

Integrating *Tri Hita Karana* into Education: Fostering Harmony for Intelligent and Virtuous Individuals

PK Ary Wimbawati¹, IW Suja², IBP Arnyana³

¹ Basic Education, Postgraduate Studies, Ganesha Education University, Indonesia

^{2,3} Lecturer of *Tri Hita Karana* at Ganesha Education University, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author

✉ arywimbawati@gmail.com¹

Abstract: This research aims to explore the implementation of *Tri Hita Karana* values in school environments and its impact on students' harmony intelligent and virtuous individuals. *Tri Hita Karana*, which encompasses the values of *Parahyangan*, *Pawongan*, and *Palemahan*, plays a significant role in shaping students' character. Through observations and interviews with students, teachers, principals, and parents, the implementation of *Tri Hita Karana* has been shown to increase students' spiritual, social, and environmental awareness. Activities such as communal prayers, group work, and cleanliness programs serve as examples of the practical application of these values. Collaboration between the school, parents, and community is necessary to strengthen the teaching of *Tri Hita Karana* values and support the development of better student character. This research concludes that, despite challenges, the implementation of *Tri Hita Karana* in schools has a positive impact on character formation and creates a more harmonious environment.

Keywords: *Tri Hita Karana*, harmony intelligent, virtuous individuals

INTRODUCTION

Tri Hita Karana, a noble philosophy originating from Balinese culture, teaches the importance of harmony between humans, the environment, and God. This philosophy is not only relevant in everyday life but also has great potential to be integrated into the world of education. By adopting the values of *Tri Hita Karana*, educational institutions can produce young generations who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have character, ethics, and care for others and their environment.

Education is the primary foundation in shaping the character and intelligence of the younger generation. However, the challenges of the modern world, such as moral crises, environmental degradation, and declining social tolerance, have become increasingly pressing issues to address. The education system often focuses too much on cognitive development, so that spiritual, social, and

environmental aspects tend to be neglected. Student character is one of many vital aspects of education, especially at the elementary level, which serves to shape ethical values, morals, and attitudes in social life.

In recent years, there has been a rather alarming decline in student character, especially in terms of respect for teachers and communication manners. This phenomenon is evident in students' speech patterns, which tend not to distinguish between speaking to teachers and speaking to peers. The polite attitude that should reflect respect for teachers is often replaced by rude behaviour, such as the use of informal language, inappropriate tone, and even an indifferent attitude towards teachers' directions and reprimands. This decline in attitude not only impacts interpersonal relationships between students and teachers but also reflects the weakness of character formation in the educational environment. Schools should be the primary place to build ethical values, morals, and respect for authority as part of character education.

METHODS

Through data collection in the form of interviews with teachers, students, and the principal, observations of school activities, and analysis of documents such as the curriculum. This writing uses a case study method at an elementary school that has integrated *Tri Hita Karana* into the learning process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tri Hita Karana comes from the words "*Tri*" meaning three, "*Hita*" meaning happiness, and "*Karana*" meaning cause. *Tri Hita Karana* consists of three main concepts: *Parahyangan*: harmonious relationship between humans and God. In education, this is realized through the learning of spiritual values, morals, and respect for each individual's religion and beliefs. *Pawongan*: harmonious relationship between humans and each other. This value teaches the importance of cooperation, tolerance, and mutual respect among students, teachers, and the school community. *Palemahan*: harmony between humans and the environment, applied by building students' awareness to preserve the environment through activities such as afforestation, waste management, and ecology-based learning.

School as a place where children develop undergoes a transition in their behavior. The process of behavioral transition in students is in accordance with the social and cultural values contained in the curriculum created by the school. The school is the place where the transformation of noble values and spirituality of students occurs through learning or education. Character and spirituality education are the keywords for the transition of noble values in schools. The function of the transition of noble values held by the school brings many benefits, including: 1) Forming students who are not only intelligent but also have noble character. 2) Creating a harmonious, safe, and comfortable school environment for learning. 3) Producing a younger generation who cares about the environment and is ready to face global challenges.

By looking at the relationship of *Tri Hita Karana* in cultivating the character and piety of students in schools, it is always based on the belief that: 1) all human activities originate from God, 2) all human

activities are revealed and seen by God, and 3) all human activities are directed for offerings to God. By observing this theoretical format, it ensures the realization of students who are religious, devout, honest, loyal, of good character, responsible, moral, ethical, polite, compassionate, loving, and love other creations of God. If all students can realize this harmony with high discipline, in agreement with each other's obligations, then the students' character will become strong in facing the competition of life in the modern era.

Tri Hita Karana efforts to build student character are implemented by schools through: 1) Schools integrate spiritual education into the curriculum through religious lessons, meditation, or communal prayers. This activity helps students recognize religious and spiritual values, which ultimately shape a wiser and more responsible character. 2) Encouraging collaboration and tolerance of good relationships between people. Schools can facilitate programs such as group work, debates, or social activities. Thus, students learn the importance of respecting each other, working together, and appreciating differences. 3) Instilling environmental education awareness in students can be done through programs such as eco-schools, plastic-free campaigns, or school gardens. These activities educate students to love and care for nature as an important part of their lives.

After conducting observations and case study interviews with students, teachers, principals, and parents, as well as analyzing the curriculum, the researcher obtained the following data. Based on interviews with students, respect was understood as an action demonstrating reverence and appreciation for God's creation, including other people, the environment, and everything around us. Students recognized the significance of respecting teachers, viewing them as valuable sources of knowledge. Moreover, students believed that respecting teachers was a duty every student should fulfill. This respectful behavior was taught both at home by parents and at school by teachers.

The cultivation of good manners as a character trait was initiated at home within families. Parents taught their children to respect others, while at school, students were taught to respect both teachers and peers. When interacting with teachers, students tended to be more polite and formal, considering teachers as figures of authority deserving respect. Conversely, when conversing with peers, students were more casual and less formal. Students were also aware of the importance of maintaining appropriate behavior, especially towards teachers. A student should demonstrate respect and appreciation for teachers by speaking politely, paying attention during lessons, and completing all assigned tasks.

In practice, although most students endeavored to maintain a respectful attitude, there were some who lacked respect for teachers. A few students defied teachers, failed to submit assignments on time, or misbehaved during lessons. Therefore, to foster a more respectful atmosphere among students, they could start by setting a positive example. In this way, their peers could observe and emulate this positive behavior. Most students were unfamiliar with *Tri Hita Karana*. However, among those who were aware of it, they understood that *Tri Hita Karana* encompassed three essential aspects of life: the relationship

with God (*Parahyangan*), the relationship with others (*Pawongan*), and the relationship with the environment (*Palemahan*).

In terms of school activities, most students were frequently involved in activities that taught the importance of maintaining a relationship with God, reflecting the value of *Parahyangan*. Some students also occasionally participated in activities that promoted cooperation with peers, reflecting the value of *Pawongan*. However, activities related to the environment, such as afforestation or cleanliness (*Palemahan*), were only attended by a small percentage of students and were often conducted sporadically.

After learning about *Tri Hita Karana*, students demonstrated an increased awareness of the importance of maintaining relationships with God, others, and the environment. The majority of students felt that they had become better individuals after practicing the values of *Tri Hita Karana*. They also became more environmentally conscious and began to exhibit positive attitudes in their daily lives. Additionally, learning about the values of *Tri Hita Karana* helped students become more aware of their social and moral responsibilities. Thus, although there were still challenges in its implementation, learning based on *Tri Hita Karana* had a positive impact on students, both socially, spiritually, and environmentally.

Through the application of the values of *Tri Hita Karana*, students gained meaningful and holistic learning experiences. In this regard, activities reflecting *Parahyangan*, such as communal prayers before and after lessons, expressing gratitude, and fulfilling responsibilities, helped students develop their spiritual awareness. These activities not only brought students closer to God but also cultivated a deep sense of gratitude. Furthermore, the value of *Pawongan* was applied by teaching students to respect and appreciate the opinions of their peers and teachers during discussions, creating a social climate of mutual respect. Lastly, *Palemahan* was practiced through activities such as maintaining classroom cleanliness, such as disposing of waste properly, which taught students to care more about cleanliness and environmental sustainability. By integrating these values, not only was a harmonious learning environment created, but also students who possessed spiritual awareness, valued social diversity, and cared for the environment.

This indicates that *Tri Hita Karana* has become an essential guide in shaping students' character, fostering a future generation that is integrity-based, has strong character, and is capable of maintaining a balance in life between God, others, and nature. After implementing the values of *Tri Hita Karana*, positive changes were observed in students. Students exhibited increased gratitude, discipline in prayer, and a respectful and cooperative attitude in group activities. Moreover, they became more concerned about the cleanliness and beauty of their classroom environment. Students were also more sensitive to moral values, demonstrating behaviors that reflected social and spiritual responsibility and creating an atmosphere that supported healthy interactions among them. Student responses to *Tri Hita Karana*-based learning were generally very positive and enthusiastic, especially when learning was delivered through creative approaches such as interactive discussions, educational games, and field trips. They

felt more engaged in learning because the values taught were directly related to their daily lives, making the learning process more meaningful.

There were several obstacles in implementing the values of *Tri Hita Karana*, including a lack of initial understanding among students about the importance of this concept, especially in relation to environmental responsibility. Some students also struggled to understand the connection between these values and their daily lives. Additionally, limited time in the curriculum often hindered the optimal integration of these values. Differences in cultural backgrounds and student habits also required a more personalized and contextual approach. To overcome these challenges, several steps could be taken, including: providing in-depth introductions to *Tri Hita Karana* through stories, videos, and concrete examples that are interesting and relevant to students' daily lives. Developing weekly activity programs that emphasize *Tri Hita Karana* values, such as "Clean-Up Day," "Life Values Discussion," and "Collective Prayer and Reflection," could help strengthen character formation in students. Furthermore, involving parents and the community in supporting the implementation of these values at home and in the surrounding environment would reinforce the positive impact. Finally, optimizing time by incorporating *Tri Hita Karana* values into daily subjects could also be an effective solution to ensure that these values are well-received and implemented by students.

The implementation of *Tri Hita Karana* values in schools has shown a positive impact in shaping students' character and creating a harmonious environment. Based on the activities carried out, the values of *Parahyangan*, *Pawongan*, and *Palemahan* were reflected in various school activities. *Parahyangan*: Activities such as communal prayers before and after lessons were carried out regularly. This indicated that students were more spiritually connected, with increased gratitude, as reflected in the habit of praying before starting activities. Additionally, the application of this value also taught students to always maintain a good relationship with God, both in their daily lives and in their social interactions. *Pawongan*: These values were very important in group activities and student cooperation. Programs such as community service, group projects, and discussions involving mutual respect and appreciation for the opinions of peers and teachers were reflected in learning. Students also learned to pay more attention and listen to their classmates in class discussions. This strengthened the values of tolerance, cooperation, and mutual respect among students.

In *Palemahan*, activities related to school cleanliness and environmental conservation, such as afforestation and school area cleanup, have a positive impact on building students' awareness of the importance of maintaining cleanliness and environmental sustainability. Many students have started to get used to disposing of waste in its proper place and maintaining the beauty of the school environment. The application of *Tri Hita Karana* values in schools has proven to not only create a more harmonious atmosphere in the classroom but also increase students' awareness of their spirituality, social interactions, and the environment. Students who initially did not fully understand the importance of the relationship with God (*Parahyangan*), others (*Pawongan*), and nature (*Palemahan*) began to show

changes in attitude. They became more concerned about environmental cleanliness and worked better in groups.

However, despite significant progress, some challenges still need to be addressed. One major challenge is the lack of students' understanding of the comprehensive application of *Tri Hita Karana*. Many students still need guidance to better understand how these values can be implemented in daily life, especially regarding environmental responsibility. Meanwhile, limited time in the curriculum has also been an obstacle to optimally integrating these values. To make the application of *Tri Hita Karana* more effective, adjustments need to be made in teaching, such as incorporating these values into daily lessons and subjects and providing a deeper understanding of these concepts through various methods, such as storytelling or more practical activities.

Overall, the application of *Tri Hita Karana* values in schools has shown positive results in shaping students' character. Activities involving these values have a real impact in shaping students who are better, polite, disciplined, and caring about the environment and social diversity. Schools, parents, and the community need closer collaboration to strengthen the implementation of these values in students' daily lives.

Parents explained that they taught their children to be respectful by setting a direct example. Children were taught to speak politely, listen attentively, and maintain good behavior both at home and outside the home. Although children today are more open, these parents felt that there was a difference in the level of respect between the current generation and the previous one. Modern children are more open in their speech, but sometimes lack the more formal and respectful attitudes that were more commonly applied in previous generations.

In the habitual patterns often seen in the current phenomenon, parents observed that their children did not always consistently apply respectful behavior in various situations, especially when interacting with adults outside the family. At home, this parent's child was quite respectful towards parents and siblings. They spoke politely, appreciated everyone, and showed concern for their surroundings. However, although the child exhibited good behavior at home, parents received reports from the school stating that their child sometimes lacked attention in class.

The report revealed that the child was often distracted during teaching and learning activities. In response to this, the parents spoke directly with their child to remind them of the importance of focus and attention during study. Parents felt that their child needed more guidance to improve their attention in class and to carry out school assignments better. These parents believed that the family environment greatly influenced a child's behavior at school. They believed that values such as respect and discipline taught at home could be applied by children at school. A child who is taught to respect parents and siblings at home will also show similar attitudes in the school environment, especially in relationships with teachers and classmates. Parents also felt that the respectful attitude applied in the family would help children feel more comfortable and valued in their social environment. Although parents felt the

importance of the school's role in shaping a child's character, they expressed that communication between parents and schools regarding the development of children's character was still rare.

To instill values such as responsibility, discipline, and respect in children, schools play an active role. Therefore, parents feel that closer collaboration between parents and schools would be more effective in supporting children's character development. Parents look forward to more opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss the development of children's attitudes and character, and to design joint strategies that can improve children's focus, discipline, and respect in school learning activities.

Based on the curriculum analysis, the school uses the Merdeka Curriculum, which is one way of education in Indonesia aimed at providing schools with freedom and flexibility in managing learning. This curriculum is designed to optimize student potential, develop 21st-century skills, and foster character traits relevant to the times. The following is an analysis of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum grants schools the freedom to determine the learning materials in line with local needs and contexts. This opens the way for teachers to be more creative in designing learning that is in line with the different interests and talents of students, as well as the surrounding environment. Thus, learning becomes more relevant for students. Advantages: This flexibility facilitates students to learn in a more independent way and according to their needs. Students can develop their skills more specifically and are not burdened by irrelevant material. Challenges: Although providing freedom, too much flexibility can also lead to inconsistencies in achieving educational goals among different schools.

The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the development of competencies, both in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In addition, character education is a primary focus in every aspect of learning. Character traits such as cooperation, discipline, respect, and responsibility are taught through a more holistic approach. Advantages: Cultivating positive character in students is crucial for shaping a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also has good personalities and is able to adapt to social change.

Challenges: However, character development requires consistency in implementation and supervision, as well as the involvement of all parties (teachers, parents, and the community) to ensure that these values are well internalized. The development of 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity is a focus of the Merdeka Curriculum. Focusing on student-centered learning processes, problem-based projects, and the use of educational technology are the primary methods applied in this curriculum. Advantages: The development of these skills is highly relevant to the demands of the current job market and global society.

Students are prepared to face increasingly complex future challenges by introducing them to project-based learning and technology. Challenges: Implementing 21st-century skills requires adequate infrastructure and training for teachers. Not all schools have sufficient resources to implement technology effectively, which can hinder the success of the curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum encourages student-centered learning, where teachers only have a role as facilitators. Students are given

the freedom to explore, collaborate, and actively participate in the learning process. Advantages: This approach increases student motivation and engagement in learning. Students feel more valued and empowered to develop their potential. Challenges: Student-centered learning requires teachers to be ready to be effective facilitators. Teachers need to be trained to support students in critical and creative thinking, and to manage the classroom with a more flexible approach.

In the Merdeka Curriculum, assessment is not only focused on the final outcome but also on the learning process itself. Students are evaluated based on the development of their competencies throughout the learning process, including affective and psychomotor aspects. Advantages: This assessment approach is more holistic, where assessment does not only look at numbers or test results, but also the process and effort of students in developing themselves. This supports the overall development of students. Challenges: Implementing process-based assessment requires more time and better skills from teachers in monitoring student development. In addition, teachers must also be prepared to manage various types of more complex assessments.

The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the importance of the role of parents and the community in supporting learning at school. Enriching students' learning experiences and strengthening character development are expected to be obtained through good collaboration between schools, parents, and the community. Advantages: Strengthening the implementation of educational values and character taught in schools, and providing more comprehensive support for students are expected to be obtained through close cooperation between schools and parents.

Challenges: Not all parents have a sufficient understanding of the curriculum or how to support their children's learning at home. Therefore, more effort is needed to increase parental awareness and involvement. The Merdeka Curriculum has great potential to develop character, 21st-century skills, and student competencies in a more flexible and holistic manner. However, challenges such as consistency of implementation in various schools, infrastructure limitations, and parental involvement must be addressed to ensure successful implementation. Strong support from all parties, including teachers, parents, and the community, is needed to optimize this approach.

The implementation of *Tri Hita Karana* values and the Merdeka Curriculum in schools has a positive impact on the formation of students' character, especially in the aspects of spirituality, social, and environment. Although there are challenges in its implementation, such as a lack of student understanding and limited resources, close collaboration between schools, the community, and parents can strengthen the success of this program. By uniting these values in everyday life, students can develop into individuals with character, who care about the environment, and who are able to face the challenges of the times.

CONCLUSION

The integration of traditional philosophies like *Tri Hita Karana* with modern educational frameworks like the *Merdeka* Curriculum offers a promising path towards producing well-rounded individuals. Strong collaboration between schools, parents, and the community is crucial for the success

of this approach. By focusing on both cognitive and non-cognitive skills, we can empower students to become responsible, compassionate, and successful individuals who contribute positively to society. The implementation of *Tri Hita Karana* values and the *Merdeka* Curriculum in schools has a positive impact on the formation of students' character, especially in the aspects of spirituality, social, and environment. Although there are challenges in its implementation, such as a lack of student understanding and limited resources, close collaboration between schools, the community, and parents can strengthen the success of this program. By uniting these values in everyday life, students can develop into individuals with character, who care about the environment, and who are able to face the challenges of the times.

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