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A Local Wisdom-Based Character Education Management for Madrasah Tsanawiyah Pesantren Mizanul Ulum Sanrobone, Takalar Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop a local wisdom-based character education management model for MTs Pesantren Mizanul Ulum Sanrobone, Takalar Regency, by examining how Takalar's cultural values can be systematically integrated into curriculum planning, classroom instruction, dormitory activities, and community collaboration. The integration of local wisdom (kearifan lokal) into Islamic educational settings has emerged as a critical priority in Indonesia, where rapid globalization risks displacing indigenous moral frameworks that sustain identity and social cohesion. A Research and Development (R&D) design was employed, incorporating semi-structured interviews, classroom and dormitory observations, surveys, and document analysis. Participants included the school head, five teachers, twenty students, and two traditional cultural leaders, selected through purposive sampling. Qualitative data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive framework, while quantitative data were examined through descriptive statistics. Results reveal that local wisdom integration within written curriculum documents (RPP) remains low at 32%, whereas informal application in classroom activities (68%) and dormitory routines (74%) is considerably higher. A total of 85% of students found cultural examples helpful for understanding character values, 90% felt stronger connection to the material, and 78% reported increased motivation. However, 40% still experienced difficulty in applying values consistently in daily behavior. All teacher respondents (91%) expressed the need for structured implementation guidelines. Effective character formation requires a comprehensive, ethnopedagogically grounded management model comprising: (1) explicit local wisdom integration in curriculum documents, (2) synergistic classroom and dormitory activities, (3) formal collaboration with traditional cultural leaders, and (4) culturally aligned character assessment. This model contributes to ethnopedagogical theory by positioning local wisdom as an epistemic foundation for character education, while offering practical guidance for pesantren and schools seeking sustainable.

Keywords: Character Education, Local Wisdom, Ethnopedagogy, Islamic Educational Management.

I. Introduction

Character education serves as a fundamental pillar in developing Indonesia's human resources amid the rapid acceleration of globalization and technological advancement (Ghofur et al., 2024). It is no longer



understood merely as the normative transmission of moral values but as a systematic process aimed at shaping individuals who are ethical, critical, adaptive, and firmly rooted in the cultural identity of the nation (Musyawir et al., 2024; Wea & Toron, 2025). National policies reflect this priority through curriculum reforms, the Character Education Strengthening Program (PPK), and the Pancasila Student Profile initiative across formal and non-formal institutions (Arti et al., 2024). Nevertheless, globalization, popular culture, and digital technology continue to introduce competing value systems, making the task of shaping the character of younger generations increasingly complex. Within this context, pesantren occupy a strategic position as Islamic educational institutions that not only transmit religious knowledge but also cultivate students' personality and character in a holistic manner (Noviani et al., 2025). Historically, pesantren have served as spaces for socializing values of religiosity, discipline, independence, and social responsibility. Communal living in dormitories, close interaction with kiai and teachers, and engagement in religious and social activities create an environment rich in value internalization (Lathifah et al., 2025). In many regions, pesantren also function as centers for transmitting local traditions and culture, bridging Islamic teachings with the local wisdom embedded in surrounding communities. This dual function provides pesantren with significant social and cultural capital to respond to contemporary challenges in character education—provided that such potential is managed systematically and contextually.

Existing studies and field observations reveal a persistent gap between the stated objectives of character education in pesantren and its practical outcomes. Students can often articulate definitions of values such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance at the cognitive level, yet their behavioral consistency does not always reflect deep internalization of these values (Nabila et al., 2025). Instances of disciplinary violations, interpersonal conflicts, and limited environmental concern around the pesantren continue to emerge (Fadliyah et al., 2025; Maryam et al., 2024). This gap indicates that character education has not fully addressed the affective and conative dimensions that shape willingness and habitual action. One key contributing factor is the suboptimal integration of local wisdom into character education management—both at the level of written curriculum and everyday practice in classrooms and dormitories. Local wisdom encompasses systems of values, norms, traditions, symbols, and cultural practices recognized and preserved by local communities (Maharani et al., 2024; Ulfa et al., 2025). Values such as mutual cooperation, respect for parents and teachers, deliberation, modesty, and social solidarity reflect local wisdom that aligns with Islamic teachings and is highly relevant to strengthening students' character (Kusuma et al., 2025; Ulfa et al., 2025). The close link between religion and local culture provides a strong contextual foundation for learning, enabling students to understand values not only as abstract moral concepts but as lived cultural practices familiar to their daily lives (Lestari et al., 2024; Oktarini et al., 2025). Without the integration of local wisdom, character education risks becoming generic and overly normative, lacking connection to students lived experiences and failing to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and social reality. Thus, incorporating local wisdom as a learning source and as the foundation of character education management becomes an urgent need in pesantren education development.

Madrasah Tsanawiyah Pesantren Mizanul Ulum Sanrobone in Takalar Regency is situated within a community rich in local cultural traditions. The surrounding society maintains diverse religious, cultural, and social practices that embody educational values—such as communal cooperation in religious events, deep respect toward religious and traditional leaders, and strong communal interaction patterns. Preliminary observations and discussions with teachers indicate that these values are indeed present in students' daily lives, particularly in dormitory activities and social interactions. However, the integration of local wisdom into character education management has not been explicitly documented in curriculum instruments, lesson plans (RPP), or the student development system. As a result, the incorporation of local culture in learning tends to rely on individual teacher initiative and remains informal, making it difficult to evaluate its effectiveness and sustain implementation during personnel changes. This condition reveals a clear gap between the cultural potential possessed by the pesantren and the character education management currently practiced. On one hand, the pesantren and the surrounding community possess a rich reservoir of values rooted in Islamic teachings and local traditions. On the other hand, a deliberate and structured model of character education management that systematically draws upon this local wisdom in planning, implementation, and

evaluation has yet to be established. This gap forms the central focus of the present study. The study posits that integrating local wisdom into character education management requires more than the inclusion of cultural examples or materials; it demands the development of a comprehensive management model that encompasses classroom and dormitory activities, collaboration with traditional leaders and the local community, and character assessment systems aligned with cultural values.

Based on this background, this research seeks to address the key question: How can a context-appropriate, applicable, and culturally grounded model of local wisdom-based character education management be designed for MTs Pesantren Mizanul Ulum Sanrobone to strengthen the internalization of character values among students? This inquiry necessitates an in-depth exploration of current practices of local wisdom integration, the needs and challenges perceived by teachers and students, and the collaborative potential with traditional leaders and the surrounding community. Additionally, the study aims to identify essential elements of learning management—planning, implementation, and evaluation—that must be reconstructed to align with local cultural characteristics and the character education goals of the pesantren. Aligned with the research problem, the overarching aim is to develop a local wisdom-based character education management model suitable for implementation in MTs Pesantren Mizanul Ulum Sanrobone. Specifically, the study aims to: (1) describe the current state of local wisdom integration in learning and character development; (2) analyze the needs and challenges faced by teachers, students, and the pesantren in managing character education; and (3) formulate a character education management model incorporating ethnopedagogical principles, integrated classroom-dormitory activities, collaborative engagement with traditional leaders and local communities, and character assessment systems rooted in cultural values. These objectives are expected to bridge the gap between the cultural potential of the community and existing character education practices that have thus far been partial and informal. Theoretically, the study is grounded in ethnopedagogical perspectives that view local culture as a legitimate source of knowledge, values, and educational practices. This perspective is integrated with learning management theories and Islamic character education principles, resulting in a holistic approach wherein religious values, local cultural traditions, and contemporary societal demands mutually reinforce one another in shaping students' character.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Overview of the Literature

Education for character formation has long been recognized as a foundational component in Islamic educational settings, especially within pesantren and madrasah systems. Studies consistently highlight that character education builds students' moral reasoning, behavioral discipline, and social responsibility qualities essential for navigating a rapidly changing society (Susilo et al., 2022). In the Indonesian context, pesantren remain pivotal institutions for cultivating virtues embedded in Islamic teachings, where learning practices combine religious instruction, habituation, and moral mentoring (Fahham, 2020; Yasid, 2018). Recent scholarship increasingly emphasizes contextualized character education, arguing that value development becomes more meaningful when rooted in students' own cultural backgrounds. This perspective aligns with the principles of ethnopedagogy, which views local wisdom (kearifan lokal) as a legitimate pedagogical resource capable of enhancing identity formation, social cohesion, and student engagement (Umar et al., 2025; Ardiansyah et al., 2024). Despite these advancements, empirical evidence suggests that many educational institutions, including pesantren, still struggle to systematically integrate local wisdom into formal curricula, lesson plans, and assessment frameworks. The literature further notes a significant gap: few structured models operationalize character education based on cultural context in Islamic school settings (Huda & Abid, 2025; Zulfikar et al., 2024). Much of the existing practice remains incidental and teacher-dependent, lacking institutional guidelines. Therefore, the development of a structured model particularly within the traditionally rich cultural environment of Takalar responds directly to this gap and aligns with the growing academic call for culturally responsive education.

2.2. Character Education in Islamic Schools and Pesantren

Character education in pesantren is anchored in the concept of adab, encompassing discipline, spirituality, obedience, and social ethics. Prior research demonstrates that pesantren leverage a combination of role modeling, communal living, ritual practices, and internalization of religious texts as mechanisms for shaping students' character (Fatmah, 2018; Surani & Darmawangsa, 2024). However, scholars also observe that pesantren often prioritize behavioral compliance over cognitive understanding, resulting in what is termed the "knowing-doing gap"—a disconnect between students' declarative knowledge of moral values and their actual behavioral practice of those values. This gap emerges when moral instruction focuses on rule-following rather than on deeper reflection and internalization (knowing doing gap). Several studies call for models that balance doctrinal instruction with critical reflection and real-life contextualization (Manubey et al., 2021; Sholeh et al., 2025). From this perspective, incorporating local cultural narratives and community-based practices is proposed as an effective means to strengthen cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains simultaneously.

2.3. Ethnopedagogy and Local Wisdom in Learning

Ethnopedagogy advocates the use of local culture as a learning resource, enabling students to connect formal learning with their lived experiences. Prior studies show that integrating local wisdom into learning:

- a. Increases students' engagement,
- b. Strengthens cultural identity,
- c. Supports moral reasoning, and
- d. Improves community relevance of schooling (Ufie, 2017; Yumnah, 2023).

In Takalar, values such as kejujuran (honesty), haya' (modesty and sense of propriety), gotong royong (communal cooperation), and respect for elders and ulama are central to social life. Tokoh adat (traditional leaders) traditionally transmit these values through rituals, communal work, storytelling, and symbolic practices. For example, in a successful ethnopedagogical application documented by Nursima et al. (2022), thematic learning organized around local traditions significantly strengthened students' engagement and identity. Similarly, Maharani et al. (2024) found that discovery learning grounded in local cultural practices enhanced character formation outcomes. Scholars argue that when cultural values are embedded in school curricula and institutionalized rather than left informal, students demonstrate deeper value internalization and stronger ties to community identity (Zulfikar et al., 2024). Despite this potential, ethnopedagogy in pesantren remains underdeveloped. Studies report an absence of structured models, lack of teacher training, and limited documentation of cultural practices in formal instructional materials (Maharani et al., 2024; Sukiastini et al., 2024). Thus, theoretical and empirical gaps point to the need for systematic model development. Unlike prior studies that describe cultural integration in general terms, this study specifically develops and validates a four-component management model grounded in Takalar's cultural context.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two primary theoretical foundations:

- a. Ethnopedagogical Theory

Ethnopedagogy argues that indigenous knowledge systems are valid and valuable sources of educational practice, rooted in the philosophical premise that community culture constitutes a legitimate epistemic foundation for formal schooling. It emphasizes the integration of cultural norms, traditions, language, and community practices into curriculum design, teaching strategies, and assessment frameworks.

In the context of this study, ethnopedagogy provides the theoretical lens for identifying, selecting, and operationalizing Takalar's cultural values—such as haya', gotong royong, and respect for traditional authority—into concrete classroom and dormitory learning activities. The rationale for selecting this theory lies in its direct applicability to pesantren settings, where local culture and religious instruction are historically intertwined, and where community-based values can most naturally be woven into daily educational routines.

b. Character Education Management Theory

This framework highlights the essential managerial functions of planning, implementation, and evaluation within character education systems. It provides the structural blueprint for designing an organized model that aligns curriculum development, classroom learning, asrama (dormitory) activities, and community engagement. Character Education Management Theory was selected for its capacity to transform informal cultural practices into institutionalized, replicable, and assessable educational routines—addressing the documented weakness in pesantren where character education depends on individual teachers rather than systematic institutional frameworks. Together, these two frameworks complement each other: ethnopedagogy provides the cultural and pedagogical content, while Character Education Management Theory provides the organizational and procedural structure. The integration produces a Model of Character Education Management Based on Local Wisdom that is both culturally grounded and managerially coherent. The term “managerial coherence” refers to the alignment of institutional goals, instructional practices, assessment criteria, and community roles within a single, consistently implemented framework.

2.5. Hypothesis Development

Although this research adopts a Research and Development (R&D) approach, the development of hypotheses serves to strengthen conceptual justification and provides a basis for empirical testing of the model's effectiveness in subsequent validation stages. Each hypothesis is grounded in prior literature, as articulated below.

H1: The integration of Takalar's local wisdom into learning activities enhances students' engagement in character education. This hypothesis is supported by ethnopedagogical research showing that culturally familiar content increases students' motivation, sense of belonging, and active participation (Nursima et al., 2022; Zulfikar et al., 2024). However, engagement outcomes may vary depending on the consistency of cultural integration across subjects and between teachers.

H2: Teacher readiness and access to structured pedagogical tools enhance the effectiveness of character learning based on local wisdom. Studies confirm that without RPP guidelines and training, cultural integration remains incidental and unsustainable (Maharani et al., 2024; Sumartini et al., 2025). It is acknowledged, however, that teacher capacity alone is insufficient without corresponding institutional support and monitoring mechanisms.

H3: Community participation, especially the involvement of tokoh adat, contributes to students' internalization of character values. This reflects findings that community-embedded values transmitted through respected cultural authorities strengthen students' moral identity beyond what formal instruction can achieve alone (Indriyani & Naidu, 2025; Ulfa et al., 2025). A potential limitation is that community engagement may be difficult to sustain without formal partnership agreements between the pesantren and local cultural institutions.

H4: A structured model of character education management based on local wisdom improves students' behavioral consistency over time. Character education research indicates that systematic habituation, guided reflection, and culturally aligned assessment are necessary to translate value understanding into stable behavioral patterns (Mudrikah et al., 2025; Nabila et al., 2025). Nevertheless, behavioral consistency is difficult to achieve within a short intervention period, and the present study acknowledges the need for longitudinal follow-up to fully validate this hypothesis.

The literature demonstrates the importance of contextualized character education, the pedagogical potential of ethnopedagogy, and the persistent gaps in structured implementation within pesantren. By developing a model that integrates Takalar's local wisdom, teacher support systems, and formal community participation, this study addresses a critical gap in both theory and practice. Unlike previous work that identifies problems without offering actionable frameworks, this study proposes a specific, four-component management model empirically grounded in field findings. The hypotheses generated provide logical extensions of existing research and offer a basis for empirical validation in subsequent stages of the R&D process. This section has sought to demonstrate not only that local wisdom integration is beneficial, but also precisely how it can be operationalized and assessed within pesantren character education management.

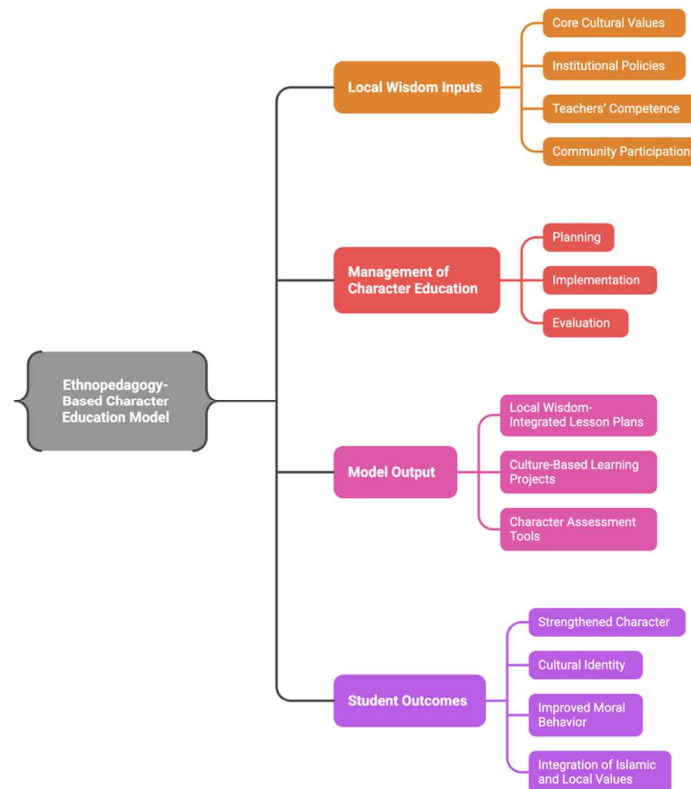


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

III. Research Method

3.1. Research Design

This study adopted a Research and Development (R&D) design to construct, refine, and validate a Local Wisdom-Based Character Education Management Model for Islamic secondary schools. The R&D approach was selected because it enables iterative cycles of analysis, design, and evaluation, producing a model that is both empirically grounded and theoretically coherent. The research proceeded through a continuous sequence of preliminary investigation, needs assessment, model construction, expert validation, and limited field testing. Crucially, this study differs from previous descriptive accounts of local wisdom integration: it not only identifies gaps in practice but systematically constructs and validates a contextual management framework. This dual focus on diagnosis and model-building constitutes the study's primary contribution to the field.

3.2. Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Pesantren Mizanul Ulum Sanrobone in Takalar Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia—a context characterized by strong communal cultural traditions deeply intertwined with Islamic practice. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure the inclusion of information-rich informants directly involved in character education processes. The final sample comprised the head of the madrasah, five classroom teachers, twenty students from grades 7–9, and two traditional cultural leaders (tokoh adat) recognized within the community. This configuration was deliberately chosen to capture the perspectives of all key stakeholders: institutional leadership, instructional practitioners, learners, and community knowledge-holders. Demographic and contextual data were collected from each participant to enhance interpretive depth and allow for nuanced cross-group analysis. The study acknowledges that the relatively small sample size, particularly five teachers and twenty students, limits generalizability. The findings are therefore best understood as contextually rich insights informing model construction rather than as statistically representative conclusions.

3.3. Data Collection

Data collection employed a multi-method approach: semi-structured interviews, classroom and dormitory observations, perception questionnaires, and document analysis. Interviews followed structured protocols drawn from established constructs in character education, ethnopedagogy, and learning management, and were designed to elicit in-depth perspectives from each stakeholder group. Observations were conducted across both formal instructional settings and informal dormitory routines to capture authentic behavioral patterns and cultural interactions. Questionnaires administered to teachers (n=5) and students (n=20) provided complementary quantitative data on perceptions of local wisdom integration and its effectiveness. Document analysis—encompassing lesson plans (RPP), curriculum frameworks, and assessment rubrics—allowed for a systematic evaluation of how formally local cultural values had been embedded in institutional practices. Data were gathered over a twelve-week period, enabling observation of variations across routine school days, dormitory activities, and scheduled cultural events.

3.4. Trustworthiness and Rigor

To ensure methodological rigor, all instruments underwent expert review and pilot testing prior to deployment. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Field notes and observational records were systematically documented using structured observation sheets. Qualitative coding was performed independently by two coders, with inter-rater reliability discussed and resolved through consensus. Member checking with key participants helped verify the accuracy of interpretations, and an audit trail was maintained to ensure full transparency in analytical decision-making. Potential researcher biases—including subjectivity in thematic coding and the influence of researcher presence during observations—were managed through reflexive journaling and peer debriefing. These procedures align with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis integrated qualitative and quantitative methods in a sequential explanatory design. Qualitative data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive framework: data reduction (selecting and condensing relevant information), data display (organizing information into tables and thematic categories), and conclusion drawing (deriving interpretive insights). Coding was conducted both inductively—allowing themes to emerge organically from participants' responses—and deductively, mapping emergent themes against the theoretical constructs of ethnopedagogy and character education management. Three main thematic clusters emerged: (1) local cultural integration is undocumented in formal

curriculum, (2) teachers are enthusiastic but lack structured guidance, and (3) cultural leaders hold essential knowledge that remains institutionally untapped. Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) to identify patterns of perception and readiness among teachers and students. These statistics were subsequently interpreted alongside qualitative findings to provide a fuller, triangulated picture. The integration of qualitative depth with quantitative breadth strengthened the overall credibility of the findings and provided a robust, multi-dimensional foundation for the proposed learning management model.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity was maintained throughout all phases of the study. Prior to data collection, all participants were provided with written informed consent forms explaining the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. For student participants (minors), written consent was additionally obtained from parents or guardians. Participant anonymity and confidentiality were preserved by using coded identifiers in all records. Data were stored on password-protected devices and accessed only by the research team. All procedures were reviewed and approved in accordance with the institutional ethical guidelines of Universitas Muslim Indonesia, Makassar. No ethically sensitive dilemmas arose during data collection; however, care was taken in observations to avoid disrupting normal classroom and dormitory routines, and any perceived discomfort among participants was addressed immediately through debriefing conversations after each session.

3.7. Significance and Future Implications

The methodological choices in this study were guided by the need to develop a model that is both theoretically grounded and practically applicable. The R&D framework, purposive sampling, multi-method data collection, and rigorous analytic procedures collectively ensure that the resulting model reflects authentic educational conditions, cultural realities, and pedagogical needs. The significance of this study extends beyond MTs Pesantren Mizanul Ulum Sanrobone: the four-component framework developed here—ethnopedagogy as a philosophical foundation, integrated classroom-dormitory activities, community collaboration, and cultural character assessment—is readily adaptable to other pesantren and madrasah contexts in culturally rich regions of Indonesia. Future research is recommended to conduct experimental validation of the model across multiple sites, to examine the long-term effects of cultural integration on students' behavioral consistency, and to explore how digital technologies might support the documentation and dissemination of local wisdom-based learning materials.

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1. Analysis Results

Table 1. Interview Findings (Data Condensation)

Respondent	Key Findings	Implications
Head of Madrasah	Strong character-education policies, but local culture is not reflected in curriculum documents	A documented ethnopedagogical model is needed
Teachers	Character education is implemented, but integration of local culture is not systematic	Requires RPP guidelines, character rubrics, and culture-based projects
Students	Positive responses to lessons using local cultural examples	Local wisdom is effective as a learning bridge

Cultural Leaders	Core values: honesty, modesty (<i>haya</i>), mutual cooperation (<i>gotong royong</i>)	Collaboration between pesantren and cultural leaders is needed in learning activities
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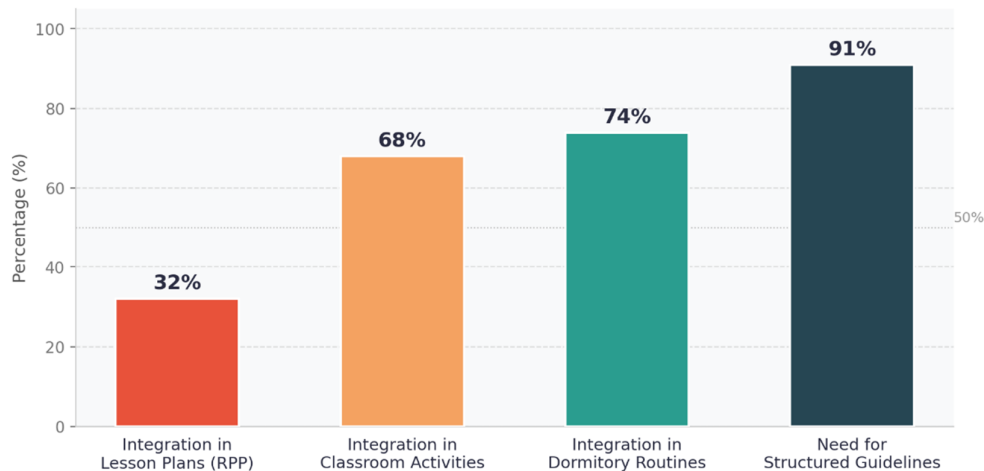


Figure 2. Teachers’ Perceptions of Local Wisdom Integration in Learning (n = 5)

The percentage of local wisdom integration in lesson plans (RPP), which stands at only 32%, indicates that teachers rarely document local cultural values and practices explicitly within their instructional plans. As a result, local wisdom has not yet become a standardized component of the written curriculum. In contrast, the higher levels of integration observed in classroom activities (68%) and dormitory routines (74%) suggest that teachers and dormitory supervisors tend to incorporate cultural examples, traditions, and practices more spontaneously during instruction and daily student mentoring. The very high percentage reflecting the need for structured guidelines (91%) further demonstrates that teachers perceive a strong need for written guidance, exemplar teaching materials, and clear curricular models to ensure that the integration of local wisdom does not rely solely on individual initiative.

These findings align with previous ethnopedagogical studies showing that local culture-based character reinforcement in many schools and pesantren often occurs through daily routines, traditional games, and nonformal activities rather than through well-structured written curricula (Arifin et al., 2023; Nabila et al., 2025; Nursima et al., 2022). Several studies also emphasize that without robust curricular planning, the integration of local culture risks becoming unsustainable, overly dependent on particular teachers, and difficult to evaluate in terms of character outcomes (Maharani et al., 2024; Sukiastini et al., 2024; Ulfa et al., 2025). This underscores the necessity of developing RPP and curriculum documents that explicitly articulate objectives, content, methods, and assessments grounded in local wisdom, so that effective practices already occurring in classrooms and dormitory settings can be documented, institutionalized, and replicated (Indahwati, 2025; Sukiastini et al., 2024; Sumartini et al., 2025).

Educational institutions could therefore develop comprehensive guidelines for integrating local wisdom, including value maps, sample learning activities, and standardized formats for teaching materials, accompanied by teacher training. Such efforts would ensure that ethnopedagogical approaches evolve from informal, individually driven practices into a planned, institutionalized strategy. The finding that teachers perceive greater cultural integration in daily classroom and dormitory activities compared to RPP documentation reinforces existing literature indicating that ethnopedagogy often operates informally in the absence of strong curricular planning (Kusrianto et al., 2025; Maharani et al., 2024).

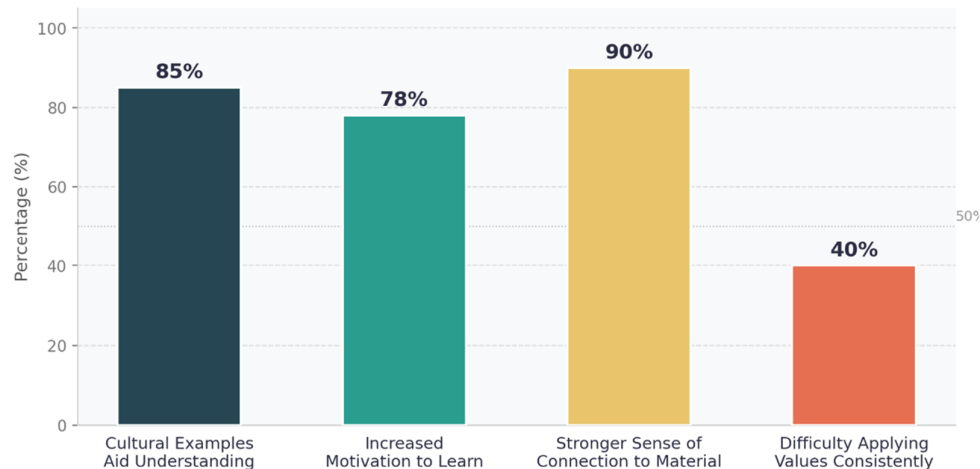


Figure 3. Students' Perceptions of Local Wisdom Effectiveness in Character Value Understanding (n = 20)

A total of 85% of students reported that examples drawn from local culture made it easier for them to understand character values. This indicates a strong cognitive function in which abstract concepts become simplified through concrete, familiar illustrations embedded in everyday lived experiences. Furthermore, 78% stated that cultural examples increased their motivation to learn, suggesting that learning materials grounded in students' own cultural backgrounds enhance interest and emotional engagement in character education. The highest percentage, 90%, affirmed feeling a stronger sense of connection to the learning material when character values were linked to local cultural practices. This finding reflects the presence of identity resonance and a sense of ownership toward the values being taught. However, 40% of students still reported difficulty in consistently applying the values in daily life, demonstrating that understanding and emotional attachment do not automatically translate into consistent behavioral enactment. This gap underscores the continuing need for habituation, structured mentoring, and sustained reinforcement within the pesantren environment.

The use of local culture facilitates value internalization through the stages of understanding, accepting, and embodying values prior to their manifestation in concrete behavior. This process is widely emphasized in research on local wisdom-based character education (Mudrikah et al., 2025; Nabila et al., 2025; Ulfa et al., 2025). Students' emotional engagement with culturally familiar symbols, stories, and practices makes values personally meaningful, thereby strengthening moral identity and their sense of belonging within the pesantren community (Aliyah et al., 2025; Lestari et al., 2024). In this regard, students clearly experience both cognitive and affective benefits from local culture-based learning, which aligns with studies showing that cultural relevance not only facilitates value internalization but also reinforces students' moral identity (Indriyani & Naidu, 2025). The finding that cultural integration strengthens character identity is also consistent with previous work demonstrating that local wisdom-based character education fosters cultural pride and a deep sense of ownership toward community values (Kaize et al., 2025; Maharani et al., 2025; Sukiastini et al., 2024). The rationale for a culturally grounded learning management approach is further supported by scholarship emphasizing the importance of aligning the learning environment, instructional materials, and social interactions with the cultural context of learners. Moreover, literature on the role of traditional communities highlights that the involvement of cultural leaders and customary institutions plays a substantial role in transmitting values and maintaining social norms. This reinforces the need for structured collaboration with cultural actors as a foundational pillar in the proposed learning management model (Amalia & Widiyono, 2025; Ulfa et al., 2025).

4.2. Discussion

Data condensation reveals that the integration of local culture within the pesantren remains largely spontaneous and is not yet supported by strong curricular documentation. Although teachers show high enthusiasm, cultural leaders possess rich cultural knowledge, and students respond positively, these potentials have not been organized within a coherent and structured learning management system. This finding confirms the central premise of the study and distinguishes its approach from prior descriptive accounts by proposing a concrete framework for institutionalization. The following discussion elaborates the three principal themes emerging from the data and connects each to the proposed management model, while acknowledging relevant limitations. Three central themes emerged from the data analysis. First, “local cultural integration is undocumented”: the limited inclusion of local wisdom within RPP and instructional materials means that effective informal practices in classrooms and dormitories remain difficult to replicate, and lack clear quality standards for evaluation. This confirms findings by Maharani et al. (2024) and Sukiastini et al. (2024) that absence of documentation is the primary structural barrier to ethnopedagogical institutionalization. Second, “teachers are enthusiastic but lack guidance”: the 91% of teachers who expressed a need for written guidelines indicates strong professional will but insufficient institutional scaffolding—a pattern consistent with research on the necessity of culturally grounded learning management frameworks (Sumartini et al., 2025). Third, “cultural leaders hold essential cultural knowledge”: tokoh adat represent strategic repositories of values, symbols, and narrative traditions that, when formally engaged, can significantly enrich the pesantren’s character education programming. Critically, however, collaboration with cultural leaders requires institutionalized agreements rather than informal goodwill, as the latter is fragile and non-transferable when personnel change.

The data display drawn from students and teachers forms a sequential pattern: the integration of local wisdom occurs informally, which generates strong student engagement, yet simultaneously reveals the need for a formal model capable of organizing and structuring these cultural learning experiences. The literature on local wisdom-based character education similarly notes that when local culture is introduced only incidentally, its impact on identity formation often depends on specific teachers and is difficult to sustain over time (Arifin et al., 2023; Maharani et al., 2024; Sukiastini et al., 2024). Based on this pattern, the study concludes that a learning management model is required that combines four key components: (1) ethnopedagogy as a philosophical foundation, (2) synergistic integration of classroom and dormitory activities, (3) systematic collaboration with cultural leaders, and (4) explicit character assessment based on local cultural values. Such an approach enables cultural values not only to be taught but also enacted through institutional routines and monitored through measurable indicators, fostering more directed and observable character development. It is important to acknowledge the study’s primary limitation: the small purposive sample (5 teachers, 20 students, 2 cultural leaders) precludes statistical generalization. The findings are best understood as the empirical foundation for model construction rather than as broadly representative population-level conclusions. Future studies should employ larger samples and experimental designs to validate the model’s effectiveness across diverse pesantren contexts.

The finding that cultural integration strengthens character identity aligns with studies showing that local wisdom-based character education cultivates cultural pride and a sense of ownership toward community values (Kaize et al., 2025; Maharani et al., 2025; Sukiastini et al., 2024). The rationale for a culturally grounded learning management approach is further supported by research emphasizing the need to align the learning environment, instructional materials, and social interactions with learners’ cultural contexts. Additionally, literature on the role of customary communities underscores that the involvement of traditional leaders and cultural institutions significantly contributes to value transmission and social regulation, making their collaboration a foundational pillar in the proposed learning management model (Amalia & Widiyono, 2025; Ulfa et al., 2025).

V. Conclusion

This study developed a Local Wisdom-Based Character Education Management Model for MTs Pesantren Mizanul Ulum Sanrobone and generated empirical support for the four hypotheses formulated in Section 2.5. Overall, the findings confirm that local wisdom possesses substantial pedagogical power in strengthening students' understanding, motivation, and moral identity. At the same time, its integration within instructional management remains insufficiently documented in formal curriculum instruments. Teachers exhibit strong enthusiasm but lack systematic guidelines; cultural leaders hold rich cultural knowledge that has not been formally engaged by the institution; and students demonstrate positive cognitive and affective responses but still require structured mentoring to achieve behavioral consistency. Taken together, these insights highlight the need for a structured, comprehensive, and ethnopedagogically grounded learning management model to institutionalize the cultural potential embedded within the pesantren context. Several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the small sample size (five teachers, twenty students, and two cultural leaders) reflects purposive selection for model construction rather than statistical representativeness. Second, the study does not include experimental validation of the model, as full pilot implementation and evaluation constitute the subsequent stage of the R&D process. Third, findings are situated within a single pesantren in Takalar and may not fully generalize to pesantren in different regional or cultural contexts without adaptation.

This study reinforces the argument that local wisdom is not merely an auxiliary component of instruction but an epistemic framework capable of grounding character education within multicultural communities. The findings contribute additional empirical evidence that value internalization through cultural approaches operates along mutually reinforcing cognitive-affective pathways, consistent with ethnopedagogical and Islamic character education theories. The integration of classroom and dormitory activities, collaboration with cultural leaders, and culturally rooted character assessment expands the scope of learning management theory by illustrating that character formation emerges not only through formal instruction but also through a holistically managed cultural ecosystem. Consequently, this study enriches theoretical discourse by proposing a model in which local culture functions as a core structural element in character education management. From a managerial standpoint, this study offers concrete directions for educational institutions seeking to systematize the integration of local wisdom. First, the findings underscore the need to revise curriculum and lesson plans (RPP) to explicitly embed objectives, content, methods, and assessments based on local cultural values. In practice, this can be achieved by developing a "local wisdom value map" that correlates specific cultural practices with character education competencies, serving as a reference tool for teachers when designing lessons. Second, schools and pesantren should establish formal partnership agreements with cultural leaders, incorporating scheduled contributions such as cultural storytelling sessions, participation in communal activities, and advisory roles in developing culturally aligned character assessment rubrics. Third, teachers require institutional support in the form of structured professional development training, sample culturally integrated lesson plans, and observable character assessment tools. The model produced in this study provides a ready-to-implement framework for adopting an ethnopedagogical learning management approach that enables character formation to proceed more systematically, measurably, and sustainably. Future research should extend this work through: (1) large-scale experimental validation of the model across multiple pesantren, (2) longitudinal studies examining behavioral change over academic years rather than a twelve-week window, and (3) digital documentation platforms that preserve and share local wisdom-based teaching materials across institutions.

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