

NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHARACTER EDUCATION LEARNING MODEL BASED ON LOCAL CULTURE

Atika Susanti

Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Universitas Bengkulu, Indonesia

atikasusanti@unib.ac.id

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ABSTRAK

The rapid development of globalization demands that education focus not only on academic aspects but also on the preservation of cultural identity and the development of students' character. The primary objective of this study is to analyze the needs for developing a character education learning model based on local culture. The method used in this study is descriptive quantitative, involving 100 elementary school teachers from 10 cities and regencies in Bengkulu Province as participants. Data were collected through needs assessment questionnaires, curriculum analysis, and student characteristic analysis, and were then analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis techniques. The results showed that 92% of teachers agreed that culturally based learning helps students understand character values, 88% stated it enhances student engagement, and 90% expressed the need for a learning model grounded in local culture. Furthermore, 94% of teachers preferred a model that involves direct experiences such as discussions and cultural exploration. However, 87% acknowledged the absence of a systematic model to integrate local culture and character values. Curriculum analysis indicated that the proposed learning model is relevant to be applied in the elements of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika and NKRI from grades 1 to 6. Cognitively, elementary students are at the concrete operational stage, showing a tendency to learn through direct experiences and tangible objects. Psychologically and socially, they enjoy playing, interacting with peers, and are beginning to develop social skills such as cooperation, empathy, and conflict resolution. Therefore, the development of a character education model based on local culture is urgently needed and considered feasible for systematic implementation in the learning process.

A. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in preparing the younger generation to become responsible citizens amid the currents of globalization and digitalization. Education must not only shape students' character but also strengthen their national cultural identity. The education system is required to provide meaningful learning experiences to ensure that students are equipped to face increasingly complex social, cultural, and political challenges UNESCO (2014). However, a study by Nahak, (2019) revealed that today's youth tend to be vulnerable to the influence of foreign cultures, lack awareness of the importance of preserving local culture, and face the threat of cultural loss, including the risk of having their cultural heritage claimed by other countries.

Efforts to safeguard and preserve Indonesian culture can be carried out through two main approaches: Culture Experience and Culture Knowledge (Abbott, 2017). Muhammad et al., (2021) dan Yusuf & Fajari, (2025) suggest in their research

that the integration of character education models is crucial to be developed, and they are expected to serve as best practices that can be implemented in other schools and educational institutions across Indonesia.

According to Laksana et al., (2021) the current circumstances highlight the crucial role of education in reinforcing cultural identity through culture-based learning. This educational approach facilitates deeper character development in students, particularly in cultivating their sense of responsibility as citizens (Susanti et al., 2022). In alignment with this perspective, Machfiroh et al., (2024) emphasize that the integration of local wisdom values into the curriculum supported by social programs, community engagement, and technological interventions is vital for nurturing students' cultural identity. Accordingly, embedding local culture into the learning process not only aids in preserving the values of local wisdom but also functions as an effective strategy for developing a

generation with strong character (Andajani et al., 2024; Deal & Peterson, 2016). Supporting this view, Sofiyah et al., (2025) assert that local wisdom can be effectively incorporated into education, significantly contributing to students' character formation and enhancing their appreciation of local culture.

Character education is a crucial element in shaping a generation with integrity, social responsibility, and concern for others and the environment (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005 & Lickona, 1992). Character education is inherently flexible, allowing it to be integrated into the curriculum structure and learning processes (Nasaruddin et al., 2024). However, the implementation of character education in schools tends to be normative and lacks contextual relevance, which limits its effectiveness in truly shaping students' character (Daryanto, 2013). This highlights the need for a more contextual approach grounded in local values, so that character development can be more meaningful and applicable in students' daily lives.

One promising approach to addressing this challenge is by integrating local cultural values into the learning process. Local culture is rich with noble values such as mutual cooperation, respect for parents, hard work, and honesty all of which can serve as authentic and relevant sources for character education closely aligned with students' everyday lives (Isroani & Huda, 2022). According to Untari et al., (2020) character education based on local wisdom can be effectively implemented through various methods, including intra- and extracurricular activities, group work, local tourism-based learning models, educational games, and student interactions using local languages. Iksal et al., (2024) emphasize that value-based education rooted in local culture particularly through the integration of moral values is essential in addressing the challenges of an increasingly complex and dynamic era.

This type of education not only cultivates individuals with strong moral and emotional character, but also plays a vital role in shaping a stable and productive society. Despite its importance, the implementation of character education still encounters several significant challenges, including uneven application, limited teacher training, and the lack of a well-balanced curriculum (Nguyen et al., 2025; Sleeter & Carmona, 2017). Addressing these

issues requires a coordinated effort; research indicates that the successful implementation of character education depends on close collaboration among the government, educational institutions, families, and communities (Watts et al., 2021). By adopting innovative and integrative teaching strategies within a holistic framework, character education can be delivered more effectively and sustainably.

Wiggan & Watson-Vandiver (2020) highlight the importance of cultural approaches in education, however, their study has yet to develop a systematic and applicable learning model. Meanwhile, Banks & Banks, (2010) assert that multicultural education is effective in raising students' cultural awareness, but this approach still lacks an emphasis on the internalization of cultural values within learners. On the other hand, the study by Nucci et al., (2014) on moral education primarily focuses on cognitive aspects, without incorporating reflective approaches based on local culture as part of the value-learning process. This study seeks to address these gaps and is positioned as the initial stage in the development of a character education learning model based on local culture.

In the Bengkulu Province, the potential of local wisdom is vast and can serve as a contextual learning resource. For example, the Sekujang tradition contains poems with moral values that are relevant for character development in elementary school students (Susanti & Darmansyah, 2022). Similar findings are observed in the Nujuh Likur and Tabot traditions, which embody moral and social values and have the potential to support the enhancement of students' cultural literacy (Ariffiando & Susanti, 2024.; Darmansyah & Susanti, 2023). Furthermore, Bengkulu's rich culture is also reflected in folklore that can be integrated into learning as a source of meaningful educational experiences (Ariffiando et al., 2024). However, this potential of local culture has not yet been fully accommodated in classroom learning practices. Until now, the development of character education models based on local culture has remained partial and lacks a systematic framework.

The approaches applied in schools are generally normative, without directly linking local cultural values to the students' life contexts. Therefore, a comprehensive needs analysis is essential as the

foundation for designing a character education model that is not only pedagogically relevant but also culturally contextual and capable of addressing the educational challenges in the era of globalization.

Based on the background outlined above, this study aims to analyze the needs for designing a character education learning model integrated with local cultural values.

B. METHODS

This study represents the initial stage of a learning model development process, thus employing a research and development (R&D) approach. However, the scope of this study is limited to the initial phase, namely needs analysis (need assessment), which serves as the foundation for designing a character education learning model based on local culture.

The approach used in this study is a descriptive quantitative approach. According to Sugiyono, (2020), this approach aims to describe or portray a phenomenon, event, or specific variable systematically, factually, and accurately through the collection and analysis of numerical data. This approach was chosen to obtain an objective and measurable overview of teachers' needs for a relevant and contextual learning model.

The data sources in this study are elementary school teachers in Bengkulu Province. The research subjects consist of 100 teachers distributed across nine regencies and one city. The subjects were selected purposively, considering regional representation and the teachers' experience in implementing character education in elementary schools.

The data collection techniques used in this study include: (1) a needs questionnaire to determine teachers' perceptions and needs regarding character education based on local culture; (2) curriculum documentation to analyze the correlation between curriculum elements, learning outcomes, learning units/chapters, and character values that can be integrated with local culture; (3) student characteristic analysis to understand the profile of learners as the end-users of the learning model to be developed.

To enhance the internal validity of qualitative data, this study employed both source and method triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from various parties, such as teachers, students, and curriculum documents. Method triangulation involved combining data from questionnaires, document analysis, and interviews. The data collected were qualitative in nature and analyzed using descriptive

qualitative analysis techniques. Referring to Miles & Huberman (1994), qualitative data analysis is carried out through three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This analytical process aims to systematically and thoroughly describe the needs for model development, which serves as the foundation for the subsequent stages in the development of the learning model.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Needs Analysis for Model Development Based on Questionnaire Results

As an initial step in designing an effective and contextual character education learning model based on local culture, a needs analysis was conducted in the field through the distribution of questionnaires to educators. The questionnaire was designed to reveal the urgency, readiness, and teachers' perceptions regarding the integration of local culture into character education in elementary schools.

The questionnaire instrument used in this study was developed independently based on indicators related to the needs for developing a character education learning model based on local culture. It was then validated by education experts through expert judgment to ensure content relevance and measurement accuracy. Curriculum data were analyzed by examining the alignment between learning outcomes and subject matter in the curriculum with character values derived from local culture, using content analysis techniques. Meanwhile, the analysis of student characteristics was conducted by collecting data on students' backgrounds, learning styles, as well as their interests and responses to local cultural content. The data collected were then analyzed descriptively to obtain a general overview of the real needs in developing the learning model. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Needs Assessment Questionnaire Data

Statement	Me an	Medi an	Mod us	Std. Devi asi	Mi n	Ma x
The use of a learning model based on local culture is necessary	4.37	4	4	0.66	1	5
Local culture helps in understanding	4.38	4	4	0.63	1	5

character values						
A direct experience approach is required	4.40	4	4	0.65	1	5
Local culture increases student engagement	4.32	4	4	0.67	1	5
Training on local culture-based learning models is needed	4.46	5	5	0.68	1	5
Local culture enhances understanding of Pancasila values	4.34	4	4	0.64	1	5
Discussion/exploration methods help internalize character values	4.34	4	4	0.64	1	5
Students are more interested when connected to their culture	4.38	4	4	0.65	1	5
Culture reduces gaps among students	4.26	4	4	0.65	1	5
This model strengthens character and social skills	4.34	4	4	0.66	1	5

Table 1 presents the results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the questionnaire measuring the need for the use of a local culture-based learning model. The results indicate that all statements received an average score above 4, with a relatively small standard deviation (around 0.6), reflecting strong agreement among the respondents. The statement with the highest score was “Training on local culture-based learning models is needed,” with a mean of 4.46, a median of 5, and a mode of 5, indicating that the majority of teachers feel a strong need for training to optimally implement this model.

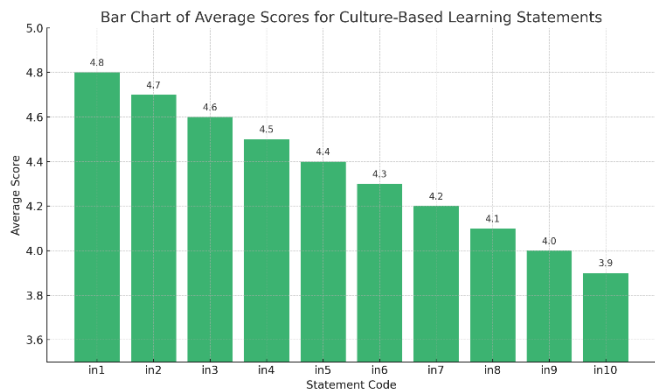


Figure 1. Distribution of Needs Analysis Scores

Note:	
in1	The model promotes a learning process based on local culture.
in2	The model facilitates direct interaction to enhance learning outcomes.
in3	Culture-based learning methods are more interesting and meaningful.
in4	Commitment to implementing a local culture-based learning model.
in5	Confidence in applying a local culture-based learning model.
in6	Culture-based learning enhances understanding of Pancasila values.
in7	Culture-based exploration and presentation methods shape student character.
in8	The model improves students' social interaction skills.
in9	Culture-based learning increases students' motivation to learn.
in10	The model reduces learning outcome gaps among students from different backgrounds.

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of scores from the needs assessment questionnaire analyzed descriptively. The score distribution shows that the majority of respondents gave high ratings regarding the importance of integrating local culture into character education. This emphasizes teachers' awareness of the urgency for a contextual approach that is relevant to students' cultural backgrounds to support a meaningful and inclusive educational process. The results indicate that 92% of teachers stated that local culture-based learning helps students understand character values, 88% reported it increases student engagement, and 90% agreed on the necessity of using a local culture-based learning model. Additionally, 94% of teachers desired a model involving direct experiences such as discussions and cultural explorations, yet 87% acknowledged the lack of a systematic model to integrate local culture and character values.

Table 2. Analysis and Findings of Needs Indicators for Learning Model Development

No.	Indicator	Description of Analysis	Key Findings
1	Need for using a local culture-based learning model	Assessing the urgency of integrating local culture into character education.	Most teachers (average score >4.4) feel this model is highly needed for strengthening student character.
2	Relevance of local culture in aiding understanding of character values	Examining the contribution of local culture in facilitating the internalization of character values.	High average scores indicate a belief that local culture enhances students' understanding of character values.
3	Need for a direct experience-based approach	Assessing the need for contextual methods to strengthen student character.	Teachers express a high demand for experience-based learning as an effective

4	Influence of local culture on student engagement	Examining the extent to which local culture can increase student participation in learning.	method. Consistently high scores; teachers believe integrating local culture encourages student enthusiasm.	social skills of students	model can shape character and social competence.	strengthens students' character and social dimensions.
		Assessing teacher readiness and capacity-building needs to implement this model.	The majority of teachers acknowledge the need for further training to implement optimally.			

Based on Table 2, all indicators demonstrate a high level of urgency, such as the need for integrating local culture into learning and the necessity of training for teachers. The findings reveal strong support from teachers for the use of this approach, particularly because it is considered effective in strengthening character and enhancing student engagement.

Table 3. Analysis and Findings of Perception Indicators on Learning Approach

No.	Indicator	Description of Analysis	Key Findings
1	Role of local culture in shaping understanding of Pancasila values	Analyzing the relationship between local culture and national values (Pancasila).	Teachers agree that local culture serves as a bridge to contextualize understanding of Pancasila values.
2	Effectiveness of local methods such as discussions and explorations in character internalization	Examining the effectiveness of instructional strategies based on local culture.	Participatory methods based on culture are considered effective in internalizing character values.
3	Student interest in learning related to their culture	Assessing the impact of cultural proximity on student learning interest.	Teachers observe increased interest when learning is connected to culture familiar to students.
4	Reduction of understanding gaps among students from diverse backgrounds	Analyzing the role of local culture as a bridge across diverse student backgrounds.	The model is considered capable of reducing understanding gaps due to its inclusive approach.
5	Impact on character formation and	Assessing the extent to which the	There is strong belief that this model effectively

Based on Table 3, the results of the analysis on teachers' perceptions regarding the local culture-based learning approach are presented. Five indicators were examined, including the relationship between local culture and Pancasila values, the effectiveness of participatory methods, and the impact on students' social skills. Overall, the findings indicate a positive perception from teachers towards this approach. Local culture is considered to play an important role in internalizing character values and fostering social cohesion among students, especially in multicultural environments.

2. Curriculum Analysis of Pancasila Subject in Elementary School

Table 4. Mapping of Learning Units to Culture-Based Learning Outcomes (LO) in Elementary Schools

Phase	Grade	Learning Unit	Related CP (Competency Points)
A	1	My Responsibilities at Home and School	Self-identity, environment, cooperation in diversity
		Self-Identity and Surroundings	Self-identity and environment
		I Like to Work Together	Cooperation and mutual assistance
	2	Loving Each Other Despite Differences	Unity in diversity
		Maintaining Unity and Cohesion	Maintaining unity
	3	Differences are Beautiful	Appreciating cultural differences
B	4	Let's Get to Know Pancasila	Pancasila values
		Building Identity in Diversity	Identity and diversity
		I Love the Unity of Indonesia	Unity and nationalism
	5	I Like to Work Together	Cultural cooperation
		The Cultural Diversity of My Indonesia	Culture as identity and pride
		The Cultural Diversity of My Indonesia	Culture and national identity
C	6	Me and My Surroundings	Participation in the environment and responsibility
		Knowing Norms, Rights, and Responsibilities	Rights, responsibilities, and norms

Learning to Deliberate	Deliberation and democracy
Respecting Cultural and Religious Differences	Tolerance and harmony
My Province is Part of the Republic of Indonesia	National insight and unity

Based on Table 4, it can be seen that the distribution of Pancasila-related materials associated with culture is spread across most units. Discussions related to culture are also evident in every grade level in elementary school. To make it easier to visualize the distribution of materials, a graphical representation is provided in Figure 2.

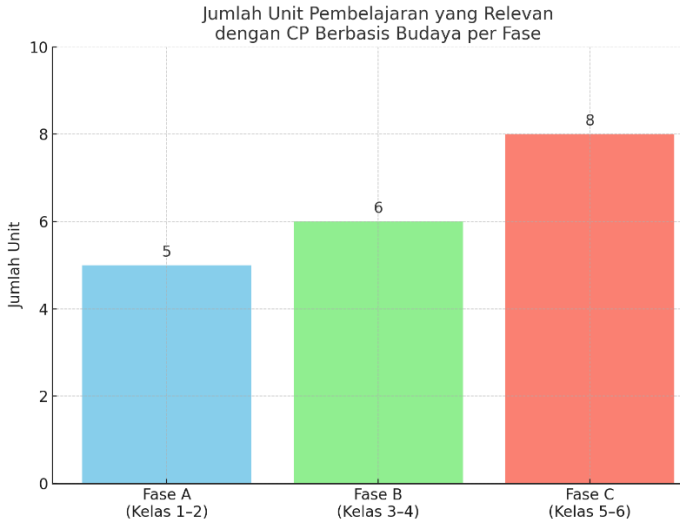


Figure 2. Distribution of Learning Units Relevant to the Culture-Based Learning Model

Figure 2 illustrates the number of learning units relevant to the cultural approach for each phase in elementary school: (1) Phase A (Grades 1–2) includes 5 units, such as "Self-Identity," "Mutual Cooperation," and "Unity"; (2) Phase B (Grades 3–4) covers 6 units that reinforce themes of diversity and Pancasila; and (3) Phase C (Grades 5–6) consists of 8 units, encompassing norms, deliberation, and respect for culture.

3. Analysis of Elementary School Students' Characteristics

Students at the elementary school level have distinctive developmental characteristics that must be considered when selecting an appropriate learning model, especially one that adopts a culture-based approach. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children aged 7 to 11 are in the concrete operational stage, characterized by their ability to think logically about tangible objects and direct experiences (Piaget, 1970). In this context, a culture-based learning approach can provide more

meaningful learning experiences through contextual content that is familiar to the students' daily lives.

Furthermore, Erikson, (1968) suggested that children in elementary school are in the psychosocial stage of "industry vs. inferiority," during which they are driven to feel competent and accepted by their environment. When learning is linked to local culture, students not only gain academic knowledge but also strengthen their sense of identity and pride in their cultural heritage (Dabamona et al., 2021). In line with this, Kohlberg (1981) indicates that children at this age begin to internalize social norms, making the integration of cultural values into learning an effective way to support character development. Therefore, a learning model that facilitates a culture-based approach is not only appropriate for the students' developmental stage but also effective in fostering national identity and nurturing a tolerant attitude.

Table 5. Analysis of Elementary School Student Characteristics

Developmental Aspect	Characteristics of Elementary School Students	Implications for Learning	Contribution to Culture-Based Learning Model
Cognitive (Piaget)	In the concrete operational stage (ages 7–11); understand concrete and contextual things	Learning should be based on real-life experiences, concrete objects, folktales, and hands-on practice	Local culture as a concrete context strengthens the understanding of abstract concepts
Social-Emotional (Erikson)	Desire to feel accepted and competent (industry vs. inferiority stage)	Requires collaborative activities and recognition of student contributions	Cultural activities (dance, music, mutual cooperation) build confidence and social connections
Moral (Kohlberg)	Early conventional stage; obey rules and norms to gain social acceptance	Values should be instilled through stories, role-playing, and	Local culture serves as a source of moral values (tolerance, respect,

		discussions based on cultural norms	cooperation) that are relevant and accessible
Language and Identity	Begin to understand self-identity and social environment	Requires reinforcement of mother tongue, local stories, and cultural awareness	Builds identity and pride through the representation of one's own culture in learning activities

The developmental characteristics of elementary school students indicate that they require a learning approach that is concrete, contextual, and socially meaningful. According to Piaget's theory of concrete operational cognition, children at this stage need real and relevant learning experiences connected to everyday life something that can be effectively facilitated through the integration of local culture into the curriculum.

From a social-emotional perspective, children at this age have a strong desire to feel competent and accepted by their peers. Therefore, collaborative learning based on cultural practices such as traditional games or artistic activities can enhance their confidence and engagement. Morally, their understanding of social norms and values develops rapidly at this stage, making local culture a rich source for instilling character values (Lockwood, 2015). Furthermore, strengthening self-identity and fostering pride in their own culture is highly relevant to shaping students' sense of self.

This aligns with the general characteristics of elementary school children who, according to Desmita, (2009) tend to enjoy working in groups, love to play, are physically active, and prefer hands-on and direct activities. Considering these traits, a local culture-based learning approach is not only relevant but also strategic in supporting the holistic development of students cognitively, socially, morally, and in terms of identity through concrete, contextual, and meaningful learning experiences. In line with this, Susanti et al., (2024) state that each student has a unique learning style. Therefore, teachers should design instruction that aligns with students' needs and learning styles by applying local culture-based teaching strategies that are both more effective and individually relevant.

Research by Hardina, (2024), Rozana et al., (2025) dan Setyawan, (2019) has demonstrated that the use of traditional games and activities based on local culture can enhance students' social skills and self-confidence, as they feel valued and actively involved in the learning process. Furthermore, at this stage, moral understanding develops rapidly; culture-based learning can serve as an effective medium for the internalization of values such as responsibility, cooperation, and empathy (Qowim et al., 2024). Moreover, strengthening cultural identity through teaching materials that reflect local heritage helps students develop pride in their identity, which is a crucial foundation for building national character (Muflihin, 2024). The revitalization of traditional regional cultures is essential to support sustainable nation-building character development in Indonesia (Agus et al., 2021). This, a culture-based learning approach not only supports cognitive, social, and moral development but also contributes to the formation of a strong and contextual self-identity.

D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that there is a clear and urgent need for the development of a local culture-based learning model in elementary schools. The results indicate that integrating local culture is not only relevant but also strategic in strengthening character values and enhancing student engagement in the learning process. The curriculum analysis and student characteristics further reinforce this urgency, particularly due to the alignment between cultural values, learning content, and the cognitive and social development stages of elementary students. Therefore, this study contributes significantly as an initial foundation for the development of a contextual and applicable character education learning model based on local culture. As this study represents the initial stage of needs analysis, it is recommended that future research focus on the development and testing of the proposed learning model. Further studies should evaluate the effectiveness and adaptability of the model in various elementary school contexts to ensure its broader applicability and long-term sustainability.

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