

## STRATEGY OF INTEGRATION OF LOCAL WISDOM IN THE CURRICULUM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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### Abstract

In a context of globalization that is increasingly eroding local values and cultural identities, the integration of local wisdom into higher education curricula offers an innovative solution to preserve and enhance those values. The research aims to identify and analyse effective strategies in integrating local intelligence into the curriculum, as well as measure its impact on student character education and multicultural abilities. The methods used in this research include examining literature by looking for literature in accordance with the context of the research. The findings show that the integration of local wisdom can be realized through several ways, such as inclusion in learning materials, the establishment of extracurricular activities that focus on local values, as well as the development of a school culture that embraces local identity. This strategy not only enriches students' learning experiences by introducing them to traditional values and practices, but also strengthens character education through the internalization of values such as diversity, tolerance, and appreciation of other cultures.

**Keywords:** strategy, integration, local wisdom, curriculum, higher education.

### Introduction

In today's era of globalization and modernization, there is a tendency to neglect the values of local wisdom that actually has great potential to enrich educational processes and outcomes, especially in higher education. (Hidayati et al., 2020). Local wisdom, which contains the values, knowledge, and practices that evolve in local communities, often does not get a decent place in educational curricula that tend to

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adopt global standards and paradigms. (Mardhiah et al., 2021). In fact, integrating local wisdom into education can enrich curricula, teaching methods, and learning materials, as well as help students to feel more deeply about their identity, appreciate diversity, and strengthen social and environmental values.

Local wisdom, as a manifestation of knowledge, values, and practices that are growing and inherited in a particular society, serves as a bridge that connects students with their cultural roots as well as their social environment (Suprpto et al., 2021). Integrating local wisdom into education helps build a strong foundation for students to understand their identity, enhance pride and appreciation of cultural heritage, and strengthen connectivity with their communities. More than that, this approach opens up students' insights into innovative solutions that come from local knowledge in responding to global problems, from environmental conservation to social issues. (Amri et al., 2021).

In addition, local wisdom provides an alternative lens and is often very relevant to understanding and addressing a variety of contemporary challenges. By covering knowledge that has been tested by time, it has the potential to enhance teaching methods with a more in-depth and applied context, encouraging experiential and participatory learning (Yamin, M. 2017). It also enables students to develop critical and creative thinking, as well as better adaptability, amid rapid social change and global environments. In relation to higher education, where the formation of analytical and innovative capacity is strongly emphasized, the integration of local wisdom not only advances culturally relevant education but also supports the cultivation of global competences that are essential for the future of students. (Polii, B. D., & Permana, D. E. 2021).

Higher education has a strategic role in preparing individuals who are not only competent in academic and professional fields, but also have a strong social awareness, empathy, and understanding of local and global contexts (Hajar, I., & Ezir, E. 2018). This requires a mature strategy to integrate local wisdom into the curriculum of higher education, so that students can develop sensitivity and appreciation for their own social and cultural environment as well as the global community. (Baderiah, B., & Munawir, A. 2024).

However, the integration of local wisdom into the curriculum of higher education faces many challenges. One of the major challenges is resistance to curriculum changes that have been established. (Bakhtiar, A. M. 2016). Many higher education institutions have curricula that are structured and designed to meet international or national academic standards, so adaptation to accommodate local wisdom requires significant effort and resources. Concerns about reduced focus on academic and professional competence to give room to local intellectual content became one of the reasons behind this. (Kristanto, A. 2019). This is combined with resource constraints, both in terms of learning materials related to local intelligence and

training for teachers to design and implement these new approaches effectively. (Zulela et al., 2022).

Moreover, the lack of understanding or appreciation of local wisdom both among policymakers and educators is another significant challenge. (Parhan, M., & Dwiputra, D. F. K. 2023). There is still a perception that local knowledge is less relevant or not in line with the standards of higher education can hinder integration efforts. This challenge is exacerbated by the diversity of local intelligence itself which can make it difficult to identify and select the most suitable content to be integrated into a diverse curriculum. It requires hard work and commitment from all stakeholders in revising curricula, raising awareness and understanding of the value of local wisdom, as well as developing teaching methods that can adapt local Wisdom to a modern and global educational context. (Santosa et al., 2021).

Therefore, research into strategies for integrating local wisdom into higher education is becoming highly relevant. The research aims to identify successful strategies and explore the potential benefits and challenges of integrating them into the curriculum of higher education, with the hope of providing applicable and relevant recommendations for future higher education development.

This research is expected to provide new insights into how higher education can contribute to the preservation of local wisdom while producing graduates who are not only academically and professionally superior, but also socially and culturally rich.

## **Research Method**

The method of literary research is an approach used in academic research to gather, review, and analyze literary sources relevant to research topics. (Zed, 2004; Sugiyono, 2010). The process is carried out by researchers looking for references from various reliable sources to strengthen the theoretical basis or conceptual framework in their research. This method of literary research involves various steps, ranging from searching for relevant keywords in various databases and catalogues, to the process of selecting literature to be used as a reference in research. (Rachmawati, 2017; Rahardjo, 2011). Each stage in the literature study research methodology is designed to ensure that all data and information collected is valid and reliable to serve as a basis in answering research questions.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Local wisdom**

Local wisdom is knowledge, values, and practices that have been developed and passed on from generation to generation within a community. This knowledge is often integrated with the habits, rituals, languages, works of art, technology, and social organization of the community. (Fajarini, U. 2014). Local wisdom reflects the unique way of life and the adaptation of people to their social and natural environment, which helps

them to survive and thrive. In this context, local wisdom is more than simple knowledge; it is a complex knowledge system, involving a deep understanding of local ecology, social, economic, and cultural (Aslan, 2017).

The scope of local wisdom is wide and varied, depending on the geographical, social, and cultural context of each community. It covers various aspects, ranging from natural resource management, traditional agricultural techniques, traditional medicine, to a system of beliefs and moral values that guide social behavior in communities. (Putra & Aslan, 2019). Local wisdom also includes adaptation strategies to environmental and socio-economic changes, enabling communities to maintain their sustainability and well-being. In some places, local wisdom has played an important role in environmental conservation, through practices such as a private system of natural resource management and in-depth knowledge of biodiversity. (Ahimsa-Putra, H. S. 2009).

However, while local wisdom is a valuable asset for communities, it is often threatened by modernization, globalization, and rapid socio-economic change. Local wisdom faces the challenge of survival and relevance in today's era, where the influence of external cultures and new technologies is rapidly spreading and can replace traditional knowledge and practice. (Nurasiah et al., 2022). Studying and preserving local wisdom is not only essential to preserve the identity and wisdom of those communities but can also provide innovative and sustainable solutions to a range of contemporary problems, ranging from natural resource management to climate change adaptation strategies. Therefore, giving room to local wisdom in global discourse and decision-making becomes highly strategic (Wafiqni, N., & Nurani, S. 2018).

Local wisdom has spread widely across the world, offering unique solutions to environmental and social challenges. In Indonesia, for example, the Subak system in Bali is a traditional irrigation method for peanut farming that has lasted for centuries, blending the technical knowledge of irrigations with the spiritual concept of Tri Hita Karana that promotes harmony between man, nature, and God. (Yetti, E. 2011). In Africa, the Himba people in Namibia utilize their customary knowledge in the pasturing and management of natural resources that enable them to adapt to harsh desert conditions. (Muhammad, F., & Yosefin, Y. 2021). Meanwhile, in South America, indigenous Amazonians use a wide range of traditional knowledge about forest biodiversity, which includes the use of medicinal plants for medicines and sustainable hunting strategies. All these examples show how local wisdom helps communities not only preserve their identity and cultural heritage but also contribute to the management of natural resources and adaptation to sustainable environmental change. (Tumanggor, R. 2007).

### **Curriculum of Higher Education**

Higher education curriculum standards refer to a set of criteria and norms designed to ensure that higher education institutions provide quality education relevant to the needs of professions, industries, and current and future global challenges.

(Barnett, R. 2009). These standards are usually established by national or international accreditation bodies, as well as the government or educational institutions themselves, to guide the development of curricula, learning materials, teaching methods, and evaluation of learning outcomes (Bridges, D. 2000). The curriculum standards of higher education aim to ensure that graduates have the competences needed to succeed in the labour market, promote innovation and research, and develop critical, creative, and communication skills of students. (Chan et al., 2017).

In a global context, the standards of higher education curricula often reflect the need for adaptation to technological, economic, and social changes (Sitopu et al., 2024). These include the application of information technology in the learning process, the cultivation of multidisciplinary education, as well as the emphasis on project-based learning and international cooperation. (Guna et al., 2024). In addition, there is a strong impetus for inclusive and sustainable curricula, which focus not only on intellectual development, but also on character formation, social awareness, and environmental responsibility. This flexible and responsive curriculum is designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to navigate the complexities of the contemporary world and make a positive contribution to society (O'Neill, G. 2015).

The curriculum of higher education plays an important role in adapting and interacting with the socio-cultural environment in which such educational institutions are located. A well-designed curriculum that recognizes and takes into account the unique values, practices, and challenges present in the society where students and graduates will work and interact (Fung, D. 2017). The integration of social and cultural contexts into the curriculum supports the development of an attitude of empathy, a deep inter-cultural understanding, and the ability to adapt and innovate in a variety of social settings. For example, curricula that incorporate local case studies, collaboration with local communities, or research related to local socio-cultural issues, not only enrich student learning experiences but also enhance the relevance and positive impact of higher education on society. (Ashwin, P. 2014).

Furthermore, higher education that recognizes and responds to socio-cultural diversity can prepare graduates to become leaders and professionals with a global and local awareness. It includes opportunities for students in understanding multicultural perspectives through an exchange program, international research collaboration, or courses that offer comparative views on global issues. (Fallows, S., & Steven, C. 2000). Thus, a responsive curriculum to the socio-cultural environment not only strengthens the relationship between the university and society, but also paves the way for its graduates to contribute effectively in solving the increasingly complex social, economic, and environmental problems in the era of globalization. (Roberts, P. 2015).

Thus, a higher education curriculum relevant to the socio-cultural environment strengthens the relationship between university and society as well as prepares graduates to become empathic, visionary, and innovative global and local leaders.

Through the integration of socio-cultural contexts and emphasis on multicultural awareness, higher education has the potential not only to improve the quality of learning but also to make a significant contribution to sustainable social and cultural development.

### **Integration of local wisdom into the curriculum of higher education**

The integration of cultural values into education is an important process for building an understanding and appreciation for cultural diversity as well as for instilling values and ethics that are the source of local wisdom. (Hidayati et al., 2020). In education, this can be done through curricula designed to include learning materials that introduce students to values, traditions, languages, and cultural expressions of different communities, both at the local and global levels. (Mardhiah et al., 2021). Education that integrates cultural values teaches students to recognize the richness and complexity of different cultural perspectives, promote an understanding of themselves and others, and form intercultural communication skills. It also helps students understand how cultural factors influence individual and group behavior, political decisions, and economic and social dynamics. (Suprpto et al., 2021).

In addition, the integration of cultural values in education can be an effective tool for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. (Amri et al., 2021). By incorporating studies of art, music, literature, and philosophy derived from different cultural traditions into the curriculum, education can help students develop respect and pride for their heritage while expanding their understanding of other cultures. (Yamin, M. 2017). It fosters an attitude of tolerance, empathy, and unity in the midst of differences, as well as preparing students to participate in an increasingly global society while maintaining a unique cultural identity. Through education that celebrates and preserves cultural diversity, future generations can be equipped with the necessary tools to foster constructive intercultural dialogue and peace. (Polii, B. D., & Permana, D. E. 2021).

Thus, the integration of cultural values into education is a critical step in enhancing intercultural understanding, teaching tolerance, and preserving identity and cultural heritage. (Hajar, I., & Ezir, E. 2018). By introducing students to diverse traditions and perspectives, as well as highlighting the importance of cultural heritage, education not only expands their insights but also cultivates respect and pride for cultural diversity in this globalized world. (Baderiah, B., & Munawir, A. 2024).

The strategy of integrating local wisdom into the curriculum of higher education requires a holistic and inclusive approach, in which the content and methods of learning are adapted to reflect and leverage the wealth of local knowledge and practice. (Bakhtiar, A. M. 2016). It can start with the development of curricula involving local stakeholders, including local intellectuals, community leaders, and industry practitioners, to ensure that the materials taught are relevant and applicable to address the specific challenges of local communities. (Kristanto, A. 2019). The academic program

can be designed to combine research projects that focus on local issues, community-based case studies, and workshops that enable students to engage directly in the application of local wisdom in real-world contexts. This approach encourages students to not only understand the theory but also appreciate how local knowledge and practice can be used for innovative and sustainable solutions (Zulela et al., 2022).

The curriculum can also be enriched with experiential learning, where students get the opportunity to plunge directly into the local community and learn from real life. (Parhan, M., & Dwiputra, D. F. K. 2023). This can include field visits, collaborative projects with local organizations or companies, and internship opportunities where students can see and contribute to the real application of local wisdom in a particular industry or sector. (Santosa et al., 2021). By enhancing student involvement in a real context, higher education can help inspire innovation based on local values and wisdom, ensuring that graduates not only have the necessary technical skills but also an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural context in which they will work. It will give birth to a new generation of leaders and professionals who are not only global but also deeply rooted in the values and wisdom of their local environment. (Fajarini, U. 2014).

Thus, integrating local wisdom into higher education curricula requires close collaboration with local communities and industry as well as an experience-based learning approach. It not only enriches students' learning experiences with practical and applied knowledge but also arms them with a deeper understanding of the values and principles that shape local societies and industries. The result is graduates who are ready to improve and innovate in their practice, while remaining faithful to important local values.

### **Local wisdom in adding value to educational outcomes**

Local wisdom, which is a legacy of knowledge, traditions, and values accumulated by a community and transferred from generation to generation, offers a valuable additional dimension in education. When local wisdom is integrated into curricula and teaching, it adds value to educational outcomes by instilling a sense of respect for knowledge and practice that has been tested by time. (Ahimsa-Putra, H. S. 2009). Students who are introduced to these concepts can develop a deeper understanding of their environment, respond more intuitively and ethically to social problems, and leverage innovative thinking based on traditional approaches (Nurasiah et al., 2022). Connecting more modern theory with local wisdom also enriches classroom discussions and analyzes contemporary issues in a broader context, enabling a more holistic understanding of global challenges and solutions rooted in local understanding (Wafiqni, N., & Nurani, S. 2018).

In addition, the use of local wisdom in education offers a unique perspective in the learning process, provides a relatable context for students and increases the relevance of material to real experiences. It invites students to see value in local

practices and explore how these principles can be integrated into innovative solutions to modern problems (Yetti, E. 2011). Local wisdom helps bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world needs, encouraging students to be more critical and reflective (Muhammad, F., & Yosefin, Y. 2021). Thus, local intelligence improves students' adaptability, prepares them to work effectively in a variety of contexts—both local and global—and makes them valuable assets for society and the labour market. (Tumanggor, R. 2007).

Moreover, by integrating local wisdom into higher education, the institution indirectly contributes to the preservation of culture. It's important in an increasingly uniform world, where locality and cultural identity are often crushed by globalization. (Barnett, R. 2009). Education that respects and nurtures local wisdom equips students with a sense of responsibility to preserve and enrich their cultural heritage while promoting sustainable and responsible innovation (Bridges, D. 2000). Furthermore, through the appreciation and application of local wisdom, graduates become promoters and protectors of culture, ensuring that valuable knowledge and practices are not forgotten, but are continually renewed and applied in a contemporary context. (Chan et al., 2017).

Thus, the conclusion that can be drawn is that local wisdom adds value to educational outcomes by enriching student understanding, increasing the relevance and applicability of education, and promoting cultural preservation. This integration of traditional knowledge and values helps in preparing students to be comprehensive, innovative, and socially responsible thinkers, while ensuring that cultural heritage remains valuable and relevant in an ever-changing world.

## **Conclusion**

The strategy of integrating local wisdom into the curriculum of higher education can be used as an effective measure to implement character education in schools. This integration can be carried out in a variety of ways, including integration into subjects, extracurricular, school culture, as well as specific learning modules. The use of local wisdom in educational curricula aims to strengthen the cultural values and local identity of students, so that they not only acquire academic knowledge but also build character and value their own culture. The integration of the values of local Wisdom in higher education can also support the creation of multicultural education, which is important in the context of a plural and diverse society. Teachers and lecturers like Pancasila have a vital role in incorporating local wisdom values into education as an effort to strengthen social integration and enrich learning from cultural aspects.

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