



REFRAMING EDUCATION: INDIGENOUS VALUES-BASED PEDAGOGY FOR HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the integration of local wisdom values into learning design and practices and examine their contribution to the holistic development of students. The study used a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that indigenous values were systematically integrated into the learning process through planning, pedagogical interactions, and contextual learning activities. This integration has been shown to encourage character development, such as responsibility, respect, and ethical decision-making. In addition, learning based on local cultural practices provides authentic learning experiences through direct involvement in community activities and self-reflection, thus contributing to students' cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual development. These findings confirm that learning based on local wisdom not only strengthens cultural identity but also creates a more meaningful and relevant learning process to real life. Thus, this study contributes to the development of a contextual, humanistic, and sustainable education model. The implications of the study indicate the importance of teachers' roles in integrating local values and creating reflective learning experiences, as well as the need for institutional support in building collaborations with cultural communities. This approach has the potential to be a strategic alternative in addressing educational challenges in the global era.

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of 21st-century global education increasingly emphasizes the importance of holistic student development, encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions (Ayanwale et al., 2024; Moya & Camacho, 2024). Within this framework, values-based education is a strategic approach to developing individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess a strong ethical awareness and cultural identity (Briones et al., 2022;

Fedele et al., 2024). Indigenous traditions offer a rich foundation of values, such as respect, responsibility, and balance in life, which can foster wise and meaningful decision-making (Birhan et al., 2021). Concepts such as Good Mind within indigenous traditions emphasize the importance of moral integrity and self-awareness, enabling students to develop a holistic identity through contextual and reflective learning processes.

However, in practice, modern education systems still tend to be oriented toward academic achievement and global standards, neglecting the dimensions of local values and context. Learning is often cognitive-centric and provides little room for the integration of cultural values and students' life experiences (Adeoye et al., 2025; Karim et al., 2025). Consequently, a gap arises between the educational process and the socio-cultural realities faced by students, making learning less meaningful and unable to optimally shape character (Zulkifli et al., 2023). Furthermore, the lack of integration of moral and spiritual values in the curriculum weakens students' ability to make ethical decisions amidst the complexities of modern life.

Several recent studies have shown that an indigenous values-based educational approach holds significant potential in supporting the holistic development of students. Educational models that integrate local wisdom, such as the Rasulan tradition in Indonesia, have been shown to increase environmental awareness, strengthen cultural identity, and foster ethical behavior through the link between cultural practices and formal learning (Aura & Nugraha, 2023; Darwis et al., 2025; Gafur et al., 2024). This approach also encourages active student engagement because learning is linked to real-life experiences and contexts (Flynn et al., 2024; Hasanah & Sain, 2025; Lin et al., 2024). Thus, education becomes not only a process of knowledge transfer but also a means of internalizing values and building character.

However, most of these studies remain partial and contextual, and have yet to develop a systematic and integrated pedagogical framework. Existing research tends to only highlight specific aspects, such as culture or character, without comprehensively linking them to the holistic development of students. Furthermore, there are still limited studies that explicitly examine how indigenous values can be reconstructed in modern pedagogical designs that adapt to the needs of the times. This indicates a research gap in the development of learning models capable of integrating local values conceptually and operationally within a coherent educational framework.

Based on this gap, this research offers a novelty in the form of a reconstruction of the educational paradigm through an indigenous values-based pedagogy approach designed in an integrative and systematic manner. This approach not only adopts local values as learning content but also internalizes them throughout the pedagogical process, from planning and implementation to evaluation. Thus, this model is expected to bridge global demands and local wisdom, as well as create a more contextual, meaningful learning experience oriented toward developing students' holistic character.

In line with this, this study aims to: (1) analyze how the integration of indigenous values in learning practices contributes to character formation and strengthening of students' ethics; and (2) evaluate the role of the indigenous values-based pedagogy approach in supporting the holistic development of students, including cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. Through these objectives, the research is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions in the development of a more contextual, humanistic, and sustainable educational model.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative design with a case study approach to explore in depth the implementation of indigenous values-based pedagogy in shaping character and ethics, and supporting the holistic development of students. The case study approach was chosen because it allows researchers to comprehensively understand the phenomenon in a real and bounded system context, namely in educational units that actively integrate traditional values and local wisdom into learning practices. The focus of the research is directed at two main aspects: the integration of indigenous values in the learning process and their contribution to the formation of ethical character and the holistic development of students, which includes cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions.

The research location was one of the schools/madrasahs in Indonesia that has implemented local wisdom-based learning, such as the practice of mutual cooperation, cultural rituals, or local traditions (e.g., *Rasulan*) in learning activities. The research subjects included the principal, teachers, education staff, and students directly involved in the practice of indigenous values-based pedagogy. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on active involvement in the planning and implementation of indigenous values-based learning. To expand the data coverage, a snowball sampling technique was also used to reach additional relevant informants. The informant selection criteria included experience in integrating indigenous values, involvement in school cultural activities, and direct interaction with students in a holistic learning context.

Data collection techniques were conducted through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Observations focused on learning practices that reflect the integration of indigenous values, social interactions that demonstrate character and ethical development, and learning activities that involve the holistic dimension of students. In-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore teachers' understanding, experiences, and strategies in internalizing indigenous values as well as students' perceptions of their learning experiences. Documentation included curriculum analysis, lesson plans, character education programs, and archives of cultural activities and local wisdom practices. All data were collected in the form of field notes, interview transcripts, and supporting documents as the research data corpus.

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive analysis model that includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process began with a thorough reading of the data to understand the research context, followed by a coding process to identify key themes such as the integration of indigenous values, character and ethics formation, and the development of holistic dimensions of students. Relevant codes were then categorized and organized into themes that represent the research findings. This process was carried out iteratively and reflectively to ensure alignment between the empirical data and the conceptual framework of indigenous values-based pedagogy.

Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documentation. Member checking with informants was also conducted to ensure accurate data interpretation, and peer discussions were conducted to enhance the validity of the analysis. The entire research process was systematically documented through an audit trail to maintain transparency and traceability.

Ethically, this research adheres to the principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and protection of participant identity. Each informant was given an explanation of the research objectives and procedures before participating. Participants' identities were disguised to maintain privacy, and all data obtained was used solely for academic purposes. With this methodological approach, the research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how indigenous values-based pedagogy can reconstruct educational practices (reframing education) while supporting the development of character, ethics, and the holistic dimension of students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research focuses on how local wisdom values are integrated into learning practices to shape students who are not only academically competent but also emotionally, socially, and spiritually mature. This discussion emphasizes the interaction between customary values and students' holistic development, as well as how local wisdom-based learning experiences influence their character, ethical behavior, and social awareness.

Result

Integration of Traditional Values Encourages the Development of Students' Character and Ethics

The integration of indigenous values into learning practices reflects a systematic effort to build students' character and ethics through contextual and meaningful learning experiences. Values such as Good Mind, which emphasizes moral awareness, respect, and responsibility, and the practice of mutual cooperation as a representation of social solidarity, are not only taught conceptually but are also brought to life in daily learning activities. This process enables students to understand values as part of concrete actions, thus forming behavioral patterns that reflect integrity, empathy, and social responsibility. Field data shows that involvement in indigenous value-based activities has

implications for increased ethical awareness, self-reflection, and consistency in positive social behavior.

Table 1. Interview Data on Integration of Indigenous Values for Character and Ethical Development

Interview Data / Observation	Description	Conceptual Code
Students work together in group activities based on mutual cooperation	Collaborative activities instill responsibility and solidarity	Collective Responsibility
The teacher links the material with the Good Mind values in class discussions	Integration of moral values in cognitive processes	Ethical Integration
Students demonstrate mutual respect in daily interactions	Internalization of values through social practices	Respectful Behavior
Reflection activities are carried out after cultural activities or projects	Reflection strengthens ethical awareness and the meaning of learning	Reflective Awareness

Table 1 shows four main forms of value integration that are interconnected in shaping students' character and ethics. Based on this data, the following findings can be explained.

First, collaborative activities based on the values of mutual cooperation provide a space for students to learn about shared responsibility and social awareness. In group activities, each individual focuses not only on task achievement but also on contributing to shared success. This process fosters awareness that success is not individual, but collective. Consequently, students demonstrate increased support, appreciation for the roles of others, and a willingness to share responsibilities.

Second, the integration of Good Mind values into learning discussions strengthens the link between cognitive and moral aspects. Teachers not only convey academic material but also guide students to consider the ethical implications of each piece of knowledge learned. This encourages students to think critically and reflectively in decision-making. Thus, learning does not stop at conceptual understanding but develops into the ability to judge and act ethically.

Third. Internalization of traditional values is evident in students' social interaction patterns, which demonstrate greater appreciation for diversity and mutual respect. These values are not taught explicitly but are formed through habits, role models, and a conducive learning environment. This demonstrates that values-based learning has a tangible impact on shaping daily behavior, particularly in building harmonious social relationships.

Fourth. Reflection activities after cultural activities or contextual learning play a crucial role in strengthening students' ethical awareness. Through reflection, students are encouraged to understand the meaning of each learning experience and relate it to life values. This process helps them develop self-evaluation skills and deepen their understanding of internalized values. As a

result, these values are not only cognitively understood but also embedded in their awareness and actions.

Based on these findings, the integration of indigenous values into learning forms a pedagogical ecosystem that emphasizes the interconnectedness of knowledge, values, and social practices. This approach not only strengthens students' cultural identities but also transforms their ways of thinking, behaving, and acting. Thus, indigenous values-based pedagogy contributes significantly to building a solid moral foundation and developing students with character and ethics in their daily lives.

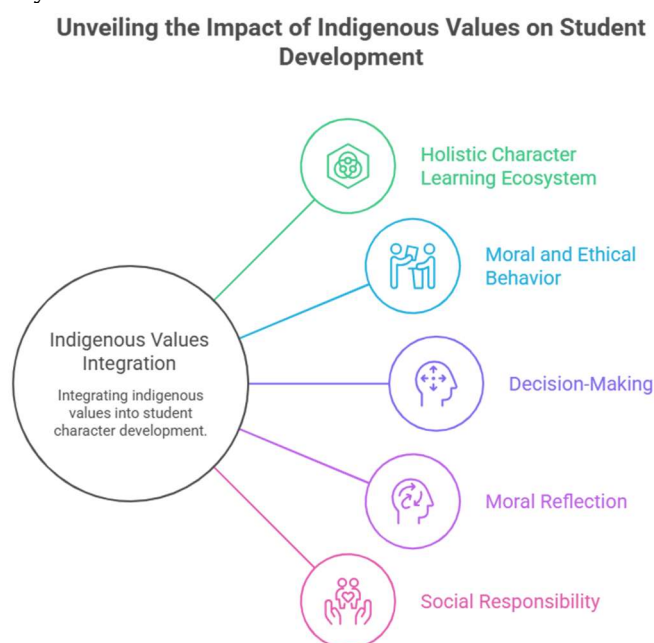


Figure 1. Model of Integration of Indigenous Values in Developing Students' Character and Ethics

Based on the data and visualizations above, the research findings indicate that the integration of indigenous values into learning forms a structured and holistic character development ecosystem. This model is centered on indigenous values integration as the primary foundation that guides the internalization of cultural values into the educational process. This integration is reflected in the formation of moral and ethical behavior that demonstrates students' sense of responsibility, respect, and integrity, and is strengthened by decision-making skills based on considerations of values and norms. This confirms that learning is not only oriented towards cognitive aspects but also builds the capacity for ethical thinking that is applicable in everyday life.

Furthermore, the moral reflection dimension plays a role in deepening students' awareness through a process of self-evaluation of learning experiences, so that the values acquired are not only understood but also deeply internalized. Meanwhile, social responsibility demonstrates the development of social concern and a real contribution to community life. This entire process culminates in the formation of a holistic character learning ecosystem, a learning environment that supports the holistic development of students, encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. Thus, this model confirms that

indigenous values-based pedagogy can reconstruct educational practices to be more contextual, meaningful, and oriented toward the formation of ethical and responsible character.

Local Wisdom-Based Learning Supports Students' Holistic Development

Local wisdom-based learning plays a significant role in shaping students' holistic development through the integration of contextual and meaningful learning experiences. Traditional practices such as cultural activities, local rituals (e.g., Rasulan), and involvement in community activities serve not only as learning media but also as spaces for internalizing values and life experiences. Through this approach, students not only acquire academic knowledge but also develop self-awareness, social empathy, and a sense of connectedness with their cultural and spiritual environment. Field data shows that direct involvement in local wisdom practices has implications for increased emotional engagement, self-reflection, and balanced overall individual development.

Table 2. Interview Data on Local Wisdom-Based Learning for Holistic Development

Interview Data / Observation	Description	Conceptual Code
Students actively participate in cultural activities such as Rasulan	Direct involvement in local cultural practices	Experiential Learning
Students work together in community activities	Social interaction strengthens empathy and collaboration	Social Engagement
Teachers link lesson materials with local values	Integration of cultural context in learning	Contextual Learning
Students reflect after cultural activities	Self-reflection deepens understanding of values and experiences	Holistic Reflection

Table 2 shows four main forms of local wisdom-based learning practices that are integrated to support the holistic development of students. Based on this data, the following findings can be explained.

First, direct involvement in cultural practices provides a concrete and contextual learning experience. Students not only understand concepts theoretically but also experience them directly through meaningful cultural activities. This strengthens cognitive understanding while building an emotional attachment to the values learned. Thus, learning becomes more meaningful and easier to internalize.

Second, social interactions in community-based activities foster empathy, cooperation, and social skills in students. They learn to collaborate, appreciate differences, and understand their respective roles within the group. This process not only strengthens the social dimension but also builds awareness of the importance of togetherness in community life.

Third, integrating local values into learning materials makes the learning process more relevant to students' lives. Teachers connect academic concepts with cultural practices, enabling students to see the connection between

knowledge and social reality. This approach helps students develop deeper understanding and enhances contextual thinking skills.

Fourth. The reflection process after learning activities is a crucial element in strengthening holistic development. Students are encouraged to evaluate their experiences, understand the meaning of each activity, and relate them to life values. This reflection contributes to the development of self-awareness, emotional maturity, and spiritual understanding.

Based on the overall findings, local wisdom-based learning creates an educational ecosystem that integrates cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects in a balanced manner. This approach not only produces students who excel academically but also possess strong character, a strong social awareness, and profound reflective abilities. Thus, pedagogy based on indigenous values has proven effective in achieving holistic and sustainable student development.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the integration of local wisdom values into learning significantly strengthens students' character and ethics. Values such as responsibility, respect, and ethical decision-making are internalized through instructional design, pedagogical interactions, and contextualized learning activities (Moya & Camacho, 2024; Park & Cho, 2022). This integration not only enriches the teaching material but also forms a strong moral foundation in students' daily lives (Uyuni, 2024). Thus, learning serves as a medium for character formation integrated with the academic process.

Interpretatively, the integration of indigenous values reflects a shift from learning oriented toward knowledge transfer toward learning that emphasizes the formation of meaning and value. Cultural values are not explicitly taught as separate concepts but are instead brought to life through practice and interaction within the learning process (Bahrani, 2023; Schittko et al., 2026). This process enables students to understand values contextually and apply them to real-life situations. Thus, learning becomes more relevant and impacts behavior formation.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings align with social constructivism, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in building knowledge and values (Wahab, 2024). Furthermore, the culturally responsive pedagogy approach explains that cultural integration in learning increases engagement and relevance (Mundiri & Firdausy, 2022). Character education also serves as a foundation that reinforces the idea that moral values can be effectively developed through structured and contextualized learning experiences.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of local wisdom values as an inherent part of the pedagogical design, not simply an addition to the learning materials. This research demonstrates that cultural values can serve as a primary framework for shaping ethical and contextual learning processes. This approach provides a new perspective on the strategic role of culture-based education in strengthening students' character.

The practical implications of these findings suggest that teachers need to design learning that consciously integrates local values into every stage of the learning process. Furthermore, educational institutions need to support policies that encourage the use of cultural context as a learning resource. With this approach, learning is oriented not only toward academic achievement but also toward character development.

From a global perspective, these findings are relevant to efforts to strengthen character education across various education systems. The integration of local values demonstrates that character formation can be achieved through a contextual approach that is culturally appropriate (Ali & Chatti, 2023; Baharun et al., 2025). This model contributes to the development of education that is not only academically competitive but also rooted in humanitarian values.

However, this study's limitations lie in its specific cultural context, requiring adjustments to other environments. Furthermore, measuring the long-term impact of character traits requires further study. Therefore, further research is needed to test the sustainability and consistency of these findings in broader contexts.

The second finding shows that learning based on local wisdom practices contributes to students' holistic development, encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. Involvement in cultural activities, community interactions, and reflection processes provide a comprehensive learning experience (Bonanati & Buhl, 2022; Gawo & Tafesse, 2024). Students not only understand the material intellectually but also develop empathy, self-awareness, and a sense of connectedness to their social and cultural environment (Schittko et al., 2026). This demonstrates that experiential learning can shape balanced and well-rounded individuals.

Interpretatively, these findings reflect that authentic learning experiences are a key factor in holistic development. Direct engagement in cultural practices allows learners to experience the learning process emotionally and socially, not just cognitively (Adu-Boahen, 2024; Flynn et al., 2024). The reflective process that accompanies these experiences strengthens understanding and internalization of values (Nailasariy et al., 2023). Thus, local wisdom-based learning creates a close relationship between knowledge, experience, and self-development.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings align with holistic education theory, which emphasizes balanced development across multiple dimensions of the individual. Furthermore, experiential learning theory explains that direct experience is the primary source of meaningful learning (Lin et al., 2024). Social constructivism also emphasizes that interactions within a cultural context play a crucial role in building students' understanding and identity.

The novelty of this research lies in its emphasis on cultural practices as the primary medium for holistic learning. This research demonstrates that cultural activities serve not merely as a complement but as the core of the learning process, integrating various dimensions of student development. This approach provides a novel contribution to the development of experiential and culturally based pedagogy.

The practical implications of these findings suggest that teachers need to create learning experiences that involve hands-on practice and in-depth reflection. Collaboration with local communities is crucial for providing authentic learning experiences. Furthermore, curricula need to be designed to provide space for the balanced development of non-cognitive aspects.

From a global perspective, these findings are relevant to educational development efforts that emphasize a balance between academic competencies and social-emotional skills (Mundiri et al., 2025; Orsi & Diniz, 2025). Local wisdom-based learning demonstrates that a culture-based approach can be an alternative for creating a more humanistic and sustainable education (Darwis et al., 2025). This model can be adapted across various contexts by adapting to local cultural characteristics.

However, this study is limited by the variation in cultural practices, which are not necessarily uniform across regions. Furthermore, the long-term impact on students' holistic development requires more in-depth examination. Therefore, further research is needed to broaden the scope and test the effectiveness of this approach in various educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the integration of local wisdom values in learning and the application of cultural practices as learning experiences results in a comprehensive educational transformation, including strengthening the character and holistic development of students. The integration of indigenous values in pedagogical design and practice forms the foundation of ethics, responsibility, and social awareness, while learning based on cultural practices enriches the learning experience through direct engagement that develops cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects in a balanced manner. The synthesis of these findings confirms that the success of local wisdom-based learning lies in the integration of values, experiences, and cultural contexts in a unified and meaningful learning system.

The primary contribution of this research lies in the development of a local wisdom-based learning framework that integrates the dimensions of cultural values and experiences as a pedagogical foundation. This model not only strengthens students' cultural identities but also offers a contextual, humanistic, and sustainable educational approach. Thus, this research provides a theoretical and practical basis for developing education that can address global challenges without abandoning local cultural roots, and opens up opportunities for implementing similar models in various educational contexts with relevant adjustments.

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