

Reactualization of Sundanese Local Hero Figure's Values to Foster Student Character in History Education

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Abstract: This research aims to analyze the character values of Regent RAA Kusumadiningrat as one of the Sundanese local heroes and their relevance in the context of history education in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This study is qualitative research that adopts a multi-method research (MMR) strategy with a narrative approach and policy research approach. Data collection is conducted through documentation from primary and secondary sources related to Kusumadiningrat and Kurikulum Merdeka, interviews, and observations conducted at historical sites. Data analysis uses an interactive model owned by Miles and Huberman, which is carried out in an interactive form with the data collection process as part of the analysis cycle process, along with data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The research results show that Kusumadiningrat, as a Sundanese traditional leader, has several character traits that are relevant to the Pancasila Student Profiles in the Kurikulum Merdeka, such as faith in God Almighty, critical thinking, global diversity, creative thinking, cooperation, and independence. Reactualization of Kusumadiningrat's character values can be carried out in the F-phase of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, especially in the elements of understanding and skills of historical processes, which can be implemented through research project-based learning on this character. This study confirms the importance of promoting local hero values in history education and suggests a new perspective on local heroes that do not necessarily need to be defined by confrontation. Incorporating local heroes into the history education curriculum can serve as sources of inspiration for students, fostering their character development.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis nilai-nilai karakter Bupati RAA Kusumadiningrat sebagai salah satu pahlawan lokal Sunda dan relevansinya dalam konteks pendidikan sejarah pada Kurikulum Merdeka. Studi ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan strategi *multi-method research* (MMR) yang mengadopsi pendekatan naratif dan penelitian kebijakan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui dokumentasi sumber primer dan sekunder terkait Kusumadiningrat dan Kurikulum Merdeka, wawancara, serta observasi di situs-situs sejarah. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang dilaksanakan secara interaktif bersamaan dengan proses pengumpulan data sebagai bagian dari siklus analisis, meliputi kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan/verifikasi kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Kusumadiningrat sebagai pemimpin tradisional Sunda memiliki beberapa nilai karakter yang relevan dengan Profil Pelajar Pancasila dalam Kurikulum Merdeka, antara lain beriman kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa, berpikir kritis, berkebinekaan global, berpikir kreatif, bergotong royong, dan mandiri. Reaktualisasi nilai-nilai karakter Kusumadiningrat dapat dilaksanakan pada fase F Kurikulum Merdeka, khususnya pada elemen pemahaman dan keterampilan proses sejarah yang dapat diimplementasikan melalui pembelajaran berbasis proyek penelitian tentang tokoh ini. Studi ini menegaskan pentingnya mengangkat nilai-nilai pahlawan lokal dalam pendidikan sejarah serta menawarkan perspektif baru bahwa pahlawan lokal tidak harus selalu didefinisikan melalui konfrontasi. Integrasi pahlawan lokal dalam kurikulum pendidikan sejarah dapat menjadi sumber inspirasi bagi siswa dalam menumbuhkan perkembangan karakter.



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INTRODUCTION

Character education is fundamental for nation-building, especially in preparing the younger generation to face the recent global challenges. Education is not only about teaching knowledge but also about instilling moral values. Human resources who have character and can think forward and constructively are a social capital for a nation to achieve progress (Rokhman et al., 2014). In other words, character education can shape students' character, which is expected to increase the nation's competitiveness, or, determine the future of a nation. (Bates, 2019; Purwadi et al., 2022). Therefore, character education is an inseparable part of the implementation of education in Indonesia and must be internalized at all levels of education (Hidayat & Rozak, 2022). This internalization must also be carried out at the Senior High School (SMA) level.

Character education is related to increasing the nation's competitiveness and handling the moral crisis faced by the younger generation. This moral crisis can be seen in several acts of juvenile delinquency in Indonesia, such as acts of violence and crime (*klitih*, motorbike gangs), promiscuity and prostitution, drugs, pornography, and even murder (Muassomah et al., 2020; Putra, 2020; Wulandari & Hodriani, 2019). In line with this, data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) recorded that the number of juvenile delinquents increased from 6325 in 2013 to 7007 cases (2014) to 7762 cases (2015), or an increase of 10.7% from year to year (Jasmisari & Herdiansah, 2022). Based on this percentage increase, it is estimated that 2024 there could be more than 15,000 juvenile delinquency cases. Character education has an important role in overcoming the problem of juvenile delinquency today. Studies conducted by Dempster (2020) show that character education can be a solution to carry out "moral improvements" and overcome the problem of delinquency and crime teenagers commit.

Internalization of character education must be carried out in every subject at school, including history education. Learning history is about teaching past events and their meaning and values. History learning is closely related to nation-building and is expected to be able to promote strategic issues such as democracy, tolerance, human rights, solidarity, and so on (Zajda, 2015). Several studies also show that history learning has been proven to play a role in shaping students' character, such as instilling the values of multiculturalism (Ekwandari et al., 2020), improving critical and creative thinking skills (Adzandini & Ma'mur, 2019; Wardhani et al., 2022), and encouraging students' learning inde-

pendence (Hidayat et al., 2021). Thus, history education has an important role in developing students' character, especially as a solution to facing the moral decadence of the younger generation and responding to the challenges of the times.

Character values in history education can come from various aspects of the past, including the example of historical figures. This process can be carried out by identifying the character values possessed by historical figures so that they can inspire students (Setianto, 2019). This is expected to impact students' attitudes and behavior in everyday life positively. History teachers should also introduce local historical figures to students during learning. The introduction of local figures is important because, so far, the narrative of Indonesian historiography has been dominated by the political aspects of national history and seems to ignore the diversity of local history (Warto, 2017). It is hoped that learning history through the example of local figures will become the foundation for strengthening students' character.

History education through the example of local figures should be carried out following the applicable curriculum. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemdikbudristek) has gradually implemented the Kurikulum Merdeka since 2021. The Kurikulum Merdeka itself started from implementing the Kurikulum Darurat during the Covid-19 Pandemic, which was then refined. The Kurikulum Merdeka has fundamental differences from the previous curriculum. A number of these differences include: (1) focus on essential material, which gives educators the freedom to develop learning outcomes according to the learning phase; (2) introduction of the concept of differentiated learning, and (3) development of soft skills through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) (Ayundasari, 2022). Among these changes, strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile must receive special attention, considering that this is a form of translating national education goals (BSKAP Kemdikbudristek, 2022).

In line with character building in the Kurikulum Merdeka, one of the local figures that students can emulate through history learning is the Regent of Galuh RAA Kusumadiningrat. Galuh Regency is the old name of Ciamis Regency, West Java province. During his reign from 1839 to 1886, the Galuh district experienced significant developments in education and infrastructure. RAA Kusumadiningrat initiated the construction of irrigation canals and dams in Cikatomas, Nagawiru, Nagawangsi, and

Wangundireja. This irrigation development has proven to support people's agriculture. The Ciamis Great Mosque, some office buildings, and factories such as coffee and coconut oil mills were also built during his reign. RAA Kusumadiningrat also dared to fight for the interests of its people before the Dutch East Indies Colonial Government. One of the results of his courage was the construction of a railway line on the Cirahong Bridge, which then penetrated the capital city of Galuh (currently the center of Ciamis city) (Sofiani, 2021). Although he was relatively cooperative and never openly confronted the colonial government, Kusumadiningrat was still known as a local Sundanese leader who fought for his people's interests. Therefore, he is still considered one of the local heroes in the Priangan region whose character is worthy of being emulated by the younger generation.

Research regarding the character values of local historical figures in history learning has been carried out previously. Research conducted by Pernantah & Ahmal (2022) The Sultan Syarif Kasim II from Riau shows that local historical figures have an important role in instilling character values for university students in Riau. Meanwhile, research conducted by Lionar & Fithriah (2023) and Lionar et al. (2025) in West Sumatra show the important role of local figures, namely Chatib Sulaiman and Bagindo Aziz Chan, in implementing character education in high school. Based on this research, the example of local figures is not only aimed at strengthening the character of the younger generation. However, it is also expected to be able to resolve the character crisis that is currently occurring today. Numerous studies conducted in other countries, focusing on local heroes like King Svätopluk of Slovakia (Otčenášová, 2020) and Alexander Modestovich von Wilken of Vyatka, Russia (Pomelov, 2024) Also, highlight the significance of these figures as role models in shaping the character development of the younger generation.

The study that comprehensively explores the local hero characters from Sundanese traditional leaders, particularly within the context of history education in the Kurikulum Merdeka, has not received much attention from previous researchers. Based on that, this study introduces several novelties: (1) Character analysis of Kusumadiningrat as Sundanese traditional leader with an ambivalent political position in the historical narrative, will provide an alternative perspective on local heroes figures and characters; (2) An epistemological novelty through the adoption of a multi-method research approach within a qualitative study, offering

a new perspective that is absent in some previous studies about local heroes and character education. This study is expected to promote Sundanese local hero figures in history education to enhance their significance and contextual relevance. Doing so will foster a stronger sense of belonging among students as integral parts of their local communities. Consequently, this research aims to analyze the character values of Kusumadiningrat and its reactualization within the context of history education in the Kurikulum Merdeka.

METHOD

This qualitative study adopts a Multi-Method Research (MMR) strategy, which refers to using two or more qualitative methods within the same study to investigate a research question or phenomenon (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). In this study, the researcher will use narrative and policy research approaches. The narrative approach in qualitative research is a methodology that investigates experiences through the telling, retelling, and interpretation of personally meaningful stories (Sztukowski & Crowley & Funk, 2020). The narrative approach will be used to analyze Kusumadiningrat's character as a Sundanese local hero and his character values. On the other hand, the policy research approach is centered on understanding the meanings embedded in policies, their implementation, and their effects on various stakeholders (Wagenaar, 2007). This approach can be used in education policy, such as curriculum implementation. Consequently, the policy research approach is utilized to analyze in depth the essence and important points of the Kurikulum Merdeka, thereby assessing its compatibility with the character of the Sundanese local hero.

Data collection is carried out through documentation, interviews, and observation. The data sources used in this research come from primary data, such as archives and manuscripts relating to Kusumadiningrat figures, such as the Babad Galoeh-Imbanagara, and colonial sources, such as the newspapers *De Locomotief*, *Java Bode*, and others. Meanwhile, to analyze the policy of Kurikulum Merdeka, the primary data used are policy documents issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, and the Education Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency (BSKAP). This research also uses secondary data from literature studies about Kusumadiningrat and Kurikulum Merdeka. Data was also collected through interviews with families descended from RAA Kusumadiningrat to understand his personal character and field observations at the historical

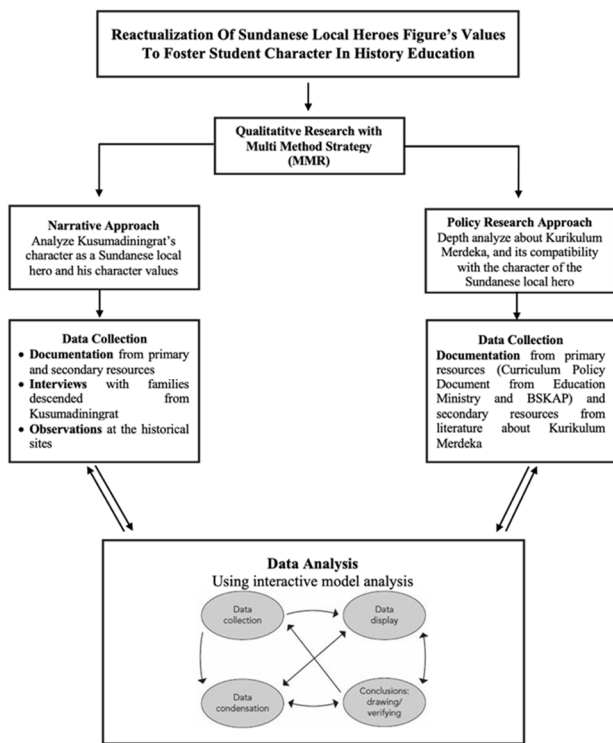


Figure 1. Multi-Method Research framework summarised from Miles et al. (2014); Roller & Lavrakas (2015); Sztukowski-Crowley & Funk (2020); Wagenaar (2007).

sites around the Ciamis district.

After the data is collected, data analysis is then carried out. The analysis carried out in this research used interactive model analysis according to Miles and Huberman. This model emphasizes that data analysis activities are not linear but iterative and dynamic, allowing researchers to move back and forth between data collection, condensation, display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). In this process, Kusumadiningrat's character values will be identified based on the six characters in the Pancasila Student Profile, which are the core characters in the Kurikulum Merdeka. Furthermore, the results of the identification will be analyzed with Learning Outcomes (CP) in history subjects in the Kurikulum Merdeka, as well as standard policies for the learning process, so that it can produce a framework for implementing character education based on Kusumadiningrat values in history learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka.

BIOGRAPHY OF RAA KUSUMA-DININGRAT AS A SUNDANESE LOCAL HERO

Raden Adipati Aria Kusumadiningrat was a traditional Sundanese leader regent from the Galuh regency (now Ciamis). As a traditional Sundanese leader, Kusumadiningrat has a unique political po-

sition. On the one hand, he was a government employee tasked with helping implement the colonial regime's policy. On the other hand, he served as a local leader who protected the people in the Galuh regency. This ambivalent position requires a traditional leader to govern wisely without triggering a confrontational reaction from the colonial government while ensuring protection for his people. In carrying out this task, Kusumadiningrat upholds the concept of *parigeuing* leadership to help him in dealing with political situations that are often unfavorable (Sofiani et al., 2025). Kusumadiningrat's steadfastness to local values and a progressive attitude can be seen in his various actions as a leader, making him worthy of being called a local hero of the Sundanese land.

Kusumadiningrat is a figure who has an important role in the history of the Priangan, especially the Ciamis regency. He was born in 1814 as the son of Raden Adipati Adikusumah and Raden Ayu Gilang Kencana. Raden Adipati Adikusumah himself was the second regent of Galuh, known for turning Galuh into the largest indigo-producing regency in the Dutch East Indies (Sofiani & Nurfa-dillah, 2020). As the son of a regent, Kusumadiningrat was groomed from an early age to replace his father in the position of regent of Galuh. Therefore, since he was a teenager, he was entrusted with the role of Galuh district clerk in 1828. Three years later, Kusumadiningrat received the military rank of second lieutenant and became a soldier commander (Sofiani, 2021). The same year, he also managed the indigo factories in Panjalu, Rancah, and the Ciamis district. With the enormous responsibility he held, when Raden Adipati Adikusumah died in 1839, Kusumadiningrat was immediately appointed as his successor.

Kusumadiningrat's leadership in Galuh can be considered a period of glory for the regency. Kusumadiningrat does not hesitate to make policy breakthroughs for the benefit of his people. One of the most notable is the ban on indigo cultivation in the Galuh regency. Since the 1840s, indigo cultivation in Galuh began to stagnate due to the negative impact of this plant on the soil in the Galuh district. Seeing this reality, Kusumadiningrat built irrigation canals to save the people's rice fields and plantations. As a result, the land in the Galuh district, which was damaged due to indigo planting, can become fertile again and support all the Galuh people. Indigo planting in the Galuh district itself officially ended in 1862 (Sofiani, 2018). Apart from the issue of banning indigo, Kusumadiningrat also stopped the forced cultivation policy implemented

in the Galuh regency. He continues to push for an end to forced cultivation in Galuh, even though this has an impact on reducing income for regents like himself (Babad Galoeh-Imbanagara, n.d.).

Another policy carried out by Kusumadiningrat to advance the Galuh is to develop and modernize the infrastructure in the regency. From 1859 to 1877, Kusumadiningrat built various government buildings in the district capital, such as the regent's building, the resident assistant building, and the military barracks. The capital area of Galuh was transformed into a more modern city (Saptono, 2019). He also built a special residential area for Chinese people (Chinatown), which is located not far from the district government center. In 1862, Kusumadiningrat also built Sakola *Regency*, the first modern school established in Priangan. This made him praised as a figure who supported the advancement of education for native people ("Onze Regenten Op Java" December 16, 1886, p.1). He was even appointed as a member of the School Commission from native circles in the Cirebon Residency area in 1876 ("Schutterijen, Enz," March 13, 1876, p.2). At the end of his reign, Kusumadiningrat succeeded in forcing the colonial government to change the railway line in Priangan, which was originally from Tasikmalaya to Banjar, to divert towards the capital of the Galuh district via the Cihong bridge (Fahmi & Prasetyo, 2022). Construction of this bridge began during the era of his son, Raden Adipati Aria Kusumasubrata, in 1893, and became part of the Trans Java railway line. This has a positive impact on the people because it makes it easier to transport various plantation products from Galuh to other areas on the island of Java. The various efforts made by Kusumadiningrat made him known as one of the most prominent regents of the Galuh regency.

Kusumadiningrat's great service to the Galuh district earned him wide recognition from his people and the Dutch people. The *De Locomotief* newspaper described Kusumadiningrat as a regent who was capable, honest, and well-behaved, and able to prosper his people ("Hoe Men Te Tjiamis 's Konings Jubilé Vierde," May 19, 1874, p.2). Kusumadiningrat even received the title *Ridder der Orde van den Nederlandsch Leeuw* (Knight of the Order of the Dutch Lion) in 1878 ("*Javasche Courant*," 1878). The Dutch Kingdom gave this title for Kusumadiningrat's services in developing and advancing the Galuh district. He was the only native leader from the native community to receive this title. The awarding of this title is a recognition of Kusumadiningrat's abilities as a traditional leader

who is forward-thinking and able to have a broad impact on the people he leads.

Kusumadiningrat's leadership and diverse policies demonstrate his ability as a traditional Sundanese leader to navigate challenging and ambivalent circumstances. As a traditional leader, he exhibits competence and good individual morals in fulfilling his role as a protector of the people. The exceptional level of competence and personal morality in his leadership was the basis for the local hero designation bestowed upon Kusumadiningrat (Goethals & Allison, 2012). Although he maintained a cooperative stance towards the colonial government, he consistently prioritized the interests of his people in every policy formulation. Kusumadiningrat illustrates that a hero does not necessarily resort to confrontational actions but prioritizes their individual moral principles in addressing challenging situations for the greater good. Consequently, the character of local heroes, such as the figure of Kusumadiningrat, holds significant importance for historical education, particularly for the younger generation.

THE CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF RAA KUSUMADININGRAT

The first character that can be emulated from the figure of Kusumadiningrat is believing in God Almighty. This character can be associated with the religious attitude of a traditional Sundanese leader. This attitude certainly cannot be separated from the strong influence of Islam in Sundanese culture (Wibawa & Awaliah, 2023). Apart from that, based on the *Sanghyang Hayu Manuscript*, which is one of the Sundanese life guidelines, a leader must show the character of *pradana* or ultimate piety (Permana et al., 2020). In other words, a traditional Sundanese leader cannot only handle worldly matters but can also show religious character. Kusumadiningrat then put these values into practice by embracing *ulama* (Islamic priests) in its government. He founded a *Da'wah* Council and even wrote sermon texts to be read in all mosques in the Galuh district during Friday prayers.

The character of believing in God Almighty or religious attitude means that a person's actions must reflect the religion they adhere to in everyday life (Purwadi et al., 2022). It is hoped that a life based on religious values will be able to keep someone away from despicable actions. Apart from behaving according to the teachings of one's religion, the character of believing in God Almighty can also be manifested in efforts to build tolerance and mutual respect between religious communities. This is

very important in Indonesia, which has a heterogeneous society with various religions and beliefs. In other words, this character can be the basis for efforts to create harmony between religious communities in Indonesia.

Kusumadiningrat, as a leader, not only displays a religious attitude and demonstrates critical thinking skills. During his leadership, the power of a regent in Sunda was often overshadowed by the power of the colonial government. In general, the regents of Priangan were an extension of the colonial government, so they only carried out what the Dutch ordered them to do (Hardjasaputra, 1985). Even so, Kusumadiningrat was an exception; he realized that colonial government policies, such as exploiting land for planting indigo, had caused much misery for the people of Galuh (Breman, 2015). Therefore, he criticized the policy and, in the end, even dared to issue an order to stop indigo planting in Galuh. Kusumadiningrat's critical attitude was apparently acceptable to the Colonial Government, which immediately stopped the forced planting policy in this area. In other words, Kusumadiningrat could resist the colonial government's policy of prioritizing his people's interests without taking up arms. Furthermore, Kusumadiningrat even ordered his people to conduct reforestation to restore the condition of the Galuh land, which had previously been damaged.

The character of critical thinking, as reflected in the character of Kusumadiningrat, must also be possessed by today's young generation. The character of critical thinking is one of the abilities most needed in the twenty-first century. In the world of education, the critical thinking character is often associated with the ability to make decisions and solve problems (Buzduga & Rodrigues, 2021). Critical thinking character can be built by encouraging students to give meaning to the historical events or figures being studied (Dumitru, 2019). By studying the meaning of the past, students are expected to be able to recognize a problem and understand the process of solving the problem. This character can be applied to solve various problems faced every day, while also being able to improve the quality and competitiveness of a nation's human resources (Syafitri et al., 2021).

The next character of Kusumadiningrat is global diversity. This character can be realized through respecting one's own culture and history, appreciating cultural diversity, and participating in the process of sustaining existing culture (Jamalulail et al., 2023). This attitude can be seen from Kusumadiningrat's actions in maintaining various

traditions in the land of Galuh and vice versa. He also became a leader who laid the foundation for the modernization of the Galuh district, especially in the Ciamis district, which is the capital of this district (Sofiani, 2021). Kusumadiningrat's ability to maintain the continuity of local traditions and adopt modernization simultaneously is a real manifestation of the character of global diversity that today's young generation can emulate.

Kusumadiningrat is also a figure who has a creative character. His creativity was demonstrated in responding to the policy of building a railway line in the Galuh area. The train line originally did not pass through the Ciamis district, but thanks to his struggle in the end, the line was "diverted" to pass through the capital of the Galuh district (Fahmi & Prasetyo, 2022). This change in route will impact the welfare of the Galuh people. This creative character in the Sundanese leadership concept is closely related to the *lagiman attitude*. *Lagiman* is the character of a Sundanese leader who must show skill and dexterity, and be able to innovate to create a better life for society (Mulyani & Ratnapuri, 2018).

Creativity, as demonstrated by Kusumadiningrat, is very important for today's young generation. Apart from being able to help in solving the problems faced, this character can also support students' academic and career achievements in the future (Siburian et al., 2019). Creative character is also one of the most needed characteristics in today's industrial world (Dumitru, 2019). Creativity can encourage someone to innovate and create various new things that society needs. Therefore, students must instill creative values by studying local historical figures.

Kusumadiningrat's example can also be seen from its cooperative character. Based on the *Tri Tangtu Buana* concept, which is the basis of the governance pattern of Sundanese society, traditional leadership must involve three elements, namely *Prebu* (ruling king), *Rama* (spiritual advisor), and *Resi* (judicial leader) (Lubis et al., 2016). Therefore, the leadership carried out by Kusumadiningrat always prioritizes the character of cooperation between these elements. One of the most visible is the cooperation between the Regent and the ulama in dialogue regarding the government running in Galuh. Kusumadiningrat is a regent known to be close to the ulama, so he always prioritizes cooperation when running his government.

The character of cooperation today is very important for students to internalize. This character will encourage the younger generation to get used

to working together with other people to achieve a common goal. This collaborative process must be carried out by prioritizing the spirit of equality, anti-discrimination, empathy, and the habit of deliberation in decision-making (Utomo, 2018). By prioritizing the character of cooperation, it is hoped that various horizontal and vertical conflicts that still frequently occur can be reduced to a minimum. The spirit of cooperation can also become a social capital for the Indonesian people when facing competition in the global era.

The next character possessed by Kusumadinigrat is independence. The regent's independence can be seen in his stance against the forced cultivation implemented in the Galuh district. Even though the position of the regents of Priangan, including the regent of Galuh at that time, was a colonial employee on the government's payroll, Kusumadinigrat, as a traditional leader, showed his independence and firmness in rejecting forced cultivation. (Hardjasaputra, 1985). Kusumadinigrat's attitude also shows that independence must be accompanied by a firm attitude, or, in the Sundanese leadership concept, *Astaguna* is known as *Ahiman*. *Ahiman* emphasized the firm attitude of a leader who must hold his ground and not depend on other people (Sumarlina, 2012). In other words, an independent character is realized through a confident attitude towards oneself.

Students today must internalize their independent character. Students' independence must be developed so that they have the confidence to get along with other people (Suryadewi et al., 2020). This means that a student will be better prepared to interact with others in a social environment by having an independent character. Independence can also support students' ability to work together with others. With an independent attitude, students will learn to be more responsible and not easily throw their obligations onto other people.

The character education values of Kusumadinigrat can be identified from his policies and attitudes. First, his faith in God Almighty is reflected in his policy to build Ciamis Grand Mosque, establish a missionary assembly to provide religious knowledge to the Galuh community, and write the Friday sermon manuscript, which was sent and read to all mosques in Galuh Regency. Second, when Kusumadinigrat banned the indigo planting in Galuh because it damaged the environment, it means that he has critical thinking skills. Third, Kusumadinigrat has a global diversity character, which is reflected in his policies to maintain various local traditions such as *Bubujeng*, *Marak*,

Wangian, *Serah Kitri*, and still adopt Western culture, especially in the field of education at the same time. Fourth, Kusumadinigrat's creative skills can be seen from the construction process of the Cihong bridge, which changed the Dutch railway line and ultimately benefited the people. Fifth, the cooperative character is reflected when Kusumadinigrat is accustomed to inviting *Ulama* to the Selagangga Palace Park to discuss various matters, especially regarding government running in the Galuh Regency. Lastly, Kusumadinigrat has an independent character, which is seen from his refusal to be fully regulated by the colonial government and had the independence to stop the forced cultivation policy, which he felt was detrimental to his people. In the end, Kusumadinigrat's character solidified his position as a traditional leader and elevated him to the status of a Sundanese local hero. This underscores the significance of reactualizing Kusumadinigrat's character for today's younger generation through local history education.

REACTUALIZATION OF RAA KUSUMADINIGRAT CHARACTER TO FOSTER STUDENT CHARACTER

History education is important in supporting character education for students because historical events have very important meanings and are relevant to the character students need. (Ramona & Supriatna, 2021). Character education can be integrated into material content or the history learning process. History learning and character education are two things that cannot be separated. In the character education process, students internalize certain values in the learning process, which then influence their feelings, thoughts, and actions in everyday life. (Muassomah et al., 2020). In line with this, character education can be carried out by internalizing Kusumadinigrat's character values so that students can apply them in everyday life. This is what teachers need to strive for to produce meaningful history learning. The implementation of character education in history learning must be carried out by the applicable curriculum, namely the Kurikulum Merdeka.

The Kurikulum Merdeka is a follow-up to the Independent Learning principle launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture to realize a comprehensive educational transformation to create enjoyable learning for students, as well as increase the competence of school principals and quality teachers (Angga et al., 2022; Maulida, 2022). Freedom to learn means the hope that students will have independence and freedom to learn, so that

learning activities become more enjoyable (Manalu et al., 2022). Therefore, this curriculum policy no longer emphasizes the aspect of mastering content/material, but mastering competencies to support the realization of the Pancasila Student Profile. The Pancasila Student Profile is the character and abilities that are built in everyday life and brought to life in each student through intracurricular activities, projects to strengthen the Pancasila student profile (P5), extracurricular activities, and integration into school culture (Satria et al., 2022). Through these four activities, at the end of the phase, it is hoped that students will have the character of Pancasila Students.

The Kurikulum Merdeka provides a broad space for incorporating local content into history education. The structure of the Learning Outcomes (CP) is broad and enables teachers to develop Learning Objectives (TP) that accommodate local aspects, such as local values (Rosanawati et al., 2025), cultural heritage (Armiyati et al., 2025), and historical figures. This flexibility allows history teachers to promote the significance of local figures like Kusumadiningrat through the learning process. The Kurikulum Merdeka's emphasis on promoting local heroes in history education aims to create a contextual learning environment while strengthening students' character aligned with local values. The contextualization of this local hero's character must also align with the Pancasila Student Profile, which is a fundamental aspect of the Kurikulum Merdeka.

Kusumadiningrat has character values relevant to the Student Pancasila Profile, such as faith in God Almighty, critical thinking, global diversity, creative thinking, cooperation, and independence. This exemplary value should become a reference for history education in Indonesia, especially in the East Priangan area. Internalizing the character values of Kusumadiningrat through intracurricular activities is possible because of the Kurikulum Merdeka. Teachers are free to develop Learning Objectives (TP) and Learning Objective Flow (ATP) according to student needs and the characteristics of the educational unit. The reactualization of these values can begin from D-phase, namely class VII junior high school, including Islamic Religious Education and Character, Pancasila Education, Social Sciences (Sociology, Economics, History, Geography), and Natural Sciences.

Kusumadiningrat's exemplary values can also be integrated into collaborative project activities. This can be done by selecting the collaborative project theme relevant to the regent's exemplary values.

There are seven themes provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture for the Elementary School level and eight themes for the Vocational School level, namely local wisdom, engineering and technology, entrepreneurship, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, Sustainable Lifestyle, Build Your Body and Soul, Voice of Democracy, and Employment (specifically for Vocational Schools). All of these themes can integrate the exemplary values of Regent Kusumadiningrat. For example, the Sustainable Lifestyle theme can refer to Regent Kusumadiningrat's courage to refuse planting indigo in the Galuh area because it would damage the environment.

Schools can also internalize it through implementing school policies and norms as implemented by Kusumadiningrat. For example, the regent also upholds tolerance apart from having a religious character. He protected the Chinese residents in his area, even though they were a minority. This tolerance value is very relevant to the profile of Pancasila students who believe in God Almighty and have noble character. A school culture that teaches students to respect others will create a safe, comfortable, and conducive school environment.

History education in the Merdeka Curriculum is typically covered in the F-phase, which corresponds to the 11th and 12th grades. The Learning Outcomes for this F-phase are centered around two key elements: Understanding Historical Concepts and Historical Process Skills. Reactualization of Kusumadiningrat's character can be effectively applied to each of these elements, tailored to the specific needs of history educators. In understanding historical concepts, particularly in 11th grade, the emphasis is on developing historical concepts. Students are expected to learn to identify historical figures' roles in history, analyze patterns and relationships between Indonesian and global historical events, and develop their own historical concepts. In this context, the teacher can incorporate a study on Kusumadiningrat as a pivotal figure in various historical events within the Galuh Regency area. This approach aligns with the Learning Outcomes and allows a deeper understanding of historical concepts. In essence, implementing the actualization of Kusumadiningrat's character can commence by presenting a narrative about this local Sundanese hero as part of the learning practice.

Regarding Historical Process Skills, there are several aspects to consider, including historical thinking skills, historical awareness, and historical research practices. Regarding historical thinking ability, students can engage in reactualization by studying Kusumadiningrat's policies and relating

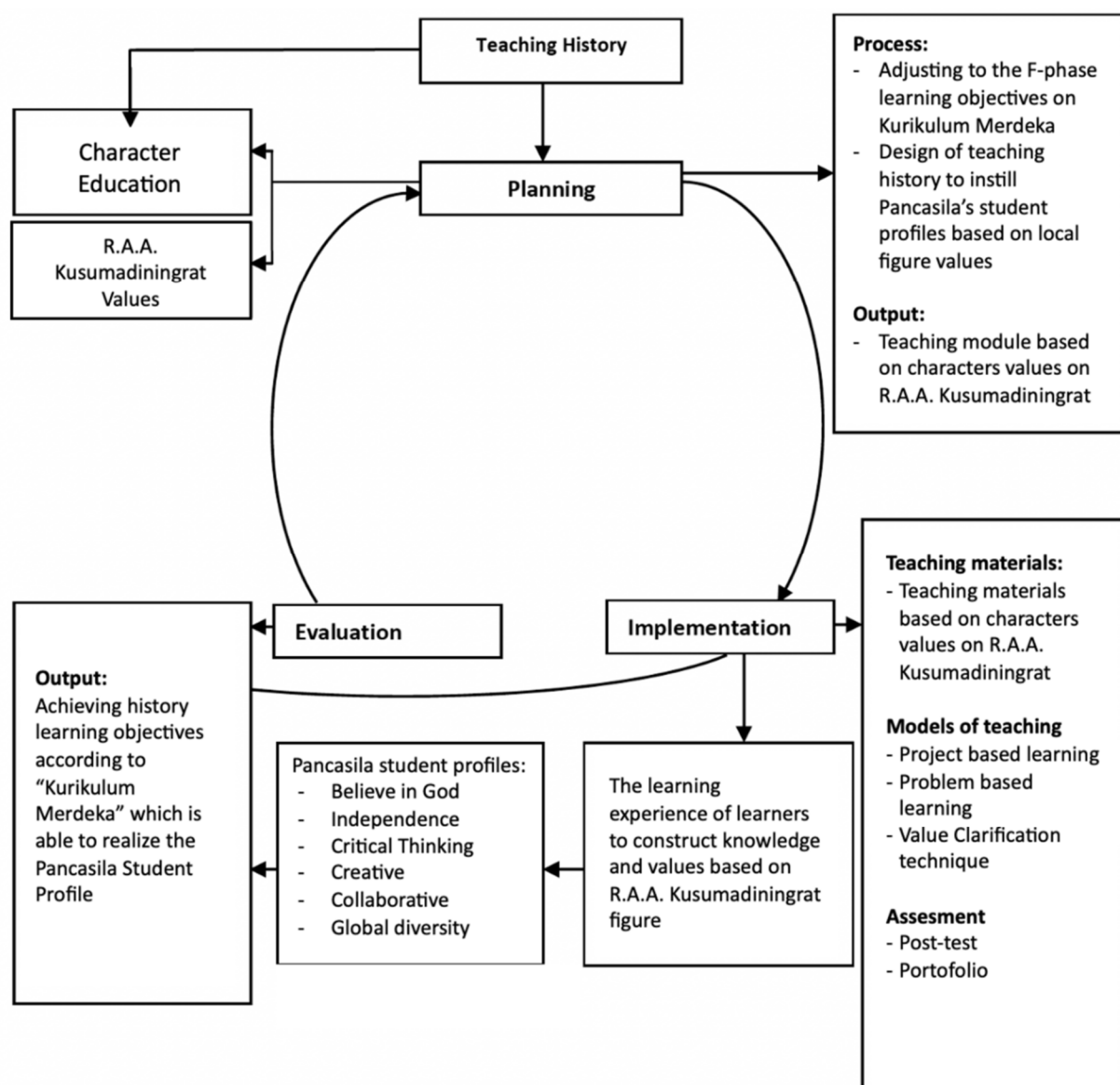


Figure 2. Reactualization Framework for History Learning Based on Kusumadiningrat Character Education Values.

them to the situation in the former Galuh Regency area. For instance, they can analyze policies related to constructing the Cirahong Bridge and railway lines. Additionally, students can be invited to analyze policies in the religion, social, and political fields. In the aspect of historical awareness, students can visit historical relics from the time of the Regent Kusumadinandrant and research the values within each. For example, they can examine Friday sermon leaflets, clothing worn for Friday prayers, and the regent leaves to analyze their religious attitude. Finally, in the aspect of historical research practice, during the research process about Kusumadiningrat, students are guided to utilize various sources of information, including archives and other sources. They are also encouraged to conduct interviews with the descendants of the Regent to gather additional information.

The reactualization of Kusumadiningrat's exemplary values in history learning must be characterized by the process standards set by the Ministry of Education. The process standards are a reference for implementing effective learning to develop students' potential and abilities. These standards are stated in the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation Number 16 of 2022 concerning Process Standards for Early Childhood Education, Basic Education Levels, and Secondary Education Levels. Based on this document, the process has three standard stages: planning, implementing, and evaluating learning. The following is a framework for implementing history learning according to the process standards in the Kurikulum Merdeka, which is based on the character values of the Kusumadiningrat:

DISCUSSIONS

The individual competence and moral character of Kusumadiningrat are pertinent to the character in the Pancasila Student Profiles. These study findings are relevant to other studies on the role of local heroes in shaping the character of students, particularly in history education (Boty et al., 2023; Otčenášová, 2020; Pernantah & Ahmal, 2022; Lionar et al. 2025; Pramono et al.2025). Local heroes can facilitate student engagement, enhancing learning quality and significance. The utilization of local resources is one of the key factors in cultivating the character of the younger generation through history education (Wijayanti et al., 2025). By presenting the example of local heroes, students not only gain an understanding of historical events but are also encouraged to internalize the values embodied by these characters in their daily lives. This renders history learning more contextual and pertinent. Nevertheless, the implementation of history learning that promotes local heroes requires the attention of history educators, as it necessitates the development of specific models or media.

The relevance of Kusumadiningrat's character to the content of the Kurikulum Merdeka underscores the significance of local history content in history education. The reactualization of Kusumadiningrat's character also serves as a critique of historical learning that often prioritizes the formation of nation-states over the local history aspect (Purwanta, 2022; Purwanta et al., 2023). This approach has severe repercussions, as it can lead to the erosion of the younger generation's identity as an integral part of their local community. Striking a balance between local and national historical narratives is the solution to the challenges faced by historical education in Indonesia. Hence, local history can increase students' pride in their communities and commitment to civic engagement (Pearson & Plevyak, 2020). By promoting the character of historical figures such as Kusumadiningrat, the young generation of Indonesia (especially in West Java) not only cultivates national awareness but also prepares them to compete globally while maintaining their roots in local values.

Additionally, the reactualization of Kusumadiningrat's character with the Pancasila Student Profiles aligns with the theory of character education proposed by Thomas Lickona. Character education, as outlined by Lickona (2013) aims to cultivate virtues, human qualities that benefit individuals and communities through educational practices. The educational process is crucial in nurturing the comprehensive range of virtues defining a mature character, ensuring that cognitive, emotional,

and behavioral aspects are harmonious. To achieve this, character education promotes consistent modeling, intentional teaching, and daily practice of virtues until they become ingrained habits. Notable figures, including local heroes such as Kusumadiningrat, can be models as well as inspiration for virtues taught in character education (Conle & Boone, 2008).

Furthermore, according to Lickona, character education emphasizes three aspects: moral knowing, feeling, and moral action. Moral knowing develops awareness of good and bad, moral feeling nurtures empathy and self-control, while moral action combines knowledge and emotion into competence, will, and habitual behavior (Izzati et al., 2019). Through analyzing Kusumadiningrat's character values through historical learning, students can cultivate moral knowledge rooted in faith in God Almighty and develop critical and creative thinking skills for contemporary life. Moreover, collaborative activities can enhance students' empathy as part of moral feeling. Furthermore, as students develop independence and embrace global diversity, their moral actions will undergo transformative changes. In essence, the reactualization of Kusumadiningrat's character through the Pancasila student profile aligns with the primary objective of character education, which is the moral development of students (Ristiana et al., 2025).

The primary findings of this research also align with Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, which states that learning occurs through reciprocal interactions between personal, behavioral, and social or environmental factors (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2023). A pivotal concept in this theory is modeling. Modeling in education refers to the process of observational learning, where learners acquire knowledge, skills, and behaviors by imitating others as role models, reinforced through social interaction, affective feedback, and cognitive interpretation (Bandura, 2021). In this context, introducing Kusumadiningrat as a Sundanese local hero can serve as a role model for students in history education. This process not only fosters cognitive understanding of the local hero but also encourages students to emulate the character traits of that figure, as elucidated by Bandura's modeling concept. By modeling Kusumadiningrat, students can internalize the character that aligns with the Pancasila Student Profile more profoundly. Ultimately, the local aspect in history education is about introducing local historical narratives and transmitting the noble character values of predecessors.

Furthermore, this research has some implica-

tions: (1) Character education is an important aspect of the history education process. Local heroes can serve as role models, relevant to Bandura's modeling concept. The character of local heroes can also foster moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, according to Lickona's character education theory. Promoting local heroes enhances meaningful and relevant history learning, fostering student engagement. (2) Kusumadinigrat's cooperative attitude with the colonial government in protecting his people offers a new perspective on the figure of the local hero. Local heroes in history education do not necessarily need to be confrontational with the "states' enemies" (in this context, colonial government) or have a direct role in nation-state formation. This perspective also challenges the binary opposition paradigm, a common issue in Indonesian history education. (3) This research emphasizes integrating local historical narratives with the Kurikulum Merdeka. The decentralized paradigm of the Kurikulum Merdeka facilitates this integration process effectively. History teachers should utilize general descriptions of learning outcomes (CP) to promote local historical narratives and stories of local heroes to students. This objective is to establish Pancasila Student Profiles deeply rooted in local values while garnering global recognition.

CONCLUSION

History education in the Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes the cognitive aspect and the development of students' character. The character of Kusumadinigrat as a Sundanese local hero is relevant to the Pancasila Student Profiles, such as faith in God Almighty, critical thinking, global diversity, creative thinking, cooperation, and independence. Furthermore, the reactualization of Kusumadinigrat's characters can be implemented through various activities, including extracurricular activities, Project Strengthening of Pancasila Profile Students, and habituation of good school practices. In history education, teachers can integrate characters exemplified by Kusumadinigrat in the F-phase or 11th and 12th grade in senior high school. This process can foster contextual history learning and enhance student engagement in history education. Character education based on Kusumadinigrat figures aligns with Lickona's character education theories, emphasizing moral knowing, feeling, and action and the modeling concept from Bandura's social cognitive theory. This relevance emphasizes that the character possessed by Kusumadinigrat can be a role model for developing students' morals and characters in history education. Furthermore, re-

search findings affirm the importance of promoting the character of local heroes in history education, but also suggest a new perspective on local heroes that do not necessarily need to be confrontational with "states' enemies". In the end, Kurikulum Merdeka has provided a broader space for history teachers to integrate local heroes who can serve as sources of inspiration for students, fostering the development of their character traits. Future research on implementing the character values of Sundanese local heroes is imperative to enhance the practical aspects of integrating local hero narratives into the history education process. This process is expected to support students' character development in the Kurikulum Merdeka.

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