

**STRENGTHENING STUDENTS' CHARACTERS IN THE PANCASILA  
STUDENT PROFILE OF THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM AT SMP  
NEGERI 13 PALEMBANG**

**A THESIS**

**By**

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**ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM  
LANGUAGE AND ARTS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**



**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

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Certified that the thesis entitled "Strengthening Students' Characters in the Pancasila Student Profile of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 13 Palembang" is my work and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethics and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face the court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang, April 2024

The Undersigned



Yulianniza Marshanda

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## DEDICATION

**This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Noviarini and Zulkarnain. I am blessed for the immense support and encouragement given to me. Additionally, I dedicate my thesis to my sisters, Dina Aprilia Permatasari and Dini Aprilia Permatasari. I sincerely appreciate all of your help throughout my toughest moments in the making of this thesis. I cherish your support and assistance.**

**This thesis is also dedicated to me. I am proud of the person I am, someone who never gives up in the face of difficulty and hopelessness. I admire your constant pursuit of improvement.**

## MOTTO:

**حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ**

**“Allah is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs. And (He is) the Excellent Protector and the Excellent Helper”**

**(Surah 3 Verse 173, Surah 8 Verse 40)**

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The writer wishes this thesis can be useful for a variety of stakeholders especially those who studying English and supporting quality of education.

Palembang, April 2024

The Researcher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yulianniza' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Yulianniza Marshanda

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |      |
|---|------|
| TITLE PAGE.....   | i    |
| APPROVAL.....   | ii   |
| COMMITTEE APPROVAL.....   | iii  |
| DECLARATION OF PLAGIARISM.....  | iv   |
| DEDICATION.....   | v    |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....   | vi   |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS.....  | ix   |
| LIST OF TABLES.....   | xi   |
| LIST OF FIGURES.....  | xii  |
| LIST OF APPENDICES.....   | xiii |
| ABSTRACT.....   | xiv  |
| CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....   | 1    |
| 1.1 Background of the Study.....  | 1    |
| 1.2 The Problems of the Study.....  | 5    |
| 1.3 The Objectives of the Study.....  | 6    |
| 1.4 Significance of the Study.....  | 6    |
| CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW.....   | 7    |
| 2.1 Framework of the Study.....   | 7    |
| 2.2 Merdeka Curriculum.....   | 7    |
| 2.3 Pancasila Student Profile.....  | 9    |
| 2.4 Possible Difficulties Faced by the Teachers in Strengthening Students’<br>Characters..... | 12   |
| 2.5 Possible Solutions to the Difficulties.....   | 15   |
| 2.6 Previous Related Studies.....   | 18   |
| CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....   | 21   |
| 3.1 Method of the Study.....  | 21   |
| 3.2 Site and Participants.....  | 22   |
| 3.3 Operational Definitions.....  | 23   |
| 3.4 Data Collection.....  | 24   |
| 3.5 Data Analysis.....  | 27   |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| CHAPTER IV RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....        | 29  |
| 4.1 Findings of the Study .....                         | 29  |
| 4.2 Discussion.....                                     | 60  |
| 4.2.1. Ways to Strengthen the Students' Characters..... | 60  |
| 4.2.3. Solutions to the Difficulties .....              | 67  |
| CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS.....               | 92  |
| 5.1 Conclusions .....                                   | 92  |
| 5.2 Suggestions .....                                   | 95  |
| REFERENCES .....  | 97  |
| APPENDICES .....  | 102 |

## **LIST OF TABLES**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 1 The Participants of the Study .....  | 23 |
| Table 2 The Observation Sheet .....  | 25 |
| Table 3 The Research Questions and Instruments Used .....  | 26 |
| Table 4 Themes and Codes of Interview Results .....  | 41 |
| Table 5 The Strategies for Strengthening Students' Characters in the Pancasila<br>Student Profile at SMP Negeri 13 Palembang ..... | 70 |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 1 Teaching Module of VII.6.....  | 56 |
| Figure 2 Teaching Module of VIII.6 .....                                      | 57 |
| Figure 3 Project Module of 7 <sup>th</sup> grade academic year 2023/2024..... | 58 |
| Figure 4 Project Module of 8 <sup>th</sup> grade academic year 2023/2024..... | 59 |

## LIST OF APPENDICES

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Appendix A Usul Judul Skripsi .....  | 103 |
| Appendix B Surat Keputusan Pembimbing Skripsi.....   | 104 |
| Appendix C Surat Keputusan Izin Penelitian FKIP UNSRI .....  | 106 |
| Appendix D Surat Keputusan Izin Penelitian Badan Kesatuan Bangsa dan Politik<br>(KESBANGPOL) .....                 | 107 |
| Appendix E Surat Keputusan Izin Penelitian Dinas Pendidikan Kota Palembang<br>.....                                | 108 |
| Appendix F Surat Keputusan Sudah Melakukan Penelitian di SMP Negeri 13<br>Palembang .....                          | 109 |
| Appendix G Surat Keterangan Validasi.....  | 110 |
| Appendix H Bebas Pinjam Buku Perpustakaan UNSRI dan Perpustakaan FKIP<br>.....                                     | 115 |
| Appendix I Teachers Module VII.6.....  | 117 |
| Appendix J Teachers Module VIII.6 .....  | 118 |
| Appendix K Project Module Grade VII.....   | 119 |
| Appendix L Project Module Grade VIII .....   | 120 |
| Appendix M Observation Sheet in the Classroom and in the Project .....   | 121 |
| Appendix N Documentation of Observation in VII.6 during English Subjects..   | 123 |
| Appendix O Documentation of Observation in VIII.6 during English Subjects.   | 124 |
| Appendix P Documentation of Observation in VII.6 in Pancasila student profile<br>strengthening project (P5) .....  | 126 |
| Appendix Q Documentation of Observation in VIII.6 in Pancasila student profile<br>strengthening project (P5) ..... | 128 |
| Appendix R Teacher Interview Photo.....  | 131 |
| Appendix S Teachers Member Check .....   | 132 |
| Appendix T Interview Questions for Teachers .....  | 134 |
| Appendix U Teachers Interview Transcript .....   | 135 |
| Appendix V Thesis Consultation Card .....  | 136 |

## **STRENGTHENING STUDENTS' CHARACTERS IN THE PANCASILA STUDENT PROFILE OF THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM AT SMP NEGERI 13 PALEMBANG**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into how students' characters in the Pancasila student profile of the Merdeka curriculum were strengthened at SMP Negeri 13 Palembang, how teachers dealt with the difficulties, and how teachers coped with the difficulties. The participants were students from classes VII.6 and VIII.6 and two English teachers. To address the study's problem, the researcher used a qualitative research method using the following instruments: observations, interviews, and document reviews. The findings of this study revealed that to strengthen students' characters, teachers attempted to incorporate Pancasila student profile elements into English subjects and conduct co-curricular activities such as the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). In English subjects, the elements were aligned with the subject's learning objectives. Meanwhile, in P5, the focus was on reinforcing the elements through participation in a craft project. However, only specific elements could be applied. From the interviews, the difficulties that teachers face include student apathy, a lack of resources, and a lack of physical space. Despite the obstacles, the teachers strived to solve the problem by proposing solutions, such as parental involvement, financial assistance, and infrastructure development to ensure the Pancasila student profile was implemented effectively. Ultimately, this study demonstrates the school's commitment to holistic education and student character development by incorporating the Pancasila student profile in the Merdeka curriculum into learning activities both inside and outside of the classroom.

*Keywords: students' characters, Pancasila student profile, Merdeka curriculum*

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces (1) the background of the study, (2) the problems of the study, (3) the objectives of the study, and (4) the significance of the study.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Education is a broad and ambiguous concept that influences children through families, churches, the media, and other social and cultural influences. Conversely, the curriculum is a specific, tangible subject that relates decision-making to particular institutions, such as schools, churches, nonprofit organizations, or government programs. Curriculum, unlike education, requires those who discuss it to address the subject matter that should be covered. While education is frequently discussed without regard for the subject, every curriculum discussion must address the topic somehow (Kershaw, 2010).

The primary goal of the curriculum is to assist anyone interested in educational improvement in recognizing when rhetoric about education obscures the underlying curricular issues that are critical to education (Kershaw, 2010).

The curriculum is fundamental in the Indonesian education system. It also plays a vital part in the success of the educational process and is one of the elements that can contribute considerably to improving students' qualitative potential (Ayu & Lestari, 2023).

The Indonesian education curriculum is constantly changing. Improving education is critical for establishing a national education standard. The transition from the 2013 curriculum to the Merdeka curriculum demonstrates the government's efforts to modernize national education. The current curriculum covers all academic units, including early childhood education, primary schools, junior and senior high schools, vocational schools, special education, and equivalency. The Merdeka Curriculum (Independent Curriculum) empowers

educational units, teachers, and students to innovate, create, be creative, and study independently (Daga, 2021).

The new learning paradigm refers to the Merdeka Curriculum's implementation. It ensures student-centered learning practices (Sopiansyah et al., 2022). Learning is a cycle in this new paradigm; arranging the learning process, developing the competency standards, and implementing evaluations are the first steps in enhancing learning and helping students get the desired competencies. Teachers have complete freedom in the learning process in this new learning paradigm, especially when creating instructional plans and evaluations specific to each student's requirements and characteristics (Faiz et al., 2022). In addition, under the new learning paradigm, the Pancasila student profile directs all national education system policies and improvements, including learning and assessment.

Teachers primarily teach the Merdeka Curriculum's new paradigm. Teachers' quality is the most critical influence on students' academic achievement and well-being (Lestari et al., 2022). Teachers are essential in the world of education. A teacher performs their tasks effectively while adhering to the mandate and ethical obligations of the job at hand. A teacher must be creative, imaginative, and dedicated to continuous education, particularly in today's constantly shifting and technologically advanced digital age. Teachers' quality is intrinsically tied to their ability to facilitate learning.

The Merdeka Curriculum (Independent Curriculum) has a Pancasila student profile. The Pancasila Student Profile (PPP) defines the skills the Indonesian education system aims to instill in students with strong character. The goal is to foster Indonesian students as continuous students, embodying qualities aligned with Pancasila values. This connection is crucial as it equips them to be not only democratic citizens of Indonesia but also outstanding and productive individuals in the 21st century. The expectation is that these students will enthusiastically contribute to global development by promoting sustainability and adaptability in the face of diverse difficulties (Anggraena et al., 2021).



The curriculum sets out to achieve six integral elements within the Pancasila student profile, which include (1) fostering faith, fear of God Almighty, and a noble character, (2) embracing global diversity, (3) promoting mutual cooperation, (4) nurturing independence, (5) honing critical thinking skills, and (6) fostering creativity (Juliani & Bastian, 2023). It is crucial to view these six profiles holistically as an integrated unit. The Pancasila Student Profile cannot be effectively implemented if any one dimension is overlooked. Strengthening the cultural values of Indonesia and Pancasila is the key to realizing these six characteristics, serving as the fundamental underpinning for all national development objectives. These attributes are cultivated in students through the cultural fabric of educational units, intracurricular learning, projects designed to enhance the Pancasila student profile, and extracurricular activities (Anggraena et al., 2021).

Furthermore, to prepare students for real-world difficulties, the Ministry of Education and Culture is doing beyond just incorporating the Pancasila student profile within the classroom. They have also introduced the Pancasila student profile strengthening project as a cocurricular activity, enabling students to engage in learning experiences beyond the confines of the traditional classroom (Ristek, 2021).

Although there is urgency for teachers to instill a variety of characteristics aimed at strengthening students' characters through the Pancasila student profile, the implementation process is fraught with difficulties. These challenges include dealing with large class sizes, making it difficult for teachers to manage many students. Furthermore, there are issues such as a lack of learning materials, difficulties in instilling a national spirit in students, difficulties in comprehending and addressing the diverse backgrounds from which students' characters emerge, a lack of teachers' knowledge and training related to character education, wavering commitment, insufficient support from various stakeholders, teacher unfamiliarity with new policies, and difficulties in addressing varying levels of cohesion. Likewise, students need help incorporating habituation activities into their everyday routines and cultural contexts.

Nonetheless, these issues can be solved through a variety of alternative solutions. For instance, carrying out effective class management strategies for navigating large class sizes, having teachers become role models and instill attitudes through personal example, encouraging open communication with students while closely observing their behavior, ensuring consistent perceptions and strategies among teachers regarding character education, encouraging teachers' internal creativity by assigning diverse tasks or projects using various learning models, and providing students with opportunities to express themselves. Moreover, the Ministry of Education and Culture must evaluate and create an appropriate framework for training schools and teachers to implement the Pancasila student profile strengthening project effectively.

Despite the challenges associated with the Pancasila student profile, several studies have been conducted to assess its implementation. These studies focused on examining the impact of the Pancasila student profile strengthening project on students' character development, highlighting the role of teachers as facilitators within the Pancasila student profile framework. Additionally, they investigated how the independent learning policy contributes to developing the Pancasila student profile.

The findings of previous studies indicate significant positive influences on students' traits. These include the promotion of entrepreneurship, the cultivation of community cohesion in attitudes and positive behavior patterns, and encouraging both the Pancasila student profile and students' creativity. Furthermore, the studies underscored the importance of addressing goals, content, materials, and teaching methods in the Merdeka Curriculum. Additionally, they emphasized the pivotal role of school counselors in providing guidance and counseling to implement the Merdeka curriculum effectively through the Pancasila student profile.

Although the existing studies have explored various facets of the Pancasila student profile, they need to conduct observational analyses conducted during the actual execution of the Pancasila student profile within the classroom. Additionally, these studies must include a comprehensive examination of the

challenges teachers face, both within and outside the classroom, while executing the Pancasila student profile. Furthermore, the studies still need to propose solutions to mitigate these issues. Consequently, there is a clear need for research that addresses these issues and provides a thorough understanding of the dynamics and potential hurdles associated with incorporating the Pancasila student profile in educational settings. Such studies would contribute valuable insights and practical solutions to enhance the effectiveness of implementing the Pancasila student profile.

Furthermore, as one of the crucial subjects, teachers in English subjects must begin to improve and prepare themselves to welcome and succeed in the independent learning curriculum. Therefore, in the Merdeka Curriculum, with its six elements of the Pancasila student profile, English teachers can also play a role in strengthening students' characters based on the Pancasila student profile. In keeping with this goal, the researcher is intrigued in researching the role of English teachers in strengthening students' characters in the Pancasila student profile of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 13 Palembang to find out whether there are any notable changes in students' characters after the implementation within the classroom and in the project, teachers difficulties in implementing Pancasila student profile, and teachers strategy to tackle the issues in executing the Pancasila student profile.

Motivated by the issues, the researcher chose SMP Negeri 13 Palembang as the site to conduct this research. The researcher believes that the students have positive behavior and excellent English skills since it is one of the exceptional schools in Palembang that offers some facilities to support language skills and establish an inclusive and safe environment where everyone is included.

## **1.2 The Problems of the Study**

The study problems are expressed in the following questions about the background.

1. How are the students' characters in the Pancasila student profile of the Merdeka Curriculum strengthened at SMP Negeri 13 Palembang?

2. What difficulties do teachers face in strengthening students' characters in the Pancasila student profile of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 13 Palembang?
3. How do teachers cope with the difficulties in strengthening students' characters in the Pancasila student profile of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 13 Palembang?

### **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

The study objectives are based on the problems stated, such as:

1. To know the students' characters in the Pancasila student profile of the Merdeka Curriculum strengthened at SMP Negeri 13 Palembang.
2. To know what difficulties teachers face in strengthening students' characters in the Pancasila student profile of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 13 Palembang.
3. To know how teachers cope with the difficulties in strengthening students' characters in the Pancasila student profile of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 13 Palembang.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is believed to help give some information relating to the role of English teachers in strengthening students' characters in the Pancasila student profile both in the classroom and during the Pancasila student profile strengthening project of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 13 Palembang, in supporting quality education and in providing insightful information for a variety of stakeholders, including teachers and other researchers.

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