



Teacher Professional Ethics as a Foundation for Culture-Based Pedagogy in Fostering Peaceful Primary Schools: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The modern era is characterized by the complexity of a pluralistic society that requires teachers to act not only as educators, but also as moral guardians and facilitators. This dual role requires a foundation of professional ethics and contextual pedagogical strategies. This study aims to systematically examine the role of teachers' professional ethics as a moral foundation and strategic filter in implementing culture-based pedagogy to foster

cultural diversity in elementary schools. The method used is Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Data were collected and analyzed from 16 scientific articles published between 2021 and 2025, following the PRISMA guidelines, from the Google Scholar and ScienceDirect databases. The results of the analysis show that teachers' professional ethics serve as a guiding framework for decisions and interactions in culturally diverse classrooms, which are operationalized through eight prerequisites for intercultural competence. These ethical principles guide the application of culture-based pedagogy as a pedagogical strategy to foster diversity. The synergy between teacher ethics and culture-based pedagogy is the foundation for realizing peaceful schools through three main pillars: (1) the moral integrity of educators, (2) a contextual pedagogical approach, and (3) collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community. Culturally-based pedagogy, supported by a strong ethical foundation, connects curriculum content with students' life experiences, fostering tolerance, empathy, and mutual cooperation. Thus, this study contributes a conceptual model that integrates teachers' professional ethics and culturally-based pedagogy as a pedagogical foundation for multicultural education within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Keywords: *Scientific Ethics; Culturally Based Approach; Peace School; Primary school*

ABSTRAK

Era modern ditandai dengan kompleksitas masyarakat majemuk yang menuntut guru tidak hanya berperan sebagai pendidik, tetapi juga sebagai penjaga moral dan fasilitator. Peran ganda ini memerlukan fondasi etika profesional dan strategi pedagogis yang kontekstual. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara sistematis peran etika profesional guru sebagai landasan moral dan filter strategis dalam mengimplementasikan pedagogi berbasis budaya untuk menumbuhkan keberagaman budaya di sekolah dasar. Metode yang digunakan adalah *Systematic Literature Review (SLR)*. Data dikumpulkan dan dianalisis dari 16 artikel ilmiah yang dipublikasikan tahun 2021-2025, mengikuti pedoman PRISMA, dari basis data Google Scholar dan ScienceDirect. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa etika profesional guru berfungsi sebagai kerangka panduan untuk keputusan dan interaksi di ruang kelas yang beragam budaya, yang dioperasionalkan melalui delapan prasyarat kompetensi antarbudaya. Prinsip etis ini mengarahkan penerapan pedagogi berbasis budaya sebagai strategi pedagogis untuk menumbuhkan keberagaman. Sinergi antara etika guru dan pedagogi berbasis budaya menjadi landasan untuk mewujudkan sekolah damai melalui tiga pilar utama: (1) integritas moral pendidik, (2) pendekatan pedagogis kontekstual, dan (3) kolaborasi antara guru, orang tua, dan masyarakat. Pedagogi berbasis budaya yang didukung oleh fondasi etika yang kuat menghubungkan konten kurikulum dengan pengalaman hidup siswa, menumbuhkan toleransi, empati, dan gotong royong. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini menyumbangkan model konseptual yang mengintegrasikan etika profesional guru dan pedagogi berbasis budaya sebagai landasan pedagogis bagi pendidikan multikultural dalam kerangka Kurikulum Merdeka.

Kata Kunci: *Etika Keilmuan; Pendekatan Berbasis Budaya; Sekolah Damai; Sekolah Dasar*

INTRODUCTION

Education in the modern era faces challenges influenced by rapid technological advances and increased cultural diversity in the classroom. Technological advances have significantly changed the way students interact and obtain information (Kalionga et al., 2023). Although the digital age brings many conveniences, it also presents new challenges. Phenomena such as plagiarism, moral degradation, and cyberbullying among elementary school students highlight the importance of teaching ethics and responsibility in the use of digital media (Tantri et al., 2023). These developments explain the urgency of the role of teachers not only as educators, but also as moral supervisors, character value instillers, and facilitators in shaping students' ethical behavior. Recent studies show that although teachers have an understanding of interculturalism, this is not always translated into concrete classroom actions (Tualaulelei & Halse, 2022), thus reinforcing

the need for a solid ethical foundation.

This study is built on two main theoretical frameworks. First, the concept of teacher professional ethics refers to the system of values and moral principles that guide teachers' behavior, decisions, and interactions in carrying out their professional duties. In the context of multicultural education, professional ethics includes not only compliance with a code of ethics, but also intercultural competence that enables teachers to create a fair and inclusive learning environment (Theeuwes et al., 2025). This competence includes moral understanding, cultural awareness, appreciation of diversity, and the ability to prevent stereotyping. He (2024), in his study of elementary school teachers in China, emphasized that the principle of cultural value internalization greatly influences the formation of teachers' professional ethics, especially in a multicultural context.

Second, the concept of culture-based pedagogy, which emphasizes the integration of local cultural values, knowledge, and practices into the learning process to make it more contextual and meaningful for students (Sastra Atmaja, 2023). This approach is in line with the principle of equity pedagogy in multicultural education, which aims to provide equal learning experiences by recognizing and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds of students (Žammit, 2025). A comprehensive review by Judijanto (2025) of 71 peer-reviewed studies highlights that the role of teachers in multicultural and interdisciplinary education is crucial to the success of inclusion in the classroom.

These two theoretical frameworks are conceptually interrelated. Teacher professional ethics provide a moral foundation that ensures the implementation of culture-based pedagogy is not mechanistic or superficial, but truly respects diversity and promotes social justice. In other words, ethics serve as a strategic foundation that guides how cultural values are integrated into pedagogical practice.

Although there have been many studies on teacher ethics and multicultural education, several research gaps can still be identified. First, most studies tend to discuss teacher ethics and culture-based pedagogy separately. There is still limited research that systematically examines the synergy between these two concepts, especially in the context of primary education. Second, although the concept of "peaceful schools" has begun to gain attention in educational discourse in Indonesia (Istianah et al., 2023), there have not been many studies that explicitly link the achievement of peaceful schools with the integration of teacher professional ethics and culture-based pedagogy. Ethnographic research in Peru shows that teachers' intercultural competence in urban areas still needs to be strengthened through a more contextual approach (Author(s), 2022). Third, with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), there is a need to understand how teacher ethics and culture-based pedagogy can be concretely integrated into the curriculum framework. Studies on strengthening tolerance in Indonesia's border areas (Zakso et al., 2021; Zakso et al., 2022) provide empirical evidence that Pancasila-based character education is effective, but its integration with culture-based pedagogy still needs to be explored further.

Based on the theoretical framework and research gaps above, this study aims to answer the following questions: (1) How does teacher professional ethics serve as a

foundation for the implementation of culture-based pedagogy in elementary schools? (2) How can the synergy between teacher professional ethics and culture-based pedagogy create peaceful schools? (3) What are the main components of a conceptual model that integrates these two concepts within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum?

Thus, this study aims to systematically examine the role of teachers' professional ethics as a moral foundation in the implementation of culture-based pedagogy to foster diversity in elementary schools, as well as to construct a conceptual model that synergizes the two.

METHODS

Type and Design

This study applies a qualitative approach using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, which is an approach used to prepare research by identifying, evaluating, and interpreting relevant studies to answer research questions (Habibi & Artha Glory Romey Manurung, 2023). The data collection technique refers to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, which consists of four stages, namely identification, screening, requirements, eligibility, and results (Habibi & Artha Glory Romey Manurung, 2023). In the article selection process, inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to determine which articles were eligible to be used as research samples.

Data and Data Sources

The data in this study were sourced from scientific articles retrieved from several indexed scientific databases such as Google Scholar and ScienceDirect. The study focused on articles published in the last five years (2021-2025) and related to the topic of teacher ethics as the foundation of a culture-based approach to promoting diversity in elementary schools. The articles selected as samples were published in international and national journals indexed by ScienceDirect and Sinta. Details of the criteria are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria Included and Excluded

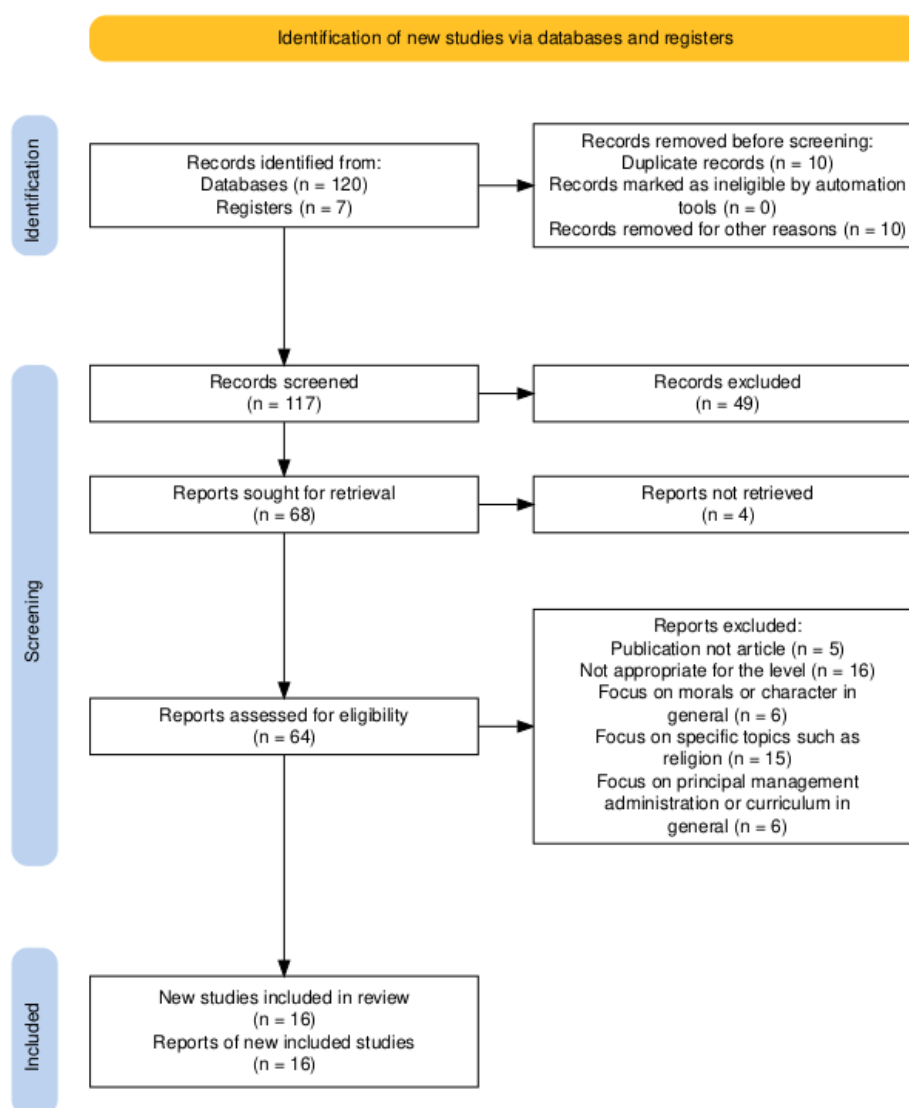
Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Articles published between 2021 and 2025	Scientific articles published before 2021
Articles published in Scopus-indexed journals from ScienceDirect and Sinta	Publications that are not articles, such as books, theses, proceedings, or journals, not indexed by Scopus or Sinta
Research that explicitly addresses one or a combination of the following topics: scientific ethics, character education, multicultural education, or peaceful schools	The main topic does not address scientific ethics, character education, or multicultural issues in education
The research subjects are teachers and prospective teachers	The research subjects focus on subjects other than teachers and prospective teachers

The research location is in Indonesia or countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe that are relevant to multicultural or educational ethics issues

The research location or subject is not specific to the context of teachers, or does not present empirical data related to multicultural issues and educational ethics

Data collection technique

The article search was conducted through ScienceDirect and Google Scholar using the keywords “scientific ethics, educators, instilling multicultural values OR, teaching strategies in culturally diverse classrooms, teachers' social responsibility in education.” This yielded 16 articles from 127.



Picture 1. SLR Metode PRISMA

1. Identification

In this stage, the researcher collected initial data in the form of articles from various sources. The diagram shows that articles were obtained from the Google Scholar database (n = 120), Sinta (n = 2), and ScienceDirect (n = 5), for a total of 127 initial articles. However, there were 10 duplicate articles, leaving 117 articles ready for further screening.

2. Screening

During the screening stage, an initial examination was conducted to determine whether the articles found were relevant to the research topic. Of the total 117 articles: (1) 49 scientific articles were published before 2021, (2) the remaining 68 articles proceeded to the next stage for further evaluation, but 4 articles were excluded because they were inaccessible, (3) the remaining 64 articles proceeded to the next stage, there were 5 publications that were not articles, such as proceedings, books, theses, or journals not indexed by Scopus and Sinta. Thus, 59 articles remained to be evaluated in depth in the next stage.

3. Eligibility

After the reports were obtained, the researchers assessed the eligibility of the articles. In this stage, 59 articles were evaluated, but some articles were eliminated for certain reasons, such as (1) not suitable for elementary school level (n=16), (2) focusing on morality or character in general (n=6), (3) focusing on specific topics such as religion (n=15), (4) focusing on school principal management administration or the curriculum in general (n=6).

4. Inclusion

After going through the identification, screening, and eligibility stages, 16 articles that met the criteria remained and were then analyzed in a *systematic literature review*.

Data analysis

After going through the identification, screening, and eligibility stages, 16 articles that met the criteria remained and were analyzed in this systematic literature review. The analysis was conducted using thematic synthesis, an approach specifically developed for synthesizing qualitative research findings in systematic reviews to identify key themes and develop new conceptual models (Thomas & Harden, 2008). This method was chosen because the study aims to move beyond merely summarizing the literature toward constructing a conceptual model that integrates teacher professional ethics and culture-based pedagogy. Thematic synthesis was employed as the primary method, while elements of content analysis were used to identify the frequency of key concepts, and narrative synthesis helped to provide brief descriptive summaries of each study's context and findings.

The thematic synthesis process followed the three-stage procedure outlined by Thomas and Harden (2008). In the first stage, free line by line coding, each of the 16 articles was read in depth multiple times to ensure familiarization with its content. Relevant text segments related to the research questions such as descriptions of teacher roles, ethical principles, cultural teaching strategies, definitions of a peaceful school, and collaborative practices were identified and assigned initial codes that captured their core meaning. This process was done inductively, meaning codes emerged from the text itself. Examples of initial codes included "teacher as moral model," "cultural awareness," "preventing stereotypes," "P5 projects," and

“family school partnership”.

In the second stage, developing descriptive themes, the initial codes were compared and contrasted to identify similarities and relationships. Related codes were grouped together using a constant comparison method, moving back and forth between the codes and the original articles to ensure the themes accurately represented the data. For instance, codes such as “cultural awareness,” “respect for diversity,” and “preventing stereotypes” were grouped into the descriptive theme “Teacher Intercultural Competence.” Similarly, codes like “local curriculum integration,” “P5 projects,” and “heritage education” formed the theme “Culture-Based Pedagogical Strategies,” while codes including “parent involvement,” “school community collaboration,” and “principal's role” were consolidated into “Stakeholder Collaboration”.

The third stage involved generating analytical themes, which moved from description to interpretation. The descriptive themes were analyzed to answer the core research question: *How do teacher ethics and culture-based pedagogy work together to foster a peaceful school?* This required synthesizing the descriptive themes to develop more abstract, analytical themes that formed the core of the conceptual model. For example, the descriptive themes of “Teacher Intercultural Competence,” “Culture-Based Pedagogical Strategies,” and “Stakeholder Collaboration” were interpreted as interdependent and mutually reinforcing, leading to the generation of the overarching analytical theme: “The Three Pillars of a Peaceful School,” which became the central finding and contribution of this review.

Throughout this process, the derivation of themes was rigorous and iterative. Units of meaning were extracted, clustered, and labeled, followed by repeated review and refinement against the source articles. To enhance reliability and minimize bias, the theme development process was discussed collaboratively among the research team, with disagreements resolved through consensus. This systematic and transparent analytical process ensures that the findings presented in the following section are credible, trustworthy, and provide a meaningful contribution to the field

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, there were 16 articles that met the criteria for analysis in the SLR systematic review. The following are the findings from the 16 articles.

Table 2. Findings from Included Articles

No	Author (Year)	Title	Location	Findings
1.	Aini, F., & Ramadan, Z. H. (2024)	The Role of Teachers in Developing Ethical and Moral Values in Elementary School Students	Indonesia (Asia)	Teachers serve as role models to instill values and ethics through good behavior
2.	Alwi, M. B (2021)	Ethics of Educators and Students in the Perspectives of	Indonesia (Asia)	Educator ethics emphasize the practice of science and morality as

		Ghozali and Ibn Miskawaih		the foundation of scientific ethics.
3.	Datunsolang et al., (2022)	Strategies of School Principals in Instilling Multicultural Educational Values	Indonesia (Asia)	Strategies for instilling multicultural values through activities inside and outside the classroom (cultural implementation aspects)
4.	Faddila, I., & Sutrisno, I. H. (2025)	The Role of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) in Building a Peaceful School Community () in the Era of the Merdeka Curriculum	Indonesia (Asia)	P5 helps build tolerant, cooperative, and inclusive character in schools (basic principles of peaceful schools)
5.	Hutagalung, R., & Ramadan, Z. H. (2022)	The Role of Parents in Instilling Multicultural Values in the Family Environment of Elementary School Students	Indonesia (Asia)	Emphasizing the importance of the educational environment, both family and school, in creating multicultural values
6.	Indriawati et al., (2023)	Teacher Professional Ethics in Elementary School Education	Indonesia (Asia)	Accountability is key in scientific ethics or educator ethics, which includes relationships with students, colleagues, and the school environment.
7.	Istianah et al., (2023)	The Concept of Peaceful Schools: Harmonizing the Pancasila Student Profile in the Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum	Indonesia (Asia)	A peaceful school is centered on a peaceful, inclusive, and harmonious environment, which requires the integration of P5
8.	Lucas-Palacios et al., (2023)	Heritage education in initial teacher training from a feminist and	Spain (Europe)	Heritage education fosters critical thinking and empathy for social change

		animal ethics perspective. A study on critical-empathic thinking for social change		
9.	Rahman et al., (2021)	Instilling Multicultural Education Values for Educators	Indonesia (Asia)	Multicultural education is a progressive approach used to eliminate discrimination and create a peaceful educational environment.
10.	Sastra Atmaja, T. (2023)	Efforts to Enhance Students' Nationalism Through Culture-Based Learning	Indonesia (Asia)	The integration of culture into the curriculum has a positive impact on the formation of national identity, which is the foundation for cultural harmony.
11.	Suryaningsih et al., (2023)	Shaping the Profile of Pancasila Students in the Dimension of Global Diversity through Multicultural Education in Elementary Schools	Indonesia (Asia)	The importance of local cultural values and the importance of multicultural education as the main way to increase global awareness.
12.	Tantri et al., (2023)	Character Education in the Digital Age: Teaching Ethics and Responsibility in the Use of Social Media	Indonesia (Asia)	Ethics and responsibility are fundamental principles that are very important, making them relevant to the context of scientific ethics
13.	Theeuwes et al., (2025)	Unraveling teachers' intercultural competence when facing a simulated multicultural classroom	Netherlands (Europe)	Identifying eight dimensions or prerequisites for teachers' intercultural competence that emphasize the importance of <i>awareness</i> and attitude (ethics)
14.	Thijs et al., (2025)	The diversity teaching beliefs scale: Addressing cultural diversity,	Netherlands (Europe)	Diversity has three dimensions, namely cultural differences, cultural similarities, and

		communalities between inter al cultures, and the national culture in the classroom		the principle of harmonizing national cultures
15.	Zammit, J. (2025)	Navigating the stormy seas of inclusion: Educator insights on refugee children in Maltese classrooms through ecological and multicultural lenses	Malta (Europe)	<i>Critical multicultural education</i> and ethics are crucial for addressing socio-cultural challenges and creating an inclusive environment
16.	Zubaidah, R. S. A. N (2022)	Teacher Ethics in Teaching as a Manifestation of Students' Character and Morality in Schools	Indonesia (Asia)	Good teacher ethics can serve as a role model and example, preventing inappropriate behavior and shaping students' morals (ethics as a moral filter)

Scientific Ethics as the Foundation of Educator Professionalism

Scientific ethics is a fundamental dimension in shaping teacher professionalism, functioning as a crucial moral compass that guides educators in their actions, thoughts, and decisions. Ethical teachers not only adhere to moral principles, but also have professional competence, responsibility for student development, and a commitment to being good role models. Scientific ethics are the basis for creating a *safe*, inclusive, and discrimination-free *space*.

Educator ethics serve as crucial guidelines in preventing unethical actions such as plagiarism, low morals, *cyberbullying*, and culture-based discrimination, but also as an affirmation of teacher accountability. Based on the *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) report, one of the significant factors contributing to an unsafe learning environment is the lack of intercultural competence among teachers, which directly highlights the urgency of ethical guidelines in teaching practice. (Theeuwes et al., 2025) put forward eight main components as prerequisites for realizing ethical teacher professionalism, namely

- 1) Moral understanding: educators must have a strong foundation to navigate complex cultural interactions and ensure that all students are valued and respected
- 2) Adaptability: educators need to adapt to the challenges of the digital age to guide students to become good, responsible, and ethical digital citizens.
- 3) Cultural awareness: the importance of understanding cultural diversity to create an inclusive learning environment that promotes respect for students from different backgrounds
- 4) Intercultural competence: educators must develop skills that can meet the multicultural needs of students

- 5) Respect for diversity: Teachers must show respect for diversity to create a supportive learning environment.
- 6) Preventing stereotypes: educators must understand students' cultural backgrounds to avoid generalizations that lead to stereotypes and discrimination
- 7) Continuing professional development is necessary for teachers to teach effectively in diverse classrooms
- 8) Guiding ethical behavior: educators play a role in modeling ethical behavior for students, including in addressing bullying.

These eight components show that scientific ethics are not only related to compliance with rules, but also serve as guidelines to guide teachers in upholding justice and respecting diversity. Philosophically, scientific ethics can be likened to a main operating system (OS) that drives and validates all of a teacher's professional abilities, ensuring that all actions are based on moral integrity. Moral integrity acts to protect public trust amid digital disruption and a crisis of public confidence. Any ethical violation can damage professional reputation. In this context, change places educators as digital moral architects responsible for teaching students how to use technology and teaching moral behavior in the virtual world, preventing polarization and the difficult-to- s of cyberbullying. In addition, scientific ethics contribute to curriculum transformation and provide significant spirit for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). Teachers carry out this moral responsibility to ensure that learning not only achieves cognitive goals but also realizes the vision of treating students as *dignified human beings*.

A Culture-Based Approach to Fostering Diversity

In applying a culture-based approach, educators are required to build a solid ethical foundation for the approach to be effective. Without a strong ethical foundation, a culture-based approach risks becoming dangerous or undesirable, such as the emergence of chauvinism or negative stereotypes. (Lucas-Palacios, 2023) emphasizes the importance of *Heritage Education* as a highly effective instrument in honing students' critical thinking and empathy skills. In the context of culture-oriented learning, cultural material must be optimally utilized as a source of reflection on crucial social issues such as social justice, gender equality, and global citizenship. (Sastra Atmaja, 2023) explains that culture-based education is recognized as having a significant role in fostering a spirit of nationalism, where the integration of culture into the curriculum helps to foster national identity. This process fosters awareness that culture is not only a legacy of the past, but also a source of morals and ethical reflection relevant to modern life. Culture-based learning contributes to the formation of an open and globally-minded national identity.

Educator ethics serve as a strategic moral filter in the application of cultural values. (Zammit, 2025) explains that the existence of a moral filter ensures that pedagogical practices are in line with the principles of *equity pedagogy* and focus on *prejudice reduction*. If this cultural approach is applied by educators who do not adhere to a strong ethical foundation, local culture has the potential to be misused to foster *chauvinism* or *stereotypes* that are contrary to the goal of creating a peaceful school environment. Instilling multicultural educational values

in educators is a strategic effort to create peaceful educational conditions and to overcome various discriminatory practices in the educational process (Rahman, 2021).

The implementation of culture-based education should ideally begin at an early age. (Hutagalung & Ramadan, 2022) shows that the weak role of educational institutions and parents in internalizing cultural and religious values can open up the potential for conflict. Therefore, the synergistic role between parents and educational institutions is very important in instilling multicultural values from an early age in order to prevent social conflict in the future.

Synergy of Harmonization of Scientific Ethics and Culture-Based Approach

Harmonious synergy between ethics as moral principles and cultural approaches as pedagogical strategies is an absolute prerequisite for success in fostering healthy and meaningful cultural diversity. This synergy is tangibly realized through the vision of the Peaceful School and the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) in the Merdeka Curriculum. (Faddila & Sutrisno, 2025) explains that P5 has a significant contribution in creating a harmonious and discrimination-free learning atmosphere, while also shaping students' characters to be solution-oriented, tolerant, inclusive, and strengthening solidarity among students.

To realize peaceful schools and comprehensive synergy, there needs to be interrelated multistakeholder collaboration. First, teachers must always uphold their morality as educators and facilitators of meaningful learning. Second, schools as educational institutions play a role in facilitating effective communication between teachers and parents. Third, teachers, parents, and the community share the responsibility of instilling multicultural values in children from an early age to prevent multicultural conflicts in the future. This synergy is realized through three main prerequisites, namely: the moral integrity of educators, a relevant and contextual pedagogical approach, and synergistic collaboration between all relevant parties.

(Suryaningsih et al., 2023) states that the application of the Global Diversity dimension in the Pancasila Student Profile plays an important role in building students' character as tolerant and globally-minded citizens. Basically, the synergy between educator ethics and a culture-based approach is a tangible representation of the application of Pancasila values in elementary schools. Teachers can integrate the values of humanity, empathy, and social responsibility into P5 activities based on local culture with a strong ethical foundation. Therefore, to build a peaceful school, not only pedagogical innovation is needed, but also a sustainable moral commitment from educators who serve as the main role models in fostering empathy and meaningful diversity.

Discussion

Professionalism in teaching based on scientific ethics requires a balance between the moral integrity of educators, relevant and contextual pedagogical approaches, and effective collaborative synergy among all relevant parties. Ethical teachers not only possess strong moral understanding but must also be able to keep pace with the times, especially in today's technological era. This context is particularly important given that PISA findings show that

intercultural competence is a factor that contributes to unsafe learning environments. To address this issue, teachers must master the eight components of professional ethics (Theeuwes et al., 2025). To create safe, inclusive, and discrimination-free spaces, scientific ethics serve as a moral compass.

This moral force becomes the main filter in teaching practice, especially when implementing a culture-based approach. If teachers use a cultural approach without a strong moral foundation, local culture can be misused to spread hatred (*chauvinism*) or stereotypes that are contrary to efforts to create a peaceful school environment. Before implementing multicultural strategies, scientific ethics must be established as a mandatory foundation. Without strong ethics, pedagogical practices have the potential to be divisive and create an intolerant environment. Ethically guided culture-based learning will build an open and globally-minded national identity.

A culture-based approach as a pedagogical strategy also serves as a vehicle for shaping students' morals. Educator ethics and cultural approaches are interrelated, with ethics serving as a moral guide for teachers in teaching appropriate cultural values, while cultural values are used to strengthen morals in pedagogical practice. This interrelationship demonstrates the close connection between ethics and cultural approaches, where ethics guide morals and culture provides a diverse context.

The relationship between ethics and cultural approaches has a strong theoretical basis. This is in line with the *critical multicultural education* framework initiated by Banks and applied by (Zammit, 2025), where socially just pedagogical practices require the integration of morality and cultural awareness. In this context, scientific ethics acts as a strategic moral filter that ensures pedagogical practices are in line with the principles of *equity pedagogy* and focus on *prejudice reduction*.

Educators who have intercultural competence can balance the appreciation of local cultural diversity with the application of universal values. Scientific ethics become the foundation of educators' professionalism in applying a culture-based approach to diverse social dynamics in the classroom. With this competence, teachers can manage diversity without getting caught up in cultural generalizations and simplifications that can lead to stereotypes.

Although culture-based education provides opportunities for students to critically reflect on social values, its effectiveness is determined by the teacher's ability to guide the learning process ethically. Teachers must position culture as a means of fostering empathy and social awareness to explain to students that culture is not merely an identity but also a bridge to connect differences in diversity. It is at this point that teachers are expected to act as ethical facilitators, capable of transforming differences into learning assets to shape social awareness.

To realize a peaceful school and comprehensive synergy, there needs to be interconnected multistakeholder collaboration. Therefore, the synergistic role between parents and educational institutions is very important in instilling multicultural values from an early age. This collaboration is very important to prevent potential conflicts in the future. First, teachers must maintain morality as educators and effective and meaningful learning facilitators. Second, schools have a responsibility to facilitate effective communication between teachers and parents. Third, everyone, including parents, teachers, and the community, has a

responsibility to teach multicultural values from an early age to prevent conflicts in the future. Therefore, parents and educational institutions must work together to instill multicultural values from an early age to prevent social conflicts in the future.

Essentially, the synergy between a culture-based approach and educational ethics is a concrete manifestation of the application of Pancasila values in elementary schools, particularly in the dimension of Global Diversity (Suryaningsih et al., 2023). With a strong moral foundation, teachers can integrate the values of humanity, empathy, and social responsibility into P5 activities based on local culture. The implementation of P5 clearly demonstrates the significant contribution (Faddila & Sutrisno, 2025) of this synergy in creating a harmonious and discrimination-free learning environment. Not only are pedagogical innovations necessary to build safe schools, but also the ongoing moral commitment of educators, who serve as role models in fostering a sense of empathy and diversity.

While this study provides a conceptual model for integrating teacher professional ethics and culture-based pedagogy to foster peaceful schools, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, this review is limited to 16 articles sourced from two primary databases, Google Scholar and ScienceDirect, which means relevant studies indexed in other databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, or ERIC may have been excluded. Second, the geographical scope of the included articles is predominantly focused on Indonesia and several Asian and European countries, which limits the generalizability of the proposed model to educational settings with significantly different cultural, policy, or curricular characteristics. Third, as a Systematic Literature Review, this study does not provide empirical validation of the proposed conceptual model, which remains theoretical until tested in real-world educational settings.

Based on these limitations, several directions for future research are recommended. Future studies should expand the literature search to include prestigious international databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and ERIC to obtain more comprehensive coverage. Empirical research such as qualitative case studies or quantitative surveys is needed to test and validate the three-pillar model, particularly in schools actively implementing culture-based P5 projects. The development of instruments to measure the level of synergy between teacher professional ethics and the implementation of culture-based pedagogy is also essential for future quantitative research. Additionally, teacher professional development programs that explicitly integrate ethical strengthening and cultural pedagogical competencies should be further investigated to determine their effectiveness in preparing teachers for diverse classrooms. By addressing these limitations through future research, the conceptual model generated from this study can be further refined and make a more significant contribution to the development of multicultural education in elementary schools.

CONCLUSION

In facing the complexities of the modern era and cultural diversity, teachers must act as educators, moral guardians, and ethical facilitators. This study confirms that teacher professional ethics serve as a moral filter ensuring educational practices align with equity pedagogy and prejudice reduction, while culture-based pedagogy embodies these ethical values through contextual learning that respects diversity. The synergy between the two is

essential for creating peaceful schools. The primary novelty of this study is the “Three Pillars of a Peaceful School” conceptual model, which integrates: (1) the moral integrity of educators, (2) contextual and ethical pedagogical approaches (culture-based learning and P5 projects within the Merdeka Curriculum), and (3) synergistic collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community. This model positions ethics not merely as a complement but as the essential foundation for multicultural education in elementary schools.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged. This review is limited to 16 articles from Google Scholar and ScienceDirect, with geographical focus primarily on Indonesia, Asia, and Europe, and as a Systematic Literature Review, it lacks empirical validation. Therefore, future research should expand database searches to include Scopus and Web of Science, conduct empirical testing of the three-pillar model particularly in schools implementing P5 projects, develop instruments to measure the synergy between teacher ethics and cultural pedagogy, and evaluate teacher professional development programs that integrate both elements. Addressing these gaps will further refine the model and strengthen its contribution to multicultural education.

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