

## Prototype Curriculum: Concepts and Its Role in Strengthening Character Education After the Covid-19 Pandemic

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### Abstract

The government is making efforts to restore learning by designing a prototype curriculum because the current 2013 curriculum is seen as inflexible during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study aims to critically and reflectively examine the concept and role of the prototype curriculum in strengthening character education. This study uses a qualitative design with a literature approach. Data collection in this study was carried out through documentation techniques. Data analysis of the study was carried out through content analysis techniques. The results of the study show that the Prototype Curriculum is a government policy to restore the quality of learning that has declined due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Strengthening character education in the Prototype Curriculum is emphasized on strengthening the profile of Pancasila students which is strengthened by project-based learning. The government/agencies/relevant stakeholders must conduct workshops and socialization related to the Prototype Curriculum so that various obstacles are not found in its implementation.

**Keywords:** prototype curriculum; character education; Covid-19 pandemic

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## INTRODUCTION

The success of the world of education in achieving and realizing goals requires a curriculum that is always relevant to the times (Firman, 2020; Wiyono, 2018). Looking at the world of Indonesian education shows that the government is making efforts to restore learning by designing a prototype curriculum. This is done because the 2013 Curriculum which is still in effect is seen as inflexible with the Covid-19 pandemic, the material is too dense, boring, lacking variety, lack of hours to explore the material, and digital technology has not been used optimally in the learning process (Zaking, 2022).

The Prototype Curriculum is provided as an additional option for educational units to restore learning during 2022-2024. This is because the pandemic has caused a significant loss of literacy and numeracy learning. This data is supported by research results from the Ministry of Education and Culture with a sample of 3,391 Elementary School (SD) students from 7 regencies/cities in 4 provinces, in January 2020 and April 2021 which showed that "the progress of learning for one year (grade 1 SD) before the pandemic was equal to 129 points for literacy and 78 points for numeracy. After the pandemic, learning progress during grade 1 was significantly reduced

(learning loss). For literacy, this learning loss is equivalent to 6 months of study. For numeracy, the learning loss is equivalent to 5 months of learning.” In addition, the prototype curriculum encourages learning according to students' abilities, and provides wider space for character development and basic competencies (Kemendikbudristek, 2021).

Therefore, researchers are interested in critically and reflectively about the concept and role of the prototype curriculum in strengthening character education after the Covid-19 pandemic. Research on the curriculum has been widely studied, such as linking it to development management (Pakpahan et al., 2021), Independent Learning (Baharuddin, 2021), online learning problems (Putri & Suyadi, 2021), and the design of learning implementation planning (Astuty & Suharto, 2021). Other research also examines the curriculum in terms of online learning (Zahrawati & Indah, 2021), training in making lesson plans (Faradita & Afiani, 2021), and learning models (Rokhimawan et al., 2022).

Several previous studies have shown findings regarding the Prototype Curriculum, namely “a new paradigm in the prototype curriculum (Faiz et al., 2022), strengthening the profile of Pancasila students and their implementation (Rachmawati et al., 2022), language skills in learning outcomes (Mulyadi & Wikanengsih, 2022), its implementation during the pandemic (Rosmana et al., 2022b), its implementation plan (Suryadien et al., 2022), the personal quality of educators (Ilah, 2020), freedom in the curriculum (Rosmana et al., 2022a), scratch as problem solving computational thinking (Rozandy & Koten, 2021), refreshing education with its implementation (Isnarofik, 2022) and reviewing it through an integration-interconnection approach (Sadewa, 2022)”. In addition, the findings of these studies were limited to the prototype curriculum and did not provide specifications regarding strengthening character education as was done in this study. This study aims to critically and reflectively examine the concept and role of the Prototype Curriculum in strengthening character education in the post-Covid-19 pandemic era.

## **METHODS**

This study uses a literature study design with a philosophical approach (Bakker & Zubair, 1990). A philosophical approach is used to critically and reflectively examine the concept and role of the Prototype Curriculum in strengthening character education in the post-Covid-19 pandemic era. Data collection is carried out through documentation techniques by collecting various references that are related to the object of study. Furthermore, data analysis was carried out through content analysis to draw a conclusion by identifying the uniqueness of certain meanings in a factual and structured manner (Holsti, 1969).

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Concept of Prototype Curriculum in Strengthening Character Education Post Covid-19 Pandemic**

The results of the study show that the Prototype Curriculum is part of a systemic effort to overcome the learning crisis due to the low basic competence and high inequality between regions in student learning outcomes as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. In other words, the Prototype Curriculum is a policy set by the government to restore learning after the Covid-19 pandemic. The prototype curriculum has several main characteristics that support the recovery of learning after the Covid-19 pandemic. First, the development of soft skills and character (noble morals, mutual cooperation, diversity, independence, critical reasoning, creativity) gets a special portion through project-based learning. Second, focus on essential material so that there is sufficient time for in-depth study of basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy. Third, the flexibility for

teachers to carry out learning according to students' abilities (teach at the right level) and make adjustments to the local context and content (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

In addition, the Prototype Curriculum also has special characteristics in supporting the recovery of learning after the Covid-19 pandemic. First, the characteristics at the PAUD level include playing activities as the main learning process; strengthening early literacy and character building through play-learning activities based on children's reading books; foundation phase to improve school readiness; Project-based learning to strengthen the profile of Pancasila Students is carried out through holiday celebrations and celebrations of local traditions. Second, the characteristics at the elementary level include strengthening basic competencies and holistic understanding with the aim of understanding the surrounding environment, natural and social science subjects combined as natural and social science subjects (IPAS), integration of computational thinking in Indonesian language, mathematics, and IPAS, and English as an elective subject; Project-based learning to strengthen the profile of Pancasila Students is carried out at least 2 times in one academic year (Faiz et al., 2022).

Third, the characteristics at the junior high school level include adjustments to the development of digital technology, subjects; informatics is a compulsory subject; a guide for Informatics teachers is prepared to help novice teachers, so that subject teachers do not have to have an informatics education background; Project-based learning to strengthen the profile of Pancasila Students is carried out at least 3 times in one academic year. Fourth, the characteristics at the high school level, which are more flexible to suit student interests, because the choice is at the subject level (not specialization programs/ majors); in grade 10 students prepare themselves to determine the choice of subjects in grade 11; in grades 11 and 12 students take subjects from the Compulsory Subject Group, and choose subjects from the Mathematics, Social Sciences, Language, and Vocational Skills groups according to their interests, talents, and aspirations; Project-based learning to strengthen the profile of Pancasila Students is carried out at least 3 times in one academic year, and students write scientific essays as a graduation requirement (Rachmawati et al., 2022).

Fifth, characteristics at the SMK level, namely the world of work can be involved in the development of learning; simpler structure with two subject groups, namely General and Vocational increasing (60% to 70%); implementation of project-based learning by integrating related subjects; Field Work Practice (PKL) is a compulsory subject for at least 6 months (1 semester); students can choose subjects outside the program of expertise; special time allocation for projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students and work culture to improve soft skills (character from the world of work). Sixth, the characteristics at the SLB level, namely the learning outcomes of special education are made only for those who have intellectual disabilities; for students in special schools who do not have intellectual disabilities, learning outcomes are the same as regular schools of the same level, by applying the principle of curriculum modification; students in special schools also apply project-based learning to strengthen Pancasila students by carrying out the same theme as regular schools, with a depth of material and activities according to the characteristics and needs of students in special schools (Kemendikbudristek, 2021).

The results of the next study show that there are seven aspects that distinguish the Prototype curriculum from the previous curriculum. First, the curriculum structure refers to the Pancasila student profile which will be a reference in developing content standards, process standards, and assessment standards, or curriculum structures, learning outcomes, and learning assessments. Second, the terms KI (core competence) and KD (basic competence) were changed to learning outcomes (CP). KI and KD are competencies that must be achieved by students after the learning process. Third, thematic learning which was previously only limited to grades 4, 5, and 6 of elementary school, in the Prototype Curriculum thematic learning can be applied to junior high

and high school levels. On the other hand, at the elementary school level, subject-based learning can also be done, not just thematic ones.

Fourth, the number of hours of lessons is set per year. If in the previous curriculum the determination of the number of hours of lessons applies per week, in the Prototype Curriculum the number of hours of lessons is set per year so that schools have flexibility in regulating the implementation of learning activities. Fifth, collaborative learning applications. The application of collaborative learning in the form of projects aims to develop a profile of Pancasila students through experiential learning and integrate the essential competencies learned by students from various disciplines. Sixth, ICT subjects (information and communication technology) are taught again as informatics, which will be taught starting at the junior high school level (Rosmana et al., 2022a).

Seventh, social science subjects (IPAS). IPA's subjects (natural sciences) and IPS (social sciences) at the elementary level which have been independent so far will be taught simultaneously through IPAS. Furthermore, there are changes in high school which previously had majors such as science, social studies, and language in the prototype curriculum. In grade 10 students only prepare themselves to determine the choice of subjects in grade 11. Students take subjects from the compulsory subject group, and choose subjects from the Mathematics, Social Sciences, language, and vocational skills groups according to their interests and talents in grades 11 and 12 (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

### **The Role of the Prototype Curriculum in Strengthening Character Education After the Covid-19 Pandemic**

The concept and design of strengthening character education appears and has always been an important issue in the world of education. This departs from the view that it is necessary to rearrange and reposition character as the spirit or the deepest dimension of national education side by side with intellect which is reflected in competence. With a strong and resilient character and competence through a good education, various new needs, challenges, and demands can be met or overcome. Therefore, in addition to intellectual development, strengthening the character of students is very important in the Indonesian national education system. It is said so because basically education aims to develop the intellectual potentials and character of students (Firman & Hidayat, 2020).

The results of the study show that the Prototype Curriculum has a role in strengthening character education after the Covid-19 pandemic. Strengthening character education in the Prototype Curriculum is emphasized on strengthening the profile of Pancasila students. In the prototype curriculum, the Pancasila student profile strengthening project is highly emphasized for Indonesian educators and students. The Pancasila student profile describes the national education goals in more detail related to the ideals, vision, mission, and educational goals for students and all components of the education unit. The Pancasila student profile provides an overview of the character and abilities of Indonesian students. All learning programs and activities in the education unit aim at the end of the profile of Indonesian students. So that educators and students know what the state hopes for educational outcomes and try to make it happen together. Classroom learning for each program subject and activity at school is expected to support the achievement of the Pancasila student profile by including it in learning. This will also be strengthened by project-based learning with themes that support the development of the targeted competencies and characters (Rachmawati et al., 2022).

Project-based learning in the new paradigm curriculum is intended to be a forum for strengthening the profile of Pancasila students. Strengthening the profile of Pancasila students can also be done through celebration of holidays and celebrations of local traditions. There are several characteristics of the project-based learning method, namely: centrality. This means that the

project becomes the center of learning. Driving questions: Focused on questions or problems that direct students to find solutions and concepts or principles of an appropriate science. Constructive investigation: Students build their knowledge by conducting independent investigations. Here the teacher only acts as a facilitator. Autonomy: Project-based learning is student centered learning. In this case, students act as problem solvers of the problems to be discussed. Realism: Student activities are focused on work that is similar to the actual situation or real situation. Project-based learning can be done by students either individually or in groups. Through project-based learning, teachers can ask students to design something that can shape and improve students' creative abilities.

The results of the next study show that the emphasis on the character of students in the Prototype Curriculum is carried out through integrated subjects on the themes of the Pancasila student profile. There are at least six themes that can be developed in strengthening the profile of Pancasila students. The theme in question is, first, global climate change. The activities in this theme are tree planting and waste management. The target profile of Pancasila students includes independence, creativity, mutual cooperation, faith and piety. The integrated learning is IPAS and Religious and Character Education (PABP). While the time allocation is from July to September in the first semester. Second, local wisdom. The theme of local wisdom can be developed in the form of visits to cultural museums or other local wisdom places. The targets that can be developed are global diversity and critical reasoning. The integrated subjects are Social Studies, Civics, Cultural Arts, and Indonesian Language. The time that can be used is March of the second semester.

Third, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. The form of activity for this theme is the celebration of religious holidays. The target profile of Pancasila students that can be developed is global diversity. The integrated subjects, namely PPKN and Indonesian, can be used from February to March in the second semester. Fourth, wake up the soul and body. For this theme the form of activity is an exhibition of works. The targets that can be developed are mutual cooperation, creative, and independent. The integrated subjects are PJOK, English, Cultural Arts, and Mathematics. The time that can be used is November to December the first semester. Fifth, the voice of democracy. The form of activity from this theme is the election of the OSIS chairman, scouts, and PMR. The targets that can be developed are mutual cooperation, critical reasoning, and global diversity. Meanwhile, the integrated subjects for this theme are Social Studies, Civics, and Indonesian. The time allocation is from October to November in the first semester. Sixth, entrepreneurship. The forms of activities on the theme of entrepreneurship are bazaars, art performances, creative economy, making videos, and innovation. The targets of the Pancasila learning profile are creative, innovative, and love the environment. Learning that can be developed and integrated in this theme, namely Social Studies, Cultural Arts, and Informatics. The time that can be used is April to June in the second semester.

If examined more deeply, then things like this are a form of actualizing the nature of students through integrated subjects on the themes of the Pancasila student profile. According to Hasan Langgung as quoted by Firman (2017), the word *fitrah* in Arabic has the meaning as God's creation or creation, in the sense that humans have been given good potential by God. Therefore, even if they are not educated, humans will naturally conform to the teachings of religion, because they have been created according to them, unless that person is educated otherwise, namely being educated to deny religion. This explains that human nature tends to goodness, truth, beauty, nobility and holiness. In relation to strengthening character education which emphasizes the profile of Pancasila students, this will be strengthened when students grow according to their nature. Students who know their potential well and are facilitated to develop it will become a performance character that is easy to develop in everyday life (Remiswal & Firman, 2018).

The results of further studies show that the implementation of the Prototype Curriculum is supported by various aspects as a form of its role in strengthening the profile of Pancasila students. First, textbooks and supporting teaching tools. Textbooks, modules and other teaching tools are provided digitally through a digital platform for teachers. Schools can procure textbooks independently with regular BOS, local government support, and foundations. Printed books are provided through SIPLah with BOS funds, or self-printed. Second, training and mentoring of teachers, KS, and local governments. Independent training for teachers and KS through micro learning on digital platforms, mentoring for teachers/KS by first-generation schools, and mentoring for local governments. The profile of Pancasila students in the prototype curriculum is the ultimate goal of a learning activity that is closely related to the formation of the character of students. The Pancasila student profile (P3) is expected to be reflected in the content and/or learning methods in a learning model (Suryadien et al., 2022).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the Prototype Curriculum is a government policy to restore the quality of learning which has decreased due to the Covid-19 pandemic by emphasizing on strengthening character education, namely the profile of Pancasila students. Theoretical suggestions for the authors are to conduct research on the Prototype Curriculum with qualitative, quantitative and other research designs in more detail and comprehensively. The next researcher who wants to conduct research with this theme should examine the Prototype Curriculum by focusing on the level of its implementation in strengthening the profile of Pancasila students. The government/agencies/relevant stakeholders must conduct workshops and socialization related to the Prototype Curriculum so that various obstacles are not found in its implementation.

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