

Analyzing the Implementation of Local Wisdom-Based Learning in Early Childhood Education: The Case of Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

Background - Early childhood education based on local wisdom is important to develop children's potential holistically, nurture various aspects of their development, preserve cultural heritage, strengthen national identity, and at the same time make education more contextual and meaningful.

Research Urgency - The urgency of this research lies in the need to preserve local wisdom in early childhood education amid the rapid influence of globalization. Current practices often emphasize academic achievement while neglecting cultural values and contextual learning. Without immediate efforts, there is a risk that younger generations will lose connection to their cultural identity. This study is therefore crucial to provide a holistic learning model that not only fosters children's development but also strengthens cultural identity and ensures meaningful, context-based education.

Research Objectives - This study aims to analyze the implementation of early childhood education based on local wisdom in PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti and to formulate recommendations for a contextual and culturally responsive learning model that supports the holistic development of young children.

Research Method - The research employed a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving teachers, children, and parents. The data analysis technique used Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

Research Findings - The findings reveal that the implementation of local wisdom-based learning has a positive impact on children. These positive impacts include introducing and familiarizing children with cultural values from an early age, enhancing active participation in learning activities, utilizing local culture as a contextual learning resource, and fostering the development of children's abilities through various learning activities.

Research Conclusion - The implementation of local wisdom-based learning in PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti has proven to be an effective means of introducing, instilling, and preserving culture from an early age. Thus, local wisdom-based learning not only strengthens children's cultural identity but also stimulates the development of cognitive, socio-emotional, language, and motor skills.

Research Novelty/Contribution - The novelty of this research lies in its analysis of early childhood education practices that genuinely integrate local wisdom into the teaching and learning process. Rather than merely describing cultural values, this study examines how local wisdom is utilized as learning resources, teaching methods, and a means of fostering children's holistic development. Thus, the research demonstrates that local wisdom can serve as a pedagogical approach that is relevant, contextual, and meaningful for early childhood education.

Keywords: Learning, Local Wisdom, Early Childhood Education, Children

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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) serves as the foundational stage in shaping children's personal development, encompassing character, physical, cognitive, language, artistic, social, emotional, spiritual, self-discipline, self-concept, and independence. ECE plays a pivotal role in determining the trajectory of children's growth and development, as it lays the groundwork for their future personality formation (Ita, 2018). During the ages of 0–6, children require proper guidance and support from parents, teachers, and other adults in their surroundings to ensure appropriate and optimal educational stimulation.

Learning processes at the early childhood level are guided by principles such as being child-centered, recognizing children as active learners, learning through play, and drawing knowledge from the surrounding environment. One of the essential principles is that children learn from their environment as a source of knowledge. This learning environment extends from the family, school, and broader community, each offering diverse experiences that enrich children's attitudes and knowledge to support their overall growth and development.

In schools, children are introduced to varied learning themes designed according to their developmental stage and needs, encompassing the self, school environment, and cultural aspects. These themes are integrated into child-centered learning activities tailored to foster active engagement. Recognizing children's unique characteristics and egocentric tendencies, early childhood learning must involve direct participation and authentic real-life examples. Such learning processes can be enriched by integrating local wisdom.

Children possess unique characteristics and display egocentric tendencies, while early childhood represents a critical stage with vast potential for learning (Abbas, 2013). At this stage, learning processes should actively involve children and provide authentic real-life examples. Such learning experiences can be meaningfully enhanced through the integration of local wisdom.

Local wisdom represents values practiced in family and community life that serve as guidelines for collective behavior (Lestari & Prima, 2023). It comprises deeply rooted norms and cultural values (Sehe et al., 2016) and reflects traditional knowledge systems embedded in beliefs, customs, myths, and long-standing traditions (Fadilah et al., 2020). Local wisdom, inherited across generations, plays a crucial role in shaping cultural identity and can be applied as an approach in early childhood education (Tilaar, 2019).

The concept of local wisdom-based learning refers to the integration of local values, culture, traditions, and knowledge into the educational process to enhance the relevance of learning in relation to the local cultural context and to strengthen cultural and social identity formation (Shufa, 2018). In today's era of globalization, such integration is essential for preserving local values while also contributing to the advancement of education through science and technology.

At PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti, local wisdom-based learning has already been implemented through themes such as "needs" and "playing and working together." Interviews with teachers revealed that these themes incorporated cultural values, including traditional games (e.g., *congklak*, *sagu alu*, and *bakiak*), local food (*tabha*), traditional clothing, and mother tongue. Within project-based learning activities, children actively participated in playing traditional games, while in the "needs" theme, children were introduced to local food (*tabha*), although some were reluctant to try it.

Integrating elements of local wisdom in every aspect of learning not only provides knowledge but also enriches students' cultural identity (Ainia, 2020). Linking learning with real-life events creates meaningful experiences (Asriati, 2012). Conceptually, local wisdom is an integral part of culture that is learned, preserved, and transmitted across generations. Therefore, local wisdom-based learning is highly relevant for implementation from early childhood.

Previous studies support this approach: Rahayu (2020) demonstrated the effectiveness of local wisdom integration in introducing social values and cultural practices to students amidst rapid societal

change. Similarly, Rahmatih et al. (2020) highlighted how local wisdom as a learning resource fosters contextual and relevant educational experiences, while Ahdhianto et al. (2020) described how embedding local wisdom in learning not only deepens students' conceptual understanding but also enhances their cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Based on this background, the present study, entitled "Analyzing the Implementation of Local Wisdom-Based Learning in Early Childhood Education: The Case of Early Childhood Education," aims to analyze the significant impacts of local wisdom-based learning implementation on children.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a design research framework to analyze the implementation of early childhood learning based on local wisdom using the case study method. The case study design was chosen as it allows the researcher to explore in depth the implementation of local wisdom-based learning at PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context and provides a comprehensive explanation related to various aspects of individuals, groups, organizations, programs, or social situations (Nugent, 2023).

Participants were teachers, principal, and parents at PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti. Participants were chosen using purposive sampling based on their relevance to the research focus. Data collection techniques included participatory observation of classroom activities, in-depth interviews with teachers, parents, and principal, and documentation of learning activities such as lesson plans and photographs.

The research was conducted at PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti over a period of three months, beginning with preliminary activities and continuing until the completion of the study. Data were collected using the following techniques: (1) in-depth interviews, conducted with the school principal, teachers, and parents; (2) observations, involving direct examination of local wisdom-based learning activities in the classroom; and (3) document analysis, focusing on curriculum and teaching modules related to local wisdom-based learning. Data collection was considered the most strategic step in the research process, as the primary goal was to obtain valid and relevant data. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources (teachers, parents, documents) and triangulation of techniques (observation, interview, documentation).

Data analysis in this qualitative study was carried out simultaneously during the data collection process as well as after data collection was completed, in accordance with Santos, et al (2021). Qualitative data analysis involves working with the data, organizing it, breaking it down into manageable units, synthesizing, identifying patterns, highlighting important elements, and determining what can be conveyed to others. To ensure that the findings were meaningful, the analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, consisting of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, as illustrated in the following cycle diagram.

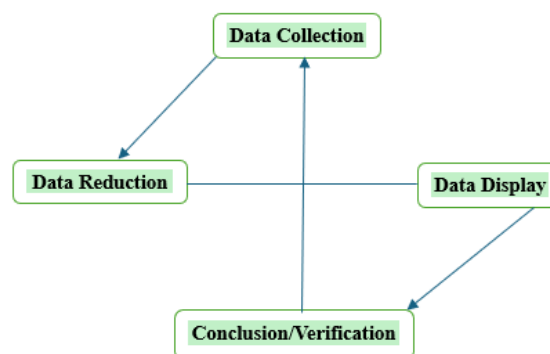


Figure 1. Stages of Data Analysis by Miles & Huberman

Ensuring the validity of data is an integral part of qualitative research. Data verification was conducted based on criteria proposed by Moleong (2010), which include prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation. Triangulation was applied to cross-check the consistency of data obtained from different methods, thereby ensuring the validity of research findings. According to Denzin (in Moleong, 2010), triangulation may involve sources, methods, investigators, and theories. In this study, data triangulation was performed through comparing the results of observations, interviews, and document analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Early Childhood Education is the main foundation in shaping children's character and intelligence (Anggreni, 2025). Local wisdom represents the worldview of a specific community regarding their natural and social environment (Hennilawati, 2022). Instilling the values of local wisdom in children from an early age is crucial, as this is a sensitive period when children are highly receptive to stimuli that help them recognize the cultural wisdom of their community (Latif, 2024). Learning through local culture in early childhood can be done through learning in kindergarten (Aditya, et al., 2025). Interviews with the principal and the teachers revealed that local wisdom-based learning at PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti had been implemented during the second semester through various project-based activities. The project-based activities had been systematically designed and incorporated into the teaching plans at the beginning of the semester. In the early childhood education curriculum, it is very important to create learning activities that utilize local wisdom (Aditya, et al., 2025).

Early childhood education is a strategic step in introducing culture in both learning and playing activities in kindergarten (Bautista et al., 2024; Hamzah & Suratman, 2023; Rahmadani et al., 2023). The learning process at PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti has introduced children to local culture through local wisdom-based learning. The main theme was “playing and working together.” Parents collaborated with the school to prepare project-based learning activities, as communicated by the principal during planning meetings held at the beginning of the academic year. Preparations included determining the types of projects, arranging tools and materials, and ensuring parental involvement during project implementation. Teachers emphasized that local wisdom-based learning requires strong parental support. Children were more enthusiastic and engaged when parents were actively involved. Moreover, parents could help explain aspects of local culture as an additional source of knowledge for children.

Local wisdom provides a foundational basis for values. Effective learning through local wisdom also depends on the active involvement of parents, teachers, and the community (Birhan et al., 2021). Collaboration between parents, schools, and communities is vital for shaping children's character (Aierbe, et al., 2023; Surikova, 2022). The perspectives expressed by teachers, school leaders, and parents consistently emphasize the crucial role of family engagement in the implementation of local wisdom-based learning. Building on these insights, the analysis underscores how parental involvement enhances both the process and outcomes of children's learning experiences.

These findings highlight that parental involvement is not merely supportive, but integral to the success of local wisdom-based learning. By engaging in the planning, preparation, and implementation of project-based activities, parents strengthen the contextual relevance of the learning process and help ensure that children gain authentic exposure to local culture. The collaborative partnership between school and families creates a learning environment that is both meaningful and culturally grounded. This underscores the importance of positioning parents as co-educators, whose cultural knowledge and active participation enrich children's educational experiences.

Culture is a crucial element that should be instilled in children from an early age. Culture is inherently close to children, as it encompasses their identity through language, customs, traditions, arts, music, traditional houses, folk songs, and other cultural expressions. Local culture-based

learning in schools thus becomes an appropriate medium for children to recognize and preserve their heritage. Local wisdom-based learning design is an approach used in learning where the learning process is integrated with various values, knowledge and practices so that learning not only focuses on the material in the book but is also able to relate it to the cultural life and environment around the students (Endayani, 2023). Local wisdom, as an integral part of culture, provides a social framework and values that can shape the way children think, communicate, and learn (Wartani, et al, 2025). Local wisdom has great potential to create an emotional bond between children and their surroundings, as well as introduce them to the traditions and identity of the nation (Anggreni, et al., 2025).

Learning is an effort to provide a set of environmental conditions that can stimulate children to engage in learning activities (Widiastuti, 2012). Local culture, or in this case community culture, becomes the identity of individuals or groups. The characteristics that form this identity remain attached throughout life (Sutardi, 2007). Ngada Regency, one of the regencies in East Nusa Tenggara, is not only rich in unique natural landscapes and history, but also possesses distinctive local cultural wealth. The local culture of Ngada is formed from the combination of diverse ethnicities, religions, traditions, arts, and customs that characterize its society. Vygotsky (in Santrock, 2007) argues that education plays an important role in helping children learn about cultural tools. In the same context, the introduction and utilization of Ngada's local culture in early childhood education activities becomes essential. This is because it strengthens children's identity, deepens their understanding of cultural diversity, and increases their love and interest in their own cultural heritage (Nasution, 2020).

These theoretical perspectives are reflected in the practices at PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti. The institution has consistently integrated local culture into the learning process, showing that early childhood education can serve as an effective channel for cultural transmission. By embedding culture into lessons and projects, teachers and parents ensure that children not only learn but also internalize cultural values as part of their daily lives.

PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti, as one of the early childhood education institutions, has implemented culture-based learning. Learning that integrates local wisdom at PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti has had positive impacts on children. In addition to introducing culture from an early age, the use of culture as a learning resource also stimulates various aspects of child development. Various forms of activities in local wisdom-based learning include traditional games (*congklak*, *sagu alu*, *bakiak*), local food (*tabha*), traditional clothing, traditional dances, and the use of the mother tongue. This is in line with Idhayani's opinion that introducing culture to early childhood, especially local culture in their environment, is a crucial aspect (2023). The use of local wisdom in learning is carried out to introduce children to local wisdom and culture from an early age (Fajriati, 2020). Local wisdom represents the cultural characteristics of a region, and young children are an inseparable part of those characteristics.

The alignment between expert opinions and the practices at PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti demonstrates that the introduction of culture from early childhood is not merely symbolic but has developmental implications. Through games, food, language, and dance, children experience culture holistically, which fosters a sense of belonging and identity that purely academic approaches may not achieve.

Learning based on local culture refers to strategies for creating a learning environment and designing learning experiences that incorporate culture as an integral part of the learning process (Fajriati & Na'imah, 2020). The significance of introducing culture in schools is reflected in the efforts to preserve cultural diversity in Indonesia, especially local cultures that are relevant to children's living environments (Kadek et al., 2023). Collaboration between schools, parents, communities, and the government is realized through efforts to strengthen early childhood education (Pandia et al., 2022). This aims to enable children to participate in preserving local culture according to their individual characteristics and needs.

This collaborative spirit is also evident in the case of PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti, where parents are actively engaged in school projects. Their involvement not only enriches the learning environment but also reinforces the idea that cultural education is a shared responsibility. The synergy between home and school provides a consistent cultural experience for children, making the learning more meaningful.

Children's learning activities are carried out through enjoyable and interactive methods so that they actively engage in the learning process, such as singing local songs together, learning traditional dances and performing them during Independence Day celebrations, introducing and wearing traditional clothing during cultural performances, introducing and playing traditional games in competitions, creating miniatures of *Ngadhu Bhaga* traditional houses as collaborative projects with parents, and other activities. Amaliyah et al. (2023) states that local wisdom-based learning is an approach that integrates cultural values, traditions, and local wisdom into the learning process, enabling students to understand and appreciate cultural heritage as well as increase engagement in learning. The introduction of local culture through interactive activities, such as singing local songs, learning traditional dances, drawing, or making crafts inspired by local culture, increases children's motivation to learn (Khofsah et al., 2023). This suggests that integrating local culture in the learning process has an impact on children's active engagement.

In practice, the children of PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti showed enthusiasm and curiosity, asking questions and taking initiative in activities. This reflects how interactive cultural learning not only motivates but also develops cognitive, motoric, and social-emotional skills. Cultural content thus becomes more than knowledge; it becomes a stimulus for holistic growth.

The following are the local wisdom-based learning activities conducted at PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti.



Figure 2. Children Were Performing Traditional Dance Wearing Ngada Traditional Clothing



Figure 3. Children Were Playing Congklak as the Traditional Game



Figure 4. Children Were Playing Bakiak as the Traditional Game

The integration of local culture in school learning provides meaningful impacts for children. They become familiar with and knowledgeable about their culture, thereby forming their identity and instilling strong local cultural values from an early age. Khofsah et al. (2023) state that by understanding local culture, children can build their sense of identity within their families, communities, and broader social diversity. The introduction of local culture can also increase children's sense of patriotism from an early age; by understanding it, they are more likely to respect the history and cultural heritage of the Indonesian nation (Mahardika et al., 2023).

The findings in PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti resonate with these arguments. Children are not only learning about dances, foods, or games but also about the deeper values embedded within them. Such exposure enables them to cultivate pride and appreciation for their roots, which forms the basis for strong identity and resilience in the face of globalization.

Local culture-based learning provides children with attitudes, skills, and knowledge to recognize their own culture. Wahyuni (2024) similarly states that culture-based learning aims to equip students with the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to recognize and love their natural, social, cultural, and spiritual environments, as well as to preserve and develop the strengths and wisdom of their regions so that their distinct characteristics are not lost. Children thus become vital actors in inheriting and safeguarding local culture. The experience at PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti confirms that children can indeed serve as cultural inheritors. By making them active participants rather than passive observers, schools prepare them not only academically but also socially and culturally for the future.

The learning process at the early childhood level certainly requires learning resources so that children can gain meaningful learning experiences related to the subject matter. Local culture-based learning provides real-life experiences for children to recognize traditional games, traditional musical instruments, traditional houses, traditional dances, and other aspects of tradition. Children learn more contextually and meaningfully because they learn directly from cultural values, traditions, and community practices. This is in line with Wahyuni (2024), who asserts that children can learn in ways that are more relevant and contextual, aligned with their social and cultural environment. For example, the use of folklore, local songs, traditional games, and local arts in the learning process helps children understand and appreciate their cultural heritage. Furthermore, Karwati (2014) states that one of the principles of early childhood education must be based on reality, meaning that children are expected to learn something through real experiences. Thus, local culture-based learning becomes very important in educating early childhood learners.

This approach is clearly evident in PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti's curriculum design, where cultural activities are embedded into everyday teaching. Instead of abstract learning, children encounter hands-on experiences that connect directly to their lives and communities, making education more grounded and sustainable.

One effective way to introduce children to culture is through local culture-based learning in schools. Rahayu (2000) reveals that the process of learning integrated with local wisdom has significant effectiveness as a way to introduce social values and local cultural habits to students amid the dynamic progress of the times. Local wisdom-based learning is an approach that integrates cultural values, traditions, and local wisdom into the learning process, enabling students to understand and appreciate cultural heritage and increase their engagement in learning (Amaliyah et al., 2023). Therefore, it can be concluded that the integration of local culture is essential to design and implement at the early childhood education level so that children, from an early age, can recognize and understand their culture, which in turn impacts other aspects of their development.

Thus, the practices observed at PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti provide clear evidence of the effectiveness of local wisdom-based learning. They illustrate how theory and practice converge, showing that local culture not only enriches learning experiences but also equips children with identity, resilience, and cultural pride that will serve them in the future.

CONCLUSION

Local wisdom-based learning at PAUD Terpadu Citra Bakti has proven to be an effective means of introducing, instilling, and preserving culture from an early age. Through the integration of local culture into learning activities such as traditional games, cooking local food, wearing traditional clothing, regional dances, and the use of mother tongue, children not only gain meaningful learning experiences but also develop their cultural identity. This process is fully supported by teachers, principals, and parents who work together to create a learning environment rich in cultural values. Thus, local wisdom-based learning not only strengthens children's cultural identity but also stimulates the development of cognitive, socio-emotional, language, and motor skills. These findings affirm the importance of integrating local culture as a sustainable educational strategy as well as an effort to preserve cultural heritage for future generations.

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