



# Analysis of pancasila teachers' teaching styles in the implementation of the independent curriculum at state junior high school 3 Karangdowo

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the teaching style of a Pancasila Education teacher in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo, Klaten. The research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach with an exploratory focus. Data were collected through non-participant classroom observation, structured interviews with one experienced teacher and 3 eighth-grade students, and documentation analysis including lesson plans, teaching materials, and learning outcomes. The data collection spanned six months to ensure in-depth and contextual understanding. Data validity was ensured using source, method, and time triangulation. The data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification. The findings indicate that the teacher's instructional style under the Merdeka Curriculum is more student-centered, contextual, and engaging. However, several challenges were identified, including resistance to change, limited resources, low student motivation, and restricted instructional time. The teacher employed strategies such as differentiated instruction, character development, and the use of contextual learning with formative assessment. These findings offer theoretical contributions to Pancasila instructional strategies and practical implications for curriculum developers and educators.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia continues to undergo dynamic changes in response to social, technological, and global developments. One of the major transformations marking a new era in national education is the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum* since 2020 (Setiyorini et al., 2023). This curriculum is designed to provide greater flexibility for schools and teachers in designing contextual learning that is student-centered and encourages creativity and critical thinking (Anjani et al., 2023). The implications of this change are particularly evident in the subject of Pancasila Education, which plays a strategic role in shaping students' character and national identity.

Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) not only emphasizes cognitive aspects such as understanding law and government, but also prioritizes internalization of Pancasila values in order to form active, democratic, and integrity-based citizens (Rahayu, 2017). In the context of the Independent Curriculum, strengthening Pancasila education is becoming increasingly urgent amidst the currents of globalization and the national identity crisis. Teachers are required to be adaptive, reflective, and innovative in order to be able to create meaningful, participatory, and contextual learning. Teaching style is a crucial element in the successful implementation of this curriculum, including how teachers deliver material, build interactions, and create a classroom climate that supports the learning process (Afnanda, 2023). However, previous research shows that not all teachers are ready to take advantage of the pedagogical freedom offered, with some still stuck with conventional approaches and some starting to explore innovative methods such as project-based and collaborative learning (Khoirunnisa et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2023). SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo is a relevant location to study this dynamic, because even though it has implemented the Independent Curriculum, there are significant variations in the teaching styles of PPKn teachers. This condition reflects the adaptation and interpretation of various curricula, so further research is needed to understand the implementation of teaching styles in the context of the Independent Curriculum, the challenges faced, and the strategies used, so that educational policies and teacher training programs can be designed appropriately (Elitasari, 2022).

Previous studies have explored various pedagogical approaches in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. For instance, Wulandari (2023) found that some teachers still use conventional teaching methods due to a limited understanding of the curriculum's core principles. Meanwhile, Putra et al. (2022) emphasized the role of teaching style in shaping meaningful learning experiences. However, most of these studies examine general instructional approaches without focusing specifically on Pancasila and Citizenship Education. Moreover, the urgency of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Civics becomes increasingly critical in strengthening students' national character amid identity crises and global cultural shifts, as PPKn serves as a foundation for cultivating democratic attitudes, critical awareness, and national resilience. This research seeks to fill these gaps by specifically analyzing the teaching styles of Pancasila Education teachers in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo, where diverse pedagogical practices reflect different levels of adaptation and readiness.

Therefore, this research aims to comprehensively analyze the teaching styles of Pancasila Education teachers in the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum* at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, aiming to understand the teaching style of Pancasila teachers in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum through data in the form of words, behaviors, and documents (Munarika, 2018). The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo, Klaten, Central Java, over a period of six months, involving one Grade VIII Pancasila teacher and 32 students as research subjects. Data collection utilized three techniques: (1) non-participant observation, based on the theory of Soesilo (2019), to observe the teaching and learning process without the researcher's direct involvement; (2) structured interviews, referring to Ahyar et al. (2020), using a set of guided questions to explore the teacher's instructional strategies and students' perspectives; and (3) documentation, which included teaching module photos, learning outcomes, as well as recordings of observations and interviews. To enhance data reliability, time triangulation was carried out by collecting data across different teaching sessions and timeframes, source triangulation was applied by comparing information from the teacher and multiple students, and method triangulation was conducted by integrating observations, interviews, and document analysis as suggested by Sugiyono (2016). Furthermore, the selection of a single Civics teacher as the main research subject is justified by the in-depth, contextual nature of qualitative inquiry, where the focus is on capturing rich, detailed pedagogical practices rather than

generalizing across populations; the chosen teacher met criteria of experience and active implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, providing a representative case for exploratory analysis. Data analysis followed the model proposed by Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Amalia, 2023). Data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation were systematically processed to explain the teaching style of the Pancasila teacher within the Merdeka Curriculum framework.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo is located in Kupang Village, Karangdowo, Klaten, Central Java. The school upholds the vision: “Excel in Achievement, Grounded in Faith and Piety, Rooted in Culture, and Oriented toward Environment and Science and Technology.” It accommodates 618 students and is supported by 33 teachers, a principal, and educational staff. In implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, the school integrates intracurricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular learning, along with the Pancasila Student Profile Reinforcement Project (P5), using the RPP EEK model (Exploration, Elaboration, Confirmation). The school is equipped with various facilities, including classrooms, a library, a computer laboratory, a sports field, a prayer room (mushola), and a cafeteria. One of the Grade VIII Civic Education teachers, Mrs. YMK, is a graduate of both a Law program and a Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) from a reputable university. Currently serving as a CPNS (Civil Servant Candidate) and induction teacher, she adopts an engaging and joyful teaching approach (interview, February 10, 2025).

### Result

#### Teaching Style of Pancasila Educators in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum

Based on interview findings, the principal explained that the school encourages teachers to implement student-centered active learning by “creating a conducive and supportive learning environment, providing training and mentoring, being role models, and offering emotional support and effective communication” (interview, January 30, 2025), noting that such training “can help teachers improve their competence and professionalism, as well as optimize classroom learning activities.” In line with this, Mr. DH, a Pancasila Education teacher, revealed several strategies he uses to foster student engagement, including “ice-breaking activities, group discussions, use of technology in teaching, formative evaluations, and limiting lecture time” (interview, January 21, 2025). This demonstrates that active, student-centered learning is a key part of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo, despite ongoing challenges in its execution.



**Figure 1.** Student-centered learning activities

*Source: Personal Archive, 2025*

Here is a shortened version without removing the interview quotes: Teachers have applied active learning strategies—such as simulations, discussions, group projects, educational games, and interactive media—to build an engaging classroom that boosts student motivation and skills. One student, Sf, shared, “Activities that make us active in class include discussions, projects,

experiments, and receiving appreciation. These activities make the classroom feel fun, Kak.” This shows how Civic Education lessons not only promote enjoyment but also strengthen students’ social and collaborative abilities. The principal, Mrs. SW, emphasized, “The concrete steps our school takes to instill Pancasila values in students include integrating those values into the curriculum and building a school culture that reflects the principles of Pancasila.” Likewise, Mr. DH, the Civic Education teacher, stated, “I integrate Pancasila values through Citizenship Education and by setting examples of tolerance, discipline, and patriotism. When students behave contrary to character values, I advise them and demonstrate appropriate behavior based on Pancasila.” This highlights the teacher’s role in character building through class activities that embody values like social justice and gotong royong, engaging all students—including those with special needs. The application of active learning strategies, such as group discussions and collaborative projects, supports the achievement of the Pancasila Student Profile by fostering values like cooperation, critical thinking, and responsibility. However, practical challenges—such as limited time, varying student motivation, and resistance to change can hinder optimal implementation. These issues align with educational change theory, which emphasizes the need for ongoing support and mindset shifts among educators to ensure sustainable reform.



**Figure 2.** Learning that integrates pancasila values  
*Source: Personal Archive, 2025*

With the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo have greater flexibility in choosing instructional methods that suit students' needs, prominently using differentiated learning a strategy that tailors the learning process, content, and environment to students' abilities, interests, and styles. The principal, Mrs. SW, emphasized, “Differentiated learning is a method that adapts the process and learning environment to suit students' needs... it supports student engagement, motivation, and academic success,” adding that the school fosters this approach through teacher training, system support, and guidelines. PPKn teacher Mr. DH shared his practical approach: “I observe student behavior, communicate directly with them, evaluate their prior knowledge, and ask about the topics to be studied,” while highlighting the need to “create a supportive environment... adapt the instruction... and collaborate with parents” to assist students with special needs. From the students’ perspective, Sf noted, “The teacher gives tasks according to my ability and needs... there are group discussions, projects, and presentations,” which makes her feel “more appreciated as an individual with unique needs... I am more motivated and confident.” These insights demonstrate that differentiated learning at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo is thoughtfully implemented with strong support from leadership, adaptive teaching methods, and positive student engagement, fostering an inclusive and meaningful educational environment.



**Figure 3.** Learning reflection  
Source: Personal Archive, 2025

Based on an interview with Sf, a student at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo, the formative assessment implemented by the teacher plays a significant role in enhancing student understanding. The teacher provides constructive and clear feedback, helping Sf to identify mistakes or weaknesses and offering guidance for improvement through additional learning resources such as reading materials, practice questions, and alternative methods. Sf noted that the assessment of her assignments was fair and objective, based on her capabilities and efforts, which fostered a positive learning environment. This fair assessment boosted her confidence and motivation to continue learning, supporting a more independent learning process.

### **Challenges Faced by Pancasila Teachers in Implementing the Principles of the Merdeka Curriculum**

Pancasila teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo face major challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly in promoting active, student-centered learning. Principal Mrs. SW (Jan 30, 2025) highlighted resistance from teachers and parents, limited resources, and misconceptions about educational freedom. Supporting this, Mr. DH (Jan 21, 2025) pointed to student-related issues low motivation, limited interest, and fear of speaking up—as well as external barriers like mismatched material difficulty, lack of resources, and limited time, all hindering effective learning.

According to the student Sf (January 14, 2025), difficulties in understanding the material also pose a challenge. *“The material can be difficult to grasp if the explanations are unclear and delivered too quickly,”* she explained. To address this, students suggested using more engaging learning media, group discussions, and simplifying the material. These challenges reflect the substantial obstacles teachers face in implementing student-centered learning, which requires adjustments in teaching methods and strategies to enhance active student participation.



**Figure 4.** Group discussion  
Source: Personal Archive, 2025

Based on the interview with the Principal of SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo, Mrs. SW, several major challenges in integrating Pancasila values into both learning and school life include limited instructional time, external environmental influences, and a lack of engaging teaching approaches. Additionally, curriculum and policy changes, along with the diverse backgrounds of students, pose obstacles in designing effective Lesson Plans (RPP). Mrs. SW stated: *“The challenges faced by*

the school in integrating Pancasila values into teaching and daily school life include limited instructional time, influences from outside the school environment, lack of engaging approaches, curriculum and policy changes, differences in students' backgrounds, and difficulties in designing good lesson plans." Based on interviews, the principal (January 30, 2025) acknowledged challenges in teaching Pancasila values, which were addressed effectively by Mr. DH, a Pancasila Education teacher (January 21, 2025). He tackled these obstacles by connecting values to students' daily lives, designing interactive lessons, serving as a role model, and providing individual mentoring. From the students' perspective, as expressed by Sf (January 14, 2025), they did not observe significant challenges in learning Pancasila values. They noted that the teacher's strategies positively influenced their character development and academic achievement.



**Figure 5.** Dynamic group division  
*Source: Personal Archive, 2025*

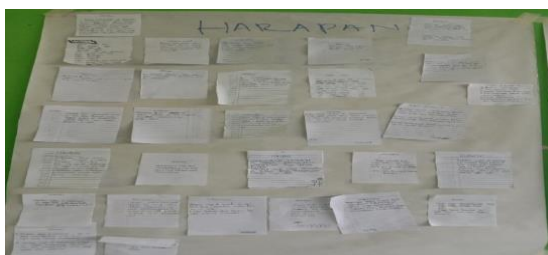
Civics teachers encounter significant challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in applying a contextual approach that links learning to students' real-life experiences. Key obstacles include limited resources, the unavailability of contextual teaching materials, and the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of students. Furthermore, developing engaging and effective teaching methods that align with the curriculum's values remains a major difficulty.

In an interview with the Principal of SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo, Mrs. SW, she stated: "The biggest challenge faced by the school in implementing a contextual approach is the limitation of resources, lack of time, resistance to change, diverse student abilities, and mindsets that are resistant to change. The solution is to enhance interaction and creative teaching, develop time management skills, and apply a positive approach." (Principal, interview transcript, January 30, 2025). The school faces notable obstacles in applying a contextual approach, including limited time, resistance to change, and varying student abilities and mindsets. To address these challenges, it enhances teacher-student interaction, adopts creative teaching methods to boost engagement, and promotes time management skills for more effective learning. Additionally, efforts are made to foster a positive mindset among all school members to encourage openness to educational changes and innovations.



**Figure 6.** Contextual approach  
*Source: Personal Archive, 2025*

In an effort to make learning more meaningful, the Pancasila Education teacher at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo, Mr. DH, faces challenges in translating learning outcomes into concrete objectives and planning materials that meet students' needs. Additionally, students need more time to grasp the material, requiring effective teaching strategies. Over time, Mr. DH has learned to address these difficulties. Meanwhile, a student, Sf, finds the material manageable even when not always directly related to daily life but values the teacher's effort to link lessons with local and national issues. She believes this connection, such as relating democracy lessons to elections, makes learning more relevant, improves understanding, and fosters critical awareness of societal issues.



**Figure 8.** Feedback from students  
*Source: Personal Archive, 2025*

### **Strategies Used by Pancasila Teachers to Overcome the Challenges of Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo**

Teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo play a crucial role in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum by fostering active, student-centered learning. However, Pancasila teachers face challenges such as readiness to adopt flexible methods, limited resources, and students' adjustment to independent learning. To overcome these, they employ strategies like designing engaging, diverse activities to boost participation and using technology—digital media and online platforms—to deliver interactive lessons. These efforts aim to create a dynamic environment that promotes critical thinking and deepens students' understanding.



**Figure 9.** Learning by utilizing technology  
*Source: Personal Archive, 2025*

To foster effective active learning, SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo emphasizes understanding student motivation such as interests and challenges through strategies like project-based learning, interactive discussions, and strong teacher-student relationships. Despite limited resources and resistance to new methods, teachers, particularly in Pancasila education, play a key role in applying the Merdeka Curriculum by integrating character development based on Pancasila values. Approaches include role modeling, discipline, habituation, and integrity-building, supported by videos, inspirational stories, and discussions. While student engagement remains a challenge, the school promotes differentiated learning by enhancing teacher competence, using

educational technology, and applying cooperative methods tailored to student needs to maximize learning outcomes.



**Figure 10.** Collaborative learning  
*Source: Personal Archive, 2025*

Mr. DH, the Pancasila teacher at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo, implements a flexible, active, and student-centered teaching approach aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum's principles of independence, creativity, and active participation. He employs active learning methods, constructive feedback, and fosters collaborative cooperation, while considering students' characteristics and promoting two-way communication to provide individualized attention. By linking learning materials to real-life contexts and relevant figures, Mr. DH enhances students' understanding despite limited local resources. Formative assessments play a vital role, as feedback is timely, specific, and balanced between challenge and support, helping students identify learning gaps and develop independently. This approach motivates students like Sf to engage more confidently and meaningfully with the material. Overall, Mr. DH's responsive and creative strategy creates an inclusive, effective learning environment that strengthens Pancasila-based character and ensures that knowledge directly impacts students' lives.

## Discussion

### **The Teaching Style of Pancasila Teachers in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo**

The implementation of active and student-centered learning at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo provides a dynamic and meaningful learning experience, in line with the Merdeka Curriculum's goal of revitalizing Indonesia's education system with a focus on character development and mastery of basic competencies (Umar et al., 2023). The Pancasila teachers at this school use project-based and collaborative approaches that encourage critical and creative thinking, in line with the needs of the 21st century (Dieguez et al., 2020). However, the main challenges faced include resistance to change, limited resources, and low student motivation, which often conflict with the flexibility of the Merdeka Curriculum (Umar et al., 2025). To address these issues, the teachers implement differentiated learning strategies, contextual approaches that integrate local wisdom, and formative assessments such as questioning and feedback to monitor student progress (Samsudi et al., 2024). Although there are limitations in facilities, teacher professional development and the use of technology can be solutions to improve the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Ramollo et al., 2023).

### **Challenges Faced by Pancasila Teachers in Implementing the Principles of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo**

The findings of this study show that the teaching style of Pancasila teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum focuses on active and student-centered learning, although some teachers still use conventional approaches. The challenges faced include resistance to change, limited resources and facilities, as well as difficulties in creating teaching methods that are engaging and relevant, often influenced by old habits and a dense curriculum

(Gan et al, 2020). In addition, the development of students' character is hindered by external factors such as the socio-economic environment and low student motivation, while differentiated learning is also challenged by the diversity of student abilities (Arzfi et al., 2025). To address these challenges, the Pancasila teachers apply differentiated learning strategies tailored to the needs of the students, as well as a contextual approach that links the material to local culture, although there are still limitations in teacher competency and the alignment of the material with the local context (Hanifa et al., 2024).

### **Strategies Used by Pancasila Teachers to Overcome Challenges in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo**

The findings at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo reveal that the teaching style of Pancasila teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum focuses on an active and student-centered approach, building positive relationships and encouraging autonomy and student competence, as explained by Huang et al (2024). The main challenges faced include resistance to change, limited resources, and low student motivation. To overcome these challenges, the teachers implement differentiated learning strategies using cooperative methods and team projects that are relevant to the students' context, in line with the theory of Ross et al (2020). In addition, the teachers relate the material to the students' daily experiences and local culture, in accordance with the views of Sudarmin et al (2024), and provide formative assessments that offer timely and meaningful feedback to support student development, as stated by Voelkel et al (2020). These strategies aim to create effective, relevant learning that focuses on character development and student engagement, in line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research at SMP Negeri 3 Karangdowo, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Pancasila education successfully fostered a dynamic, student-centered learning environment. Challenges such as resistance to change, limited resources, low student motivation, and constrained learning time were identified. To address these, teachers employed differentiated learning, character development, contextual approaches, and appropriate formative assessments. Theoretically, the study enhances understanding of student-centered strategies in Pancasila education, while practically, it offers guidance for educators, principals, and curriculum developers to improve learning quality. The strategies used by teachers can be further developed into best practice models for Civics education in similar public school contexts, providing concrete examples for effective implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Moreover, these findings offer a foundation for designing teacher training programs that align with Pancasila values and emphasize active, contextual, and student-oriented teaching approaches. Recommendations include expanding research scope, conducting longitudinal and mixed-method studies for more comprehensive data. However, the study's limitations single school setting, small sample size, short duration, and qualitative approach should be considered in future research.

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