated learning on children's character development. Future research could employ longitudinal studies to assess sustained impacts. Additionally, the study primarily focused on the reliance on teacher self-reports, which may introduce bias; incorporating student and parent perspectives through surveys or focus groups could provide a more holistic view. Lastly, while differentiated learning was emphasized, the study did not deeply examine how teachers assess individual learning progress. Developing standardized yet flexible assessment tools tailored to differentiated learning in ECE would be beneficial for educators.

#### 4.4. Suggestions

To address limitations, future studies should expand the scope to include multiple regions in Indonesia, incorporate mixed-method approaches (quantitative and qualitative), and explore the role of digital tools in supporting differentiated learning. Policymakers and educators should also consider providing professional development for teachers to enhance their capacity in implementing differentiated learning effectively. By addressing these gaps, future research can



contribute to more robust and scalable strategies for character education in Indonesia's early childhood education system.

## 5. Conclusion

This study contributes to early childhood education by showing how differentiated learning can be effectively integrated with the Pancasila Student Profile in ECE Penggerak schools. Theoretically, it connects Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory with Vygotskian social constructivism, demonstrating how culturally grounded character education can be embedded in daily classroom practices. Practically, it provides an adaptable framework that links national values with children's diverse learning needs, filling a critical gap in post-pandemic character education.

The findings reveal that differentiated learning in two Banda Aceh schools successfully fostered dimensions of faith, cooperation, and creativity through activities such as Islamic habituation, project-based tasks, and parental collaboration. The integration of varied strategies—storytelling, repetition, and hands-on projects—ensured inclusivity, while the involvement of families and communities reinforced Bronfenbrenner's tri-center education model. These results highlight the adaptability of project-based learning in embedding values across different contexts, strengthening originality, teamwork, and ownership among children.

This study offers a replicable model for values-based early childhood education that respects cultural diversity while supporting UNESCO's 2030 holistic development goals. Although limited in scope and duration, the research provides valuable policy insights for teacher training, assessment, curriculum adaptation, and community partnerships. By extending future studies through longitudinal tracking, digital integration, and comparative analyses, this work lays the groundwork for developing inclusive and evidence-based approaches to character education in pluralistic societies.

## Declarations

### Author contribution statement

Dewi Fitriani served as the primary investigator, leading the conceptualization, design, and execution of the study. She was responsible for conducting literature reviews, formulating research questions, designing the methodology, collecting and analyzing data, and drafting the initial manuscript. Her hands-on involvement in fieldwork, data interpretation, and problem-solving ensured the study's coherence and academic rigor. Additionally, she coordinated with the co-authors, integrating their feedback to refine the research. Teuku Zulfikar contributed by refining the theoretical framework, offering methodological insights, and ensuring the study's alignment with established scholarly standards. His feedback strengthened the analytical depth and validity of the findings. Habiburrahim played a key role in contextualizing the research within broader academic discourse, suggesting improvements to the manuscript's structure, and verifying the ethical and pedagogical implications of the study. His mentorship was instrumental in enhancing the clarity and impact of the final output.

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### Data availability statement

The dataset generated and analyzed during the research is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.



## Declaration of interests statement

All authors declare that they have no financial or personal interests that could influence the work presented in this manuscript.

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