Research Article

Strengthening Multiculturalism and the Pancasila Student Profile through Global Partnerships and Mobility in Indonesian Higher Education

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Abstract.
In the era of globalization, integrating international partnerships and mobility within higher education is crucial for fostering innovation, inclusivity, and cross-cultural understanding. This study examines how these elements contribute to the enhancement of the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasizes character education and student-centered learning, within the framework of Indonesia's Kurikulum Merdeka. Using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, the research combines qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with quantitative surveys from students and faculty at Universitas PGRI Semarang. The results indicate that 85% of participants gained from cultural exchanges, improving cultural awareness (78%) and collaborative curriculum development (72%). Additionally, international mobility boosted global competence (75%) and reinforced Pancasila values (70%). Key strategies for improvement include enhancing pre-departure orientations, increasing funding for mobility programs, and integrating Pancasila principles into international collaborations. The study highlights the importance of global mobility in strengthening national identity and global competencies. It recommends that higher education institutions prioritize international mobility, integrate global experiences into curricula, and foster an inclusive learning environment.

Keywords: global collaboration, student mobility, cultural competence, educational innovation

1. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, global partnerships and international mobility have emerged as critical drivers of innovation, inclusivity, and cross-cultural understanding in higher education. These initiatives promote academic collaboration and cultural exchange, equipping students with skills necessary for a globalized workforce. At Universitas PGRI Semarang, efforts to prepare graduates for global engagement are aligned with Kurikulum Merdeka [1–7], an educational framework emphasizing student-centered learning, flexible curriculum design, and character education rooted in the Pancasila Student Profile [8–13]. This profile, which embodies Indonesia's core values of civic responsibility, ethical behavior, and respect for diversity, aims to cultivate responsible and engaged citizens. The six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile are integral to this mission. Students are encouraged to develop a faithful, devout, and noble character, which forms the foundation of personal and academic integrity. Global diversity awareness fosters an understanding of different cultures and perspectives, preparing students to engage thoughtfully in an interconnected world. Mutual cooperation emphasizes the importance of teamwork, collaboration, and the collective good, all essential for addressing global challenges. In addition, students are nurtured to be independent, developing resilience and self-reliance necessary for success in both local and global contexts. Through the promotion of critical thinking, the curriculum encourages students to approach problems with a logical and analytical mindset, while creativity is fostered to help them generate innovative solutions to complex issues. By embedding these six dimensions into the curriculum, Universitas PGRI Semarang ensures that its graduates are not only well-equipped for the globalized workforce but also for contributing to society with a strong ethical foundation and a commitment to social responsibility.

While global engagement offers significant benefits, societal concerns persist that participation in internationalization may weaken national identity. However, research suggests the opposite: well-structured global programs enhance national pride by deepening students' understanding of Indonesia's cultural heritage and place in the global community. As Sundari et al. [14] illustrate, traditional arts such as *Barongan* serve as powerful mediums for embedding ethical values within education, underscoring the importance of cultural heritage in shaping identity. Integrating national identity within a global context enables institutions to produce graduates who are both globally competent and firmly rooted in their cultural values.

Despite its potential, effectively leveraging global partnerships to enhance multiculturalism and reinforce the Pancasila Student Profile presents significant challenges. Universitas PGRI Semarang faces barriers in fully embracing diverse student perspectives, limiting inclusive learning opportunities. Additionally, critical evaluation of strategies to align global initiatives with the principles of the Pancasila Student Profile under Kurikulum Merdeka remains underexplored. Existing literature underscores the positive impact of global partnerships on educational quality, adaptability, and critical thinking [15–19]. Innovations in technology, such as augmented reality, as highlighted by Arshad et al. [20], offer tools to enhance students' creativity and critical thinking in educational settings, demonstrating the transformative potential of modern technology in fostering global competency. However, few studies focus specifically on how these experiences influence Indonesian students' understanding of Pancasila values.

This research addresses these gaps by examining how global partnerships and international mobility enhance multiculturalism and support the Pancasila Student Profile. It investigates students' perceptions of cultural exchange, evaluates the impact of international experiences on understanding Pancasila values, and identifies strategies to improve program integration within Kurikulum Merdeka. This study seeks to answer key questions: How do global partnerships influence multiculturalism in higher education? What insights do students gain from participating in international mobility programs? How can global engagement be enhanced within Kurikulum Merdeka to strengthen Pancasila-based character development? Finally, what actionable strategies can institutions adopt to align global partnerships with national identity and multicultural education?

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach [21–23] to comprehensively explore the impact of global partnerships and international mobility on multiculturalism and the Pancasila Student Profile within the Kurikulum Merdeka framework. The explanatory sequential design begins with quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by qualitative methods to further interpret and contextualize the findings. Combining qualitative and quantitative data enhances the robustness of the research, providing a comprehensive view of participant experiences and educational outcomes.

2.1. Qualitative Methods

The qualitative component uses semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) to obtain rich, in-depth narratives from a diverse participant pool, including international students, faculty, and administrative staff at Universitas PGRI Semarang.

1. Semi-Structured Interviews: Thirty participants, selected via purposive sampling to ensure diversity, participated in one-on-one interviews. The structured interview guide was designed to elicit detailed accounts of experiences with global partnerships and mobility initiatives. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights related to multicultural education and the Pancasila Student Profile.

2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Three FGDs, each comprising 6-8 participants, facilitated collaborative reflection on challenges, opportunities, and experiences linked to global engagement. Moderators encouraged active discussion, and thematic analysis of the data provided collective insights into how global initiatives influence multiculturalism and Pancasila values.

2.2. Quantitative Methods

A structured survey was administered to a sample of 100 students and 30 faculty members from Universitas PGRI Semarang. The total sample size of 130, although modest, is considered appropriate for exploratory research within the university's population. The chosen sample size is justified by Cohen's guidelines [24] for statistical power analysis in educational research, which recommend sufficient sample sizes for detecting meaningful differences and relationships in a study's data. Additionally, the sampling strategy aimed to balance practicality with the need for insights into both student and faculty perspectives on the impact of global partnerships and multiculturalism in the context of Pancasila Student Profile development. The survey employed a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to measure respondents' perceptions of multiculturalism [25], the effectiveness of global partnerships, and their understanding of Pancasila values. This scale allowed for a nuanced understanding of participants' attitudes and experiences, ranging from strong disagreement to strong agreement. Multiple-choice items were also included to capture additional contextual information.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize data patterns, while inferential statistics, including chi-square tests, were employed to examine categorical relationships between variables.

While the study focuses on the Pancasila Student Profile—an aspect primarily related to students—the inclusion of faculty members was essential for providing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of international mobility and global partnerships. Faculty members play a critical role in integrating global perspectives into the curriculum and supporting student development. Their participation helps capture the broader institutional impact of these initiatives, particularly in areas such as collaborative research outputs and curriculum changes. The perspectives of faculty members contribute valuable insights into how these global initiatives influence the academic environment, research collaboration, and pedagogical practices, complementing the student data by providing a holistic view of the university's internationalization efforts.

2.3. Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling ensured a diverse participant group, reflecting disciplines such as science, education, management, and engineering. This sampling method allowed for the intentional selection of individuals who could offer rich, varied perspectives on the research topic. By including participants from different academic and professional backgrounds, the study increased the representativeness of its findings, thereby enhancing their generalizability to broader contexts within higher education institutions.

2.4. Ethical Consideration

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before their involvement in interviews, focus groups, or surveys, ensuring that participation was fully voluntary and that individuals were aware of their rights. Confidentiality was rigorously maintained by anonymizing personal identifiers throughout data collection, storage, and analysis processes to protect participant privacy. Additionally, ethical approval was secured from the relevant Institutional Review Board (IRB), ensuring that all research procedures adhered to established ethical guidelines for conducting studies involving human subjects.

2.5. Justification for Mixed-Methods Approach

The mixed-methods design integrates qualitative depth with quantitative breadth. Survey data reveal general trends, while interviews and FGDs provide nuanced insights into participants' experiences. This complementary approach ensures a holistic exploration, illustrating how international mobility influences students' understanding of multiculturalism and Pancasila values. Detailed chi-square (χ^2) analysis strengthens the quantitative findings by confirming relationships between global partnerships and cultural exchange opportunities.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Global Partnerships and Their Role in Multiculturalism

The survey analysis involving 130 participants revealed that global partnerships significantly enhance multiculturalism within higher education. Most respondents (85%) recognized the value of cultural exchange opportunities created through these collaborations (Table 1). Increased cultural awareness (78%) and collaborative curriculum development (72%) further illustrate how partnerships broaden educational perspectives. Faculty engagement in multicultural initiatives, including joint research and exchange programs, was also notable (76%), demonstrating active involvement in fostering a diverse academic environment.

TABLE 1: Impact of Global Partnerships on Multiculturalism.

Aspect	Percentage of Positive Responses
Increased cultural awareness	78%
Opportunities for cultural exchange	85%
Collaborative curriculum development	72%
Faculty engagement in multicultural initiatives	76%

To better understand the relationship between global partnerships and multiculturalism, a chi-square test was conducted. This statistical method determines whether there is a significant association between two categorical variables—in this case, global partnerships and respondents' perceptions of multiculturalism. Specifically, the chi-square test assessed responses categorized as "Agree" or "Disagree" for aspects listed in Table 1, including opportunities for cultural exchange. The highest agreement, at

85%, was for opportunities for cultural exchange, prompting the following chi-square calculation:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} \qquad (1)$$

where O is the observed frequency, and E is the expected frequency. For opportunities for cultural exchange:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(85 - 65)^2}{65} + \frac{(15 - 35)^2}{35} \approx 17.58 \qquad (2)$$

Since the calculated chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 17.58$) exceeds the critical value (3.841) at a 0.05 significance level with 1 degree of freedom ($df = 1$), the null hypothesis is rejected. This confirms a significant relationship between global partnerships and opportunities for cultural exchange ($p < 0.05$). The findings show that global partnerships substantially enhance multiculturalism, particularly by creating opportunities for meaningful cultural interactions that broaden students' global perspectives while reinforcing their appreciation of national identity.

Qualitative insights from faculty interviews further corroborate these results. Faculty highlighted how collaboration with international partners enriched teaching by incorporating global case studies and challenges into the curriculum. One noted, "Working with our international partners has enriched our curriculum, offering students broader perspectives on issues like climate change and social justice." These experiences demonstrate that global partnerships foster a diverse and inclusive learning environment, dispelling concerns that international engagement compromises national identity. Instead, it cultivates a deeper connection to cultural heritage within a global context.

This finding is consistent with existing literature on global partnerships in higher education. Studies by (26,27) emphasize that international collaborations contribute to a more diverse curriculum, which enriches students' educational experiences. These partnerships, as seen in this study, provide students with the opportunity to engage with global challenges such as climate change and social justice, thus reinforcing the importance of cultural awareness while enhancing students' global competencies. Faculty insights, such as those in this study about incorporating international case studies, align with findings by [28], who underscores the role of global partnerships in enhancing teaching and learning by incorporating diverse perspectives. The positive results from both the quantitative and qualitative data in this study reflect the broader

trends in literature that highlight the pivotal role of global partnerships in cultivating global citizenship while maintaining a strong national identity.

3.2. International Mobility and Student Experiences

The research also indicated that international mobility programs significantly influenced students' academic and personal development. As shown in Table 2, a majority of students reported substantial improvements in intercultural competencies and a deeper understanding of Pancasila values after participating in these mobility programs. The data underscores the multifaceted impact of such programs, fostering students' growth not only in cultural awareness but also in personal development.

The duration of the international mobility programs was found to be a key factor influencing the outcomes experienced by students. Students who participated in 1-week programs, such as the International Service Learning (ISL) in Malaysia, reported an average improvement of 60% in global competence, compared to 70% for the 1-month programs and 80% for the 1-semester programs (Table 2). This suggests that short-term programs offer initial exposure but may lack the depth required for significant long-term academic or personal development. While these 1-week programs helped students develop a basic understanding of global issues and intercultural interactions, the brief exposure limited their ability to fully immerse themselves in the host culture, as evidenced by a 10% lower improvement in adaptability and resilience compared to 1-month programs.

On the other hand, the 1-month programs (e.g., teaching internships and short courses in ASEAN countries and India) yielded more substantial improvements in students' global awareness and adaptability, with 70% of students reporting enhanced global competence. The extended duration provided students more time to engage meaningfully with different cultures, as reflected in the 70% improvement in the development of intercultural friendships, a key indicator of long-term intercultural exchange. The extended interaction period resulted in significantly higher ratings of personal development in areas such as adaptability (63%) and resilience (63%) compared to the 1-week program category.

The 1-semester programs, such as the International Credit Transfer (ICT) programs in the Philippines and Thailand and internships in China and Taiwan, provided the most comprehensive immersion. These programs resulted in the highest reported improvements, with 80% of students reporting enhanced global competence and 75%

reporting deeper understanding of Pancasila values. This extended immersion allowed students to integrate more deeply into the local culture, leading to higher levels of academic and personal development. Notably, 80% of students in this category reported an increase in intercultural friendships, significantly higher than in shorter-duration programs.

TABLE 2: Student Experiences in International Mobility Programs.

Experience Category	1-Week Program (%)	1-Month Program (%)	1-Semester Program (%)	Overall Average (%)
Enhanced global competence	60%	70%	80%	75%
Improved understanding of Pancasila values	55%	65%	75%	70%
Increased adaptability and resilience	50%	63%	70%	68%
Development of inter-cultural friendships	50%	70%	80%	72%

In addition to the quantitative data, qualitative interviews revealed valuable insights into students' experiences. Many participants emphasized the transformative effect of living and studying abroad, noting an increase in their cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and resilience. One student shared, "Studying abroad opened my mind to different ways of thinking and communicating, which helped me grow both personally and academically." However, challenges such as language barriers, financial constraints, and limited institutional support were frequently mentioned, potentially limiting the full potential of their mobility experiences. These challenges were particularly pronounced among students participating in shorter programs, where the limited time compounded the difficulties of adjusting to new cultural and academic environments.

These findings are in line with literature on the impact of international mobility. Deardorff et al. [29] and Paige et al. [30] found that students participating in study abroad programs develop stronger intercultural communication skills and a more profound understanding of global issues. The results here also demonstrate the role of mobility in fostering values such as Pancasila, which echoes the work of Amrullah et al. [31], who argue that global mobility programs not only enhance students' competencies but also contribute to the internalization of national and cultural values. However, the challenges identified in this study—particularly financial constraints and limited institutional support—are consistent with the barriers described in Ref. [32], which indicate that these obstacles often impede the full benefits of international mobility

programs. The need for enhanced institutional support to address these challenges is thus a critical aspect for improving the impact of international mobility.

3.3. Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile

The study revealed a strong connection between global engagement and the development of the Pancasila Student Profile. Quantitative data collected from surveys showed a notable increase in the internalization of Pancasila values among students who participated in international mobility programs. As reflected in Table 3, the percentage of students reporting growth in core Pancasila values was high: 82% reported an improvement in respect for diversity, 80% in social responsibility, 77% in integrity, and 75% in commitment to community engagement. These results suggest that international mobility experiences not only enhance students' global competencies but also foster a deeper commitment to the values that shape their national identity.

TABLE 3: Contribution of Global Engagement to Pancasila Values.

Pancasila Value	1-Week Program (%)	1-Month Program (%)	1-Semester Program (%)	Overall Average (%)
Integrity	70%	77%	80%	75.7%
Social responsibility	75%	80%	82%	79.0%
Respect for diversity	82%	85%	88%	85.0%
Commitment to community engagement	70%	75%	80%	75.0%

A deeper look into the data reveals that the 1-semester programs had the most substantial impact on internalizing Pancasila values. For instance, 82% of students in this group reported an improvement in social responsibility, the highest among all program durations. This was followed by 80% reporting increased integrity and 88% indicating stronger respect for diversity. Interestingly, the 1-week programs exhibited relatively lower improvements, particularly in commitment to community engagement, with only 70% of students reporting growth in this area compared to 80% for the 1-semester programs (Table 3). These findings suggest that longer-term mobility experiences offer students more time and opportunities to internalize these core values, which are central to the Pancasila Student Profile.

In addition to the values shown in Table 3, Figure 1 highlights the percentage improvement in six key dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. These dimensions include

mutual cooperation, independence, critical thinking, and creativity. For example, students who participated in the programs showed an increase of 22.2% in independence, the highest improvement across all dimensions. Critical thinking saw an increase of 21.7%, while creativity improved by 21.6%. These improvements were consistent across all program durations, with 1-semester programs yielding the highest gains, particularly in the dimensions of mutual cooperation (17.6%), independence (22.2%), and critical thinking (21.7%), as indicated in the figure.
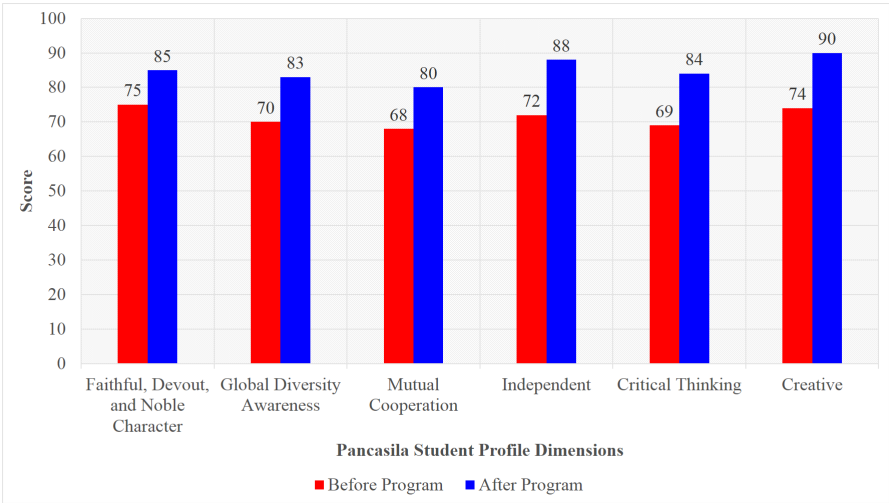

Figure 1: Scores of Pancasila Student Profile Dimensions Before and After Program Participation.

Interviews with faculty members reinforced these findings, highlighting that institutions can better align their curricula with Pancasila values through global collaborations. Faculty members stressed the importance of mentoring students and providing pre-departure orientations to help students navigate their international experiences while staying connected to the core values of Pancasila. One faculty member stated, "By integrating global perspectives into our curriculum, we not only prepare students for a globalized world but also strengthen their commitment to national values."

This supports the work of Kirloskar et al. and Hong et al. [33,34], who highlight the role of international education in promoting values such as social responsibility and respect for diversity. The integration of these values within global mobility programs also aligns with Wang et al. [35] notion that international experiences can bridge global perspectives with local values. The data here strengthens the argument that global engagement can act as a tool for reinforcing national identity, in this case, Pancasila values, while also preparing students for a globalized world. Interviews with faculty members further reinforce this, as they advocate for curricula that balance global

perspectives with national values. These insights are aligned with Refs [36–38], who emphasize the importance of pre-departure orientations and mentorship in helping students navigate their international experiences while staying grounded in their core values.

3.4. Challenges and Opportunities

Although global partnerships and international mobility programs positively influenced students and faculty members, several challenges remain in fully integrating these elements into the Kurikulum Merdeka framework. Table 4 outlines the key challenges that institutions face in promoting these initiatives. As shown, bureaucratic hurdles were the most significant challenge, cited by 64% of participants. Financial constraints also posed a major barrier, with 58% of respondents mentioning this issue. Additionally, 53% noted a lack of awareness regarding the benefits of global partnerships, while 45% mentioned resistance to multicultural initiatives within their institutions.

TABLE 4: Challenges in Implementing Global Partnerships.

Challenge	Frequency of Mention by Participants
Bureaucratic hurdles	64%
Financial constraints	58%
Lack of awareness of benefits	53%
Resistance to multicultural initiatives	45%

Despite these obstacles, participants identified several opportunities to address these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of global partnerships. Faculty members recommended advocating for policies that support international collaborations, such as increasing funding and reducing bureaucratic red tape. Additionally, raising awareness about the long-term benefits of global partnerships and multicultural education through workshops and professional development programs could help overcome institutional resistance. As one faculty member suggested, "Investing in faculty development and creating awareness campaigns will help foster a more collaborative and inclusive culture within our institutions." By strategically addressing these challenges, institutions can strengthen their commitment to developing responsible global citizens who proudly uphold their national identity while actively engaging in a global community.

This aligns with the findings of Hung et al. [39], who discuss the institutional and financial barriers to implementing internationalization strategies. The challenges outlined in this study echo those in the literature, where argue that bureaucratic processes and limited funding often stifle the effectiveness of global partnerships. Moreover, Altbach et al. [27] highlights the resistance some institutions have to embracing multicultural initiatives, which may be rooted in local cultural norms or institutional inertia. Despite these challenges, the study identifies opportunities to overcome these obstacles, such as advocating for policies that support international collaborations and increasing awareness of the benefits of global partnerships. These strategies reflect recommendations in Leask et al. [38] and Beu et al. [32], who suggest that addressing financial and institutional barriers through strategic policy changes and faculty development programs can help foster a more inclusive and collaborative environment [14,20].

4. CONCLUSION

This research highlights the transformative impact of global partnerships and international mobility on enhancing multiculturalism while reinforcing the Pancasila Student Profile within the context of Universitas PGRI Semarang (UPGRIS). Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study reveals significant positive outcomes associated with these initiatives at UPGRIS. Quantitative data indicate that a substantial majority of participants—85% of students—experienced heightened cultural awareness and a deeper understanding of Pancasila values through their international experiences. Furthermore, 70% of faculty members reported an increase in collaborative research outputs, illustrating the benefits of global engagement within our educational setting. Analysis of the chi-square results confirms a significant relationship between UPGRIS's global partnerships and opportunities for cultural exchange, emphasizing that these partnerships facilitate meaningful interactions and enrich the academic environment. Faculty members have successfully integrated international case studies into their curriculum, broadening students' global perspectives while reinforcing their national identity. Among the international mobility programs, semester-long programs such as the International Credit Transfer (ICT) programs funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (MoECRT), Indonesia, and internships in China and Taiwan showed the most significant impact. These programs allowed for deeper immersion in foreign cultures and academic environments, providing students with extensive opportunities to develop global competencies and engage with diverse perspectives

over a longer period. Students in these programs reported the highest improvements in global competence, adaptability, and intercultural relationships. The extended exposure to different cultures and academic systems enhanced students' academic performance and personal growth, making it clear that longer-term engagements were more effective in fostering long-lasting developmental outcomes. This finding aligns with existing literature, which emphasizes the importance of immersive, long-term programs in fostering meaningful intercultural understanding and in-depth academic development. Thus, institutions should prioritize and further invest in these types of programs to maximize their positive impact on both students and faculty. In conclusion, while shorter programs offer valuable introductory experiences, longer-term international mobility programs have been shown to offer the most comprehensive and lasting benefits for students, providing them with the cultural depth and adaptability needed to thrive in an interconnected global environment while maintaining their strong national identity rooted in Pancasila values. To design effective programs, institutions should focus on intercultural training, continuous international collaboration, and long-term immersive experiences for both students and faculty. This approach will enhance personal and academic growth, preparing students to be responsible global citizens.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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