



Reviving Local Heritage: Leadership in Building a Culture of Quality

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Abstract:

This study analyzes leadership preferences in building a quality culture based on local wisdom in schools. The research method used is a qualitative case study approach involving in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis, which includes systematic data coding, grouping similar codes, and drawing conclusions based on identified themes. The study results indicate that inclusive and supportive leadership strategies and the integration of local wisdom in teaching materials have succeeded in increasing student engagement in learning and strengthening their character. In addition, the findings show that the support of the principal in the form of policies and initiatives plays an essential role in the successful implementation of local wisdom-based programs. The implication of this study is the importance of school leadership in encouraging and supporting local culture-based programs to achieve more holistic and sustainable education.

Key Words: *Educational Leadership, Local Wisdom, Quality Culture, Principal*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tentang bagaimana preferensi kepemimpinan dalam membangun budaya mutu berbasis kearifan lokal di sekolah. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif jenis studi kasus yang melibatkan wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah analisis tematik, mencakup pemberian kode sistematis pada data, pengelompokan kode sejenis, dan penarikan kesimpulan berdasarkan tema yang diidentifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi kepemimpinan inklusif dan suportif, serta integrasi kearifan lokal dalam bahan ajar berhasil meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dalam pembelajaran dan penguatan karakternya. Selain itu, temuan menunjukkan bahwa dukungan kepala sekolah dalam bentuk kebijakan dan inisiatif berperan penting dalam keberhasilan implementasi program berbasis kearifan lokal. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah pentingnya peran kepemimpinan sekolah dalam mendorong dan mendukung program berbasis budaya lokal untuk mencapai pendidikan yang lebih holistik dan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan Pendidikan, Kearifan Lokal, Budaya Mutu, Kepala Sekolah*

INTRODUCTION

The progress of globalization and modernization increasingly emphasizes the importance of preserving local cultural values (Suardana et al., 2022; Prakoso & Risman, 2021; Munir et al., 2021). Amid the rapid flow of foreign cultures that

enter through various media, many people are losing their cultural identity (Alba, 2024; Alam & Timur, 2023; Arifin, 2024). The topic of research on integrating local wisdom in education becomes very interesting and relevant to be researched. This is because education is one of the most effective tools for instilling and preserving local cultural values in the younger generation (Agus et al., 2021; Setiartin, 2021; Darong et al., 2021). This research is necessary because it can provide insight into how schools can play a crucial role in preserving local culture amid globalization.

The theories behind this research include multicultural education theory, which underscores the importance of including local cultural content in the curriculum to increase students' understanding of their cultural identity (Buwono et al., 2023; Roiha & Sommier, 2021; Ridlo & Yanti, 2023). Multicultural education can help students appreciate cultural diversity and increase tolerance (Wahidah & Maristyawati, 2023; Wahyono et al., 2022). In addition, the contextual learning theory by Berns and Erickson (2001) (Thamrin et al., 2024; Budiman et al., 2021; Len & Tieme, 2022) states that learning related to the context of students' lives can increase their involvement and motivation in learning. This theory is relevant to this study because using local wisdom in the curriculum creates a learning context closer to students' daily lives.

The main issue that is the focus of this research is how principals and teachers can integrate local wisdom values in the teaching and learning process to build a culture of quality in schools (Haq et al., 2022; Tohri et al., 2022; Arif et al., 2023; Sanjani, 2024). In practice, many schools need help implementing local culture-based programs due to limited resources and a lack of understanding of effective teaching methods. In SD Negeri Karangjati 04 Cilacap, although there have been efforts to include local wisdom in the curriculum, its implementation still needs to be improved. This problem is crucial because without a practical approach, local cultural values risk being lost, and students do not get the maximum benefit from such culture-based learning.

Research by Lee and Ng (2020) shows that using local cultural content in education can increase student engagement and motivation. They found that students who engaged in local culture-based activities showed improvements in learning outcomes and positive attitudes toward learning. In their study, Smith et al. (2021) stated that local culture-based teaching is often limited to aspects of knowledge and pays little attention to student character development. They stressed the importance of integrating moral and ethical values in culture-based teaching. Meanwhile, Kim et al. (2020) underlined the importance of support from school principals in implementing local wisdom-based curriculum. They found that effective leadership can encourage teachers to be more innovative in integrating local cultural values into learning.

Although previous research has shown the benefits of using local cultural content in education, significant gaps in the literature need to be filled. Previous research has tended to focus on aspects of increasing student engagement and

learning outcomes. However, more attention must be paid to how integrating local wisdom can strengthen student character. In addition, few studies extend the leadership role of school principals in supporting the holistic implementation of local culture-based programs. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by exploring how leadership preferences and principal support can facilitate the integration of local wisdom in curriculum and learning in schools.

The novelty of this research lies in its holistic approach to integrating local wisdom into education. This research not only focuses on the teaching aspect but also pays attention to the role of school leadership in supporting the implementation of local culture-based programs. Thus, this study provides a new perspective on how local wisdom-based approaches can be effectively applied in elementary schools. This research also combines multicultural education theory and contextual learning to create a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of local wisdom implementation in schools.

This study explores leadership preferences in building a quality culture based on local wisdom at SD Negeri Karangjati 04 Cilacap. This research mainly focuses on understanding the strategies and approaches school principals take to integrate local wisdom values into curriculum and learning.

This research is necessary because it examines how leadership preferences can build a quality culture based on local wisdom amid the threat of globalization to local cultural values. By understanding the principal's strategy in integrating local wisdom into the curriculum, this study provides insight into effectively preserving local culture through education. In addition, this study assesses the impact of local cultural integration on the quality of learning and student character, which is essential for forming a young generation that not only excels academically but also has strong character and is rooted in local values.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses qualitative research with a case study approach (Alam, 2021). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in-depth leadership preferences in building a quality culture based on local wisdom at SD Negeri Karangjati 04 Cilacap. This qualitative research focuses on understanding the phenomena that occur in the school environment through the perspective of the main speaker. The location of this research is SD Negeri Karangjati 04, located at Jalan Karangjati No. 4, Cilacap, Central Java, Indonesia.

Data collection techniques used in this study included in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation (Maxwell, 2021). Interviews were conducted with school principals, teachers, and several school staff who have critical roles in implementing local wisdom-based programs. Participatory observation is carried out by directly observing learning activities and school programs prioritizing local culture. The documentation collected includes school records, teaching materials, and student work. The data obtained

from these techniques are then analyzed qualitatively to understand how local wisdom is integrated into the teaching and learning process.

The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis, which aims to identify patterns and themes that emerge from the data that has been collected (Taherdoost, 2022). This analysis involves systematically coding data, grouping similar codes, and drawing conclusions based on identified themes. In this stage, researchers also triangulate the data to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. Triangulation is carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to get a comprehensive picture of the implementation of local wisdom in the school.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study explores leadership preferences in building a quality culture based on local wisdom at SD Negeri Karangjati 04 Cilacap. The findings are based on in-depth interviews with key sources at the school. Each sub-discussion of the findings integrates the results of interviews conducted and interpreted to provide a comprehensive picture. The results of these findings can be illustrated in the following chart.



Figure 1. Building a Quality Culture Based on Local Wisdom

Leadership in building Figure 1, a culture of quality, involves a systematic approach that begins with integrating local wisdom values into the curriculum. This foundational step ensures that educational content reflects the community's cultural, historical, and traditional knowledge, fostering a sense of identity and pride among students. Following this, developing school programs based on local culture strengthens the connection between students and their heritage, creating relevant and engaging learning experiences. To sustain and enhance these initiatives, increasing teacher capacity is essential. Educators must be empowered with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to deliver high-quality, culturally relevant education. Effective leadership in this context involves guiding and supporting these processes, ensuring that the entire educational ecosystem is aligned toward continuous improvement and excellence.

Integration of Local Wisdom Values in the Curriculum

Integrating local wisdom values in various subjects is integral to building a quality culture based on local wisdom. For example, local folklore is used as teaching material in Indonesian subjects to enrich learning. One of the teachers stated, "We integrate Cilacap folklore into Indonesian lessons in several ways. First, we chose stories rich in moral and ethical values, such as honesty, courage, hard work, and humility. These stories are usually retold by the teacher or read together by students from the storybook provided. For example, the story of "Legenda Nyai Roro Kidul" or "Story of Jaka Tarub," which is part of the local culture of Cilacap" (I_Gr_2024).

The Indonesian subject teacher also conveyed the same thing in an interview where he said, "Children are taught the importance of respecting local traditions through PPKn lessons. Teachers always insert local cultural values in every material delivered in class. For example, in discussions about harmony, students are invited to understand and practice the customs of mutual respect in their environment. We believe that understanding and respecting local traditions is key to building strong character, says one teacher. Through this approach, the school hopes to instill a sense of love and pride for local culture in the hearts of every student (I_Gr_2024)."

"We teach children about the values of mutual aid through craft activities. Each student is invited to work together on making handicrafts, which involves many stages, such as weaving and weaving from recycled materials. By working together, children learn to help each other and appreciate each individual's role in a team. In addition, this activity also aims to strengthen social ties and develop cooperation skills. Their crafts are often exhibited at school events to show the importance of mutual aid and creativity (I_Gr_2024)."

This series of interviews shows that integrating local wisdom values in the curriculum increases students' understanding of their own culture and strengthens their character. Using folklore, traditions, and local customs in teaching materials helps students internalize the positive values contained in them. The research findings from the interview activities above can be illustrated in the Table 1.

Table 1. Integration of Local Wisdom Values in the Curriculum

Subject	Forms of Local Wisdom Integration	Implementation Example
Indonesian	Folklore	Using Cilacap folklore as teaching material
PPKn	Local traditions	Teaching traditional ceremonies in lessons
Prakarya	Local Customs	Practice gotong royong in craft activities

The results of this study show that the integration of local wisdom values through the use of folklore in the Indonesian curriculum at SD Negeri Karangjati 04 Cilacap has succeeded in increasing students' understanding of morals and

ethics and enriching their insight into local culture. This finding aligns with research conducted by Lee and Ng (2020), which found that using local cultural content in education can increase student engagement and motivation to learn (Tong et al., 2024; Salas - Pilco et al., 2022). However, these findings also show significant differences from previous studies by Smith et al. (2021), which stated that local culture-based teaching is often limited to aspects of knowledge and pays little attention to student character development (Syaodih et al., 2022; Ariusnita & Bayu, 2023). In the context of this study, folklore is not only used as a tool to convey cultural information but also as a medium to teach important ethical and moral values, such as honesty and courage. In addition, research by Kim et al. (2020) underscores the importance of support from school principals in implementing local wisdom-based curricula (Haq et al., 2022; Seno et al., 2022). This is also seen in this study, where school principals play a crucial role in encouraging teachers to integrate folklore into the learning process. Thus, this study contributes to the literature by showing that a holistic approach that includes leadership support and local cultural content can significantly improve students' moral and character education.

Development of School Programs Based on Local Culture

School programs that promote local culture, such as traditional arts, music, dance, and religious activities relevant to the local community. In an interview conducted at the school stated, "We have a traditional dance program that is routinely held every week. The program involves all students, from small to large classes, to learn and perform a different traditional dance each month. One teacher said that traditional dance is an effective way to preserve local culture and teach discipline and cooperation. Through these regular exercises, children learn dance moves and the meaning and history behind each dance. This program is expected to foster love and pride for their cultural heritage (I_Gr_2024)."

In addition, traditional music is also taught to students, as mentioned by Vice Principal for Curriculum in an interview conducted where he said that, "Children learn to play traditional musical instruments such as angklung and gamelan. Every week, they receive intensive training from instructors who are experienced in traditional music. "Through this music lesson, we want children to know and love their cultural heritage," said one teacher. In addition to learning playing techniques, students are also taught about the history and philosophy behind the instrument. This program improves children's musical skills and strengthens the sense of community and cooperation between them (I_WakaKur_2024)."

"Every month, we hold recitations and commemorations of religious holidays to bring students closer to religious values. The event involves all students and teachers and sometimes invites local religious leaders to give lectures. Through this religious activity, students can deepen their

understanding and appreciation of religious teachings, said a teacher. This activity also creates an atmosphere conducive to spiritual reflection and character building. By regularly holding recitations and commemorations of religious holidays, we hope students can grow into individuals with noble character and high integrity (I_KS_2024)."

The interpretation of these interviews shows that local culture-based programs enhance students' skills in arts and music and strengthen their cultural identity. Regular religious activities help students better understand and appreciate their communities' religious values.

Table 2. Development of School Programs Based on Local Culture

School Programs	Description	Implementation Example
Traditional Dance Art	Regular traditional dance program	Dance practice every week
Traditional Music	Learning traditional musical instruments	Learn angklung and gamelan
Religious Activities	Recitation and commemoration of religious holidays	Monthly recitation and celebration of religious holidays

The results shown by Table 2 show that school programs that prioritize local culture, such as dance, traditional music, and religious activities at SD Negeri Karangjati 04 Cilacap, positively preserve local culture and strengthen student character. A dance program that engages all students each week teaches dance moves and the meaning and history behind them, helping to foster a love of cultural heritage. These results are consistent with Lee and Ng's (2020) research, which found that engagement in local cultural activities can increase student motivation and engagement in learning. In addition, religious activities such as monthly recitation help students deepen their understanding of religious teachings and form good character (Sauri et al., 2022; Aisyah et al., 2021). This research confirms that a holistic approach that combines local culture and leadership support can improve students' moral and character education.

Teacher Capacity Building

The principal at SD Negeri Karangjati 04 Cilacap also focuses on improving teacher capacity through various trainings and workshops. This training aims to help teachers teach and integrate local wisdom more effectively in the teaching and learning process. A teacher explained in the interview activity where he said that, "We often attend workshops on teaching methods based on local wisdom. This workshop provides an opportunity for teachers to learn how to integrate local cultural values into the curriculum. By understanding local wisdom, we can create teaching materials that are more relevant and interesting for students, said a teacher. The workshop also introduced various innovative teaching strategies that can be applied in the classroom. Through participation in

the workshop, we hope to improve the quality of education and strengthen the cultural identity of our school (I_Gr_2024)."

This is also in line with the statement made by the principal from the interview conducted, where he said, "IT training for teachers helps us make teaching materials more engaging. Each teacher is trained to use various educational software and applications that can enrich the learning process. With this training, we can create interactive presentations and multimedia content that is more engaging for students, said one of the teachers. IT training also helps us develop technology skills essential in today's digital age. Appropriate technology can improve teaching effectiveness and make learning more enjoyable for students (I_KS_2024).

The Vice Principal for Curriculum also conveyed another statement through an interview activity conducted in which he said, "The workshop on student character development is beneficial for improving the quality of education in our school. This workshop teaches teachers various methods and strategies to instill positive character values in students. "We gained a lot of new insights on how to shape the character of students who are honest, disciplined, and responsible," said one teacher. In addition, this workshop also provides various examples of best practices that can be applied in the classroom. By participating in this workshop, we hope to create a learning environment that supports student character's holistic and sustainable development (I_WakaKur_2024)."

The interpretation of these interviews shows that the trainings and workshops held not only improve the technical and pedagogical abilities of teachers but also motivate them to constantly develop themselves. This capacity-building of teachers has a direct impact on the quality of learning they provide to students and on the more effective integration of local wisdom in the teaching and learning process.

Table 3. Teacher Capacity Building

Types of Training	Description	Benefit
Local Wisdom Teaching Workshop	Workshop on teaching methods based on local wisdom	Improve teaching effectiveness
IT Training	IT technical skills training for teachers	Assist in the creation of interesting teaching materials
Character Development Workshop	Workshop on student character development	Improve the quality of education

The results of this study show that increasing teacher capacity through training and workshops at SD Negeri Karangjati 04 Cilacap significantly impacts the quality of learning and the integration of local wisdom. Training based on local wisdom, information technology, and student character development gives teachers new skills to create more relevant and engaging teaching materials. These findings support Lee and Ng's (2020) research, which found that

professional training focused on pedagogical and technological innovation can improve teaching effectiveness and student engagement. However, in contrast to Lee and Ng's findings that highlight challenges in implementing technology in the classroom, this study shows that strong leadership support at SD Negeri Karangjati 04 Cilacap enables the practical application of technology and innovative teaching strategies. Thus, the training and workshops held not only improve teachers' technical and pedagogical abilities but also strengthen students' cultural identity and character through the integration of local wisdom in the teaching and learning process (Widana et al., 2023; Hetharion, 2021).

This research contributes to the educational literature by showing that a leadership approach that integrates local wisdom can significantly improve the quality of education in SD Negeri Karangjati 04 Cilacap. Through in-depth interviews, this study revealed that the use of folklore in the Indonesian curriculum enriches learning and strengthens students' characters. In addition, traditional dance and music programs and regular religious activities have proven effective in preserving local culture and shaping students' morals and ethics. The study also emphasizes the critical role of school principals in encouraging teachers to integrate local cultural values through various trainings and workshops, which enhance teachers' technical and pedagogical abilities. These findings support previous research showing that local cultural content can increase student engagement and add a new dimension by highlighting the importance of leadership support in implementing local wisdom-based curricula.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that leadership preferences at SD Negeri Karangjati 04 Cilacap are essential in building a quality culture based on local wisdom. School principals use a variety of leadership strategies to integrate local cultural values into the curriculum and learning process. The results showed that the integration of local wisdom through folklore, traditions, and local culture-based activities improved the quality of learning and strengthened students' character. Students become more engaged and motivated in learning and show better character development, such as honesty, hard work, and togetherness. The headmaster's support in the form of policies and initiatives has also proven crucial in ensuring the success of local wisdom-based programs.

Based on the findings of this study, future research is recommended to explore the role of teachers in implementing local wisdom-based programs more, as well as their impact on student learning outcomes in the long term. Further research can broaden the scope by examining other schools in different regions to see how local contexts affect the implementation of local wisdom in education. In addition, a deeper study of the challenges and constraints faced in integrating local cultural values into the curriculum can provide more comprehensive insights to develop more effective and sustainable strategies.

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