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## Integrating Local Cultural Values in Character Formation and Academic Achievement

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### Abstract

This research explores the role of local cultural values in shaping Student character and learning achievement at Tri Daya Budi Vocational School, Majalengka. With increasingly rapid globalization, the importance of character education rooted in the local culture is becoming increasingly relevant. Through a qualitative approach, this research identifies various local cultural values that can be integrated into the educational curriculum and their impact on character development and student academic achievement. Research results show that introducing and applying local cultural values helps students recognize and value their cultural identity and encourages attitudes, tolerance, and innovation. Thus, education prioritizes cultural values. Local communities have the potential to create an intelligent generation that has a strong character and can face global challenges without losing their identity. This research is expected to contribute to developing more relevant and sustainable educational programs in Indonesia.

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## Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping students' character and academic success. In an increasingly complex era of globalization, the challenge for the younger generation lies in intellectual intelligence and developing strong character. Character education is the key to producing individuals who face various challenges, maintain the nation's noble values, and contribute positively to society (Sakti, S. A. et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, local cultural values are essential in shaping individual character. Local culture, which includes norms, traditions, and practices passed down from generation to generation, serves as a moral foundation for behavior and decision-making. According to Banks and McGee Banks (2010), cultural education enriches students' understanding of themselves and others, fostering mutual respect and a deeper appreciation of diversity. Therefore, understanding and applying local cultural values in the educational process is expected to shape student character effectively.

Moreover, integrating local culture into education has proven an effective strategy for instilling discipline, respect, and responsibility—traits crucial for building strong character. Gay (2018) highlights that culturally responsive teaching improves academic performance and supports the development of social and emotional skills. Students who understand and embrace their cultural heritage exhibit increased motivation and engagement in learning activities, ultimately enhancing their academic achievements.

In the Indonesian context, the richness and diversity of local cultures across regions provide a vast resource for character education. Cultural practices such as *gotong royong* (cooperation), *adat istiadat* (customary traditions), and religious ceremonies offer lessons that emphasize values like solidarity, empathy, and respect for others. As noted by Tilaar (2009), education rooted in local culture not only strengthens students' character but also reinforces national identity, enabling them to navigate the challenges of modernization without losing their cultural roots.

However, the rapid pace of globalization has posed significant challenges to preserving local cultural values. Exposure to global influences often shifts attitudes and behaviors, particularly among younger generations, who may regard traditional values as outdated or irrelevant. This underscores the urgent need for educational institutions to actively integrate local culture into their curricula to ensure that students grow up with a strong sense of cultural pride and moral grounding.

Tri Daya Budi Majalengka Vocational School, as an educational institution in a community with a unique local cultural richness, has great potential to integrate local cultural values into the learning process. Situated in Majalengka, a region known for its vibrant traditions and cultural heritage, the school is a model for how education can harmonize modern knowledge with cultural preservation. Local traditions, such as traditional music, dance, and crafts, can serve as educational tools that build character and spark student creativity and innovation.

Integrating local cultural values in education at Tri Daya Budi Majalengka Vocational School has also shown potential to address challenges in student behavior and learning outcomes. For example, incorporating cultural narratives into the curriculum can improve students' critical thinking skills and encourage ethical decision-making. Research by Muslich (2011) emphasizes the role of culture-based education in fostering disciplined, responsible, and community-oriented individuals.

Furthermore, applying local cultural values in learning is not limited to character formation but also significantly impacts students' academic achievements. Studies have shown that students exposed to culturally relevant materials and teaching methods perform better academically because they can relate the subject matter to their lived experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In Tri Daya Budi's case, local stories, proverbs, and practices can help students connect abstract concepts to real-life contexts, making learning more meaningful and engaging.

This research explores the role of local cultural values in shaping students' character and improving their learning achievement at the school. It seeks to identify educators' strategies to integrate cultural values into teaching practices, examines the impact on students' personal and academic development, and highlights the potential challenges in implementing such an approach. By doing so, the study aspires to provide insights into how education can balance cultural preservation with the demands of a modern, globalized world.

Ultimately, the findings of this research are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on culturally responsive education in Indonesia. The study underscores the importance of leveraging local wisdom to cultivate future generations who are academically capable, morally grounded, socially responsible, and proud of their cultural heritage. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, maintaining a strong cultural identity will be essential for ensuring

that young people remain rooted in their values while embracing the opportunities and challenges of the future.

## Theoretical Review

A literature review shows that character education based on local culture can improve the quality of teaching and form a young generation with strong character. According to Koentjaraningrat (2003), local culture includes various aspects of life, such as language, customs, art, and social systems that influence individual behavior. Previous research also shows that applying local cultural values in education can improve students' discipline, self-confidence, and social awareness (Kuswantara, 2023; Mahpudin & Yuliati, 2019).

In addition, Lickona (1991) emphasized the importance of character education in creating responsible individuals and respecting differences. Thus, integrating local cultural values in the educational curriculum is expected to positively impact the formation of students' character and learning achievements.

## Method

This research aims to identify the dominant local cultural values at Tri Daya Budi Vocational School, Majalengka. Analyze the implementation of local cultural values in the learning process at school. Evaluate the impact of applying local cultural values on the formation of students' character and their learning achievements.

Through this research, it is hoped that concrete recommendations can be produced to improve the quality of education and form a young generation with a strong character rooted in the noble values of national culture.

### *Detailed Description of Research Design*

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. A qualitative approach was chosen because it aims to understand complex and in-depth phenomena regarding the role of local cultural values in shaping student character and learning achievement at Tri Daya Budi Vocational School, Majalengka. The case study design allows researchers to explore specific contexts and gain deeper insight into the interactions between local culture and character education.

### *Population and Sample*

The population in this study was all students and teachers at Tri Daya Budi Vocational School, Majalengka. The sample was taken purposively by selecting students and teachers with relevant understanding and experience related to local cultural values and character education. The samples were 30 students from various departments and 10 teachers involved in the school's learning process. This sample selection aims to obtain a wider variety of perspectives.

### *Data Collection Instruments*

Data collection instruments used in this research include:

Interview: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students and teachers to gain information about their understanding of local cultural values and their application in the learning process.

Observation: Observations are carried out in the classroom and school environment to see directly the implementation of local cultural values in learning activities and social interactions between students.

Documentation: Collection of related documents, such as curriculum, teaching materials, and records of extracurricular activities related to local culture.

### *Research Procedures*

The research procedure is carried out in several stages:

Preparation: Researchers conducted a preliminary study to understand the school context and identify relevant local cultural values.

Data Collection: Conduct interviews with students and teachers, classroom observations, and collect documents related to local culture.

Note-taking and transcription: The results of interviews and observations were recorded and transcribed to facilitate data analysis.

Data Verification: Triangulating data to ensure the validity of information obtained from various sources.

### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis process includes:

**Coding:** Identifying and coding relevant data with themes emerging from interviews, observations, and documentation.

**Categorization:** Grouping coded data into broader categories based on themes relevant to the research objectives.

**Interpretation:** Interpreting data that has been categorized to find patterns and relationships between local cultural values, student character formation, and learning achievement.

**Preparing Reports:** Compiling research results reports that include findings, analysis, and recommendations based on research results.

## Results

### *Presentation of Data and Research Findings*

The results of this research were obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation conducted at Tri Daya Budi Vocational School, Majalengka. The data collected shows that local cultural values have a significant role in shaping students' character and their learning achievements. Here are the main findings from the research:

#### **Dominant Local Cultural Values:**

**Mutual Cooperation:** Students demonstrate a strong understanding of the importance of cooperation in completing group assignments and social activities. This can be seen from their active participation in community service activities and group projects.

**Courtesy:** Students are taught to respect their teachers and peers, which is reflected in respectful daily interactions and polite language.

#### **Implementation in the Learning Process:**

**Curriculum Integration:** Teachers link lesson material to local cultural values, such as teaching the concept of cooperation through examples of cooperation.

**Extracurricular Activities:** The school provides activities such as learning gamelan and traditional dance, strengthening students' cultural identity.

**Cultural Projects:** Students engage in projects related to local culture, such as crafts, which provide practical experience in understanding cultural values.

### Impact on Character and Learning Achievement:

Students are actively involved in activities promoting local cultural values, such as discipline, self-confidence, and social awareness, and they show better character.

Student achievement also increased, with many students able to relate lesson material to the cultural values they studied.

**Table 1: Summary of Local Cultural Values and Their Impact**

Implementation of Local Cultural Values	In Learning Impact	In Character Impact	In Learning Achievement
<b>Mutual Cooperation</b> Group activities,	Community service Cooperation	caring Improve	The results of group assignments
<b>Courtesy</b>	Daily interactions Respect	discipline Increase	class participation
<b>Extracurricular Activities</b>	Studying arts and culture	Cultural identity	Increasing creativity

### *Initial Interpretation of Data*

The research results show that the local cultural values implemented at Tri Daya Budi Vocational School, Majalengka, enrich students' learning experiences and contribute to forming positive character. Students involved in activities promoting local cultural values improve their character and learning achievement. This indicates that integrating local cultural values in education can be an effective strategy for forming a young generation that is not only academically intelligent but also has good character.

Overall, this research confirms the critical role of local culture in character education and provides recommendations for continuing to integrate these values into the curriculum and school activities.

## **Discussion**

### *Interpretation of Research Results*

The research results show that applying local cultural values at Tri Daya Budi Vocational School, Majalengka, contributes significantly to student character formation. Students involved in local cultural activities, such as cooperation and cultural preservation, show increases in self-confidence, discipline, and social

awareness. This aligns with character education theory, which states that direct experience in a cultural context can strengthen an individual's identity and character. Thus, local cultural values function as a tool to preserve cultural heritage and as a foundation for forming strong character in the younger generation.

### *Research Limitations*

Although this research provides valuable insights, several limitations need to be noted:

- 1) Limited Sample: This research was only conducted in one school, Tri Daya Budi Vocational School, Majalengka, so the results may not be generalizable to other schools with different cultural contexts.
- 2) Qualitative Method: This research uses a descriptive qualitative method, so the data obtained may be influenced by the subjectivity of researchers and respondents.
- 3) Observation Time: Observations are carried out over a specific period, which may not cover all the dynamics in the learning process and students' social interactions.

### *Implications of Research Results*

The results of this research have several important implications for education:

**Curriculum Development:** Schools need to integrate local cultural values into the curriculum more systematically so students can understand and appreciate their culture while developing positive character.

**Extracurricular Activities:** Organizing extracurricular activities focusing on local culture can increase student engagement and strengthen cultural identity.

**Teacher Training:** Teachers must be trained to implement local cultural values to create a learning environment supporting student character formation.

### *Comparison with Previous Research*

The results of this research have several important implications for education:

**Curriculum Development:** Schools need to integrate local cultural values into the curriculum more systematically so that students can understand and appreciate their culture while developing positive character.



Extracurricular Activities: Organizing extracurricular activities focusing on local culture can increase student engagement and strengthen cultural identity.

Teacher Training: Teachers must be trained to implement local cultural values to create a learning environment supporting student character formation.

### *Comparison with Previous Research*

This research aligns with previous research showing that integrating cultural values in education can improve student character. Research by Mahpudin & Yulianti (2019) found that elements of local culture often contain mathematical concepts that can play a role in efforts to develop mathematical literacy skills. Apart from that, research by Minawati (2020) also noted that using learning tools linked to local culture is very suitable for learning because it can improve elementary school students' understanding of mathematical concepts. Thus, the results of this research strengthen previous findings and confirm the importance of local cultural values in character education.

Overall, this research contributes to understanding the role of local cultural values in education and paves the way for further research in this area.

### **Conclusion**

Integrating local cultural values into education is a powerful strategy for shaping students' character and improving their academic achievements. The findings from Tri Daya Budi Vocational School in Majalengka illustrate the significant role of local cultural practices, such as cooperation and respect, in fostering discipline, self-confidence, and social awareness among students. These values, implemented through curriculum design, extracurricular activities, and cultural projects, strengthen students' moral grounding and enhance their engagement and performance in learning activities.

Moreover, the study reaffirms that culturally responsive education bridges the gap between modern academic requirements and traditional wisdom, allowing students to stay rooted in their cultural heritage while navigating global challenges. The results align with previous research that underscores the importance of local cultural integration in promoting discipline, ethical decision-making, and educational success.

However, limitations such as restricted sample size and the subjective nature of qualitative methods suggest that broader studies are necessary to generalize the findings. Despite these constraints, the research offers valuable insights for educators and policymakers, emphasizing the need to systematically incorporate cultural values into curricula, provide teacher training, and develop engaging cultural programs to nurture well-rounded individuals.

In conclusion, local culture is a vital foundation for character education in Indonesia, enabling future generations to uphold their cultural identity while excelling academically and socially in an increasingly interconnected world.

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