

Character Development through Thematic Project-Based Learning: A Case Study of the Pancasila Student Profile Project in Indonesian Junior High Schools

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ABSTRACT

The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) is a key component of Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum for promoting character development through project-based learning. However, limited empirical evidence explains how different P5 themes foster distinct dimensions of student character within the same school context. This qualitative case study examined three P5 themes—*Voice of Democracy*, *Build the Body and Soul*, and *Entrepreneurship*—at a public junior high school in Mataram, Indonesia. Nineteen participants, comprising 12 Grade 7–8 students, six facilitator teachers, and one school principal, were purposively selected. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observations, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The data were analyzed thematically through open coding, axial coding, and theme development, while trustworthiness was strengthened through source and method triangulation, member checking, an audit trail, and researcher reflexivity. The findings revealed distinct patterns of character development across the three themes. *Voice of Democracy* fostered tolerance, social responsibility, and collaborative leadership; *Build the Body and Soul* supported self-care, empathy, emotional regulation, and resilience; while *Entrepreneurship* promoted reflective independence, applied creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving. Implementation was constrained by limited instructional time, teacher capacity, resources, and stakeholder collaboration. These findings suggest that thematic variation in P5 provides differentiated experiential contexts for character development. Effective implementation requires sustained teacher professional development, interdisciplinary collaboration, institutional support, and structured opportunities for student reflection.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st-century global educational landscape, the instructional focus has shifted significantly from passive cognitive mastery to holistic character development and socio-emotional competencies (Thomas, 2000; Zheng et al., 2022). International educational bodies increasingly emphasize the necessity of equipping learners with ethical values, social responsibility, critical thinking, and collaboration to navigate global complexities (Lickona, 1991; Sukarma et al., 2023). In this context, traditional pedagogical approaches reliant on passive lecturing are no longer adequate for internalizing dynamic character traits. Instead, global literature indicates that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and Experiential Learning have emerged as premier methodologies effective in bridging the gap between moral theory and concrete action (Dewey, 1938; Thomas, 2000).

In response to this global shift, Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) launched systemic reforms through the Merdeka Curriculum (Munawar, 2022; Syahrial, 2025). This policy is reinforced by the national constitutional mandate of Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution, which dictates the development of a national education system to cultivate holistic national character (Bintang et al., 2023). As the primary operational instrument for character formation, the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) was introduced (Pratama & Wirdati, 2024). P5 is designed as a project-based co-curricular program aimed at internalizing six core character dimensions: faith and devotion to God Almighty and noble character, global diversity awareness, collaboration, independence, critical thinking, and creativity (Kemendikbudristek, 2022; Pratama & Wirdati, 2024). Through P5, students are encouraged to transcend conventional classroom boundaries and engage directly with real-world issues.

Although P5 conceptually offers a robust framework, existing literature exhibits a fundamental gap. The majority of previous studies on P5 have predominantly focused on macro policy analysis, general school readiness, or isolated single themes—such as examining only the entrepreneurship theme or the voice of democracy theme independently (Dalman et al., 2022; Jannah & Pangestu, 2023; Kusuma, 2023; Santika & Dafit, 2023). These studies have missed a comparative empirical evaluation of how different P5 themes activate and cultivate distinct character dimensions within the same school environment. Consequently, empirical understanding of how variations in project-based activities specifically affect multidimensional character development remains highly limited.

This study aims to address this research gap by providing a systematic, in-depth thematic comparative analysis at SMP Negeri 8 Mataram. The novelty of this study lies in its empirical, cross-thematic investigation of three distinct P5 initiatives executed simultaneously: "Voice of Democracy," "Build the Body and Soul," and "Entrepreneurship." Utilizing a qualitative case study approach, this research compares how the practical simulations embedded within each project theme contribute uniquely to specific character dimensions—such as tolerance and collaborative leadership in "Voice of Democracy"; emotional regulation and physical-mental discipline in "Build the Body and Soul"; and independence and applied creativity in "Entrepreneurship". Ultimately, this study provides comprehensive empirical validation of the Merdeka Curriculum's effectiveness in transforming moral education into socially grounded practice.

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To address this gap, this study positions P5 within the broader global discourse on character education frameworks, experiential learning, and student agency literature (OECD, 2019; Biesta & Tedder, 2007). Within global character education frameworks, moral development is inextricably linked to students' autonomy to act and reflect upon their choices (Lickona, 1991; Nucci & Narvaez, 2014). Experiential learning provides the foundation where student agency is activated through active participation in social projects (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984). Through this active engagement, students transition from passive recipients of character traits to active agents shaping their own moral identity. This study contributes by examining how different P5 themes shape distinct dimensions of student character.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the implementation of P5 and its role in developing students' character through thematic project-based learning at SMPN 8 Mataram. By focusing on real classroom practices, this study seeks to provide empirical insights into the effectiveness of P5 as a strategy for strengthening character education at the junior high school level.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive case study design (Yin, 2018). This design was selected because the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) is a contemporary phenomenon deeply embedded within a local school context, requiring an in-depth and holistic understanding that cannot be isolated from daily school social interactions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Epistemologically, this research is anchored in an interpretive/constructivist stance. This paradigm posits that social reality—specifically student character formation through project activities—is not a single, objective truth, but rather a dynamic, subjective social construct negotiated and interpreted by educational actors, including the principal, teachers, and students, through their active lived experiences in co-curricular activities (Lincoln et al., 2011).

Participants were selected purposively using a purposive sampling technique to guarantee information-rich cases. The inclusion criteria were defined strictly: for students, they must be active Grade 7 or Grade 8 students at SMPN 8 Mataram who had fully participated in all three designated P5 themes ("Voice of Democracy," "Build the Body and Soul," and "Entrepreneurship"); for teachers, they must be active members of the P5 facilitator team who designed and mentored these projects; and the school principal was included to oversee the policy and execution of the Merdeka Curriculum at the institutional level. Based on these inclusion criteria, the study involved a total of 19 participants, comprising 12

students aged 12–14 years (consisting of 6 Grade 7 students and 6 Grade 8 students), 5 teachers from the cross-disciplinary P5 facilitator team, and 1 school principal at SMPN 8 Mataram.

Primary and secondary data were gathered through four integrated techniques to ensure data richness and depth. The first technique was semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted with each participant, lasting between 30 and 45 minutes per session. These interviews were digitally recorded with the participants' written consent, addressing key questions such as how the student council election simulation helped students respect divergent opinions in the Voice of Democracy theme, how students managed emotions or resolved group conflicts during the Market Day project in the Entrepreneurship theme, and how teachers designed character assessment rubrics to evaluate dimensions of independence and collaboration during the projects. In addition to interviews, the researchers conducted systematic, direct observations twice a week during the project implementation period, with each observation lasting 2 class periods (40 minutes each) using semi-structured observation sheets to document patterns of student engagement, peer collaboration, leadership roles, and emotional regulation in real time. The third technique involved Focus Group Discussions (FGD) conducted twice—namely, a mid-project progress FGD and a post-project evaluation FGD—with each session lasting approximately 90 minutes and involving all 6 facilitator teachers to evaluate student character progression and identify systemic implementation challenges. Finally, documentation analysis was performed on draft P5 learning modules, student reflective journals, activity photographs, and project-based character report cards to triangulate the empirical findings.

Qualitative data analysis was performed manually using a progressive thematic coding approach to ensure interpretive depth (Creswell, 2013). The analysis followed a systematic, multi-stage process starting with open coding, where the researchers repeatedly read the interview transcripts and field notes to assign basic labels or codes to relevant text segments, such as marketing failure, role conflict, or empathy toward bullying victims. Next, axial coding was performed, during which similar codes were clustered and linked conceptually to construct broader analytical categories, such as linking role conflict and task division into the category of collaborative barriers. In the final stage of theme development, these categories were synthesized into conceptual themes addressing the research questions, aligned with the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile, such as the themes of applied creativity or collaborative leadership. Manual coding was intentionally chosen to allow the researchers to achieve deep immersion in the raw textual data without the mechanistic constraints of qualitative data analysis software.

To establish the scientific validity and rigor of the qualitative findings, the researchers applied the four criteria of trustworthiness established by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility was secured through triangulation, which included source triangulation by comparing perspectives from the principal, teachers, and students, and method triangulation by cross-verifying data from interviews, field observations, FGDs, and student portfolios. Additionally, member checking was conducted as a validation process wherein draft interview transcripts and preliminary analytical summaries were shared back with representative participants (two teachers and three students) to confirm that the documented findings accurately represented their actual experiences. The researchers also maintained a detailed, chronological audit trail of the research process—including raw data, field notes, coding progression, and final draft reports—ensuring that the entire analytical pathway is transparent and auditable by external researchers. Finally, reflexivity was practiced as the researchers maintained reflective journals throughout the study to consciously identify and mitigate personal subjective biases or preconceived expectations that could distort the interpretation of field data.

This study was conducted in strict adherence to human research ethical standards. Before data collection began, all adult participants (teachers and the school principal) received a comprehensive brief regarding the study's scope, purpose, and potential benefits, and subsequently signed written informed consent forms. Because student participants were minors, written parental consent forms were secured from their parents or guardians, and verbal assent was obtained from the students themselves prior to starting the interviews. Confidentiality was strictly maintained by pseudonymizing the identities of the school and all individual participants, using codes such as Student A, Teacher B, and Principal to protect

their privacy, and storing all digital data in encrypted folders accessible only to the research team. As an institutional legal requirement, formal ethical clearance and research authorization were granted by the school administration of SMP Negeri 8 Mataram under research permit number

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings were obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results indicate that various character values were developed through the P5 program under the themes “Voice of Democracy,” “Build the Body and Soul,” and “Entrepreneurship” at SMPN 8 Mataram. The following table presents the findings related to character values integrated into P5 activities and their impact on students’ learning outcomes under these themes.

3.1 Theme 1: Voice of Democracy

This theme focused on strengthening the dimensions of global diversity, collaboration, and creativity through a student council election project designed as a mini-democracy laboratory. The findings show that this simulation successfully internalized the values of tolerance, empathy, social responsibility, and collaborative leadership. Students not only learned electoral procedures but also learned to manage differing opinions when drafting campaign platforms. The data are presented in Table 1 below

Table 1. Development of Character Values in the P5 Program (Merdeka Curriculum) under the Theme “Voice of Democracy” at SMPN 8 Mataram

Theme	Dimension	Element	Sub-element	Developed Character Values
Voice of Democracy	Global Diversity	Participation in deliberation to reach consensus	Actively involved in setting shared standards and strategies through open and critical discussions with teachers	Respect for different opinions; active participation in deliberation; social responsibility; empathy and tolerance; justice and equality; collaborative leadership
		Awareness of individual roles in democracy	Understanding rights and responsibilities and their impact on attitudes and actions; participating in protecting others’ rights	Responsibility; active participation; critical and reflective thinking; empathy and tolerance; justice and equality; collaborative leadership
	Collaboration	Cooperation	Aligning individual actions with others to achieve shared goals and encouraging productive teamwork	Collaborative decision-making; collective responsibility; effective communication; mutual respect and empathy; participatory leadership
		Social awareness	Responding actively to social dynamics and contributing to community needs	Concern for common interests; active participation in school social activities; responsiveness to social issues; empathy and care; engagement in social dialogue
	Creativity	Creative expression	Expressing ideas through original works and considering their social impact	Personal creativity; originality in expression and behavior

Source: P5 Report Description (Theme: Voice of Democracy), SMPN 8 Mataram

Table 1 illustrates that the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) under the theme “Voice of Democracy” at SMPN 8 Mataram systematically promotes character

development across three main dimensions: global diversity, collaboration, and creativity. These dimensions are operationalized through participatory and experiential learning activities that position students as active agents in democratic processes.

From the perspective of the global diversity dimension, the findings indicate that students' involvement in deliberative discussions and collective decision-making serves as a critical mechanism for internalizing democratic values. Rather than merely understanding democracy at a conceptual level, students engage directly in dialogic processes that require them to articulate opinions, negotiate differences, and reach consensus. This aligns with Prabamurti et al. (2022), who emphasize that democratic character is effectively developed through participatory practices. The emergence of values such as respect for diverse perspectives, empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility suggests that experiential engagement plays a pivotal role in fostering inclusive attitudes.

Importantly, the data show that participation is not limited to symbolic involvement but extends to meaningful contribution. Activities such as student council election simulations and structured group deliberations require students to justify their arguments and accept collective decisions. This process strengthens not only participatory skills but also accountability, as students recognize the consequences of shared decisions (Nurasiah et al., 2022; Safitri et al., 2022). In this context, democratic learning becomes a process of value internalization rather than procedural compliance.

The element of awareness of individual roles in democracy further reinforces this process by linking students' participation to responsibility and critical reflection. Students demonstrate an increased ability to evaluate social situations, consider multiple perspectives, and reflect on the implications of their choices. This finding indicates that P5 does not merely promote participation but also supports the development of higher-order thinking skills, particularly critical and reflective thinking. As noted by Pabamuri et al. (2023), such reflective engagement is essential for developing responsible and ethical citizens.

In the collaboration dimension, particularly within the cooperation sub-element, the findings reveal that democratic character development is closely associated with students' ability to work collectively toward shared goals (Ammalia et al., 2025; Lirhan & Hamka, 2024). Collaborative decision-making, collective responsibility, and effective communication emerge as dominant values. These are cultivated through structured group activities in which students negotiate roles, distribute tasks, and manage group dynamics. In line with Hasdinar (2023), this process highlights that collaboration in democratic contexts is not merely task-oriented but value-laden, emphasizing mutual respect, empathy, and inclusivity.

A notable insight from this study is that collaboration also functions as a medium for leadership development. Students who assume leadership roles are required to adopt participatory and non-authoritarian approaches, which contrasts with traditional hierarchical leadership models. This indicates that P5 facilitates the emergence of what can be termed *collaborative leadership*, where influence is exercised through inclusion, dialogue, and shared responsibility.

Furthermore, within the social awareness sub-element, the findings demonstrate that students develop sensitivity toward social issues and a willingness to engage in collective problem-solving. Activities such as classroom forums and social projects encourage students to identify real issues within their environment, including bullying, inequality, and low participation, and to propose actionable solutions. Consistent with Kharisma and Yusuf (2023), this reflects a shift from individual-centered learning to socially responsive learning. The development of empathy, social concern, and active engagement suggests that democratic education in this context extends beyond cognitive understanding to social action.

In the creativity dimension, character development is reflected in students' ability to express democratic values through innovative and meaningful forms. The use of creative media—such as posters, videos, and performances—enables students to translate abstract democratic concepts into tangible outputs. This finding indicates that creativity in the P5 context is not limited to artistic

expression but also involves critical engagement with social issues. Students are encouraged to design solutions, such as awareness campaigns, that address real challenges within the school environment.

This integration of creativity and critical thinking highlights the role of project-based learning in fostering *creative problem-solving*. Students are not only producers of creative content but also evaluators of its social impact. They reflect on whether their work contributes to awareness and positive change, which strengthens their sense of responsibility and agency.

Overall, the findings suggest that the “Voice of Democracy” theme provides a comprehensive framework for character development by integrating participation, collaboration, and creativity within authentic learning contexts. Compared to conventional classroom instruction, this approach offers a more holistic and experiential pathway for developing democratic character. It demonstrates that character education becomes more effective when students are actively involved in meaningful social practices rather than passively receiving moral instruction.

3.2 Theme 2: Build the Body and Soul

The following section presents the data and discussion on the development of character values in the P5 Program of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMPN 8 Mataram under the theme “Build the Body and Soul.” This theme aimed to build student awareness of the importance of maintaining a balance between physical, mental, and spiritual health, as well as fostering moral resilience and emotional regulation. Activities centered around an anti-bullying campaign, collaborative sports, and daily psychosocial reflection. The data are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Development of Character Values in the P5 Program (Merdeka Curriculum) under the Theme “Build the Body and Soul” at SMPN 8 Mataram

Theme	Dimension	Element	Sub-element	Developed Character Values
Build the Body and Soul	Faith, Devotion to God Almighty, and Noble Character	Self-care (physical, mental, and spiritual)	Understanding the importance of maintaining balance between physical, mental, and spiritual health	Discipline; responsibility for personal health; awareness of the importance of a healthy body for learning and activities
		Emphasizing equality and respecting differences	Understanding perspectives and emotions from different individuals or groups	Respect for equality; appreciation of differences; understanding others' perspectives and emotions
	Collaboration	Communication to achieve shared goals	Understanding and responding to ideas, emotions, and information effectively	Clear and effective communication; active listening; collective problem-solving
		Social perception	Understanding reasons behind others' responses to guide appropriate actions	Empathy; social awareness; responsibility; cooperation
	Independence	Emotional regulation	Understanding and managing emotional responses in learning and social interaction	Self-awareness; self-control; empathy and tolerance; resilience

Source: P5 Report Description (Theme: Build the Body and Soul), SMPN 8 Mataram

Table 2 presents that the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) under the theme “Build the Body and Soul” at SMPN 8 Mataram emphasizes character development through the integration of three main dimensions: faith and devotion to God Almighty and noble character, collaboration, and independence. These dimensions collectively reflect a holistic

approach to character education that connects physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being within authentic learning contexts.

From the perspective of faith, devotion, and noble character, the findings indicate that the element of self-care serves as a foundational mechanism for developing students' personal responsibility and moral awareness (H. Hidayati, 2023; Khoiriyah & Sukasih, 2022). The emphasis on maintaining balance between physical, mental, and spiritual aspects suggests that character education in this context is not treated as an abstract concept but as a lived practice embedded in daily routines. Activities such as collective prayer, reflective sessions, and the habituation of moral values enable students to internalize discipline, responsibility, and ethical awareness. This aligns with Dhelilik (2023), who highlights that the integration of spiritual practices within school activities contributes significantly to the development of students' moral character.

Importantly, the data reveal that self-care is operationalized through a multidimensional approach. Physical well-being is promoted through structured activities such as exercise routines and healthy lifestyle campaigns, which foster discipline and responsibility for personal health. Mental development is supported through emotional literacy and reflective discussions on social issues, enabling students to recognize and manage their emotions (Ikhlās, 2024; Khadavi, 2023; Raharja, 2024). Meanwhile, spiritual development is strengthened through religious and reflective practices that cultivate gratitude and self-awareness. This integrated approach indicates that character development becomes more effective when students are guided to connect internal awareness with external behavior.

The element of emphasizing equality and respecting differences further extends this process by situating character development within a social context. The findings show that students develop a deeper understanding of diversity through participatory activities that require interaction with peers from different backgrounds. Values such as respect, tolerance, and inclusivity emerge as students engage in discussions, collaborative projects, and reflective activities on social and cultural differences. In line with Kemendikbudristek (2022), this demonstrates that inclusive learning environments play a crucial role in fostering social harmony and mutual respect.

Analytically, this finding suggests that character education within the P5 framework moves beyond individual moral formation toward socially situated character development (Gunawan et al., 2023; Setyowati & Sutikno, 2024; Sumarsih & Muhtar, 2022). Students are not only encouraged to be morally responsible individuals but also to function as members of a diverse community. This shift is significant, as it positions character education as a process of negotiating values within real social interactions rather than merely internalizing predefined norms.

Within the collaboration dimension, particularly in the element of communication to achieve shared goals, the findings highlight the central role of communication in mediating both personal and social development. Students are trained to express ideas clearly, listen actively, and respond constructively to others' perspectives. These skills are developed through group discussions, collaborative projects, and simulation-based activities that reflect real-life situations. As indicated in the P5 Module SMPN Duang Ancar, such practices are essential for building effective teamwork and resolving conflicts in a constructive manner.

A key insight from this study is that communication functions not only as a technical skill but also as a value-based practice (Arliman et al., 2022; Khotimah & Januarizal, 2017; Martalia et al., 2022). Effective communication requires empathy, respect, and openness, which are integral components of character development. This indicates that the development of communication skills within P5 contributes simultaneously to cognitive, social, and emotional domains.

Furthermore, in the sub-element of social perception, students demonstrate an increased ability to interpret others' emotions and respond appropriately within social interactions. This development of empathy and social awareness supports collaborative behavior and strengthens students' sense of responsibility within group contexts. It also reinforces the idea that character development is closely linked to students' capacity to understand and navigate social relationships.

In the independence dimension, particularly in emotional regulation, the findings show that students develop self-awareness and self-control as key components of resilience. Through reflective practices and guided activities, students learn to manage emotional responses in both academic and social situations. This supports the development of adaptive coping strategies, which are essential for maintaining psychological well-being. The emergence of resilience in this context indicates that P5 not only addresses external behavior but also strengthens students' internal capacity to effectively cope with academic and social challenges.

Overall, the findings suggest that the "Build the Body and Soul" theme provides a comprehensive and integrative framework for character development. By combining self-care, social awareness, communication, and emotional regulation, this theme supports the formation of well-balanced individuals who are not only physically and mentally healthy but also socially responsible and morally grounded. Compared to more cognitively oriented instructional approaches, this model demonstrates that holistic and experiential learning can more effectively foster sustainable character development.

3.3 Theme 3: Entrepreneurship

This theme was designed to develop independence, applied creativity, and constructive problem-solving skills through real-world business simulations culminating in a Market Day event. Students managed the entire business cycle, starting from product research using local food sources, financial budget calculations, and direct marketing strategies. The data are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Development of Character Values in the P5 Program (Merdeka Curriculum) under the Theme "Entrepreneurship" at SMPN 8 Mataram

Theme	Dimension	Element	Sub-element	Developed Character Values
Entrepreneurship	Independence	Recognizing personal qualities, interests, and challenges	Making realistic assessments of abilities and priorities	Independence; critical thinking; creativity
	Creativity	Generating original ideas	Connecting ideas with new and imaginative concepts	Creativity; innovation; self-confidence; independence
	Collaboration	Teamwork	Aligning actions to achieve shared goals	Role responsibility; communication skills; leadership and empathy; conflict resolution

Source: P5 Report Description (Theme: Entrepreneurship), SMPN 8 Mataram

Table 3 shows that the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) under the theme "Entrepreneurship" at SMPN 8 Mataram emphasizes character development through three interconnected dimensions: independence, creativity, and collaboration. These dimensions are operationalized through project-based activities that simulate real entrepreneurial practices, enabling students to learn through experience and reflection.

From the perspective of independence, the findings indicate that students' ability to recognize personal qualities, interests, and challenges serves as a critical foundation for entrepreneurial character formation. Students are encouraged to conduct self-assessment, identify their strengths and limitations, and set realistic priorities. This process fosters self-awareness, responsibility, and confidence in decision-making. Importantly, independence in this context is not merely individual autonomy but involves reflective judgment and accountability for one's choices.

The data further suggest that entrepreneurial learning activities—such as reflective journaling, interest assessments, and business idea presentations—facilitate the development of reflective independence. Students are not only making decisions but also evaluating their reasoning and outcomes. This contributes to the development of critical thinking, as students analyze potential

challenges and formulate strategies to address them. At the same time, creativity emerges as students translate personal interests into viable business ideas, indicating a strong linkage between self-awareness and innovation.

In the creativity dimension, particularly in generating original ideas, the findings demonstrate that students actively engage in designing innovative products and solutions that respond to real or simulated community needs. This aligns with Ruang GTK Kemendikbud (2022), which highlights the importance of creativity and innovation in entrepreneurship education. The development of creativity in this context goes beyond idea generation; it involves the ability to connect concepts, identify opportunities, and propose practical solutions.

Analytically, this suggests that P5 facilitates what can be described as applied creativity, where students integrate imagination with problem-solving. The strengthening of self-confidence and independence indicates that students gain not only the ability to create ideas but also the courage to present and implement them. This is particularly important in entrepreneurial contexts, where risk-taking and initiative are essential components of success.

Within the collaboration dimension, the findings reveal that entrepreneurial projects require students to engage in intensive teamwork, where roles, responsibilities, and contributions must be negotiated collectively. Character values such as teamwork, empathy, tolerance, and collective responsibility are developed as students coordinate efforts to achieve shared goals. In line with Kharisma (2023), this highlights that entrepreneurial learning is inherently social and relies on effective collaboration.

A key insight from this study is that collaboration in entrepreneurship contexts also supports the development of distributed leadership. Students take on different roles within teams, such as coordinators, creators, or presenters, and learn to lead and support one another depending on situational demands. This dynamic fosters flexibility, mutual respect, and conflict resolution skills. Activities such as market day simulations, group discussions, and reflective evaluations (Laily et al., 2024) provide authentic contexts for practicing these competencies.

Furthermore, the integration of independence, creativity, and collaboration suggests that entrepreneurial character development within P5 is inherently interdisciplinary. Students are required to think critically, act creatively, and work collaboratively within a single learning process. Compared to more traditional instructional approaches, this model demonstrates a higher level of authenticity and relevance, as students engage in tasks that mirror real-world entrepreneurial challenges.

In addition to these strengths, the findings also highlight several supporting factors that contribute to the effectiveness of P5 implementation. These include strong teacher commitment and collaboration in designing contextual projects, active student involvement across all stages of learning, institutional support from school leadership, the use of contextual themes aligned with local needs, the availability of P5 modules, and a school environment that promotes innovation and inclusivity (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). These factors collectively create an enabling ecosystem that supports sustainable character development.

However, the study also identifies several challenges that limit optimal implementation. These include limited teacher understanding of P5 concepts, insufficient training and mentoring, time constraints due to dense academic schedules, limited facilities and resources, weak collaboration with external stakeholders such as parents and communities, and the persistence of school cultures that prioritize academic achievement over character development (Akbar, 2023).

These findings suggest that while P5 provides a strong conceptual and practical framework for character education, its effectiveness is highly dependent on institutional readiness and stakeholder capacity. Addressing these challenges requires systematic efforts, including continuous professional development for teachers, improved resource allocation, and stronger integration between character education and academic learning.

Overall, the "Entrepreneurship" theme demonstrates that character education can be effectively developed through authentic, practice-based learning experiences. By engaging students in real-world

problem-solving, this approach not only strengthens entrepreneurial competencies but also fosters essential character values such as independence, creativity, collaboration, and resilience.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates how three thematic implementations of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) provide distinct experiential contexts for character development among junior high school students. The findings indicate that the *Voice of Democracy* theme fostered tolerance, social responsibility, and collaborative leadership through deliberation and democratic participation; *Build the Body and Soul* supported self-care, empathy, emotional regulation, and resilience through health, anti-bullying, and reflective activities; and *Entrepreneurship* promoted reflective independence, applied creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving through authentic business-related experiences. Across these themes, character development emerged through students' active participation, social interaction, reflection, and engagement with contextual problems, suggesting that thematic project-based learning can translate character education from abstract values into meaningful practices. However, effective implementation depends on adequate instructional time, teacher capacity, interdisciplinary collaboration, institutional support, and opportunities for structured student reflection. Given the single-school context and limited observation period, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific rather than broadly generalizable. Nevertheless, this study contributes to character education and experiential learning literature by illustrating how different project themes can support differentiated dimensions of student character within the same curricular framework. Future research should examine these patterns across diverse school contexts and over longer periods using multi-site, longitudinal, or mixed-methods designs to determine their transferability and sustainability.

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