

Research Article

Internalizing Maluku Local Wisdom Values in Literacy Modules for Strengthening Character Education

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ABSTRACT

Literacy education not only functions to improve students' reading and writing skills but also plays a crucial role in shaping learners' character. However, literacy instruction in schools tends to remain low in contextual relevance and insufficiently integrates local cultural values. This study aims to analyze the integration of Maluku local wisdom values into literacy learning modules as an effort to strengthen character education among senior high school students. This research employed a qualitative approach using descriptive analysis through library research, enriched by an analysis of the implementation results of the literacy modules in Indonesian language learning. The findings indicate that literacy modules based on Maluku local wisdom enhance student engagement in the learning process, develop literacy skills across reading, writing, speaking, and listening domains, and contribute significantly to students' character development. The values of Pela-Gandong, Masohi, and Sasi play an important role in fostering tolerance, mutual cooperation, social responsibility, and environmental awareness. Furthermore, the implementation of these modules aligns with ethnopedagogical principles, the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka), and the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile. Therefore, integrating Maluku local wisdom into literacy learning modules constitutes an effective and relevant instructional strategy for creating contextual and character-oriented Indonesian language learning.

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1. Introduction

Fundamentally, education does not merely function as a means of transferring knowledge; it also plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and personality. In the current era of globalization, character education faces complex challenges due to the rapid flow of information and the shifting of cultural values among younger generations. Students are no longer expected to be academically competent alone, but are also required to demonstrate integrity, a sense of responsibility, and the ability to preserve their cultural identity. Therefore, educational processes require learning approaches that are capable of integrating local cultural values, one of which is through the use of literacy-based instructional modules.

Literacy is a fundamental competence that students must master pragmatically in the era of disruption, serving as a core skill for navigating digital transformation in the twenty-first century. Literacy extends beyond basic reading and writing skills to include the ability to comprehend, reflect upon, and relate information to real-life contexts.

Local wisdom represents an accumulation of knowledge and values that grow and develop within a community, encompassing theological, cosmological, and sociological perspectives. It is the result of collective thinking and practices rooted in social, cultural, ethical, and behavioral values that are traditionally institutionalized in managing natural and human resources. As such, local wisdom can be understood as a formulation of a community's worldview.

Njatrijani (2018) explains that local wisdom constitutes a way of life and a body of knowledge, as well as various life strategies manifested through activities undertaken by local communities to address challenges and fulfill their needs. From this worldview emerges a distinctive community identity that differentiates one social group from another.

Unfortunately, literacy learning in schools is often understood narrowly and separated from its social and cultural contexts. Most instructional modules currently in use tend to be generic and lack integration with local cultural elements, posing challenges to the development of learning systems that are relevant to students' lived experiences. In contrast, the Merdeka Curriculum provides opportunities for teachers to design flexible and contextual learning systems that consider students' characteristics and their surrounding environments.

The integration of local wisdom values into literacy learning modules also represents a concrete implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile. According to Sufyadi, as cited in Mery et al. (2022), the Pancasila Student Profile emphasizes six core dimensions: (1) faith and devotion to God Almighty accompanied by noble character; (2) global diversity; (3) mutual cooperation; (4) independence; (5) critical reasoning; and (6) creativity. In this regard, teaching and learning processes are expected to focus not only on academic achievement but also on character formation and personality development that reflect national values.

An ethnopedagogical approach serves as an essential foundation for developing literacy education based on local wisdom. Ethnopedagogy positions local wisdom values as an integral component of education and as part of the cultural transmission process. Through this approach, students can perceive learning as an extension of their own lives rather than as something unfamiliar. Consequently, this perspective enhances student engagement in the learning process and fosters a sense of responsibility and appreciation for their own culture.

Previous studies have demonstrated that learning approaches incorporating local wisdom tend to enhance students' learning motivation and foster positive character development. These include Hamer et al. (2023) on strengthening character education through social studies learning based on local wisdom in Lampung; Ramdani (2017) on character education reinforcement through contextual learning models grounded in local wisdom; and Pendais Hak (2019) on ethnopedagogy among the Muna, Tolaki, and Bajo ethnic communities in Southeast Sulawesi as a strategy for integrating local wisdom into history education to strengthen student character.

The use of literacy modules that incorporate folklore, traditional expressions, local poetry, and community cultural practices can serve as meaningful educational media. Such modules not only enhance literacy skills but also broaden students' perspectives and enrich their identities as members of both local and global communities. Instructional models grounded in local values are capable of creating authentic learning experiences aligned with the principles of contextual education.

One effort to address these challenges is the reintegration of local wisdom values that have been increasingly eroded by modernization (Fa'idah et al., 2024). Since local cultural environments play a major role in shaping student character, this issue can be addressed through teaching methods that emphasize local wisdom-based education by integrating local values into literacy modules for character development.

Ultimately, the integration of local wisdom values aims to preserve, respect, and strengthen the national character of younger generations in order to produce individuals who are knowledgeable, skilled, morally grounded, and equipped with strong leadership qualities (Sanjaya & Safitri, 2024).

2. Methods

2.1 Type of Research

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive analytical method. The qualitative approach was selected because it allows researchers to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of concepts, perspectives, experiences, and values related to the research topic, particularly within the context of character education. Qualitative research emphasizes the interpretation of meaning derived from data examined in a naturalistic and contextual manner (Solissa, 2024). The method applied in this study was library research, which relies on the systematic exploration, review, and analysis of written sources relevant to the research focus.

2.2 Time and Study Site

This study was not bound to a specific field location, as it was conducted as a library-based study. The research timeline was flexible and adapted to the process of data identification and collection from various relevant literature sources. All research activities were carried out through access to scientific journal databases, academic books, and reputable online publications.

2.3 Types and Sources of Data

The data utilized in this study were qualitative in nature, consisting of information, concepts, theories, and research findings relevant to the topic under investigation. The data sources included:

1. Accredited scientific journals, particularly those indexed in SINTA;
2. Academic books relevant to the research topic;
3. Other scholarly publications, such as conference proceedings and reputable academic sources that support the study.

2.4 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through a literature study. The researcher gathered data by searching for and selecting scientific articles and academic books aligned with the research focus. The data collection process was carried out systematically by considering the relevance, credibility, and currency of the sources used.

2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach through several stages:

1. Data identification, involving the selection of sources relevant to the research topic;
2. Data categorization, by grouping information according to themes and research focus;
3. Data synthesis, which involved integrating and interpreting findings from various sources to achieve a comprehensive and coherent understanding

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Results

This study was conducted through the implementation of a Maluku local wisdom-based literacy learning module in Indonesian language instruction for Grade 10 senior high school students. The module was implemented in a structured manner across several instructional sessions encompassing reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities. Core values of Maluku local wisdom, including *Pela-Gandong*, *Sasi*, and *Masohi*, were systematically integrated throughout the literacy activities. Research data were obtained through classroom observations, analysis of students' written work, documentation of learning activities, and reflective accounts from both students and teachers. The research findings are presented based on empirical evidence gathered during the instructional process.

3.1.1 Student Activities and Engagement in Literacy Learning

Observation results indicate that the use of a Maluku local wisdom-based literacy module significantly enhanced students' engagement in Indonesian language learning. From the initial sessions, students demonstrated higher enthusiasm compared to previous learning experiences that relied on conventional instructional materials. Learning content that foregrounded local culture and traditions made students perceive the lessons as more closely connected to their everyday lives.

During reading activities involving Maluku cultural texts, students appeared more focused and actively responded to the reading content. Rather than engaging in passive reading, students asked questions, expressed opinions, and related textual content to personal experiences and surrounding social realities. This indicates an increase in students' cognitive engagement in the literacy process.

In group discussion activities, student engagement became even more evident through intensified peer interaction. The value of *Masohi* embedded in the module encouraged students to collaborate, share responsibilities, and support one another in completing learning tasks. Discussions became more dynamic and were no longer dominated by a small number of students.

Students' emotional engagement was also apparent when learning activities addressed the value of *Pela-Gandong*. Students demonstrated mutual respect for differing opinions and diverse backgrounds. The classroom atmosphere became more inclusive and conducive, enabling students to express ideas openly. Overall, the Maluku local wisdom-based literacy module fostered participatory, student-centered learning. Student engagement increased not only quantitatively but also qualitatively, as reflected in active thinking, communication, and collaboration throughout the learning process.

3.1.2 Development of Students' Literacy Skills

Analysis of students' literacy skills revealed positive development following the implementation of the local wisdom-based module. In terms of reading skills, students demonstrated deep comprehension, extending beyond literal understanding to interpretative and reflective levels.

Students were able to identify main ideas, moral messages, and cultural values embedded in reading texts. Texts derived from Maluku folklore and traditions facilitated analysis because their contexts were already familiar in students' daily lives.

In writing skills, students' work showed improvement in textual structure, cohesion, and coherence. Students' compositions whether narratives, expository texts, or poetry—exhibited clearer organization and more varied, contextually appropriate vocabulary. Reflective writing activities related to *Sasi* and *Pela-Gandong* encouraged students to articulate arguments. Students were no longer merely reproducing textual content but were able to express personal perspectives supported by logical reasoning and concrete examples.

In speaking and listening skills, students demonstrated increased confidence in presenting opinions in front of the class. Presentations and discussions became more structured, indicating that the local wisdom-based literacy module also contributed to the development of communication skills among senior high school students.

Literacy competence is an essential foundational skill for learners in the era of disruption, particularly as preparation for the peak of digital transformation in the 21st century (Harahap et al., 2022). However, literature reviews indicate that despite literacy being a central focus in 21st-century education, its meaning is often narrowly confined to reading and writing skills alone. In fact, authentic literacy encompasses critical thinking, contextual understanding, and the ability to connect information with real-life situations. In character education, the lack of integration between literacy and local cultural values often results in learning processes that are decontextualized and socially irrelevant.

Maluku, as a region rich in oral traditions such as folklore, customary advice, local poetry, and cultural practices, holds tremendous potential as a literacy resource imbued with moral and social values. Values such as mutual cooperation (*Masohi*), interreligious tolerance, and respect for nature constitute core elements of Maluku cultural identity that can foster positive character development. Studies by Ramdani (2017) and Hamer et al. (2023) demonstrate that local wisdom-based learning enhances student motivation and deepens social value comprehension. The integration of Maluku local wisdom values into literacy modules has a strong positive impact on character strengthening, including values such as *Pela-Gandong*, *Masohi*, *Ale Rasa Beta Rasa*, and *Potong Dikuku Rasa Ditulang*, which serve as a solid foundation for character development and cultural preservation.

Previous studies further confirm that literacy modules incorporating folklore, customary expressions, and cultural symbols from Maluku significantly enhance student engagement, enrich vocabulary, and foster cultural pride. Modules integrating local cultural elements effectively facilitate meaningful learning due to their strong relevance to students' lives. Moreover, cultural integration in literacy supports the achievement of the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly in dimensions of mutual cooperation, critical reasoning, and global diversity. These findings reinforce that an ethnopedagogical approach can minimize the gap between national curricula and local cultural realities.

3.1.3 Strengthening Students' Character and Social Attitudes

The findings indicate that Maluku local wisdom-based literacy learning positively influenced senior high school students' character development. Character values were not taught normatively but were internalized through contextual and meaningful learning experiences. The value of *Pela-Gandong* was reflected in students' tolerance and mutual respect during discussions. Students accepted differing viewpoints and demonstrated empathy, indicating the development of positive social attitudes.

The value of *Masohi* was evident in group work, where students supported one another and shared responsibility for collective tasks. Learning was oriented not only toward individual outcomes but also toward collective success. Discussions of *Sasi* fostered students' environmental awareness. Students demonstrated concern for environmental issues and connected these issues to their surrounding natural conditions. Thus, the Maluku local wisdom-based literacy module served as an

effective medium for character formation, particularly in tolerance, responsibility, social care, and ecological awareness.

3.1.4 Students' Responses and Reflections on the Learning Module

Based on reflective data, most students responded positively to the implementation of the Maluku local wisdom-based literacy module. Students reported that learning activities were more engaging and less monotonous.

They found it easier to understand Indonesian language materials because examples and texts were derived from familiar cultural contexts. This facilitated the connection between literacy concepts and real-life experiences. Several students expressed that culturally enriched learning fostered pride in Maluku cultural identity, as their local culture was acknowledged and valued within formal education.

Students also noted that the learning process encouraged critical and reflective thinking about social values within society. Learning extended beyond academic achievement to include attitude and character development. Overall, student reflections indicate that the local wisdom-based literacy module provided meaningful and relevant learning experiences while enhancing motivation in Indonesian language learning at the senior high school level.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Contextual Literacy Based on Local Wisdom in Senior High School Learning

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of a Maluku local wisdom-based literacy module facilitated contextual and meaningful literacy learning for senior high school students. Indonesian language learning was no longer perceived as a mechanical activity of reading and writing but as a meaning-making process directly related to students' social and cultural realities. Cultural contextualization enabled students to link new knowledge with prior experiences. Texts addressing *Pela-Gandong*, *Sasi*, and *Masohi* allowed deeper comprehension because these values are embedded in Maluku society.

At the senior high school level, students are in the formal operational stage, enabling abstract and critical thinking. Integrating cultural values into literacy texts encouraged students to interpret implicit meanings and social implications. These findings indicate that contextual literacy enhances cognitive engagement, as students become more active in thinking, discussing, and reflecting on textual values. Thus, the Maluku local wisdom-based literacy module effectively addresses the need for advanced literacy skills while maintaining relevance to students' real lives.

3.2.2 Literacy as a Medium for Strengthening Character Education

The discussion reveals that literacy plays a strategic role in strengthening character education when integrated with local wisdom values. Literacy learning develops not only cognitive aspects but also affective and social dimensions. *Pela-Gandong* values embedded in texts and discussions contributed to tolerance and empathy development. Discussions on intercommunity brotherhood fostered respect for diversity.

Masohi values implemented through group projects reinforced cooperation and social responsibility. Learning outcomes extended beyond individual achievement toward collective success. Discussions of *Sasi* cultivated ecological awareness and responsible attitudes toward environmental sustainability. Consequently, Maluku local wisdom-based literacy effectively facilitated the internalization of character values in a natural and sustainable manner.

3.2.3 Ethnopedagogical Approach in Indonesian Language Learning

This study reinforces the relevance of the ethnopedagogical approach in Indonesian language learning at the senior high school level. This approach positions local culture as a primary learning resource, imbuing learning with meaning. Ethnopedagogy enables learning to transmit not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural and social values.

Local culture-based literacy modules provide reflective spaces for students to understand identity, history, and community values. This approach enhances student engagement because learning materials feel authentic and meaningful. Students learn not merely about culture but through lived cultural experiences. Thus, ethnopedagogy contributes to holistic Indonesian language learning oriented toward character and identity formation.

3.2.4 Alignment with the Pancasila Student Profile and the Merdeka Curriculum

The findings indicate that the Maluku local wisdom-based literacy module aligns with the objectives of strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile. Literacy activities support 21st-century competencies emphasized in the Merdeka Curriculum.

Critical and creative reasoning emerged through critical reading, reflective writing, and argumentative discussions. Cooperative and global diversity perspectives were reflected in group work and discussions grounded in Pela-Gandong and Masohi. Moral and ethical dimensions were fostered through internalized values promoting honesty, responsibility, and respectful behavior. Thus, the module is pedagogically relevant and strategically supports curriculum implementation.

Previous studies support these findings. Sohilait and Abdurrachman (2022) demonstrated that Maluku local wisdom-based modules enhance mathematical literacy and cultural appreciation. Afdhal et al. (2024) found that integrating Pela-Gandong values into the hidden curriculum improved tolerance among elementary school students. These findings confirm that local wisdom integration is empirically validated.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that integrating Maluku local wisdom values into literacy learning modules plays a strategic role in enhancing Indonesian language learning quality while strengthening senior high school students' character. Literacy modules incorporating *Pela-Gandong*, *Masohi*, and *Sasi* values foster contextual, meaningful, and socially relevant learning experiences.

The implementation of the Maluku local wisdom-based literacy module positively influenced students' literacy development across reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Students demonstrated not only improved literal comprehension but also interpretative and reflective thinking. Writing skills developed toward greater coherence, argumentation, and contextual relevance, while oral communication skills improved in confidence and discussion quality.

In terms of character education, the module significantly contributed to the formation of tolerance, cooperation, social responsibility, and environmental awareness. Character values were internalized naturally through learning experiences rather than normatively imposed. Furthermore, this study confirms the relevance and effectiveness of the ethnopedagogical approach in Indonesian language education at the senior high school level. The developed module aligns with the Merdeka Curriculum and supports the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly in critical reasoning, cooperation, global diversity, and moral integrity.

Overall, integrating Maluku local wisdom into literacy modules constitutes an effective and relevant instructional strategy for enhancing literacy competence and character development. These findings open opportunities for the development of culturally grounded literacy modules in other regional contexts to enrich contextual and character-based Indonesian language learning practices.

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