

Islamic Political Education in Elementary Schools: Developing Democratic Character through Pancasila and Islamic Ethical Values

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ABSTRACT

Political education at the elementary-school level is often narrowly understood as knowledge about elections, state institutions, or partisan activities. This study aims to formulate a developmentally appropriate framework for Islamic political education in elementary schools through the integration of Pancasila values and Islamic ethics. The study employs qualitative library research using an integrative literature review design. The primary sources consist of relevant scholarly articles, policy reports, and educational documents, with priority given to publications from 2020–2026, along with several foundational references that remain substantively relevant. The data were analyzed thematically across five areas: the conceptualization of nonpartisan political education, the convergence of Pancasila values and Islamic ethics, dimensions of democratic character, pedagogical strategies, and implementation safeguards. The synthesis identifies five major character clusters: integrity-responsibility, justice-empathy, tolerance-diversity, deliberation-participation, and solidarity-public good. This article proposes the Integrative Pancasila–Islamic Ethics Model for Democratic Character (MIPEK-D), which translates normative values into an open classroom climate, classroom deliberation, moral-dilemma discussions, decision-making simulations, social project-based learning, digital literacy, and school-family collaboration. The framework emphasizes that Islamic political education in elementary schools must be nonpartisan, inclusive, contextual, and assessed through students' everyday democratic behavior rather than their political preferences.

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INTRODUCTION

Democracy cannot be sustained solely through electoral procedures; it requires citizens who are able to understand shared rules, evaluate the public interest, express opinions civilly, listen to others, and accept differences without abandoning a commitment to justice. Because such dispositions develop over the long term, elementary education constitutes an important setting for educational forms of political socialization. Citizenship studies show that instructional quality, an open classroom climate, cognitive activation, and opportunities for participation are associated with children's and adolescents' interest in and readiness to engage in public life (Alscher et al., 2022; Fitzgerald et al., 2021). Among younger children, citizenship is also expressed through everyday actions—sharing space, voicing objections, caring for the environment, questioning unfair rules, and cooperating—suggesting that civic education should recognize children as social actors with a voice, rather than merely as future citizens (Payne et al., 2020; Gottschalk & Borhan, 2023).

In the Indonesian context, this urgency has strong constitutional and pedagogical foundations. Law No. 20 of 2003 places the formation of democratic and responsible citizens among the objectives of national education. The current Graduate Competency Standards framework also emphasizes eight dimensions of the graduate profile, including faith and piety, citizenship, critical reasoning, collaboration, independence, and communication; at the elementary-school level, qualities such as compassion, honesty, justice, and responsibility are explicitly included among the expected outcomes (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Republik Indonesia, 2025). Thus, the development of democratic character is not separate from the goals of national education, but is intertwined with students' moral development, literacy, and social competencies.

Pancasila provides a distinctive ethical-political language for democratic education in Indonesia. The principle of Belief in the One and Only God prevents democracy from being reduced to freedom without moral responsibility; Just and Civilized Humanity requires respect for human dignity and justice; the Unity of Indonesia directs differences toward national cohesion; Democracy Guided by the Inner Wisdom in the Unanimity Arising out of Deliberations Among Representatives affirms a tradition of deliberation; and Social Justice for All the People of Indonesia connects political decisions with the public good and fair distribution. Research on Pancasila-based character education shows that these values can be internalized through school culture, habituation, contextual learning, and shared experiences, rather than solely through memorizing the principles (Natalia et al., 2021; Nurizka et al., 2020). More recent studies also emphasize the relevance of Pancasila-based democratic education for strengthening civil-society capacity and civic orientation amid challenges to democratic quality (Pratiwi et al., 2025).

For elementary schools that provide Islamic Religious Education, political education should also engage with sources of Islamic ethics. The Islamic tradition contains a moral vocabulary closely aligned with democratic competencies: justice ('adl), trustworthiness (amanah), deliberation (shura), compassion (rahmah), recognition of and respect for diversity (ta'aruf), tolerance (tasamuh), the public good (masalah), and social responsibility. Q.S. al-Nahl [16]: 90 presents justice and benevolence as moral imperatives; Q.S. al-Shura [42]: 38 associates collective affairs with consultation; Q.S. al-Hujurat [49]: 13 frames difference as an

opportunity for mutual recognition; and Q.S. al-Ma'idah [5]: 8 affirms that dislike of others must not negate justice. Islamic ethics can therefore serve as a source of moral motivation for democratic behavior, provided that it is taught inclusively and is not transformed into a justification for group domination.

A number of recent studies indicate that Islamic education can serve as a setting for the development of open citizenship. Memon and Zaman (2020) demonstrate the potential of the Islamic educational ethos for global citizenship education, while Ma'ruf and Asyafah (2023) identify both reception of and resistance to global citizenship discourse within Indonesian Islamic educational institutions. Saada (2022) emphasizes the need to balance communitarian, civic, and liberal aims in religious education so that commitment to religious tradition does not eliminate the capacity to live together in the public sphere. In the Indonesian context, studies of religious moderation show that tolerance, national commitment, non-violence, and openness to local culture can be integrated into Islamic curricula and educational practices (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Muqowim et al., 2022; Mulyana, 2023; Khasanah et al., 2023). At the elementary level, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in Indonesia and Malaysia have also practiced the internalization of moderation through explanation, modeling, and classroom activities, although they continue to face limitations in pedagogical strategies and variations in teachers' understanding (Muslih et al., 2024).

However, the existing literature still tends to develop along separate trajectories. Studies of Pancasila focus primarily on strengthening national character; civic education research emphasizes knowledge, participation, and democratic skills; while Islamic education studies largely address moderation, identity, morality, and global citizenship. Research on elementary schools has begun to document innovative practices for strengthening civic values (Fitra & Witanto, 2024), but frameworks that explicitly bridge Pancasila, Islamic ethics, and nonpartisan political education at the elementary-school age remain limited. This gap is important because the term 'political education' can easily be misconstrued as a process of introducing children to political parties, candidates, or electoral preferences. At the elementary-school level, such an approach is developmentally inappropriate and risks turning education into indoctrination.

This article uses the term Islamic political education to refer to an educational process that helps students understand shared life, rights and obligations, rules, authority, justice, differences of interest, deliberation, participation, and public responsibility through the moral framework of Pancasila and Islamic ethics. The term 'Islamic' does not imply a partisan or theocratic orientation; rather, it emphasizes ethical sources that guide the responsible exercise of freedom and power. From a developmental perspective, political content is translated into concrete experiences: establishing classroom rules, allocating tasks fairly, resolving conflicts, evaluating information, electing class representatives in a healthy manner, proposing solutions to problems in the school environment, and reflecting on the effects of decisions on others.

Against this background, the study addresses three questions. First, how can a developmentally appropriate concept of Islamic political education for elementary-school children be formulated without becoming entangled in practical politics? Second, how can Pancasila values and Islamic ethics be synthesized into observable dimensions of democratic character? Third, what pedagogical strategies and safeguards are required to ensure that

implementation is inclusive, nonpartisan, and relevant to the challenges of digital citizenship? The study aims to produce a conceptual-operational framework that can be used by PAI teachers, Pancasila Education teachers, homeroom teachers, and school administrators to develop democratic character in an integrated manner.

METHODS

This study is qualitative library research employing an integrative literature review design. This design was selected because the purpose of the study is not to measure the effect of a single intervention, but to connect several bodies of literature civic education, elementary education, Pancasila, Islamic education, religious moderation, and public ethics—within a single operationalizable conceptual framework. An integrative review enables empirical studies, systematic reviews, policy documents, and conceptual works to be considered together, provided that the contribution of each source is critically explained. The literature-review design follows the principle that transparency is essential in defining objectives, selecting sources, comparing findings, and constructing a theoretical synthesis (Snyder, 2019).

The literature search was conducted in a targeted manner using Indonesian- and English-language keywords in combinations that included: 'civic education', 'democratic citizenship', 'elementary/primary school', 'child participation', 'Pancasila values', 'democratic character', 'Islamic education', 'Islamic ethics', 'religious moderation', 'global citizenship', 'shura', and 'digital citizenship'. Priority was given to publications from 2020–2026 so that the article would reflect recent developments, while several pre-2020 references were retained because of their direct conceptual relevance to the relationship between Islamic education and democratic citizenship. Indonesian policy documents were used to ensure the framework's alignment with national educational objectives and the applicable Graduate Competency Standards.

The inclusion criteria were: (1) works addressing civic education, participation, democratic character, Pancasila, Islamic education, moderation, or social ethics; (2) studies conducted in elementary education or with other age groups that offered pedagogical mechanisms that could be transferred cautiously to elementary schools; (3) scholarly articles or institutional documents with verifiable publication identities; and (4) works providing substantive findings or concepts relevant to the study objectives. Sources were excluded if they focused on partisan campaigning, electoral persuasion of children, propaganda, or lacked sufficient relevance to the educational context. The final synthesis drew on core sources, all of which are included in the reference list.

The analysis was conducted in three stages. First, thematic coding was used to identify units of meaning related to citizenship aims, democratic character, instructional practices, the role of teachers, the school environment, families, and the risk of indoctrination. Second, a normative-interpretive analysis of Pancasila and Islamic ethical concepts was conducted to identify functional points of convergence—for example, the fourth Pancasila principle with shura, the second principle with 'adl and rahmah, and the fifth principle with maslahah and social responsibility. Third, pedagogical mapping translated each value into observable behaviors among elementary-school students. Conceptual validity was strengthened through triangulation across bodies of literature: no proposition was based solely on religious or civic sources, but was compared with findings from elementary education and educational policy.

This study does not claim to be a systematic review with exhaustive database coverage and does not produce statistical effect estimates. Its findings constitute an evidence-informed conceptual synthesis that requires further testing through field research. Because the study did not involve human participants and analyzed only published sources, no personal data were collected. Nevertheless, academic ethical principles were maintained through appropriate source attribution, avoidance of claims that exceeded the findings of the literature, and a clear distinction between empirical evidence and normative recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

Reconstructing Islamic Political Education for Elementary-School-Age Children

The literature synthesis indicates that political education for children should be reconstructed from an orientation toward 'knowledge about politics' to one of 'learning to live democratically'. At the elementary-school level, the focus is not party competition, contested ideologies, or electoral strategies, but an initial understanding of how collective decisions are made and accounted for. Civic education research emphasizes that authentic opportunities to express opinions, ask questions, deliberate, and solve shared problems are more meaningful than the mere transmission of institutional facts (Fitzgerald et al., 2021; Blevins et al., 2020). Children's opportunities to participate in decision-making must also have a tangible influence; symbolic participation without consequences instead teaches children that their voices do not matter (Gottschalk & Borhan, 2023).

From this perspective, Islamic political education can be formulated through four elements. First, literacy regarding rules and authority: children understand why rules exist, who makes them, and when rules may be fairly evaluated. Second, interest literacy: children learn that peers may have different needs and views without becoming adversaries. Third, deliberative literacy: children learn to provide reasons, listen to the reasons of others, and seek decisions that can be justified. Fourth, public-responsibility literacy: children learn that the freedom to speak, choose, and propose ideas always has consequences for others. These four elements position political education as the development of moral-civic capacities rather than the transfer of adult political preferences.

An Islamic framework adds ethical depth to these four elements. Amanah requires authority to be exercised responsibly; 'adl requires fair treatment; shura teaches consultation in collective affairs; rahmah prevents democratic processes from becoming degrading; and maslahah directs decisions toward the common good. These principles are consistent with the argument that Islamic education can support global and public citizenship when religious identity serves as an ethical resource for relating to others rather than as a boundary that closes off dialogue (Memon & Zaman, 2020; Ma'ruf & Asyafah, 2023). Saada (2022) identifies a central challenge of religious education as balancing communal loyalty, civic capacity, and individual freedom. At the elementary-school level, this balance can be cultivated through classroom rules that respect beliefs, differences in ability, family backgrounds, and every student's right to be heard.

The Convergence of Pancasila and Islamic Ethics as a Foundation for Democratic Character

A central finding of this review is that Pancasila and Islamic ethics need not be positioned as competing systems of values. In the context of elementary education, they can be mapped as mutually reinforcing normative layers. Pancasila provides a national orientation and a framework for shared life, while Islamic ethics offers a moral-spiritual language familiar to Muslim students. Such integration is important because character education that remains purely normative can easily stop at the level of slogans. By contrast, when values are connected to concrete situations—who receives an opportunity to speak, how resources are distributed, how one responds to peers who are different, or what should be done when information is uncertain—children can connect morality with public action.

The first Pancasila principle can be integrated with amanah and ihsan to cultivate integrity and an awareness that public action has a moral dimension. The second principle intersects with 'adl, rahmah, and karamah al-insan, requiring respect for human dignity and the rejection of bullying. The third principle can be read alongside ta'aruf, ukhuwah wathaniyah, and tasamuh to develop unity without erasing difference. The fourth principle most directly intersects with shura and adab al-ikhtilaf, namely the ability to deliberate and to disagree respectfully. The fifth principle intersects with maslahah, takaful, and 'adl in its distributive dimension, so that collective decisions are evaluated not only by who wins, but also by whether vulnerable groups are treated fairly. This mapping is presented in

Table 1 Integration Matrix of Pancasila, Islamic Ethics, and Democratic Character in Elementary Schools

Pancasila Foundation	Islamic Ethics	Democratic Character	Behavioral Indicators for Elementary-School Students
Belief in the One and Only God	Amanah, ihsan, taqwa	Integrity and responsibility	Honest; fulfills assigned duties; uses classroom roles/trust without abusing authority.
Just and Civilized Humanity	'Adl, rahmah, karamah al-insan	Justice and empathy	Provides equal opportunities; rejects ridicule/bullying; considers peers' needs.
Unity of Indonesia	Ta'aruf, tasamuh, ukhuwah wathaniyah	Tolerance and diversity	Willing to work with different peers; does not exclude others; respects different identities and traditions.
Democracy/Deliberation	Shura, adab al-ikhtilaf	Deliberation and participation	Provides reasons; listens; proposes ideas; accepts decisions made through fair procedures.
Social Justice	Maslahah, takaful, 'adl distributif	Solidarity and public concern	Shares resources proportionately; helps those in need; participates in projects for the common good.

The matrix demonstrates that democratic character is not synonymous with unrestricted individual freedom. Rather, at the child level, democracy is learned as a

relationship among rights, reasons, responsibility, and care. Studies of Pancasila implementation in schools show that school culture can be an effective medium for turning values into habits (Nurizka et al., 2020; Natalia et al., 2021). The findings of Saiman et al. (2026) on local wisdom and the eight dimensions of the graduate profile further underscore the importance of contextual learning resources: civic values become more meaningful when they intersect with practices of gotong royong, cooperation, communication, and problem-solving familiar to children. Accordingly, the integration of Pancasila and Islamic ethics should be embedded in the school ecology, not confined to the content of a particular subject.

Dimensions of Democratic Character to Be Developed

Based on thematic coding, democratic character in elementary schools can be summarized into five clusters. The first is integrity-responsibility. Children learn that serving as a group leader, class-duty officer, or member of the class leadership means accepting an amanah. This is important so that leadership is not associated with privilege. The second cluster is justice-empathy, namely the ability to recognize that fair treatment may sometimes require different forms of support according to need. The third cluster is tolerance-diversity, which goes beyond merely 'not disturbing others' to include a willingness to interact and cooperate with those who are different. Studies of religious moderation in Islamic education indicate that tolerance is internalized more effectively when it becomes part of culture and practice rather than remaining merely a definition (Muqowim et al., 2022; Muslih et al., 2024).

The fourth cluster is deliberation-participation. Participation includes the courage to express one's views and the capacity to accept that personal views do not always become the final decision. In civic learning, an open classroom climate and cognitive activation are associated with willingness to participate (Alscher et al., 2022). Feitosa (2020) also shows that different forms of civic education can produce different civic dispositions, suggesting that the quality of the learning experience is more important than the mere presence of a subject. For elementary-school children, deliberation should be developed through issues that are close to their lives and easy to understand, such as rules governing device use in class, the allocation of playtime, the selection of project themes, or decisions about how to keep the school clean.

The fifth cluster is solidarity-public good. A democracy that emphasizes only voting procedures can overlook the substance of social justice. Children therefore need to learn to evaluate decisions in terms of their effects on other groups, particularly more vulnerable peers. Service learning and active citizenship can connect knowledge with concrete social action (Geier & Hasager, 2020). In the language of Pancasila, this orientation is related to social justice and gotong royong; in Islamic ethics, it is associated with *maslahah*, *rahmah*, and the responsibility to help others. Combining these two moral languages gives democratic character both a national and a spiritual foundation.

Integrative Pancasila–Islamic Ethics Model for Democratic Character (MIPEK-D)

As its conceptual contribution, this study proposes the Integrative Pancasila–Islamic Ethics Model for Democratic Character (MIPEK-D). The model consists of three interconnected layers: values, democratic experiences, and dispositions. The value layer comprises Pancasila and relevant principles of Islamic ethics. The democratic-experience layer comprises learning situations that require children to enact these values: discussing, choosing, managing differences, evaluating information, sharing responsibilities, and serving the common interest. The disposition layer consists of habits expected to become enduring, such

as fairness, responsibility, openness to reasons, tolerance, and the courage to participate. With this structure, teachers do not stop at the question 'what values are being taught?', but proceed to ask 'what experiences enable students to practice these values?' and 'what behaviors can be observed after those experiences?'.

MIPEK-D employs seven pedagogical strategies. First, regular classroom deliberations to discuss real issues. Second, moral-dilemma discussions that present students with two or more equally reasonable interests. Third, decision-making simulations, including class-leader elections, with emphasis on ideas, rules, and acceptance of the outcome. Fourth, project-based civic learning targeting local issues such as waste, water use, play spaces, or queuing practices. Fifth, service learning or gotong royong activities followed by reflection on who benefits. Sixth, basic media and digital literacy: distinguishing fact from opinion, checking sources, refraining from forwarding uncertain information, and recognizing degrading language. Seventh, school-family collaboration so that messages about justice, responsibility, tolerance, and deliberation extend beyond the classroom. Findings on the role of parents in values education (Saputri & Marzuki, 2021) and a parent-teacher collaboration model for moderation from early childhood (Yusuf et al., 2025) support the importance of continuity between home and school.

Digital strategies require particular attention because children's political socialization is increasingly likely to occur through online content, family conversations, short videos, and social-media algorithms. Research on Indonesian youth participation in the public sphere shows that digital spaces have become an important part of the civic-engagement ecosystem (Saud, 2020), while misinformation and polarization pose serious challenges to the quality of democratic conversation (Rahman & Tang, 2022). At the elementary level, the aim of digital political literacy is not to encourage children to participate in partisan debates, but to develop epistemic habits by asking: 'who is the source?', 'what is the evidence?', 'could this information harm someone else?', and 'should I share it?'. Recent studies of digital citizenship competencies also emphasize the need to integrate critical reasoning, responsibility, and digital behavior into the learning process (Awiria et al., 2026). In Islamic Religious Education, the need to connect akhlak, digital literacy, and global citizenship is likewise becoming increasingly evident (Chotibuddin, 2026).

Table 2 MIPEK-D Implementation Strategies and Forms of Authentic Assessment

Strategy	Example Activity	Target Character	Assessment Evidence
Classroom deliberation	Establishing discussion rules, class-duty schedules, or solutions to minor conflicts.	Deliberation, amanah, respectful disagreement	Rubric for listening, giving reasons, respecting turns, and accepting decisions.
Moral dilemma	Cases involving limited learning materials or the treatment of peers who are different.	Justice, empathy, moral reasoning	Records of students' reasoning; ability to consider more than one perspective.

Decision simulation	Class-leader election based on simple ideas/programs.	Participation, honesty, responsibility	Observation of a healthy campaign process, voting, and acceptance of results.
Public-issue project	Classroom waste audit, water conservation, or an anti-bullying safe-space initiative.	Maslahah, gotong royong, care	Project portfolio, solution product, reflection on impact for the school community.
Digital literacy	Comparing two pieces of information, distinguishing fact from opinion, assessing provocative language.	Critical reasoning, digital responsibility	Source-check worksheet; reasons given before sharing information.
Home-school collaboration	Family tasks on deliberation and the division of responsibilities at home.	Consistency of values and responsibility	Simple reflection journal and parental feedback.

Assessing Democratic Character: Measuring Behavior, Not Political Preferences

Assessment is a sensitive component of political education for children. Schools must not assess students on the basis of their family's political choices, attitudes toward public figures, or ideological preferences. What can and should be assessed are democratic competencies and behaviors relevant to educational aims: the ability to provide reasons, listen to others, follow agreed procedures, act fairly, resolve conflicts nonviolently, verify information, and take responsibility for public duties. This focus preserves the boundary between civic education and political indoctrination.

Authentic assessment is more appropriate than memorization tests. Teachers can use four-level observation rubrics, project portfolios, anecdotal records, student reflections, and simple peer assessment. For example, the deliberation dimension can be observed through four indicators: expressing an opinion with reasons; giving others an opportunity to speak; responding to ideas without attacking the person; and being willing to accept or evaluate collective decisions. The justice dimension can be observed through the ability to distribute roles proportionately, attend to peers who need support, and apply rules consistently. The digital-responsibility dimension can be observed through the habit of checking sources and refraining from disseminating unverified messages.

Assessment should also be formative. Teachers use observation results to improve the classroom climate rather than permanently labeling children as 'democratic' or 'undemocratic'. ICCS positions knowledge, attitudes, and engagement as interrelated domains in civic education (Schulz et al., 2024). At the elementary-school level, this relationship should be simplified in a developmentally appropriate way: children understand a principle, practice it in real situations, and then reflect on the result. Thus, assessment not only produces a score but also becomes part of the process of developing democratic habits.

The Role of Teachers, School Culture, and Families

Implementation of this framework depends heavily on teachers. Teachers function as facilitators of deliberation, models of public ethics, and guardians of a safe learning environment. This role requires pedagogical competencies that differ from one-way lecturing.

Teachers need to be able to pose open-ended questions, refrain from imposing personal preferences, invite multiple perspectives, and help students distinguish criticism of ideas from attacks on people. The quality of this process is important because civic education research shows that an open classroom climate and cognitive activation are positively associated with readiness to participate (Alscher et al., 2022).

At the same time, democratic education cannot be assigned to a single subject. An authoritarian, nontransparent, or inconsistent school culture will undermine the democratic messages conveyed in the classroom. MIPEK-D therefore requires alignment among Pancasila Education, Islamic Religious Education, classroom activities, student leadership, school regulations, and conflict-resolution practices. Nurizka et al. (2020) show that school culture is an important medium for cultivating awareness of Pancasila values. In Islamic education, moderation likewise needs to be embedded in the curriculum, role modeling, and institutional practice rather than standing as an additional slogan (Mukhibat et al., 2024; Khasanah et al., 2023).

Families should be positioned as partners, particularly because children often first encounter political language through conversations at home. Partnership does not mean that schools monitor parents' political choices; rather, it means establishing an agreement that children should not be used as campaign instruments and that political differences should not become a source of stigma at school. Parents can be engaged through brief guidance on discussing political issues with children: distinguishing facts from opinions, avoiding hate speech, explaining differences proportionately, and giving children space to ask questions. Evidence regarding the contribution of families to values education (Saputri & Marzuki, 2021) and the effectiveness of parent-teacher collaboration in moderation education (Yusuf et al., 2025; Syafri et al., 2025) provides a basis for this strategy.

Safeguarding Principles: Nonpartisan, Inclusive, and Developmentally Appropriate

Political education for children requires explicit ethical safeguards. First, the principle of nonpartisanship: teachers and schools must not use instruction to support or oppose particular parties, candidates, political organizations, or family political choices. Contemporary political examples should be used only when genuinely necessary, presented in a balanced manner, and should not require children to declare personal support. Second, the principle of developmental appropriateness: abstract concepts should be translated into concrete situations close to children's lives. Third, the principle of inclusion: religious language should be used as an ethical resource for Muslim students without disparaging other religions or beliefs and without turning the classroom into an arena for claims of group superiority.

Fourth, the principle of psychological safety: students should not be compelled to disclose their family's political views, sensitive identities, or experiences that may create pressure. Fifth, the principle of plurality of reasons: teachers should help students understand that public decisions may be supported by more than one legitimate reason, provided that human dignity and shared rules are not violated. Sixth, the principle of non-violence and respectful dialogue: disagreement must never justify humiliation. The literature on religious moderation in Indonesia consistently identifies tolerance, non-violence, national commitment, and openness as important elements of education (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Nurdin, 2021; Mulyana, 2023).

Seventh, the principle of pedagogical transparency. Schools should explain to parents that the purpose of the program is to develop democratic character and civic literacy, not electoral preferences. Transparency can reduce suspicion surrounding the term 'politics' and help parents understand that deliberation, justice, responsibility, and information literacy are life competencies. Eighth, the principle of professional reflection: teachers should periodically review whether their examples, questions, and responses are balanced. This is important because bias does not always appear through explicit content; it can also be conveyed through the choice of examples, the allocation of speaking turns, or assumptions about who is 'most correct'.

2. Discussion

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study broadens the meaning of political education for children from a model of institutional knowledge transfer to a model of ethical-deliberative capacity building. Pancasila functions as a national horizon, while Islamic ethics provides a source of moral motivation that deepens the concepts of justice, amanah, deliberation, rahmah, and maslahah. This integration avoids two extremes: the secularization of civic values that neglects the moral sources of Muslim students, and the sacralization of politics that turns religion into a legitimating instrument of power. The resulting model is consistent with the view that religious education should be capable of sustaining both identity and the capacity to live together in a plural society (Saada, 2022).

Practically, MIPEK-D can be integrated into existing instruction without adding a new subject. Pancasila Education teachers can use dilemmas involving justice and deliberation; PAI teachers can connect Qur'anic verses or hadith concerning amanah, justice, and brotherhood to concrete problems; homeroom teachers can provide space for weekly deliberation; school projects can focus on small-scale public issues; and student-leadership activities can emphasize accountability. Fitra and Witanto (2024) show that innovative approaches to elementary-school civic education can strengthen civic values, while Blevins et al. (2020) demonstrate the potential of inquiry to foster democratic citizenship. Thus, value integration is most effective when realized through active and reflective learning practices.

Recent education policy, which places faith, citizenship, critical reasoning, collaboration, independence, health, and communication within the graduate profile, provides a structural opportunity for implementing this model (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Republik Indonesia, 2025). Because several of these dimensions have become official targets, MIPEK-D can be positioned as a cross-curricular approach that connects citizenship with faith and noble character, critical reasoning, communication, and collaboration. The findings of Saiman et al. (2026) on the integration of local wisdom also show that local cultural contexts can serve as an important bridge, enabling democracy to be understood not as a foreign concept but as a practice of shared life rooted in the community.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations. The proposed framework is a literature synthesis and has not yet been tested through experiments, quasi-experiments, or longitudinal case studies in elementary schools. Some of the civic education evidence is derived from adolescent students; therefore, transfer to elementary-school-age children should be undertaken

cautiously. In addition, implementation in public elementary schools, madrasah ibtidaiyah, private Islamic schools, and schools with religiously diverse student populations may require adaptation. Future research should test the construct validity of MIPEK-D, develop observation instruments for democratic character, map teacher readiness, and compare the effects of classroom deliberation, project-based civic learning, and digital literacy on student behavior.

CONCLUSION

Islamic political education in elementary schools should be understood as a process of developing civic literacy and nonpartisan democratic character, rather than as an introduction to practical politics or the formation of electoral preferences. The literature synthesis indicates that Pancasila and Islamic ethics converge productively around the values of integrity, amanah, justice, rahmah, tolerance, unity, deliberation, participation, solidarity, and maslahah. On the basis of these points of convergence, this article formulates five clusters of democratic character integrity-responsibility, justice-empathy, tolerance-diversity, deliberation-participation, and solidarity-public good and operationalizes them through the Integrative Pancasila–Islamic Ethics Model for Democratic Character (MIPEK-D).

The model positions authentic experiences such as classroom deliberation, moral-dilemma discussions, decision simulations, public-issue projects, service learning, digital literacy, and family-school partnerships as the primary media for internalizing values. The model's strength lies in linking values, experiences, and observable behavior; its limitation is its conceptual nature, which has not yet been tested longitudinally across different types of schools. Further development should therefore focus on instrument validation, teacher training, and empirical studies examining the model's effects on moral reasoning, deliberative skills, tolerance, digital responsibility, and student participation. With nonpartisan, inclusive, psychologically safe, and developmentally appropriate safeguards, Islamic political education can help elementary schools cultivate young citizens who are faithful, critical, fair, capable of deliberation, and responsible for shared life.

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