

The *Merdeka* Curriculum as a Reflection of National Identity: Dynamics of Character Education Based on Local Wisdom in South Sumatra

Zainuddin Zainuddin*

Department of Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah, Institut Agama Islam Al-Qur'an Al-Ittifaqiah Indralaya, 30862, Indonesia

Received: 08.07.2025 • Accepted: 26.11.2025 • Published: 30.12.2025 • Final Version: 30.12.2025

Abstract: This article explores how the *Merdeka* Curriculum reflects the construction of Indonesia's national identity amid the currents of globalization. The main finding reveals that the national identity embedded in the Curriculum is hybrid in nature, formed through three key stages: affirmation of local culture, adaptation to relevant global values, and selective integration of both within educational practices. The *Merdeka* Curriculum serves as a space of negotiation between traditional values and modern demands, representing the state's efforts to formulate a contextual and dynamic sense of nationhood. This study employs a qualitative approach with document analysis of educational policies and Curriculum texts as its primary sources. The findings affirm that the *Merdeka* Curriculum is not merely a pedagogical innovation, but also a cultural strategy in shaping an inclusive national identity that is responsive to global change.

Keywords: *Merdeka* Curriculum, National Identity, Local Wisdom, Character Education, Hybrid Identity

1. Introduction

The transformation of global education in the contemporary era demands a learning paradigm that is responsive to social dynamics, technological advancements, and the diversity of local cultures (Bakar, 2021). In the Indonesian context, the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum since 2022 represents a systematic effort to adapt national education policy to the challenges of the digital age and globalization (Hunaepi & Suharta, 2024). This Curriculum emerges as an educational reform that emphasizes differentiated learning, freedom to learn, and the strengthening of character based on the values of *Pancasila*, while also providing greater autonomy for educational institutions to develop local content in accordance with their regional cultural contexts (Usman et al., 2023).

The integration of local wisdom into formal education systems has become a significant focus of international research, particularly in the context of sustainable education and character formation (Druker-Ibáñez & Cáceres-Jensen, 2022). Previous studies have shown that local wisdom-based education not only plays a vital role in cultural preservation but also serves as an effective strategy for developing cross-cultural literacy and reinforcing national identity within multicultural societies (Wijayanti, 2025). Within the framework of character education, local wisdom functions as a bridge

* Corresponding Author: Email: zainuddin@iaiqi.ac.id

that connects universal values with specific cultural practices, thereby fostering contextual and meaningful learning experiences (Sakti et al., 2024).

In South Sumatra, renowned for its rich Malay cultural heritage, deeply rooted Islamic traditions, and a distinctive communitarian value system (Abdullah, 2006), the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum presents strategic opportunities to align national educational objectives with local wisdom, such as *gotong royong*, the customary principles of *Simbur Cahaya*, and localized Islamic traditions that have been culturally adapted to the regional context (Nuriadi, 2023). Such ethnopedagogical practices have proven effective in enhancing students' awareness of local culture while fostering holistic character development (Jessen et al., 2022).

Implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum is not a linear process; it demands serious attention, comprehensive planning, and strong synergy among stakeholders. This complexity arises because curriculum implementation is not merely a technical endeavor, but a multidimensional process encompassing philosophical, pedagogical, sociological, and political dimensions. These complexities are further reflected in the interplay between structural barriers such as unequal infrastructure, inconsistent policy enforcement, and limited teacher preparedness and cultural barriers, including resistance to change, entrenched local educational traditions, and diverse interpretations of educational autonomy. These dimensions interact dynamically, indicating that successful curriculum implementation requires not only technical execution but also cultural transformation and institutional realignment. Previous studies have highlighted a persistent gap between the policy's ideal objectives and the practical capacity for implementation at the school level, especially in terms of teachers' readiness to integrate local cultural values with national learning goals (Al Arsyadhi et al., 2024). More fundamentally, there is still a lack of empirical research exploring how national values and local wisdom are negotiated in day-to-day teaching practices, and how these negotiations shape the construction of student identity in Indonesia's multicultural context.

A crucial question that arises is how the *Merdeka* Curriculum contributes to shaping students' character as a reflection of national identity within the local context of South Sumatra. This question is particularly relevant considering that identity formation during adolescence is a complex process, significantly influenced by the formal educational environment, especially in societies undergoing transitions between traditional and modern values (Zhang & Qin, 2023). From a theoretical perspective, this process can be understood as the construction of a *hybrid identity*, one that merges elements of national identity with local cultural roots through the mediation of contextual pedagogical practices (Faiz, 2024).

This study aims to examine the practices and meanings constructed by teachers and students in character education processes based on the *Merdeka* Curriculum, particularly in the integration of national values and the local culture of South Sumatra. Specifically, the study seeks to: (1) analyze the pedagogical strategies employed by teachers to integrate South Sumatran local wisdom into classroom learning; (2) explore the formation process of students' hybrid identity that combines national values with local cultural roots; and (3) evaluate the effectiveness of the *Merdeka* Curriculum as a medium for character formation and national cohesion in a multicultural context.

The contribution of this study is multidimensional. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on multicultural education and identity formation in the Indonesian context by offering an ethnopedagogical perspective from South Sumatra—an area that has been underrepresented in academic discourse. Empirically, the study provides in-depth qualitative data on the micro-level implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum, which can serve as a reference for the development of

education policies grounded in local wisdom. Practically, the findings are expected to offer strategic recommendations for optimizing local content in national Curriculum design and for strengthening the role of teachers as mediators of national values through the lens of local culture within Indonesia's plural society.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Character Education and National Identity in a Multicultural Context

Character education in multicultural societies has become a central focus in global educational discourse, particularly in efforts to build social cohesion and an inclusive sense of national identity (Hunduma & Mekuria, 2024). Within the framework of multicultural education theory, Banks (2019) emphasizes that character formation cannot be separated from the identity construction process, which involves negotiating between universal and particular values in specific cultural contexts. Research by Phitsanu (2025) and recent studies by Widyanti and Syah (2025) demonstrate that integrating local wisdom into character education enhances the internalization of moral values and strengthens students' sense of belonging to their communities and nation.

In Indonesia, character education is grounded in the six dimensions of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Profile of Pancasila Students): faith in and devotion to God Almighty, independence, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), critical thinking, creativity, and global diversity (Mustafidah et al., 2025). This framework reflects an effort to construct a national identity that accommodates Indonesia's cultural diversity while upholding unity in diversity as a fundamental principle (Hedir & Nurdianti, 2024). However, in practice, character education cannot rely solely on verbal or normative instruction; it requires a contextual and integrative approach rooted in the cultural values of students' lived environments (Eldering, 1996).

A constructivist perspective on character education asserts that character formation is an active process through which students build moral understanding via interactions with their sociocultural environment (Aryabkina et al., 2021). Longitudinal studies have shown that students who experience culture-based character education exhibit higher levels of civic engagement and stronger national identity than those who receive conventional character instruction (Astawaa et al., 2024). This indicates that contextual character education is not only effective in shaping individual morality, but also contributes to strengthening social bonds and collective identity within multicultural societies (Althof & Berkowitz*, 2006).

2.2. Conceptualizing Local Wisdom within the Framework of Contemporary Education

Local wisdom is defined as a system of knowledge, values, norms, and cultural practices that have stood the test of time and been transmitted across generations within a specific community (Pesurnay, 2018). From the perspective of educational anthropology, local wisdom functions as cultural capital, playing a vital role not only in cultural preservation but also as an authentic and meaningful source of learning (Selasih & Sudarsana, 2018). Druker-Ibáñez and Cáceres-Jensen (2022) in their systematic literature review, assert that the integration of indigenous knowledge into formal education significantly contributes to the development of sustainability consciousness and cross-cultural literacy.

The theoretical framework surrounding local wisdom in contemporary education is grounded in the principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy, as developed by Paris and Alim (2017). This approach not only accommodates students' cultural diversity but actively promotes and sustains

local cultural practices as valuable assets within the learning process (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Zindy et al. (2020), in their multi-perspective reflection, emphasize that indigenous knowledge systems possess a distinctive epistemology capable of enriching mainstream education with holistic perspectives on the interrelation between humans, nature, and the spiritual realm.

In South Sumatra, values such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *musyawarah mufakat* (deliberation through consensus), and the customary principle of *Simbur Cahaya* formally known as the *Customary Law Code of Palembang (Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Adat Palembang)*, a traditional legal and ethical charter that integrates Islamic teachings with local customs to regulate social conduct—are integral parts of daily life. These cultural elements, along with religious and communitarian practices such as interfaith harmony forums, hold significant potential as contextual foundations for character education. Zainuddin (2025) shows that local wisdom-based learning in South Sumatra fosters meaningful learning experiences that support the development of a strong identity while remaining open to cultural diversity. Furthermore, an ethnographic study by Giri and Ardiawan (2018) highlights that local wisdom values closely align with the principles of the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly in the dimensions of mutual cooperation and global diversity.

2.3. The *Merdeka* Curriculum and the Space for Integrating Local Wisdom

The *Merdeka* Curriculum, through the Project for Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile (*Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila or P5*), provides significant space for schools to develop project themes rooted in local culture, enabling authentic and contextual learning processes (Asera et al., 2024). Within this framework, learning is no longer characterized by a one-size-fits-all approach; rather, it offers flexibility for teachers to adapt content and pedagogical methods to the socio-cultural characteristics of their students (Tran & Doan, 2025). The educational philosophy underpinning the *Merdeka* Curriculum aligns with the principles of constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of direct experience and meaningful engagement in the learning process (Walad et al., 2024).

Nuriadi's (2023) study on the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in various regions across Indonesia indicates that schools which successfully integrated *kearifan lokal* into P5 demonstrated significant improvements in student engagement and achievement of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila indicators. Setyaningrum et al., (2025), in their etnopedagogi-based study, emphasize that revitalizing *kearifan lokal* through etnopedagogis approaches is effective in shaping student character rooted in local culture while fostering a global perspective (Sakti et al., 2024). More specifically, Sulistyosari et al. (2024) reveal that the integration of *kearifan lokal* within P5 not only enhances academic achievement but also strengthens cultural pride and social cohesion among students.

Nevertheless, the implementation of local wisdom integration within the *Merdeka* Curriculum faces various structural and cultural challenges. Dwiputra and Sundawa (2023) identified several major obstacles, including the lack of systematic documentation of local wisdom, limited teacher competence in facilitating culturally based learning, and resistance from certain stakeholders who perceive local wisdom as a hindrance to modernization. A longitudinal study by Wahyuni et al. (2024) further indicates that the success of local wisdom integration heavily depends on the support of school principals, the involvement of local communities, and the availability of relevant learning resources.

2.4. The Dynamics of Hybrid Identity Formation in Multicultural Education

The concept of hybrid identity in the context of education refers to the process of identity formation that integrates multiple cultural references, whereby individuals are able to retain their local cultural roots while simultaneously adopting broader values and perspectives. Smith (2008), through his theory of hybridity, emphasizes that hybrid identity is not merely a simple amalgamation of two or more cultural elements, but rather a process of negotiation and transformation that produces a third space in which new meanings are generated. In the Indonesian educational context, the formation of hybrid identity becomes increasingly relevant, as students navigate the tensions between traditional local values, national identity, and global influences, elements that are often not entirely harmonious (Sidi, 2020).

The study by Zhang and Qin (2023) on identity negotiation among adolescents in multicultural contexts demonstrates that educational environments which support the exploration and affirmation of multiple identities significantly enhance students' well-being and academic achievement. This aligns with the findings of (2024), who emphasizes that education integrating local wisdom with global perspectives facilitates the development of resilient and adaptive identities. Berry (2005) provides a framework for understanding how individuals can develop bicultural competence, the ability to navigate effectively between two or more cultural systems without compromising the integrity of their personal identity.

Empirical studies on hybrid identity formation within the Indonesian educational context remain relatively limited; however, some emerging research reveals noteworthy patterns. Amin and Ritonga (2024) found that students who experience education grounded in local wisdom demonstrate greater capacity for code-switching between traditional and modern values, as well as higher levels of tolerance toward cultural differences. Furthermore, a longitudinal study identified that the process of hybrid identity formation among Indonesian students involves three key stages: awareness (recognition of multiple cultural references), negotiation (the dynamic process of reconciling differing values), and integration (the synthesis of a coherent yet multifaceted identity) (Setiawan, 2014).

2.5. The Role of Teachers as Cultural Mediators in Local Wisdom-Based Education

In the implementation of character education based on local wisdom, teachers play a vital role as cultural mediators, bridging students' lived experiences with the formal world of schooling and facilitating the negotiation process between local and global values. Vavrus (2008), through the theory of culturally responsive teaching, emphasizes that effective teachers in multicultural contexts are those who can utilize students' cultural backgrounds as leverage to enhance both learning and character development. The concept of cultural mediation extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge; it also involves facilitating a meaning-making process that enables students to construct a coherent identity within a multicultural context (Huang, 2023).

Research by Eden et al., (2024) demonstrates that teachers who possess cultural competence and are able to integrate local knowledge into their pedagogical practices are more successful in creating inclusive learning environments and fostering students' academic engagement. In the Indonesian context, Mulyana (2024) affirms that teachers who act as cultural brokers in integrating Pancasila values with local wisdom are capable of delivering instruction that is not only cognitive but also transformative in shaping students' character and identity. The framework of cultural responsiveness in Indonesian education requires adaptation that takes into account the socio-cultural

complexity of local contexts as well as the dynamic interplay between traditional values and aspirations for modernity (Mariyono, 2024).

Nevertheless, a significant gap remains in terms of teachers' readiness and competence to effectively implement the cultural mediation approach. Asrial et al., (2021) identified that the majority of teachers in Indonesia lack adequate preparation for integrating local wisdom into their pedagogical practices, highlighting the need for systemic support in the form of continuous professional training and development. Recent research by Boyd (2025) indicates that the development of teacher cultural competency requires a holistic approach, one that involves not only technical training, but also reflective practice and community engagement, enabling teachers to develop a deeper understanding of local cultures and how to meaningfully incorporate them into the learning process.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Blumer's (1969), symbolic interactionism approach, which views identity as a social construct formed through interaction. In this context, character formation among students is understood as a process of meaning negotiation between the national values that are taught and the local values that are lived. National identity is not a static entity; rather, it is dynamic-evolving through interactions with social institutions such as schools. This perspective emphasizes that meaning and identity are not automatically transmitted but are actively produced through individuals' interpretive processes within their social interactions. In the educational setting, students do not merely receive prescribed values; instead, they actively interpret and negotiate these meanings based on their lived experiences and cultural backgrounds.

This theoretical framework is further reinforced by Bhabha's (2012) concept of cultural hybridity, which explains how identity is formed within a "third space" a space where different cultural elements intersect and generate new meanings. In the context of character education under the *Merdeka* Curriculum, this third space is represented by the classroom and school environment, where Pancasila values interact with the local wisdom of South Sumatra. This process of hybridization does not result in a mere blending of cultural elements; rather, it leads to a transformation that produces a new identity one that is neither entirely national nor solely local, but both at once. This concept is highly relevant in understanding how students in South Sumatra can cultivate a strong sense of national identity without abandoning their local cultural roots.

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of contextual learning provides a foundation for understanding how local wisdom can serve as scaffolding in the processes of learning and character formation. Within the Vygotskian framework, learning is most effective when new material is connected to students' prior experiences and existing knowledge. Local wisdom, as part of students' cultural capital Bourdieu (2018) functions as both a cognitive and emotional bridge that facilitates the internalization of national values. This process engages not only cognitive dimensions, but also affective and behavioral aspects, resulting in holistic and meaningful learning. In this context, the teacher serves as a cultural mediator, facilitating dialogue between formal knowledge and local wisdom.

Gay's (2018) culturally responsive teaching framework serves as a methodological foundation for understanding how teachers implement character education that is responsive to students' cultural contexts. This approach acknowledges that the effectiveness of education depends not only on Curriculum content but also on the mode of delivery that respects and utilizes students' cultural backgrounds as valuable learning assets. In the context of South Sumatra, this involves integrating values such as gotong royong (communal cooperation), customary principles embedded in *Simbur*

Cahaya, and the tradition of *musyawarah mufakat* (deliberative consensus) into character education practices. This approach not only enhances the relevance of learning but also strengthens students' sense of belonging to educational institutions and the values they embody.

The integration of these three theoretical frameworks results in a conceptual model that explains the formation of national identity as a situated practice occurring within specific contexts through pedagogical mediation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This model illustrates that the national identity of students in South Sumatra is shaped through an iterative process involving exposure to Pancasila values, reflection on local wisdom, and the negotiation of meaning within the social interactions of the school environment. The outcome is the development of a hybrid national identity that reflects the complexity of modern Indonesian identity global in orientation yet local in expression. This framework enables the research to analyze not only what students learn, but also how they interpret and internalize that learning in constructing their identities as Indonesian citizens rooted in South Sumatran culture.

4. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative exploratory approach with a multisite case study design, which enables the researcher to contextually and deeply understand the process of integrating local wisdom into the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum as a reflection of students' national identity. This approach was chosen for its capacity to capture the complexity of social and cultural meanings embedded in everyday educational practices, particularly within the multicultural and postcolonial context of Indonesia (Merriam, 2015).

Three lower secondary schools (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama*) located in the districts of Ogan Ilir and Banyuasin, South Sumatra, were purposively selected due to their active engagement in the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (P5) program and their strong grounding in local Malay-Islamic traditions and communitarian values. These sites are considered representative in illustrating integrative practices between national and local values in shaping students' character (Creswell John & Creswell, 2009).

The research participants consisted of nine teachers (teaching Islamic Religious Education, Indonesian Language, and Social Studies), three school principals, and eleven students from grades VII to IX. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure the inclusion of informants with direct knowledge and experience in the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum and P5 projects based on local wisdom (Machado-da-Silva, 2003).

Data collection was carried out using a combination of three main techniques. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, principals, and students to explore meanings, strategies, and dynamics of learning based on local values. Second, participant observation was employed to document pedagogical interactions in classroom practices and P5 project activities in a natural setting. Third, document analysis was conducted on lesson plans (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran* or *RPP*), P5 project reports, and school cultural artifacts to identify concrete forms of local wisdom integration within the Curriculum (Bowen, 2009).

Data analyzed in this study were processed using a grounded theory approach, involving three main coding stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the open coding stage, the researcher read each transcript line-by-line to identify significant statements and initial concepts, which were labeled as preliminary codes. These codes captured recurring patterns, expressions of local values, and pedagogical practices. In the axial coding stage, the researcher clustered these initial codes into broader categories by identifying relationships between them for example, linking community-based learning activities with values such as *gotong royong* and *musyawarah*. Finally,

in the selective coding stage, core themes were synthesized by integrating categories into overarching conceptual constructs, such as “contextualized character formation” or “cultural adaptation in curriculum.” (Thai et al., 2012).

To enhance the credibility of findings, member checking was conducted by returning the synthesized themes to selected participants primarily teachers and local education figures. They were asked to review whether the interpretations and thematic categorizations accurately reflected their experiences and perspectives. This was done through follow-up interviews and informal feedback sessions, which allowed participants to clarify, confirm, or challenge the researcher’s conclusions. Adjustments to thematic labels and definitions were made accordingly to ensure alignment with participants’ intended meanings.

The validity and credibility of the findings were ensured through source triangulation (teachers, students, and principals), methodological triangulation (interviews, observations, and document analysis), and ongoing analytical reflection throughout the data collection and interpretation process. The principle of member checking was also applied by confirming preliminary interpretations with participants to ensure coherence of meaning and accurate representation of their experiences (Glaser, 2007).

5. Findings

5.1. Contextualization Strategies of National Values through Local Wisdom

The analysis revealed that teachers in all three schools consistently employed contextualization strategies to integrate Pancasila values with the local wisdom of South Sumatra. This process was not mechanistic, but involved creative adaptations that took into account cultural relevance and student responsiveness. In Islamic Religious Education classes, teachers incorporated principles from Simbur Cahaya—a customary code of conduct to elucidate concepts of religious tolerance and moderation. Meanwhile, in Indonesian language classes, local folktales such as Si Pahit Lidah and Batu Betangkap were utilized as pedagogical tools to instill values of honesty, responsibility, and patriotism. This approach reflects the principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy, which not only accommodates local cultures but actively sustains and promotes them as valuable educational assets.

Classroom observations revealed that teachers systematically employed local proverbs and expressions to reinforce character values being taught. One Indonesian language teacher stated, “We teach the value of responsibility through the story of Si Pahit Lidah, which contains local moral messages. Students understand it more easily because they are already familiar with the character and context.” This strategy proved effective in creating cognitive resonance between the learning content and the students’ existing knowledge schemas. Furthermore, in social studies classes, teachers used the concept of *beduluran* (mutual cooperation) to explain democratic values and social participation, demonstrating that local wisdom can serve as a bridge for understanding abstract concepts in civic education.

An interesting finding is how teachers utilized local religious rituals and traditions as contexts for character education. In the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) project themed “Unity in Diversity” (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*), students were invited to document the *marhaban* and *berzanji* traditions as manifestations of tolerance and diversity within Islam. This documentation process not only provided cognitive understanding of tolerance but also offered direct experiential engagement with cultural practices that embody such values. This integration demonstrates that character education within the *Merdeka* Curriculum context is not merely a transfer of information, but an experiential learning process that engages the full dimensions of students’ personalities.

5.2. The Role of Teachers as Cultural Brokers in Mediating Multicultural Values

Analysis of interview and classroom observation data re-veals that teachers assume a complex role as cultural bro-kers who facilitate dialogue between national values and local wisdom. This role transcends the traditional function of teachers as mere transmitters of knowledge, positioning them instead as facilitators of cultural negotiation through which students develop a nuanced understanding of national identity. In practice, teachers do not simply deliver the na-tional Curriculum; they actively adapt content and pedagog-ical methods to ensure relevance to students' local cultural contexts. This adaptation process involves reflexive practice, whereby teachers continuously evaluate the effectiveness of their pedagogical strategies in creating meaningful and transformative learning experiences. Through such media-tions, educators foster hybrid forms of identity formation that integrate both national ideals and local cultural heritage, reinforcing a sense of belonging while cultivating civic competencies in a multicultural society.

The principal of a junior high school stated, "Students learn to collaborate by helping the community clean the mosque and by documenting the cultural heritage of the village. They are not merely learning about mutual coopera-tion, but actively practicing it within a context that is famil-iar and meaningful to them." This statement reflects a de-liberate application of the situated learning approach, where students directly engage with the values being taught. In the context of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Pro-gram (Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila or P5), teachers serve as learning designers who orchestrate educa-tional experiences that bridge classroom learning with community involvement, thereby fostering continuity be-tween formal instruction and its real-life application.

The mediating role of teachers is also evident in how they address potential tensions between traditional values and students' aspirations for modernity. A social studies teacher explained how they facilitate discussions on social change by employing an adaptive local wisdom framework. "We teach that tradition is not static. Values such as deliberation and consensus (*musyawarah mufakat*) remain relevant, but their implementation can evolve in accordance with the times," the teacher noted. This approach reflects the princi-ples of critical multicultural education, which not only cel-ebrates cultural diversity but also fosters students' critical capacity to evaluate and adapt traditions within a changing social context.

5.3. Hybrid Identity Construction: Integrating National and Local Values in Student Selfhood

The most significant finding of this study is the docu-mented process of hybrid identity formation among stu-dents, wherein they successfully integrate national identity with pride in their local culture without experiencing signif-icant identity conflict. This process unfolds through inter-nalization by appropriation, whereby students actively adopt and adapt the values they learn based on their person-al experiences and reflections. As one 7th-grade student expressed, "I'm proud to be Indonesian, but I also love the culture of my village. It's part of who I am." This statement indicates that students do not perceive local and national identities as conflicting entities, but rather as mutually en-riching dimensions in the construction of their personal identity.

A deep analysis of student narratives reveals three stages in the process of hybrid identity formation: awareness (recognition of diverse identity affiliations), integration (the blending of distinct identity elements), and synthesis (the formation of a coherent personal identity). In the awareness stage, students begin to recognize that they possess multiple affiliations that are not necessarily in conflict. As one 8th-grade student explained: "I used to think that being modern meant leaving behind tradition. But now I know I can have both." The integration stage involves a selective

process in which students choose elements from various identity sources that they perceive as meaningful and relevant. Finally, the synthesis stage results in an identity that is multi-faceted yet coherent where students can see themselves as modern Indonesian citizens while also embracing their authentic local heritage.

The formation of this hybrid identity is facilitated by a school environment that is both inclusive and affirming of students' cultural diversity. In focus group discussions, students demonstrated the ability to engage in code-switching between different cultural frames of reference smoothly and naturally. They could explain the concept of democracy through the analogy of *musyawarah mufakat* (deliberation by consensus), or discuss global issues through a lens informed by local values. This ability indicates that education grounded in local wisdom does not render students parochial; rather, it broadens their cultural repertoire and enhances their capacity to navigate complex multicultural contexts.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm the theoretical proposition that the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum creates a dialogical space that enables dynamic negotiation between national values and local wisdom within the context of formal education (Banks, 2019). The results indicate that character formation among students does not occur through a unidirectional (top-down) transmission mechanism, but rather through a complex and contextual meaning-making process, facilitated by teachers as cultural mediators. This aligns with the framework of culturally sustaining pedagogy developed by Paris and Alim (2017), which emphasizes that effective education must actively sustain and promote local cultural practices as assets in the learning process. In the context of South Sumatra, the integration of values such as *beduluran* (communal solidarity), customary principles embedded in *Simbur Cahaya*, and the tradition of *musyawarah mufakat* (consensual deliberation) not only enriches the learning content but also generates cognitive resonance, thereby facilitating a deeper and more meaningful internalization of Pancasila values (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

The process of hybrid identity formation observed in this study reflects the complexity of identity construction in postcolonial multicultural societies, where students successfully integrate multiple cultural references without experiencing significant identity fragmentation (Aanayo, 2023). These findings support Bhabha's theory of hybridity and the concept of the third space as a productive site where new meanings are generated through negotiation between diverse cultural elements (Hollinshead, 1998). In the context of this research, the third space is represented by the school environment, where Pancasila values interact with the local wisdom of South Sumatra to produce a national identity that is not homogeneous but multifaceted. This process aligns with Kutsyruba's (2015) findings, which highlight that educational environments that support the exploration of multiple identities contribute positively to students' well-being and academic achievement in multicultural settings.

The role of teachers as cultural brokers identified in this study reinforces the argument regarding the importance of teacher cultural competency in the effective implementation of multicultural education (McAllister & Irvine, 2000). Teachers are not merely transmitters of the national curriculum, but rather architects of learning experiences that connect students' lived realities with the goals of formal education through culturally sensitive and responsive mediation. This aligns with the framework of culturally responsive teaching proposed by Vavrus (2008), which emphasizes that pedagogical effectiveness relies not only on teachers' technical competence, but also on their ability

to leverage students' cultural backgrounds to enhance learning. The study's findings indicate that teachers who successfully integrate local wisdom into their pedagogical practices are able to create inclusive learning environments that not only increase academic engagement but also strengthen cultural pride and social cohesion among students (Li & Singh, 2022).

From an educational policy perspective, the findings of this study suggest that the *Merdeka* Curriculum holds transformative potential in fostering a civic identity that is both pluralistic and coherent within Indonesia's diverse sociocultural context (Hunaepi & Suharta, 2024). The flexibility afforded through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) allows schools to develop learning approaches that are responsive to local contexts without compromising national educational goals. This aligns with the principle of glocalization in education, wherein the global and the local are not viewed as dichotomous, but as mutually enriching dimensions of the learning process (Drori et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the successful implementation of this approach depends heavily on teacher readiness, institutional support, and local community engagement all of which require systematic investment in capacity-building and educational infrastructure.

The theoretical implication of these findings lies in the enrichment of discourse on postcolonial education and multicultural pedagogy within the Indonesian context, particularly in understanding how formal education can serve as a space for productive identity negotiation rather than a site of cultural hegemony (Kim & Cho, 2014). The observed formation of hybrid identities illustrates that students are not passive recipients of imposed identities; instead, they actively construct identities that are authentic and meaningful, based on their own cultural repertoires. This supports argument regarding cultural agency in the era of globalization, wherein individuals possess the capacity to adapt and transform both global and local cultural elements in accordance with their needs and aspirations (Ritzer, 2007). In the context of Indonesian education, these findings provide empirical evidence that a culturally sustaining approach can serve as an effective strategy for fostering a national identity that is inclusive, dynamic, and resilient in the face of globalization and modernization (Mohyeddin, 2024).

7. Conclusion

This study affirms that the *Merdeka* Curriculum functions not merely as an instrument of educational reform, but also as a dynamic space for shaping students' national identity within Indonesia's multicultural society. Through the integration of South Sumatran local wisdom into context-sensitive pedagogical practices, the *Merdeka* Curriculum facilitates the construction of hybrid identities, identities that coherently and functionally merge national values with local cultural roots. Teachers act as cultural brokers who actively mediate the negotiation of meaning between Pancasila values and community-based cultural norms, fostering a learning process that is not only academic, but also transformative in character formation.

The identity formation process is not linear; rather, it unfolds through dialogical and reflective learning experiences that enable students to develop cultural awareness, value integration, and adaptive identity synthesis. In the context of globalization and cultural disruption, students' ability to remain rooted in local traditions while maintaining national and global orientations emerges as a key indicator of sustainable character education.

The implications of these findings are multidimensional: theoretically, they enrich postcolonial discourse and multicultural pedagogy; empirically, they provide evidence that contextualized character education is more effective in shaping a resilient civic identity; and practically, they underscore the need to strengthen teacher capacity, design curricula grounded in local content, and

promote cross-sector collaboration between educational institutions and cultural communities as strategic pathways for building an inclusive and rooted national identity.

8. Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of experience-based learning rooted in local wisdom, especially as exemplified by **Simbur Cahaya** in South Sumatra, it is essential to develop a clear and measurable evaluation framework. This framework should combine both **quantitative** and **qualitative** indicators. Quantitative measures may include: (1) character assessment scores aligned with the Pancasila Student Profile dimensions (e.g., mutual cooperation, tolerance, critical thinking); (2) the frequency of student participation in culturally contextualized project-based learning activities; (3) attendance and engagement levels during fieldwork and community-based learning; and (4) improvements in thematic learning outcomes related to local values.

Meanwhile, qualitative indicators should involve reflective student narratives, teacher and student interviews or focus group discussions regarding the perceived impact of contextualized learning, and student portfolios that showcase the integration of cultural experiences into their learning process.

Moreover, while *Simbur Cahaya* provides a culturally rich model specific to South Sumatra, its underlying principles integrating local wisdom into formal education are broadly adaptable across Indonesia. Other regions possess their own forms of customary law, local philosophy, and traditional knowledge that can similarly serve as contextual foundations for character education. For instance, cultural texts such as, *Petatah-petitih Minangkabau*, or *Lontara Bugis* can be drawn upon to promote student identity, local relevance, and national cohesion.

The successful expansion of this approach requires adequate teacher training, inclusive curriculum design, and strong collaboration with local communities and cultural practitioners. It is also vital to challenge the perception that local values are outdated or irrelevant; instead, they must be reframed as dynamic resources that embody universal humanistic principles such as justice, solidarity, and sustainability.

In sum, implementing experience-based learning through local wisdom not only strengthens students' cultural identities but also aligns with national education goals. With proper evaluation tools and scalable strategies, this approach has the potential to be replicated across diverse educational contexts in Indonesia.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions who contributed to the completion of this research. Special thanks are extended to the teachers, students, and school leaders who participated in this study and generously shared their time and perspectives. Appreciation is also given to local cultural figures and community members in South Sumatra for their valuable insights that enriched the contextual depth of this work.

The author is especially grateful for the academic support provided by Institut Agama Islam Al-Qur'an Al-Ittifaqiah Indralaya, whose encouragement and institutional facilitation played a significant role in the successful implementation of this research.

Author Contributions

Zainuddin Zainuddin is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author reports there are no competing interests to declare.

Reference

- [1] Aanayo, C. (2023). Globalization's Influence on Cultural Hybridity and Identity Formation. *Journal Social Humanity Perspective*, 1(2), 60–66. <https://scieclouds.com/ojsnew/index.php/JSHP/article/view/94/282>
- [2] Abdullah, I. (2006). *Konstruksi dan reproduksi kebudayaan*. Pustaka Pelajar. <https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1130282269095379584>
- [3] Al Arsyadhi, N. L., Dewi, L., & Hernawan, A. H. (2024). Evaluation of teacher readiness in implementing Kurikulum Merdeka in elementary schools. *Inovasi Kurikulum*, 21(2), 1149–1160. <https://doi.org/10.17509/jik.v21i2.64113>
- [4] Althof, W., & Berkowitz*, M. W. (2006). Moral education and character education: Their relationship and roles in citizenship education. *Journal of Moral Education*, 35(4), 495–518. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240601012204>
- [5] Amin, M., & Ritonga, A. D. (2024). Diversity, Local Wisdom, and Unique Characteristics of Millennials as Capital for Innovative Learning Models: Evidence from North Sumatra, Indonesia. *Societies*, 14(12), 260. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc14120260>
- [6] Aryabkina, I., Medvedeva, I., Bulynin, A., Lebedeva, N., & Zharkova, G. (2021). Socio-cultural design as a means of moral education of schoolchildren in the conditions of modern education. *Revista Eduweb*, 15(3), 295–311. <https://doi.org/10.46502/issn.1856-7576/2021.15.03.25>
- [7] Asera, G. A. D., Riyadi, R., & Suryandari, K. C. (2024). Analysis of Local Regional Potential Empowerment as a Learning Resource in the Project for Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students (P5). *Social, Humanities, and Educational Studies (SHES): Conference Series*, 7(1), 96–105. <https://doi.org/10.20961/shes.v7i1.84295>
- [8] Asrial, A., Syahrial, S., Maison, M., Kurniawan, D. A., & Putri, E. (2021). Fostering students' environmental care characters through local wisdom-based teaching materials. *JPI (Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia)*, 10(1), 152–162. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jpi-undiksha.v10i1.27744>
- [9] Astawaa, D. N. W., Handayani, N. N. L., & Meylani, V. (2024). The Effectiveness of Local Culture-Based Human Values in Efforts to Strengthen Pancasila Student Profiles in Elementary Schools. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*, 5(4), 1414–1422. <https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.05.04.26>
- [10] Bakar, S. (2021). Investigating the dynamics of contemporary pedagogical approaches in higher education through innovations, challenges, and paradigm shifts. *Social Science Chronicle*, 1(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.56106/ssc.2021.009>
- [11] Banks, J. A. (2019). *An introduction to multicultural education* (Sixth edition). Pearson. <https://www.pearsonhighered.com/assets/preface/0/1/3/4/0134800362.pdf>
- [12] Berry, J. W. (2005). Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29(6), 697–712. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.07.013>
- [13] Bhabha, H. K. (2012). *The location of culture*. routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203820551/location-culture-homi-bhabha>

- [14] Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. [https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Blumer,+H.+\(1969\).+Symbolic+interactionism:+Perspective+and+method.+University+of+California+Press.&hl=id&as_sdt=0,5](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Blumer,+H.+(1969).+Symbolic+interactionism:+Perspective+and+method.+University+of+California+Press.&hl=id&as_sdt=0,5)
- [15] Bourdieu, P. (2018). The forms of capital. In *The sociology of economic life* (pp. 78–92). Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429494338-6/forms-capital-pierre-bourdieu>
- [16] Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.3316/QRJ0902027/full/html>
- [17] Boyd, H. (2025). Embedding cultural competence in dental education. *British Dental Journal*, 238(2), 86–89. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-024-8242-6>
- [18] Brown-Jeffy, S., & Cooper, J. E. (2011). Toward a conceptual framework of culturally relevant pedagogy: An overview of the conceptual and theoretical literature. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 38(1), 65–84. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23479642>
- [19] Creswell John, W., & Creswell, J. D. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Los Angeles London New Dehli Singapore: Sage Publications.
- [20] Drori, G. S., Höllerer, M. A., & Walgenbach, P. (2014). Unpacking the glocalization of organization: From term, to theory, to analysis. *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology*, 1(1), 85–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23254823.2014.904205>
- [21] Druker-Ibáñez, S., & Cáceres-Jensen, L. (2022). *Integration of indigenous and local knowledge into sustainability education: A systematic literature*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2022.2083081>
- [22] Dwiputra, D. F. K., & Sundawa, D. (2023). Analysis of Potentials and Challenges of Culture-based Learning in Indonesia: A Systematic Literature Review. *Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian Dan Kajian Kepustakaan Di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran Dan Pembelajaran*, 9(1), 213–223. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jk.v9i1.6556>
- [23] Eden, C. A., Chisom, O. N., & Adeniyi, I. S. (2024). Cultural competence in education: Strategies for fostering inclusivity and diversity awareness. *International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences*, 6(3), 383–392. <https://doi.org/10.51594/ijarss.v6i3.895>
- [24] Eldering, L. (1996). Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education in an International Perspective. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 27(3), 315–330. <https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.1996.27.3.04x0352n>
- [25] Faiz, F. A. (2024). Understanding Cultural Identity in a Globalized World. *Journal of Social Signs Review*, 2(01), 10–18. <https://socialsignsreview.com/index.php/12/article/view/26/24>
- [26] Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. teachers college press.
- [27] Glaser, B. G. (2007). Naturalist inquiry and grounded theory. *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung. Supplement*, 114–132. <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/28832>
- [28] Haryono, P., Setyaningrum, S., Sundari, N. F. S., Judijanto, L., Tumober, R. T., Ardiansyah, W., Ginting, I. S. P., & Safitri, F. (2025). *Seni Dan Ilmu Mengajar: Kerangka Komprehensif untuk Pengajaran Efektif*. PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia.

- [29] Hedir, M. K., & Nurdianti, A. (2024). CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN PANCASILA PHILOSOPHY: A CONTRIBUTION FOR SOCIAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY AWARENESS. *Pelita: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Karya Ilmiah*, 24(2), 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.33592/pelita.v24i2.6276>
- [30] Hollinshead, K. (1998). Tourism, Hybridity, and Ambiguity: The Relevance of Bhabha's 'Third Space' Cultures. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 30(1), 121–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.1998.11949822>
- [31] Homsombat, P. (2025). *Integrating Local Wisdom and Modern Education: A Holistic Approach to Curriculum Development*. <https://so19.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JEIM>
- [32] Huang, Z. M. (2023). Intercultural mindfulness: Artistic meaning-making about students' intercultural experience at a UK university. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 23(1), 36–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2022.2162064>
- [33] Hunaepi, H., & Suharta, I. (2024). Transforming education in Indonesia: The impact and challenges of the Merdeka belajar curriculum. *Path of Science*, 10(6), 5026–5039. <https://doi.org/10.22178/pos.105-31>
- [34] Hunduma, C. M., & Mekuria, Y. S. (2024). Multicultural education and global citizenship: Literature review. *Multidisciplinary Reviews*, 7(10), 2024223–2024223. <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2024223>
- [35] Jessen, T. D., Ban, N. C., Claxton, N. X., & Darimont, C. T. (2022). Contributions of Indigenous Knowledge to ecological and evolutionary understanding. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 20(2), 93–101. <https://doi.org/10.1002/fee.2435>
- [36] Kim, J., & Cho, Y. (2014). Reimagining multicultural education: Postcolonial approach. *SNU Journal of Education Research*, 23, 25–49. https://doi.org/file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/vol23_2.pdf
- [37] Kutsyuruba, B., Klinger, D. A., & Hussain, A. (2015). Relationships among school climate, school safety, and student achievement and well-being: A review of the literature. *Review of Education*, 3(2), 103–135. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3043>
- [38] Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465–491. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465>
- [39] Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge university press. https://books.google.com/books?hl=id&lr=&id=CAVIOrW3vYAC&oi=fnd&pg=PA11&dq=Situated+learning:+Legitimate+peripheral+participation&ots=OEpzrt3IHh&sig=tBHiCwR1iW00yf eBKnwZ4Y_6kF8
- [40] Li, Y., & Singh, C. (2022). Inclusive learning environments can improve student learning and motivational beliefs. *Physical Review Physics Education Research*, 18(2), 020147. <https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevPhysEducRes.18.020147>
- [41] Machado-da-Silva, C. L. (2003). Qualitative research & evaluation methods. *Revista de Administração Contemporânea*, 7, 219–219. <https://www.scielo.br/j/rac/a/76K9TYKYMJBCRw3XBKQFDwc/>
- [42] Mariyono, D. (2024). Indonesian mosaic: The essential need for multicultural education. *Quality Education for All*, 1(1), 301–325. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/QEA-05-2024-0042>

- [43] McAllister, G., & Irvine, J. J. (2000). Cross Cultural Competency and Multicultural Teacher Education. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(1), 3–24. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543070001003>
- [44] Merriam, S. B. (2015). Qualitative research: Designing, implementing, and publishing a study. In *Handbook of research on scholarly publishing and research methods* (pp. 125–140). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/qualitative-research/120335>
- [45] Mohyeddin, Z. (2024). Cultural identity in a globalized world: Navigating tradition and modernity. *Frontiers in Humanities and Social Research*, 1(3), 106–115. <https://doi.org/10.71465/fhsr202>
- [46] Mulyana, D. (2024). National Character, Local Wisdom, and Citizenship Education: Building National Identity Through Education. *Journal Arbitrase: Economy, Management and Accounting*, 2(02), 87–93. <http://paspama.org/index.php/Arbitrase/article/view/118>
- [47] Mustafidah, U. P., Mashudi, M., & Usriyah, L. (2025). Character Education through the Pancasila Student Profile Project toward Indonesia's Golden Generation 2045. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research of Higher Education (IJMURHICA)*, 8(3), 518–525. <https://doi.org/10.24036/ijmurhica.v8i3.375>
- [48] Nuriadi, N. (2023). Exploring Indonesian Regional Cultures and the Integration of Local Wisdom in the Merdeka Curriculum. *International Journal of Education and Digital Learning (IJEDL)*, 2(1), 28–37. <https://doi.org/10.47353/ijedl.v2i1.264>
- Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*. Teachers College Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22329/jtl.v11i1.4987>
- [49] Pesurnay, A. J. (2018). Local wisdom in a new paradigm: Applying system theory to the study of local culture in Indonesia. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 175(1), 012037. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/175/1/012037>
- [50] Ritzer, G. (Ed.). (2007). *The Blackwell Companion to Globalization* (1st ed.). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470691939>
- [51] Sakti, S. A., Endraswara, S., & Rohman, A. (2024). Integrating local cultural values into early childhood education to promote character building. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 23(7), 84–101. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.7.5>
- [52] Selasih, N. N., & Sudarsana, I. K. (2018). Education based on ethnopedagogy in maintaining and conserving the local wisdom: A literature study. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 6(2), 293–306. <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v6i2.219>
- [53] Setiawan, D. (2014). Integration in the process of national identity formation for growing citizenship culture of Chinese ethnic in Medan City-Indonesia. *Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(6), 195–205. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.hss.20140206.18>
- [54] Sidi, B. A. (2020). *Unity and diversity: National identity and multiculturalism in Indonesia* [PhD Thesis, University of Otago]. <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/esploro/outputs/doctoral/Unity-and-diversity-National-identity-and/9926478412901891>
- [55] Smith, K. E. I. (2008). Hybrid identities: Theoretical examinations. *Hybrid Identities: Theoretical and Empirical Examinations*, 3–12. <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004170391.i-411.6>
- [56] Sulistyosari, Y., Sultan, H., & Meilia, H. (2024). Integration of P5 in Local Wisdom-Based Social Studies Learning as a Form of Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile in Junior High Schools. *JURNAL PENDIDIKAN IPS*, 14(1), 119–128. <https://doi.org/10.37630/jpi.v14i1.1577>

- [57] Thai, M. T. T., Chong, L. C., & Agrawal, N. M. (2012). Straussian grounded theory method: An illustration. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(5). <https://doi.org/file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/ssrn-1934881.pdf>
- [58] Tran, T. M. L., & Doan, H. H. (2025). A Comparative Study of Education Recovery Policies in Indonesia and Nigeria. *EDUTREND: Journal of Emerging Issues and Trends in Education*, 2(2), 59–71. <https://doi.org/10.59110/edutrend.620>
- [59] Usman, U., Nuraulia, D., Nauroh, R., Rajudin, I., & Rifqiawati, I. (2023). Project to strengthen Pancasila student profile as an application of differentiated learning in the independent Curriculum: A case study at a senior high school in Pandeglang, Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia Gemilang*, 3(1), 103–113. <https://doi.org/10.53889/jpig.v3i1.159>
- [60] Vavrus, M. (2008). Culturally responsive teaching. In *21st century education: A reference handbook* (p. II–49). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://sk.sagepub.com/hnbk/edvol/education/chpt/culturally-responsive-teaching>
- [61] Vygotsky, L. S., & Cole, M. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard university press.
- [62] Wahyuni, E., Tandon, M., & Jonathan, B. (2024). Leveraging Local Wisdom in Curriculum Design to Promote Sustainable Development in Rural Schools. *Journal of Social Science Utilizing Technology*, 2(3), 446–459. <https://doi.org/10.70177/jssut.v2i3.1347>
- [63] Walad, M., Suastra, W., Nasri, U., & Manap, A. (2024). Independent Curriculum Analysis from Constructivism and Ki Hajar Dewantara Philosophy Perspective. *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan*, 9(1), 221–228. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jipp.v9i1.1915>
- [64] Widyanti, T., & Syah, R. (2025). Internalization of Social Values Based on Local Wisdom" Sundanese Proverbs" in Social Studies Learning. *Journal of Social Studies Education*, 1(1), 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.71094/josse.v1i1.88>
- [65] Wijayanti, Y. (2025). Enhancing Students' Cultural Identity through History Education Based on Local Wisdom of Kagaluhan Values. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 14, e2025075. <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.14.75>
- [66] Zainuddin, Z. (2025). The Merdeka Curriculum and Local Wisdom: An Innovative Synergy in Shaping Student Character in South Sumatra, Indonesia. *Journal of Cross-Disciplinary Sustainability Innovations*, 1(1), 32–38. <https://doi.org/10.64229/ryqx2v47>
- [67] Zhang, Y., & Qin, P. (2023). Comprehensive review: Understanding adolescent identity. *Studies in Psychological Science*, 1(2), 17–31. <https://www.pioneerpublisher.com/SPS/article/view/410>