

ETHNOPEDAGOGY BASED ON PANCAWALUYA VALUES IN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

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Abstract:

Character education in secondary schools can no longer be understood solely as a process of instilling universal values, especially when students live in a constantly changing social and cultural landscape. In the context of globalization, the expansion of digital culture, and the dynamics of adolescent identity, character education approaches that are detached from students' cultural realities tend to lose their relevance. This article aims to critically examine Pancawaluya-based ethnopedagogy as an alternative approach to character development in secondary schools. This research uses a literature review method by analytically examining scientific literature discussing ethnopedagogy, character education, and Sundanese cultural values. The results of the study indicate that ethnopedagogy functions not only as a culture-based learning approach but also as an epistemological critique of ahistorical and normative models of character education. Within this framework, Pancawaluya, through its values of cageur, bageur, bener, pinter, and singer, is understood as a holistic value system directly related to the real-life issues of high school adolescents, such as identity formation, social empathy, discipline, and creativity. The discussion reveals a gap between the philosophical depth of Pancawaluya values and the practice of character education in schools, which still tends to be symbolic and fragmented. This article concludes that the integration of ethnopedagogy and Pancawaluya values needs to be positioned as a contextual and sustainable reconstruction of character education paradigms, and provides theoretical and practical implications for the development of local culture-based character education in high schools.

Keywords: Ethnopedagogy, Pancawaluya, Character Development, High School

1. Introduction

Character education in the context of secondary schools is currently a central issue in contemporary educational discourse, particularly amidst the acceleration of social change, the penetration of global culture, and the transformation of values experienced by the younger generation. Recent studies indicate that globalization and digitalization not only bring cognitive advancements but also pose serious challenges in the form of weakened moral values, a crisis of cultural identity, and a decline in students' social sensitivity (Biesta, 2022; Selwyn, 2023; OECD, 2022). This situation places schools in a strategic and dilemmatic position: on the one hand, they are required to produce globally competitive individuals, but on the other, they must remain rooted in local cultural values. In this context, the ethnopedagogical approach becomes relevant as an educational paradigm that places local culture as the primary source of learning.

Ethnopedagogy views education not merely as a process of transmitting knowledge, but as a process of cultivating values, norms, and ways of life that are socially and historically inherited within a community (Selasih & Sudarsana, 2025; Faridah, Marini, & Zakiah, 2025). Through this approach, learning is directed towards integrating the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions as a whole, so that character education does not stop at the normative realm but is internalized in the actual behavior of students. In West Java, particularly in the context of Sundanese culture, Pancawaluya is a local value system that has strong relevance to the goals of character education. Pancawaluya represents five ideal human dimensions: cageur (physically and mentally healthy), bageur (good behavior), bener (honest and responsible), pinter (intelligent and knowledgeable), and singer (creative and adaptive) (Hidayat, 2021; Saraswati et al., 2025).

These values are not merely philosophical concepts but have long been embedded in Sundanese social practices and form a life ethos that emphasizes a balance between morality, intellect, and creativity. Substantially, Pancawaluya contains character dimensions that align with the demands of 21st-century education. The values of cageur emphasize holistic health as a foundation for learning, bageur and bener

reflect social morality and personal integrity, while pinter and singer lead to the development of critical thinking competencies, innovation, and adaptability to change (Fauzia et al., 2020; Saraswati et al., 2025). Furthermore, Pancawaluya is closely linked to Sundanese cultural principles such as *silih asah* (grooming), *silih asih* (compassion), and *silih asuh* (caregiving), which emphasize collaborative learning, social empathy, and caring for others.

However, the potential of the Pancawaluya values has not been fully implemented systematically in secondary school education. Various studies show that character education in schools still tends to be formalistic, fragmented, and less contextualized to students' local cultures (Hidayat, 2021; Dirgantari & Cahyani, 2023). Empirical phenomena in West Javanese secondary schools show low levels of student social empathy, increasing intolerant behavior, and the emergence of bullying and strong individualism, reflecting the weak internalization of character values in students' daily lives (Yuwantika et al., 2025; Selwyn, 2023). An empirical study at SMP Negeri 52 Bandung shows that although the Pancawaluya values have been integrated into character learning strategies, their implementation is still uneven across all value dimensions.

The study noted that the values of honesty and responsibility were relatively well developed, while environmental awareness and social solidarity remained weak and required more structured pedagogical reinforcement (Yuwantika et al., 2025). This finding indicates that the mere existence of local values is insufficient without a systematic ethnopedagogical framework. Meanwhile, research at SMAN 1 Ligung in Majalengka Regency demonstrated that the Pancawaluya values habituation program was able to shape a more disciplined, religious, and socially conscious school culture. However, this success is highly dependent on the consistency of school policies, teacher involvement, and the integration of Pancawaluya values into daily learning practices, not merely symbolic or ceremonial activities (Harianto, Cahyani, & Ali, 2025).

This confirms that local wisdom-based character education requires institutional commitment and a sustainable pedagogical approach. Another phenomenon in high schools in the Greater Bandung area shows that the Pancawaluya values are beginning to be internalized through non-academic activities such as the School Environment Introduction Period (MPLS) and extracurricular activities, primarily in response to the increasing number of juvenile delinquency and bullying cases. However, these practices remain incidental and have not yet been conceptually integrated into the school curriculum (West Java Education Office, 2024). This situation indicates a gap between the policies, practices, and theoretical frameworks of local culture-based character education.

Based on this reality, a character development model is needed that is not only normative, but also contextual and transformative, by using the Pancawaluya values as the foundation and ethnopedagogy as its pedagogical approach. This approach is expected to be able to bridge the needs of adolescent character formation with the local socio-cultural context that has not been optimized in secondary school education. Unlike previous research that tends to be conceptual or focused on the elementary level, this article offers a systematic integration between the ethnopedagogic approach and Pancawaluya values in character development in secondary schools. Thus, the novelty of this article lies in the effort to formulate a framework for implementing Pancawaluya values that is relevant to the psychosocial dynamics of adolescents, and places local culture not as a complement, but as a strategic basis for sustainable character formation amidst global challenges.

2. Research methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method. This method was chosen based on the research objectives, which focus on exploring, analyzing, and synthesizing concepts, values, and research findings related to ethnopedagogy and the Pancawaluya values in character development in secondary schools. The literature review is considered relevant because this study does not intend to empirically test causal relationships in the field, but rather to build a strong conceptual and analytical framework as a basis for developing character education based on local wisdom. The literature review in this study is not understood simply as an activity of collecting literature, but as a process of critical analysis of relevant scientific sources, including national and international journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, and educational policy documents.

This approach allows researchers to map the development of ideas, find conceptual patterns, and identify research gaps related to the implementation of ethnopedagogy and Pancawaluya values in secondary schools (Snyder, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data sources in this study were obtained from scientific publications discussing: (1) the concept and principles of ethnopedagogy, (2) Pancawaluya values as Sundanese local wisdom, (3) character education in secondary schools, and (4) empirical and conceptual research related to the integration of local cultural values in education. The literature analyzed was selectively selected based on topic relevance, academic credibility, and publication recency, with

priority given to sources published in the last decade, without neglecting classic works of a fundamental nature (Creswell, 2018; Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2016).

The data analysis procedure was carried out in several stages. First, the literature was identified and classified based on the main research themes, namely ethnopedagogy, Pancawaluya (Five Principles), and character development in secondary schools. Second, close reading was conducted to understand the substance, theoretical framework, and main findings of each source. Third, the researcher conducted thematic and comparative analysis, comparing various perspectives and research findings to identify similarities, differences, and trends in existing studies (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The next stage was conceptual synthesis, which integrated the results of the literature analysis into a complete and coherent framework.

At this stage, the Pancawaluya values are positioned as cultural substance, while ethnopedagogy plays a role as a pedagogical approach that bridges local values with character education practices in secondary schools. This synthesis allows researchers to formulate a theoretical contribution in the form of a conceptual model of character development that is contextual and relevant to the dynamics of adolescents and the global challenges of education (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). To maintain the validity and credibility of the data, this study applies the principle of source triangulation, by comparing various types of literature and academic perspectives.

Furthermore, the analysis was conducted reflectively and critically to minimize interpretation bias and ensure that the conclusions drawn are supported by theoretical arguments and consistent research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By using this literature review method, the research is expected to provide an in-depth and systematic understanding of the potential of Pancawaluya-based ethnopedagogy in character development in secondary schools, while also offering a conceptual foundation that can be used as a reference for further research and the practice of local culture-based character education.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Research result

3.1.1 Ethnopedagogy as a Critique of Character Education that is Separate from Character Education

In character education practices in secondary schools, values are often positioned as something that is already established and simply needs to be transmitted. Character is taught in the form of standard norms, attitude indicators, and behavioral targets that students must achieve. This approach makes character education a technocratic project: values are measured, behavior is controlled, and results are evaluated. However, this approach rarely questions one fundamental issue: where values come from and how they are intertwined with students' lives. Ethnopedagogy challenges this way of thinking. It rejects the assumption that values are universal and can be applied uniformly across all contexts.

In contrast, ethnopedagogy views character education as a cultural process, in which values grow out of a community's history, social practices, and way of life. From this perspective, the failure of character education is not solely due to weak implementation, but rather to an epistemological error: character education is built without a foundation in the cultural experiences of students. Thus, ethnopedagogy serves as a critique of character education that is ahistorical and detached from real life. It emphasizes that character cannot be formed solely through rules and attitudinal assessments, but through a process of meaning-making involving cultural identity, social relations, and personal reflection. Character education that is not rooted in cultural context risks producing individuals who are formally obedient but morally fragile.

3.1.2 Pancawaluya as a Local Value System

Within an ethnopedagogical framework, Pancawaluya cannot be understood as a collection of stand-alone moral values. It is a value system with an internal structure and logic that shapes the formation of a complete human being. Pancawaluya does not merely discuss dos and don'ts, but rather discusses how humans should grow and develop in balance. The value of *cageur* serves as the initial foundation, affirming that character education cannot be separated from an individual's physical and mental condition. Health is understood as a prerequisite for moral and intellectual functioning.

From this perspective, the values of "*bageur*" and "*benar*" (good) derive their meaning, not as external moral demands, but as expressions of healthy and responsible social relations. Morality in the Pancawaluya (National Morality) is not the result of coercion, but rather the fruit of self-balance. Furthermore, intelligence is not reduced to academic intelligence, measured solely by cognitive achievement. It reflects the ability to think reflectively, wisely, and contextually. Singer, meanwhile, emphasizes that creativity is not an accessory, but rather the culmination of the process of developing a complete human being. Thus, the Pancawaluya (National Morality) presents a framework for character education that does not separate the body, morality, mind, and creativity.

3.1.3 The Relevance of Pancawaluya to the Character Crisis of Middle School Students

High school adolescents live in a complex social space. They are juxtaposed between academic demands, social pressures, and exposure to global values that often clash with local values. In this context, character issues don't always manifest themselves in rule violations, but rather in confusion about determining life's orientation, lack of empathy, and a tendency to follow the flow without reflection. The Pancawaluya (Five Principles) holds strong relevance in this context because it speaks to the everyday language of adolescents. Cageur (Good) addresses the increasingly prominent issue of mental health, bageur (Good) and bener (Good) relate directly to social relations, honesty, and responsibility, while pinter (Good) and singer (Good) create space for self-actualization, often hampered by an education system that overemphasizes academic standards. These values position adolescents not as objects of moral development, but rather as subjects developing their own identity. Within the Pancawaluya framework, character education begins not with behavioral correction, but with an understanding of the adolescent's own existential condition.

3.1.4 Fragmentation of Pancawaluya Values in Practice in Secondary Schools

At the secondary school level, Pancawaluya often appears as part of the institutional narrative. It becomes the school's symbolic identity, reflected in its vision, mission, and educational slogan. However, this presence rarely translates into consistent pedagogical practices in the classroom. Pancawaluya values appear more often in ceremonial activities or supplementary programs, rather than as the primary framework for learning. Academic learning continues with the logic of knowledge transfer and curriculum achievement, while character education is positioned as a separate activity. As a result, students experience a fragmented experience: on the one hand, they are required to excel academically, while on the other, they are asked to behave according to certain values without adequate pedagogical explanation. This fragmentation causes Pancawaluya to lose its transformative power. Values no longer live within the learning process, but become moral messages that stand outside the students' experiences.

3.1.5 The Philosophical Richness of Pancawaluya and Practice in Secondary Schools

The philosophical richness of Pancawaluya actually presents a serious problem when confronted with school educational practices. The values that should shape a complete human being are reduced to easily measurable behavioral indicators. The character education process then focuses more on assessing behavior than on fostering value awareness. This gap suggests that the primary problem lies not in a lack of local values, but rather in the education system's inability to translate those values into meaningful pedagogical experiences. Without a clear ethnopedagogical framework, Pancawaluya risks remaining in the realm of the symbolic and normative.

3.1.6 Ethnopedagogical Learning Based on Pancawaluya in Secondary Schools

Secondary schools have distinct student developmental characteristics compared to other levels of education. Adolescents require space for dialogue, reflection, and value exploration. However, Pancawaluya does not yet have an ethnopedagogical model explicitly designed to address these needs. Existing approaches are still general and do not fully consider the psychosocial dynamics of adolescents. This lack of a model leads to a lack of clear direction in Pancawaluya integration. Values exist, but the method for educating them has not been systematically formulated. This situation underscores the urgency of developing an ethnopedagogical model for Pancawaluya that not only elevates cultural values but also translates them into learning practices relevant to the reality of secondary schools.

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1 Ethnopedagogy as a Contextual Character Education Paradigm

Character education in modern school practice over the past two decades has tended to be positioned as a set of universal values deemed applicable across time, space, and social contexts. Values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and tolerance are generally formulated in curriculum documents as moral competencies that students must possess, without in-depth reflection on the social and cultural contexts in which these values are internalized. While this perspective facilitates the standardization of educational policies, it also raises serious epistemological issues: values are treated as abstract entities detached from the history, collective identity, and life experiences of students (Biesta, 2015; Veugelers, 2019).

In such situations, ethnopedagogy acquires a significance that cannot be reduced to merely a culture-based learning approach. Ethnopedagogy starts from the assumption that education always takes place within a specific social and cultural space, so that the process of character formation cannot be separated from the value systems, symbols, language, and life practices of the society in which students grow up (Alwasilah, 2014; Ruyadi, 2010). Values do not exist as external norms transmitted one-way from school to students, but rather as lived knowledge negotiated through social experiences and cultural interactions.

Within this framework, ethnopedagogical-based character education positions local culture as the epistemic source of education. Culture is not understood as a supplement to the curriculum, but rather as a learning space that holds values, ethics, and wisdom that have been tested in the practices of community life. This approach allows character education to move beyond mere moral instruction to the formation of reflective and contextual moral meaning. For secondary school students who are in the phase of searching for identity and beginning to question the legitimacy of the values taught in school, this approach becomes relevant because values are no longer present as dogma, but as part of a life narrative close to their reality (Banks, 2016; Gay, 2018).

3.2.2 Pancawaluya as a Holistic Value Framework in 21st Century Education

In Sundanese culture, the Pancawaluya (the Five Principles of Self-Reliance) holds a crucial position as a value system that encapsulates a holistic view of human life. The five core values of cageur, bageur, bener, pinter, and singer emerged from the Sundanese people's collective reflection on the qualities of an ideal human being in relation to themselves, others, and their social environment. Therefore, Pancawaluya cannot be understood merely as a normative concept, but rather as a living value structure deeply rooted in social practices (Rosidi, 2011; Hidayat, 2020). The cageur values reflect a holistic understanding of health, encompassing physical, mental, and emotional balance.

In the context of secondary school education, these values have strong relevance given the increasing psychosocial pressures experienced by adolescents, including academic anxiety and the influence of digital culture. The values of bageur and bener emphasize the dimensions of social ethics and moral integrity that are the foundation of civilized human relations. The value of pinter is not reduced to academic intelligence alone, but encompasses wisdom in thinking and decision-making, while singer emphasizes creativity, innovation, and adaptability to change (Fullan & Quinn, 2016; OECD, 2019). Upon closer examination, the Pancawaluya value structure demonstrates a strong correspondence with the 21st-century character education framework that demands a balance between cognitive, socio-emotional, and creative competencies. This confirms that Pancawaluya are not outdated traditional values, but rather a local value system that has the capacity to address global challenges. The main issue lies not in the relevance of Pancawaluya, but in how these values are articulated and pedagogically integrated into formal educational practices.

3.2.3 Integration of Ethnopedagogy and Pancawaluya: From Symbolic Values to Pedagogical Practice

One of the crucial problems with local culture-based character education in secondary schools is the tendency to stop at the symbolic level. Cultural values often appear in the form of slogans, jargon, or ceremonial activities, but are not substantively connected to the classroom learning process. In such situations, the Pancawaluya (National Values) risk losing their depth of meaning and becoming merely a cosmetic cultural identity. The integration of ethnopedagogy and Pancawaluya provides a pedagogical framework that allows these values to be operationalized in a concrete way. Ethnopedagogy facilitates the transformation of values from mere declarative knowledge to reflective and dialogical learning experiences.

Through this approach, the Pancawaluya values can be presented in learning through cultural narratives, students' social experiences, and reflective practices that enable students to relate the values to their daily lives (Banks, 2016; Gay, 2018). This approach shifts the orientation of character education from adherence to norms to a critical understanding of the meaning of values. Students are not only invited to learn what is considered good or right according to Sundanese culture, but also why these values are important and how they are relevant in the context of the lives of today's adolescents. Thus, Pancawaluya-based character education does not stop at reproducing past values, but becomes a space for actualizing values in the current context.

3.2.4 Reconstruction of Local Culture-Based Character Education in Secondary Schools

Secondary school is a complex social space, where students act not only as learners but also as individuals developing their identities. During this phase, adolescents begin to question the values inherited from their families and schools, while also being intensely exposed to alternative values from digital media and global popular culture. Normative and ahistorical character education often loses its appeal in this context (Erikson, 1968; Damon, 2004). The Pancawaluya values, when presented through an ethnopedagogical approach, have the potential to become a value framework that is more resonant with the experiences of Sundanese adolescents.

These values do not exist as rigid moral rules, but rather as part of a cultural narrative that can be negotiated and critically reflected upon. This process allows character education to function as a space for value dialogue, rather than as a tool for moral uniformity. In this context, character education in secondary schools cannot be separated from issues of identity. The values of cageur, bageur, bener, pinter, and singer serve as reflective media for adolescents to understand themselves and their position in society.

Character education based on local culture thus contributes not only to the formation of moral behavior but also to strengthening students' cultural identities.

Thus, this points to the need for a reconstruction of character education in secondary schools. Character education cannot be understood as a stand-alone supplementary program or local content, but rather needs to be positioned as a philosophical framework that animates the entire educational process. This reconstruction demands a shift in perspective on the role of teachers, the curriculum, and school culture. Within a reconstructive framework, teachers are no longer positioned as conveyors of normative values, but rather as facilitators of value reflection. The curriculum should not only contain a list of character competencies but also provide space for the integration of local cultural values into each subject. School culture does not stop at symbols, but is manifested in the practice of social relations that consistently reflect the Pancawaluya values (Veugelers, 2019).

3.2.5 Theoretical Implications: Strengthening Ethnopedagogy in the Character Education Process in Secondary Schools

Theoretically, the integration of ethnopedagogy and Pancawaluya enriches the study of character education by emphasizing the importance of the cultural dimension as the epistemological foundation of values education. This approach challenges the dominance of the universalistic paradigm and opens up space for the development of a more contextual, pluralistic, and socially grounded theory of character education (Biesta, 2015). Pancawaluya can be positioned as a local contribution to the global discourse on character education, demonstrating that local values do not have to be in conflict with universal values, but rather can complement each other when articulated reflectively and critically.

3.2.6 Practical Implications: Reorientation of Character Learning Based on Pancawaluya

Practically, this discussion calls for a reorientation of character education in secondary schools. Schools need to build a learning ecosystem that allows the Pancawaluya values to be consistently present in policies, pedagogical practices, and social relations. Teachers need support in developing reflective and contextual learning strategies so that character education does not remain merely discourse but becomes a truly meaningful learning experience for students.

3.3. Relation to Research Objectives

Ensure the results and discussion remain relevant to the research objectives formulated in the introduction. Demonstrate how the findings answer the research questions or fill previously identified research gaps.

4. Conclusion

Character education in secondary schools demands a contextual approach rooted in the socio-cultural realities of students, especially amidst the dynamics of globalization and the adolescent identity crisis. This study confirms that ethnopedagogy is a relevant paradigm for reconstructing character education by placing local culture as a source of values and pedagogical practices. In the West Java context, Pancawaluya does not merely function as a collection of moral virtues, but as a holistic value system that unites physical, ethical, intellectual, social, and creative dimensions through the values of *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, and *singer*, which align with the real problems of secondary school adolescents. However, the practice of character education in schools still shows a gap between the philosophical richness of Pancawaluya values and their implementation, which tends to be symbolic and fragmented. Therefore, the integration of ethnopedagogy and Pancawaluya needs to be understood as a reconstruction of the character education paradigm, not merely an implementation strategy, so that character education in secondary schools can develop contextually, meaningfully, and sustainably.

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