CONTEXTUAL STORYTELLING TO STRENGTHEN PANCASILA VALUES: A CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

Sabina Kedeikoto[1], Mesak Gabou[2], Bunga Yulin Singgamui[3], Hendrika Edowai[4], Antonia Mote[5], Karola Devita Moyab[6], Santji Afi Rangkoly[7*]

[1234567] Universitas Satya Wiyata Mandala, Indonesia
*Corresponding Author: santjirangkoly76@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

A recurring challenge in Indonesian primary schools is that students often learn Pancasila as memorized principles rather than values practiced in daily interactions. This study investigated whether a storytelling-based learning approach could improve Grade V students' understanding of Pancasila values at State Elementary School 1 Nabire, Central Papua. The research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in two cycles, each comprising planning, action, observation, and reflection, across two meetings per cycle. Participants were 24 fifth-grade students (13 boys, 11 girls). Data were collected through pre-test and post-test measures (KKM = 75) and structured classroom observations of engagement and value-related behaviors, and were analyzed using descriptive quantitative and qualitative techniques. Findings indicated substantial improvement in learning outcomes: the pre-cycle mean score was 63.5 with 25% mastery; after Cycle I, the mean increased to 73.4 with 58.3% mastery; and after Cycle II—which strengthened storytelling using visual media and small-group retelling/discussion—the mean rose to 82.1 with 91.7% mastery. The study concludes that storytelling, particularly when supported by visual aids and participatory discussion, is effective for improving students' cognitive understanding and classroom engagement in learning Pancasila values. Practically, the approach offers a feasible model for character education in culturally diverse and resource-limited contexts. Future research should test the model with control groups, larger samples, and longer follow-up to assess sustained value internalization and behavioral change.

Keywords: Character education; Classroom action research; Elementary school; Pancasila values; Storytelling

INTRODUCTION

Schools serve as a primary foundation for shaping children's personality, thinking patterns, and morality. Therefore, learning at this stage should not only focus on knowledge transfer but also on character formation (Azhirakeisha et al., 2025). Under the Independent Curriculum, elementary education is directed to integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner and in line with children's developmental needs (Ansori, 2020; Ridha et al., 2025). Hayatuddin et al. (2025) reported that meaningful learning at the primary level provides lasting learning experiences and becomes a basis for strengthening national identity. In addition, elementary learning requires creative strategies so that students not only understand academic content but also internalize social and cultural values. Cahyani et al. (2025) confirmed that project-based, thematic, and collaborative learning models provide ample space for students to practice critical thinking while understanding national values. Accordingly, elementary teachers are expected to present innovative learning methods that connect academic content with nation-building character formation (Sunarno et al., 2023).

Initial observations at State Elementary School 1 Nabire indicated that students had high enthusiasm for learning, but the school still faced limitations in learning media and variation of teaching methods. These conditions affected students' interest in materials related to national values, including Pancasila. This study reinforces that the quality of infrastructure and teachers' pedagogical skills influence learning effectiveness, especially in character education. The school also faces challenges in linking Pancasila values with students' daily lives due to limited contextual approaches. In classroom practice, teachers need flexible and practical strategies that align with local culture. This creates an opportunity for narrative-based learning, such as storytelling, which can be adapted using Nabire local stories to become more meaningful for students.

Understanding Pancasila values at the primary level is not sufficient if it is limited to memorizing the five principles; these values must be realized in students' daily behavior and social interactions. The Pancasila Student Profile introduced through the Independent Curriculum emphasizes six main dimensions: faith and piety, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity (Rohmah et al., 2023). Madyarini and Wijayanti (2025) confirmed that integrating these values in elementary schools is more effective through direct practice and contextual learning than through theory alone. Unfortunately, value learning in the field often remains normative and tends to emphasize memorization, so students do not adequately understand the deeper meaning of Pancasila. Widiastuti et al. (2024) showed that value education is more successful when linked to stories, collaborative projects, or experiences close to children's world. Therefore, an innovative approach is needed to connect Pancasila values with the realities of students' daily lives.

Storytelling is an effective learning method that helps students understand abstract values through stories related to characters, events, and particular cultures (Maknun & Adelia, 2023). At the elementary level, storytelling not only develops language skills but also strengthens empathy, morality, and students' national identity. Hernawati et al. (2024) found that this method significantly increases learning engagement and understanding of social values among children. In addition, storytelling allows teachers to use various media such as big books, animated videos, and local folklore (Kusmana & Nurzaman, 2021). Local folklore is considered more relevant because it is culturally close to students' daily lives. Nur'aini et al. (2024) also reported that culturally based storytelling strengthens national character understanding and contextual moral values in children's lives.

Prior studies have shown the positive effects of storytelling on language skills, listening ability, and character development among elementary students, including improved tolerance, honesty, and mutual cooperation when stories are designed to emphasize these values (Retnasari et al., 2023). Purwani and Mustikasari (2024) also support storytelling as an effective strategy for character education. Yulianti et al. (2023) reported that storytelling that highlights national and local themes contributes to increasing students' understanding and practice of Pancasila values.

The novelty of this study lies in the focused implementation of storytelling for internalizing Pancasila values at State Elementary School 1 Nabire, a school with distinctive local cultural characteristics. Unlike previous studies that generally emphasize literacy or speaking skills, this study focuses on understanding national values. In addition, this research integrates Nabire local stories as a means to communicate Pancasila values, presenting a contextual innovation in character-education strategies. Therefore, this study titled "Improving Understanding of Pancasila Values Through the Storytelling Method for Grade V Students at State Elementary School 1 Nabire" not only provides empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of storytelling, but also offers a learning model that can be replicated in other remote regions of Indonesia.

METHOD

This study used Classroom Action Research (CAR) because it aimed to improve the learning process and increase students' understanding of Pancasila values through the storytelling method directly in the classroom. The CAR model consisted of four repeating stages in each cycle: (a) planning, (b) action, (c) observation, and (d) reflection. The research was conducted in two cycles, and each cycle consisted of two meetings. The participants were Grade V students at State Elementary School 1 Nabire, Nabire Regency, Central Papua Province. The class comprised 24 students: 13 boys and 11 girls. The site was selected based on initial observations indicating that students' understanding of Pancasila values—particularly their application in daily life—was still low. Data were collected using two techniques: (1) tests to measure students' cognitive understanding of Pancasila values (pre-test and post-test in each cycle) with a minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of 75.00, and (2) observations to record students' learning activities, engagement during storytelling, and behaviors reflecting the practice of Pancasila values. The test instrument consisted of questions related to Pancasila values. Data analysis used qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative data from observations were analyzed descriptively to identify the development of students' attitudes, engagement, and behavior from cycle to cycle. Quantitative data from tests were analyzed by calculating the mean score, the percentage of mastery learning, and improvement between cycles

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Pre-Action (Pre-Cycle)
In the pre-cycle stage, the researcher administered an initial test to determine students' baseline understanding of Pancasila values. The results showed an average score of 63.5, with mastery learning of 25% (only 6 students met the KKM of 75.00). Most students (18 students or 75%) were not able to connect Pancasila values to daily life. This indicates an urgent need to improve the learning process so that students understand these values contextually. In addition to cognitive aspects, initial observations revealed low student participation in learning activities. Students tended to be passive, listening to the teacher's explanation without active interaction. Behaviors reflecting Pancasila values, such as cooperation, discipline, and tolerance, were also minimally observed. These conditions became the basis for implementing classroom improvement actions through the storytelling method, which was expected to attract students' attention while instilling Pancasila values in a more enjoyable way.

Table 1. Pre-Cycle Results

Stage	Average Score	Students Meeting KKM	Students Not Yet Meeting KKM	Completion Percentage
Pre-Cycle	63.5	6 students	18 students	25%

Source: Research Results, 2025

Cycle I
In the planning stage of Cycle I, the teacher and researcher prepared a lesson plan (RPP) using a storytelling approach. The selected stories contained moral messages aligned with Pancasila values, such as justice, unity, and mutual cooperation. Instruments were prepared, including a test on Pancasila value understanding, an observation sheet for student activities, and reflection guidelines to evaluate the achievement of learning objectives. The teacher also prepared implementation steps, including storytelling, short discussion, and question-and-answer sessions to probe students' understanding. The learning media used were still simple (oral storytelling without visual aids). It was expected that students would be more interested in learning material when Pancasila values were conveyed in narrative form.

The actions in Cycle I were carried out over two meetings. In the first meeting, the teacher told a story emphasizing cooperation and tolerance in daily life. After listening, students were asked to respond regarding the characters and moral messages. In the second meeting, the teacher continued with a story about justice and responsibility, and students discussed the story content with peers seated nearby. Although many students began to show interest, some students were still less focused. Group discussions were not yet optimal because only a few students were confident enough to share their opinions. This indicates that storytelling was sufficiently engaging but required improvement in media use and delivery to promote more active student involvement.

Observations in Cycle I indicated improved student participation compared to the pre-cycle condition. Approximately 60% of students actively answered the teacher's questions and participated in discussions. Students also began to display behaviors aligned with Pancasila values, such as respecting peers and cooperating in small groups. However, participation was not yet evenly distributed because some students remained passive. In terms of understanding, the test results showed an increase in the average score to 73.4, with a mastery rate of 58.3% (14 students met the KKM). These results show progress, but the success criteria were not yet fully achieved, so additional strategies were needed for the next cycle.

Table 2. Cycle I Results

Stage	Average Score	Students Meeting KKM	Students Not Yet Meeting KKM	Completion Percentage
Cycle I	73.4	14 students	10 students	58.3%

Source: Research Results, 2025

Based on reflection, the teacher and researcher concluded that storytelling increased students' learning interest, but modifications were needed. A key limitation was the lack of visual aids, which made some students lose focus. In addition, group discussions were not optimal because several students were still

hesitant to speak. Therefore, Cycle II was planned to include visual media (pictures and story illustrations) and more structured small-group discussions so that all students would be actively involved. These improvements were expected to enhance students' understanding both cognitively and in terms of attitudes reflecting Pancasila values.

Cycle II

Cycle II planning was based on the reflection results from Cycle I. The teacher prepared a revised lesson plan that enriched the storytelling method by using visual media such as pictures, illustrations, and story cards. The selected stories emphasized unity, responsibility, and social justice. The same instruments were used (tests, observation sheets, and reflection guidelines), with strengthened indicators for student engagement. The teacher also designed follow-up activities in the form of small-group discussions, where each group was assigned to retell the story in their own words. Thus, students were not only listening but also actively processing and communicating information, strengthening their understanding of Pancasila values.

The actions in Cycle II were implemented in two meetings. The first meeting used a story about unity and cooperation supported by picture media. Students then discussed in groups to connect the story content with their daily experiences. The second meeting continued with a story about responsibility and social justice, where students took turns retelling the story they had understood. As a result, students were more enthusiastic and active than in Cycle I. Most students were confident to express opinions, and previously passive students began to participate in discussions and retelling activities. This indicates that combining storytelling with visual media and participatory strategies successfully increased student involvement more evenly.

Observations in Cycle II showed a significant improvement in students' learning activities. Approximately 85% of students actively asked questions, answered, and provided real examples of implementing Pancasila values in their lives. Students were also more enthusiastic to cooperate in groups and to respect their peers' opinions. Attitudinal changes reflecting Pancasila values, such as discipline, tolerance, and responsibility, became more visible. Quantitatively, the Cycle II test results showed an average score increase to 82.1 with a mastery rate of 91.7% (22 students met the KKM, and 2 students did not). These data indicate that the learning targets were achieved both in terms of average score improvement and mastery percentage.

Table 3. Cycle II Results

Stage	Average Score	Students Meeting KKM	Students Not Yet Meeting KKM	Completion Percentage
Cycle II	82.1	22 students	2 students	91.7%

Source: Research Results, 2025

Based on reflection, the storytelling method supported by visual media and small-group discussion strategies was more effective. Students not only understood Pancasila values cognitively but also began to internalize them in their daily attitudes. Active participation became almost evenly distributed across students, and learning outcomes exceeded the success indicators. Therefore, the study was concluded in Cycle II because the objectives had been achieved. Storytelling proved to be a relevant, enjoyable, and effective method for improving both understanding and practice of Pancasila values among elementary students. This study also highlights that visual media and participatory strategies are key factors in the success of story-based learning.

Recapitulation of Research Results

Overall, the study results show an improvement in students' understanding from the pre-cycle to Cycle II, as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of Research Results

Stage	Average Score	Students Meeting KKM	Students Not Yet Meeting KKM	Completion Percentage
Pre-Cycle	63.5	6 students	18 students	25%
Cycle I	73.4	14 students	10 students	58.3%
Cycle II	82.1	22 students	2 students	91.7%

Source: Research Results, 2025

In the pre-cycle stage, the average student score was 63.5 with a mastery rate of 25%, indicating that most students had not met the KKM (≥ 75). This aligns with Sunaryati et al. (2024), who suggested that contextual approaches to learning Pancasila values influence improvements in discipline, responsibility, and tolerance among elementary children. Rahmawati and Dewi (2020) also emphasized that storytelling, when developed as a medium for moral education, strengthens the internalization of national values such as Pancasila because stories convey ethical messages in ways that are more affective and meaningful for children. The initial observations also revealed passive attitudes and limited active interaction, where students only listened to the teacher without meaningful engagement. Puspitasari et al. (2025) support the need to improve student participation through narrative media such as digital storytelling. Musthofa et al. (2025) further showed that bilingual digital storytelling not only enhances literacy but also strengthens Pancasila Student Profile character dimensions such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and reflection.

After applying oral storytelling in Cycle I, the class average increased to 73.4 and mastery learning rose to 58.3%. This improvement suggests that storytelling began to effectively enhance cognitive understanding. Similarly, Syahputra and Wahyudi (2025) found that moral education through storytelling is significantly more effective than conventional learning in building moral, civic, and social behaviors among elementary students. However, observations showed that participation was not yet evenly distributed, and group discussions were not optimal. As suggested by Nursafiah et al. (2025), strengthening storytelling through visualization or digital media can expand participation and support deeper internalization of Pancasila values.

With the addition of visual media and improved group discussion strategies in Cycle II, the students' average post-test score increased significantly to 82.1, and mastery learning reached 91.7%. This demonstrates the effectiveness of media-enriched storytelling in conveying Pancasila values more deeply. These results are consistent with Sukandar (2019), who stated that storytelling can build inclusivity and tolerance among young people. Rusiyono and Apriani (2020) also emphasized that storytelling supports the planting of nationalism character in elementary students. Overall, the findings indicate that storytelling—especially when supported by appropriate media and participatory pedagogy—can strengthen students' understanding and enactment of Pancasila values.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to improve Grade V students' understanding of Pancasila values at State Elementary School 1 Nabire through the storytelling method as a contextual and engaging learning strategy. The key findings showed a consistent improvement in learning outcomes from the pre-cycle (mean 63.5; mastery 25%) to Cycle I (mean 73.4; mastery 58.3%) and reaching the target in Cycle II after strengthening the intervention with visual media and small-group discussion/retelling (mean 82.1; mastery 91.7%), accompanied by increased active participation and behavioral indicators reflecting Pancasila values (e.g., cooperation, tolerance, discipline, and responsibility). In terms of contribution, this study reinforces the theoretical premise that narrative (story-based learning) effectively transforms abstract values into meaningful understanding, while also providing practical evidence and policy implications that locally contextualized storytelling can be integrated into Kurikulum Merdeka implementation for character education in primary schools, including in resource-limited settings. Future research is recommended to test the model's effectiveness using control-group designs, larger samples, and long-term follow-up to examine the sustainability of value internalization and its impact on students' observable behavior at school and at home.

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