

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS A FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF PANCASILA

Apri Winge Adindo¹, Sutoyo²

^{1,2}Universitas Slamet Riyadi, Surakarta, Indonesia

Corresponden E-Mail: arsipberkas1@gmail.com

Abstract

Religious education plays a strategic role in instilling the value of Belief in One God as the embodiment of the first principle of Pancasila. However, the development of digital technology poses new challenges to the process of internalising religious values, especially among children. This study aims to analyse the role of the family, community, and educational institutions in implementing the value of Belief in One God in the digital era. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show that: (1) children's participation in religious educational institutions is still ongoing, but has undergone changes due to the increasing use of digital technology; (2) the role of society and parents in guiding children against the influence of social media greatly determines children's religious behaviour patterns; (3) the level of formal education of parents is not always directly proportional to the quality of religious education in the family, because busy work schedules often reduce the intensity of interaction with children. Therefore, it is necessary to revitalise religious education based on Pancasila values through collaboration between families, schools, and communities. The implementation of the value of Belief in One God needs to be realised not only through ritual activities but also through role modelling, positive habits, and the use of educational technology relevant to the character of the digital generation. The instilling of these values is an important foundation in shaping the character of Pancasila students who are faithful, devoted to God Almighty, and have noble character.

Keywords: Religious Education; Pancasila; Role of Parents; Social Media

A. Introduction

Religious education occupies a strategic position in shaping students' character and moral consciousness, particularly in the context of implementing the First Principle of Pancasila, *Belief in the One and Only God* (Azis et al., 2022; Chang, 2020). This principle constitutes the philosophical and ethical foundation of Indonesian national life and is explicitly reflected in the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasises faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character. In this regard, religious education is not merely a transfer of religious knowledge but a conscious and systematic effort to internalise religious values so that they are manifested in students' daily attitudes and behaviour, both in educational settings and in wider social environments (Aminah, 2019; Gawise et al., 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, value internalisation theory provides a strong foundation for understanding how religious values are embedded within individuals. This

theory posits that values are not automatically adopted but must undergo a gradual process involving cognitive understanding, affective acceptance, and behavioural manifestation. In religious education, this internalisation process is crucial, as faith (*iman*) and piety (*taqwa*) are not solely doctrinal concepts but lived values that must be reflected in consistent religious practice and moral conduct. Successful internalisation of religious values enables students to transform abstract religious teachings into concrete ethical behaviour, thereby reinforcing the essence of the First Principle of Pancasila in everyday life (Azis et al., 2022; Chang, 2020).

However, the process of internalising religious values currently faces significant challenges in the digital era. Rapid technological development and widespread access to digital devices have reshaped children's patterns of interaction, learning, and religious engagement. While digital technology offers opportunities for innovation in religious education, it simultaneously poses risks, particularly when not accompanied by adequate guidance and value-based supervision (AlAjmi, 2022; Daud et al., 2020; Zulkipli et al., 2024). Empirical observations in community settings indicate that children are increasingly absorbed in digital activities, such as playing on mobile phones, even during times traditionally allocated for religious practices, including Qur'anic recitation. This condition reflects a weakening of religious discipline and illustrates how uncontrolled digital exposure can disrupt the internalisation of faith and piety.

In the context of digital religious education, this phenomenon highlights the urgent need to reconceptualise religious education strategies. Digital religious education should not be viewed solely as the use of technology in teaching religion, but rather as an integrative approach that aligns digital media with the goals of character formation and value internalisation (Kharismatunisa, 2023; Putra et al., 2023, 2024). Without a strong pedagogical framework, digital technology risks reducing religious education to superficial knowledge consumption, rather than fostering deep spiritual awareness and moral commitment. Consequently, religious education must adapt by incorporating digital literacy, ethical guidance, and value-based control mechanisms to ensure that technology becomes a means of strengthening, rather than eroding, students' faith and devotion.

Furthermore, the weakening of religious commitment among children is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, children's moral and psychological development is still in a formative stage, making them vulnerable to external influences. Externally, family involvement, social environment, and educational practices play a decisive role in shaping religious behaviour (Adha et al., 2019; Madyawati et al., 2021). A lack of parental supervision and limited community engagement in religious activities contribute to declining religious participation among children. This condition underscores the importance of collaborative efforts between families, educational institutions, and communities in reinforcing religious values as part of character education grounded in Pancasila.

Faith and piety are inseparable dimensions of religious life and function as the moral core of character education. Faith without piety remains abstract, while piety without faith lacks spiritual grounding. Therefore, strengthening faith through consistent religious practice, moral discipline, and spiritual guidance is essential for cultivating a positive religious culture in society. In this regard, religious education serves as a vital instrument for re-internalising values of faith and devotion to God Almighty, ensuring that the First Principle of Pancasila is not only understood normatively but also realised substantively in the daily lives of students, particularly in the challenging context of the digital age.

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research approach aimed at exploring and interpreting the process of internalising religious values as a manifestation of the First Principle of Pancasila within the community context. A qualitative descriptive design was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of social and religious phenomena as they naturally occur, particularly in capturing people's perceptions, experiences, and practices related to faith and devotion to God Almighty. This approach is considered appropriate for examining how religious values are understood, practised, and integrated into daily life amid the challenges of the digital era.

The research was conducted in a community setting where children's religious activities are routinely organised, such as Qur'anic recitation sessions. This location was selected based on preliminary observations indicating a shift in children's religious behaviour influenced by digital technology use. The research subjects consisted of purposively selected informants, including children, parents, and local religious educators. The selection of informants was based on specific criteria, namely their direct involvement in religious activities, their interaction with children's religious learning processes, and their relevance in providing rich and credible information related to the research focus. The number of informants was determined based on data saturation, ensuring that the collected data sufficiently represented the studied phenomenon.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted to explore informants' understanding and experiences regarding religious education, faith practices, and the influence of digital technology. Observations were used to examine real-life religious practices and children's behaviour in natural settings, while documentation supported the data through written records, activity reports, and relevant visual materials. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Through this systematic process, patterns and meanings related to the internalisation of religious values were identified and interpreted comprehensively. To ensure the credibility of the findings, data triangulation across sources and techniques was applied, enabling a more valid and reliable interpretation of the research results.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Findings

This study demonstrates that the implementation of religious education within the community functions as a substantive expression of the First Principle of Pancasila, namely *Belief in the One and Only God*. However, empirical findings indicate that this implementation is undergoing a significant transformation, particularly in relation to children's religious participation, the growing influence of digital media, and the shifting role of parents in religious value transmission.

The findings show that children's participation in community-based religious education institutions remains observable but has declined in terms of intensity and consistency. Observations reveal a marked shift in children's daily activity patterns, where engagement in religious group activities has gradually been replaced by individual-oriented digital activities, especially mobile phone use. Religious spaces that previously facilitated daily interaction, such as mosques and TPA, are now utilised on a weekly basis rather than as routine environments for value formation. This change indicates a weakening of habitual religious practice, which is essential for embedding religious values into children's everyday behaviour. Parental involvement emerged as a decisive factor in sustaining children's engagement. Interview data indicate that children are increasingly dependent on parental initiative to attend religious activities, as peer-driven participation has diminished due to digital distractions.

The results further reveal that social media has become a dominant external influence shaping children's religious attitudes and social behaviour. Children tend to exhibit reduced interest in religious conversations and, in some cases, show resistance toward religious activities. This phenomenon is closely linked to family communication patterns in which religion is frequently introduced in corrective or punitive contexts rather than through daily exemplification. Parents also expressed heightened anxiety about sending children to religious institutions due to negative narratives circulating on social media regarding misconduct by religious educators. As a result, some families limit children's participation in communal religious activities, thereby reducing opportunities for social and spiritual learning. These findings suggest that digital media not only alters children's behaviour directly but also indirectly reshapes parental decision-making related to religious education.

In addition, the study identifies a tendency among parents to delegate religious education to formal institutions, such as full-day religious schools or Islamic boarding schools, primarily due to work demands and limited religious competence at home. Although this strategy is often intended to ensure children receive adequate religious instruction, the findings indicate that it frequently leads to weakened emotional bonds between parents and children. The absence of sustained parental engagement reduces the affective dimension of religious education, limiting children's internalisation of religious values beyond institutional settings.

Observational data further reveal behavioural implications associated with this condition, particularly in children's manners, language use, and social sensitivity. Digital media, especially video-based platforms such as YouTube, is commonly used by parents as

a behavioural management tool during daily routines. Prolonged exposure to such media contributes to imitation of inappropriate language, aggressive expressions, and diminished politeness in family interactions. These behavioural patterns are subsequently reproduced in children's social environments outside the home, indicating that family-based digital practices significantly shape children's moral and social dispositions.

Overall, the findings indicate that although the value of Godliness remains a normative reference within Indonesian society, its practical internalisation among children is increasingly fragile. The implementation of the First Principle of Pancasila through religious education requires systematic reinforcement through consistent parental involvement, value-oriented social environments, and conscious regulation of digital exposure. Without these efforts, religious education risks becoming symbolic rather than transformative in shaping children's faith, character, and moral conduct.

2. Discussion

The present findings confirm that community-based religious education constitutes a lived enactment of the First Principle of Pancasila (*Belief in the One and Only God*). Nevertheless, the implementation is increasingly fragile at the level of children's daily practice, due to three interacting dynamics: (1) the weakening of habitual participation in religious learning spaces, (2) the pervasive influence of digital media on children's behaviour and parents' decision-making, and (3) the shifting parental role from direct value transmission to institutional delegation. These dynamics indicate that religious education in the digital age cannot be evaluated solely by the availability of religious institutions; it must be assessed by how effectively religious values are internalised into children's routines, dispositions, and interpersonal conduct.

2.1 Value internalisation and the erosion of habituation

A central implication of the findings is that children's participation in religious education remains present but has shifted from a daily habituation to a more sporadic, scheduled engagement. From the perspective of value internalisation, this shift is consequential because internalisation is not merely cognitive understanding of religious norms, but a developmental process that requires repeated practice, emotional investment, and behavioural consistency. The literature on moral and value socialisation emphasises that values become durable when children experience consistent reinforcement across contexts home, peers, and community institutions – and when routines become part of their self-regulation (Kohlberg & Hersh, 2008; Lickona, 1991). In this study, the decline of daily communal religious activity and the rise of individually oriented screen-based routines weaken the behavioural and affective pathways through which religious values become embodied in action. Consequently, religious learning risks remaining at the level of "knowing" rather than "living," which reduces the transformative capacity of religious education as an implementation of Pancasila's first principle.

2.2 Digital influence as behavioural displacement and moral-social reshaping

The findings also show that mobile phone use has become a dominant competitor to religious participation and family interaction, functioning not only as a personal entertainment medium but as a family management tool. This pattern is consistent with research indicating that extensive screen exposure can displace social activities and weaken face-to-face interactions that are essential for moral learning and empathy development, particularly during childhood (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007; Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). Importantly, this study identifies a dual mechanism: digital media shapes children's conduct directly through imitation of language and behaviour observed online, and indirectly through parents' reliance on digital platforms (e.g., YouTube) for calming children during meals or busy periods. Social learning theory helps explain this pattern: children learn behavioural scripts through observation and modelling, and repeated exposure normalises those scripts as acceptable conduct (Bandura, 1986). This offers a theoretical basis for the observed decline in manners, increased rudeness, and reduced social sensitivity, which are then reproduced outside the home.

In addition, the study highlights how negative social media narratives (e.g., viral news about violence in religious institutions) influence parental risk perceptions and can reduce children's access to communal religious learning. This aligns with scholarship on the social amplification of risk in digital environments, where repeated exposure to salient negative content can reshape trust and decision-making even in the absence of direct personal experience (Kasperson et al., 1988). As a result, digital media becomes not only a behavioural influence on children but also a structural factor that reshapes the ecology of religious education by altering parental choices and community participation.

2.3 Parental role: from direct transmission to delegation and emotional distance

A third contribution of this study is the demonstration that some parents respond to digital-era pressures and work demands by delegating religious education to formal institutions (full-day religious schools or boarding schools). While institution-based religious schooling can strengthen cognitive religious knowledge, the findings indicate that delegation may reduce emotional attachment and weaken the affective channel of internalisation. Developmental and parenting research consistently shows that value internalisation is strengthened when children experience warmth, consistent guidance, and reasoning within close relationships; when parents are emotionally unavailable, children's compliance becomes fragile and values are less likely to be integrated into personal commitments (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Ecological systems theory further clarifies why delegation alone is insufficient: children's development is shaped by interacting systems, and the family microsystem remains decisive for daily reinforcement and meaning-making (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this study, parents' reduced interaction time often associated with higher formal education and work intensity creates gaps in supervision, moral dialogue, and exemplification. Children may then seek recognition through behaviours that draw attention, including those shaped by online scripts, which weakens the practical enactment of Godliness as a core value.

2.4 Implications For Pancasila-Based Character Education and Digital Religious Education

Taken together, these findings suggest that the First Principle of Pancasila is not threatened primarily at the level of formal endorsement, but at the level of everyday internalisation. In the framework of Pancasila-based character education, the key challenge is ensuring that religious values are enacted as lived ethics discipline, respect, responsibility, and compassion rather than reduced to symbolic rituals. This requires an approach to digital religious education that goes beyond transferring religious content through digital media. Instead, digital religious education should be oriented toward (1) regulating the moral ecology of children's digital experiences, (2) strengthening family-based modelling and dialogue, and (3) restoring community religious spaces as consistent arenas for habituation.

From an international perspective, self-determination theory provides a useful lens for strengthening internalisation: values are more likely to become integrated when children experience autonomy-supportive guidance, relational connectedness, and clear structure (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Applied to this study's context, parents and educators can increase the likelihood of internalising religious values by shifting from punitive religious talk toward supportive moral-religious dialogue, establishing consistent routines (e.g., device-free mealtimes and prayer/Qur'an schedules), and designing community religious activities that are socially meaningful for children. In short, religious education as an implementation of Pancasila's first principle in the digital age should be conceptualised as an ecosystem of internalisation across home community school, rather than as an institutional responsibility alone.

E. Conclusion

This study concludes that religious education within the community remains a fundamental medium for actualising the First Principle of Pancasila, *Belief in the One and Only God*, not merely as a normative doctrine but as a lived moral and spiritual practice. The findings demonstrate that while religious education institutions continue to exist and function, the effectiveness of religious value internalisation among children has weakened due to changes in participation patterns, increasing digital exposure, and shifting parental roles. These conditions indicate that the challenge facing religious education in contemporary society lies not in its institutional availability, but in its capacity to sustain habituation, emotional engagement, and behavioural consistency in children's daily lives.

The study further reveals that parents and the surrounding community play a decisive role in mediating children's engagement with digital media and shaping their moral orientation. Parental role modelling, sustained interaction, and open communication emerge as critical mechanisms for internalising religious values, whereas the delegation of religious education solely to formal institutions tends to reduce emotional closeness and weaken the affective dimension of moral development. These findings highlight that higher formal educational attainment and economic productivity do not automatically translate into

effective family-based religious education when not accompanied by spiritual awareness and consistent parental involvement.

In addition, the results emphasise the necessity of integrating formal, non-formal, and informal education as a coherent ecosystem of value formation. Religious education in schools and community institutions cannot operate in isolation from family practices, particularly in the digital era where children's moral learning is strongly influenced by everyday media consumption. Without deliberate guidance and value-oriented digital regulation, religious education risks becoming symbolic and fragmented, rather than transformative.

Therefore, the revitalisation of Pancasila-based religious education requires adaptive and innovative strategies that align with children's developmental characteristics and contemporary digital realities. This includes the constructive use of educational technology, the strengthening of family-centred religious practices, and the cultivation of Godliness (*ketuhanan*) as an integrated character trait that balances faith, knowledge, and moral conduct. Ultimately, the implementation of the value of Belief in the One and Only God must be understood as an ethical framework guiding everyday behaviour and social interaction, rather than as a ritualistic or ideological label. By integrating religious education with Pancasila values across family, school, and community contexts, this study contributes to the development of a resilient generation that is spiritually grounded, morally responsible, and capable of engaging with the digital age without losing its national and religious identity.

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