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Literacy Character Education Planning to Strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile through Local Culture in Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

This study explores the planning of character education projects to strengthen the Pancasila student profile through local culture in early childhood education at TK Sukoharjo 1 and TK Desa Majasto 02. Employing a descriptive qualitative case study approach, data were gathered through interviews, observations, and document studies. The findings reveal comprehensive strategies for planning, implementing, and evaluating character education projects. At TK Sukoharjo 01, the project involved forming a facilitator team, identifying readiness stages, and developing specific learning modules. Implementation utilized real-life experiences such as gardening and local markets, while evaluation focused on cooperation, communication, and care. At TK Desa Majasto 02, the project preparation included curriculum development, facilitator team formation, and methods centered around the local culture of "Ngapem," emphasizing global diversity, cooperation, and independence. The implications of these findings are profound for educational policy and practice. Integrating local cultural practices into character education effectively strengthens the Pancasila student profile, fostering values essential for national cohesion and global citizenship. These insights suggest that policymakers and educators should adopt similar culturally embedded educational frameworks, ensuring that character education is theoretically sound, practically relevant, and contextually appropriate. Despite the promising outcomes, limitations include the study's scope confined to two early childhood centers and reliance on qualitative data. Future research should explore applying similar projects in diverse settings, investigating long-term impacts, and integrating quantitative measures to enhance the evidence base.

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Introduction

Character education development in early childhood is a fundamental pillar in nurturing Indonesian citizens with noble character. Character education transcends mere instruction on right and wrong, embedding a habitual process of good behavior that allows children to understand, feel, and act appropriately, thus cultivating good character traits. In the current era, technological advancements significantly influence children's thinking patterns and character, necessitating enhanced character value integration to uplift national dignity, particularly in the educational realm (Farjon et al., 2019; Hasan & Mustakim, 2020; Komalasari & Saripudin, 2018; Sukestiyarno et al., 2019). As society becomes increasingly complex and diverse, the role of character education in shaping ethical, responsible, and empathetic individuals becomes even more crucial (Sarkadi et al., 2020; Zakiah et al., 2023). Furthermore, character education is essential for fostering social cohesion and resilience, equipping young learners with the moral compass needed to navigate the challenges of the modern world (Utami et al., 2023).

Character education has been a focal issue in Indonesia since 2012, with various reports highlighting the character crisis among the younger generation (Abdi, 2018). Contemporary issues such as cheating, bullying, littering, tardiness, absenteeism, and violence are prevalent,

reflecting deviations from societal norms and moral values (Jhon et al., 2021). Social-emotional problems manifest in behaviors like hitting, pushing, name-calling, and threatening, which can lead to bullying, indicating a significant need for strengthened character education (Hidayati et al., 2020; Pike et al., 2020). Studies have shown that effective character education can mitigate these issues by fostering student empathy, respect, and ethical behavior (Dasmana et al., 2022; Nurhayati et al., 2022). Moreover, addressing these behavioral problems early can prevent more severe issues in the later stages of life, highlighting the importance of early intervention (Ashar et al., 2024; Ratnawati et al., 2024).

The Indonesian government has been proactive in reforming the educational system, exemplified by introducing the Merdeka Belajar curriculum to produce an exemplary generation imbued with Pancasila values (Rifqi Hamzah et al., 2022). This curriculum focuses on six dimensions to be developed early on faith, autonomy, cooperation, global diversity, critical thinking, and creativity (Kemenikbudristek, 2022; Nafsia et al., 2020; Nucci, 2019). Embedding character education within local cultural contexts is crucial for preventing the erosion of cultural values and enhancing character development (Iswatiningsih, 2019). Research indicates that integrating cultural elements in education enriches the learning experience and instills students' sense of identity and pride (Mahmudah & Putra, 2021; Sulistiawati et al., 2023). This approach aligns with global educational trends emphasizing culturally responsive pedagogy, which has been shown to improve student engagement and achievement (Ariusnita & Bayu, 2023; Astawaa et al., 2024).

To foster a generation grounded in national values, integrating character education with local cultural values is imperative (Ramdani, 2018; Wulandari, 2017; Zidniyati, 2018). Strengthening character education through local wisdom aids in cultural preservation and instills a sense of pride and identity among students. Local wisdom, encompassing daily life practices and knowledge, is vital in character education, enhancing students' understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage (Mahmudah & Putra, 2021; Sulistiawati et al., 2023). This is particularly important in diverse societies like Indonesia, where local traditions and customs play a significant role in community life (Afriliani et al., 2023; Zakso et al., 2021). Studies have demonstrated that culturally relevant teaching can bridge the gap between students' home and school environments, fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational experience (Nabila et al., 2021; Sakti et al., 2024).

Utilizing local culture in character education projects within the Merdeka curriculum offers a unique approach to preserving local traditions amidst globalization and technological advances (Nugraha et al., 2022). Observations in Sukoharjo District reveal that 8 kindergartens under the School Movers program and 343 kindergartens implementing the Merdeka Curriculum independently have incorporated character education projects emphasizing Pancasila through local culture, despite facing challenges such as teacher knowledge gaps and resource constraints (Rohendi, 2014; Wicaksonowati, 2022). Local cultural practices, such as traditional dances and culinary traditions, provide rich content for character education projects, helping children connect with their heritage while developing essential life skills (Hartono, 2016; Indriastiningsih et al., 2021). Additionally, community-based initiatives involving parents and local leaders have effectively reinforced character education's cultural and ethical dimensions (Novitasari, 2017; Saraswati, 2019).

Despite the progress, the implementation of character education projects faces several limitations. Teachers often lack the expertise to effectively integrate local cultural values into character education projects (Hartono, 2016; Novitasari, 2017). Additionally, there is an absence of structured guidelines and expert support, coupled with time constraints, that hinder the effective delivery of these projects (Arifin et al., 2015; Saraswati, 2019). The variability in local cultures also challenges standardizing educational approaches, requiring customized strategies that can address the unique cultural contexts of different regions (Palangda et al., 2023; Utami et al., 2023). Moreover, the assessment of character development remains a contentious issue,

with debates over the most appropriate and effective methods to measure intangible qualities such as empathy, integrity, and cultural appreciation (Saylendra et al., 2023).

This study aims to analyze and describe the planning of character education projects to strengthen the Pancasila student profile through local culture for early childhood in Sukoharjo District. Focusing on the planning stage, this research seeks to identify critical indicators and strategies that align character development with Pancasila values. The findings are expected to serve as a reference for implementing similar projects in kindergartens and inform policy-making and evaluation systems related to Pancasila student profile projects. This research will contribute to the academic discourse on character education by providing empirical insights and practical recommendations for integrating local culture into early childhood education. Furthermore, it aims to support educators and policymakers in designing culturally responsive character education programs that are both effective and sustainable, ultimately contributing to preserving cultural heritage and developing well-rounded, morally upright individuals.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design with a case study approach, focusing on the analysis, process, and meaning based on theoretical frameworks relevant to the field observations (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The aim was to delve deeply into the planning of character education projects to strengthen the Pancasila student profile through local culture for early childhood education in Sukoharjo District. Comprehensive data collection procedures were established over a specified timeline, acknowledging challenges such as subjectivity affecting data interpretation, limited generalizability, difficulties replicating findings, and researcher bias susceptibility. Primary data were gathered verbally through descriptions from observations of interaction patterns between principals and teachers in planning character education projects at TK Sukoharjo 1 and TK Desa Majasto 02. Secondary data comprised lesson plans (RPP), photographs, children's work, daily checklists, and information from teaching modules/materials.

Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and document studies. Interviews with principals, class teachers, and parents sought to extract information regarding character development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the character education projects. These interviews were recorded using mobile phones and noted in journals. Observations were conducted both pre-study and during the study to gather project information. Documentation involved photographing the process using mobile phone cameras. The research focused on character education planning within the Pancasila student profile dimensions, namely global diversity and collaboration, developed through local culture. The observed aspects included: 1) recognizing and appreciating culture; 2) intercultural communication and interaction; 3) reflecting on and being responsible for multicultural experiences; 4) social justice; 5) collaboration; 6) care; and 7) sharing. This focus helped streamline data collection and facilitate data reduction.

The study employed source and technique triangulation to ensure data reliability and validity. Source triangulation involved cross-verifying data from primary sources to draw consistent conclusions across different institutions, followed by member checks with primary data sources. Technique triangulation compared data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. If discrepancies arose, further discussions with different data sources ensured data accuracy. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's framework, involving data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction entailed summarizing, organizing, and discarding irrelevant data from observation and interview notes at TK Sukoharjo 1 and TK Desa Majasto 02. Data were then presented in a narrative text format for clarity. Conclusions were drawn by synthesizing reduced data to answer the research questions and summarizing the alignment of character education projects with the Pancasila student profile within the independent curriculum (Miles & Huberman, A. Michael, Saldana, 2018).

Result

This study focuses on planning a character education project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students through local culture for early childhood at TK Sukoharjo 01 and TK Desa Majasto 02. TK Sukoharjo 01 and TK Desa Majasto 02, the early childhood education units in Sukoharjo Regency, have implemented the independent curriculum. TK Sukoharjo 01 adopted the theme "I Love the Earth" to develop the dimensions of cooperation and critical thinking and the theme "I Love Indonesia" to enhance the dimensions of global diversity and creativity in strengthening the profile of Pancasila students, considering the environmental characteristics and natural resources around TK Sukoharjo 01, which are surrounded by extensive rice fields and plantations. TK Desa Majasto 02 adopted the theme "I Love Indonesia" with the sub-theme "*Ngapem*" as the local cultural wisdom of the region. The research results on planning the character education project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students through local culture for early childhood at TK Sukoharjo 01 and TK Desa Majasto 02 are as follows:

3.1. Project Planning for Character Education in Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile in Early Childhood through Local Culture at TK Sukoharjo 01

The results of observations through interviews with the principal, teachers and document review about the stages of planning a character education project in strengthening the Pancasila student profile through local culture at TK Sukoharjo 01 are as follows:

3.1.1. Identifying the Readiness Stages Implemented at TK Sukoharjo 01 in Executing the Project, Determining P5 Dimensions and Themes

Based on a document review of the Project Planning Activities for Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) at TK Sukoharjo 01, the sequence of P5 development activities begins with a meeting involving the principal, teachers, and the school committee to form a facilitator team. This meeting decided on the P5 Facilitator Team, with duties including 1) identifying the readiness stages of the educational unit in running the profile project; 2) determining the dimensions and themes of the profile project; 3) designing the time allocation for the profile project; 4) compiling the profile project module; 5) determining learning objectives; 6) developing topics, activity sequences, and assessments for the profile project. The roles and responsibilities in managing the P5 project are outlined in the Decree (SK) of the P5 Facilitator Team.

Based on interviews with group B class teachers, it was explained that the program for strengthening the Pancasila student profile at TK Sukoharjo 01 began in the 2022-2023 academic year. The background for implementing character education in strengthening the Pancasila student profile through local culture is that children must be prepared to face the rapid progress of the times. Therefore, children need to have solid and resilient personalities, according to Indonesia's state philosophy, Pancasila, and be able to understand local culture. Thus, from an early age, children must be accustomed to having characters in line with Pancasila values and being familiar with and proud of their local culture.

Character education through the Pancasila student profile in the independent curriculum at TK Sukoharjo 01 is implemented by providing real-life experiences. Children can directly engage in activities designed to achieve indicators set by government regulations. The goal of character education through the Pancasila student profile is to shape students' personalities to appreciate and tolerate differences and instill the character of cooperation in line with Pancasila's noble values.

3.1.2. Designing Dimensions, Themes, and Time Allocation for the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project through Local Culture in Children

The project planning for strengthening the Pancasila student profile at TK Sukoharjo 01 is conducted every Friday over 17 weeks per semester, with a learning duration of 150 minutes per week. TK Sukoharjo 01 has chosen the themes "I Love the Earth" to develop dimensions of collaboration and critical thinking, and "I Love Indonesia" to develop dimensions of global diversity and creativity. The theme selection is based on the local environmental characteristics,

with the school being surrounded by rice fields and large plantations. The theme "I Love the Earth" includes the sub-theme "Farming," aiming to instill children's character in global diversity dimensions such as collaboration, care, and sharing. Meanwhile, the theme "I Love Indonesia" with the sub-theme "*Krempyeng* Market" aims to instill character values in the cooperation dimension, including recognizing and appreciating culture, communication and interaction between cultures, reflection and responsibility towards cultural diversity experiences, and social justice.

The activity plan documents in the teaching module outline learning objectives for global diversity and cooperation dimensions. For the cooperation dimension, the objectives include children becoming accustomed to collaborating, working together, communicating to achieve common goals, having a caring attitude, and sharing. For the global diversity dimension, the objectives are for children to know the identity and habits of others, respect different cultures, build positive social interactions in their family and school environment, recognize people based on specific characteristics, show awareness of accepting friends from different cultures, learn about the existence of different cultures in their surroundings, make friends without considering differences, and begin participating in making diverse choices for everyday needs in a small environment.

With the project of strengthening the Pancasila student profile in instilling the noble values of the nation, activities with the sub-themes "Farming" and "*Krempyeng* Market" are breakthroughs from TK Sukoharjo 01 to facilitate children contextually in learning and playing. Character building in children from an early age through actual activities makes children accustomed to cooperation, caring, and mutual assistance. It also instills a sense of unity to develop the character of Global Diversity so that children appreciate each other. As stated in an interview with Mrs. Yulianik, a teacher,

"Through farming, we realize the results with Krempyeng market, so children are accustomed to working together, having shared responsibilities according to their preferences, with contextual learning."

The planning for implementing the character education project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile in children through the themes "Farming" and "*Krempyeng* Market" involves cooperation with teachers appointed as facilitators. Additionally, the principal of TK Sukoharjo 01 collaborates with agricultural extension workers in Sukoharjo District as the site for the Pancasila student profile strengthening activities. Collaboration and cooperation are also conducted with parents and community leaders to accompany children during the activities. The activity guidelines used in implementing character education to strengthen the Pancasila student profile are based on the Independent Curriculum.

Implementing character education development activities to strengthen the Pancasila student profile at TK Sukoharjo 01 involves all school members (including the principal, teachers, and staff). The aim is to provide good examples, appreciate students' abilities, inspire students, and engage them in real or contextual activities.

3.1.3. Developing Teaching Modules for Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile through Local Culture in Children

The teaching module for the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile is a document containing objectives, steps, teaching aids, and assessments needed to implement the project. There are two teaching modules based on the documentation review of the teaching module created by TK Sukoharjo 01 in the even semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. First, the "Farming" module, derived from the theme "I Love Earth," aims to develop a cooperative attitude by engaging in farming activities. Second, the "*Krempyeng* Market" module, derived from the theme "I Love Indonesia," aims to develop a global diversity attitude.

TK Sukoharjo 01 has independently designed teaching modules covering theme selection, objectives, child learning activity development, and teaching material assessments. These modules include stages for implementing activities to strengthen the Pancasila student profile: introduction, development, expansion development, conclusion, and reflection.

Based on the teaching module documents at TK Sukoharjo 01, the indicators and learning objectives for strengthening the Pancasila student profile include recognizing family identity and cultural habits, understanding others' identities and habits, respecting different cultures, expressing feelings and thoughts meaningfully, positive social interactions, accepting friends from various cultures, and recognizing people based on specific attributes. Children also learn about different cultures, make friends regardless of differences, participate in decision-making, work in groups, follow mutual agreements, convey needs, play together according to agreements, respect people at home and school, respond to needs, understand others' reactions, and share with those around them.

The learning objectives in the planning of learning to strengthen the Pancasila student profile at TK Sukoharjo 01 refer to Permendikbud No. 009 of 2023, namely, that children can develop characters according to the noble values of Pancasila and preserve the local culture in their environment. This aligns with the interview results with Ms. Dwi Roh Kayati, a class B group teacher at TK Sukoharjo 1, regarding the objectives of character education implementation in strengthening the Pancasila student profile through local culture, which stated:

"So that children can have good values that form character according to the noble values of Pancasila through the local culture in their environment."

3.1.4. Planning the Reporting Strategy for Project Results

The assessment planning to be carried out in implementing character education in strengthening the Pancasila student profile through local culture at TK Sukoharjo 01 is included in two teaching modules. First, the "Farming" module, derived from the theme "I Love Earth," aims to develop a cooperative attitude by engaging in farming activities. Second, the "*Krempyeng* Market" module, derived from the theme "I Love Indonesia," aims to develop a global diversity attitude. Each teaching module has indicators for assessment planning as student evaluation materials in implementing character education to strengthen the Pancasila student profile through local culture at TK Sukoharjo 01 using the checklist technique, as shown below.

The evaluation for character development in strengthening the Pancasila student profile focuses on the growth of students, educators, and educational units. This evaluation is not based on product quantity or high final scores but on the extent to which students experience learning and develop the Pancasila student profile throughout the project. In the global diversity dimension, learning objectives include recognizing the identity and habits of others and understanding the existence of different cultures in the surrounding environment. In the cooperation dimension, learning objectives include habits of working together in groups, communicating to achieve common goals, showing caring attitudes, and sharing attitudes.

These evaluation goals reflect the values of Pancasila, such as respect for different cultures, positive social interactions, and acceptance of friends from diverse backgrounds. Through projects like *Krempyeng* Market and Farming, students are expected to develop social and cooperation skills, demonstrate caring and sharing attitudes, and participate in everyday decision-making within small environments. The development of these teaching modules aims to strengthen the Pancasila student profile through local culture in children.

Evaluation benchmarks are applied to students, educators, and educational units. For educators, measurable development includes designing project-based profile learning activities. For educational units, measurable development includes the readiness level of the educational unit, the continuity of project-based profile learning implementation, and the teamwork of the profile project facilitators. Student involvement is crucial for fostering a sense of ownership of the profile project and for a more comprehensive evaluation.

Based on an interview with the Head of TK Sukoharjo 1, the evaluation conducted during the character education development activities in strengthening the Pancasila student profile for the dimensions of Global Diversity and Mutual Cooperation is as follows:

"The evaluation we conduct is not only on the finished products produced by students but more on the process that makes students develop good habits, making them noble

character values. The evaluation we apply must be holistic, contextual, explorative, and certainly student-centered. This is done through interviews, observations, and other evaluation tools."

This statement aligns with the guidelines for developing projects to strengthen the Pancasila student profile by the Agency for Standards, Curriculum, and Educational Assessment of the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2022, which state: 1) the evaluation of project profile implementation should be comprehensive; 2) the evaluation focuses on the process, not the final results; 3) the evaluation should adapt to the educational unit context; 4) various forms of assessment should be used throughout the project implementation to obtain a more comprehensive picture; 5) students should be involved in the evaluation. The character education activities in the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile through local culture at TK Sukoharjo 01 can be seen in the following figures.



Figure 1. Farming Activities



Figure 2. Krempyeng Market Activities

3.2. Planning the Implementation of Character Education in Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile in Early Childhood through Local Culture at TK Desa Majasto 02

The results of observations through interviews with the principal, teachers, and document reviews regarding the stages of planning the implementation of character education at TK Desa Majasto 02 are as follows:

3.2.1. Identifying the Readiness Stages Implemented at TK Desa Majasto 02 in Executing the P5 Project, Dimensions, and Themes

Preparation for implementing character education in strengthening the Pancasila student profile through local culture at TK Desa Majasto 02 includes preparing the curriculum, providing facilities and infrastructure for learning, and developing enjoyable learning methods and approaches for early childhood. The implementation process of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) at TK Desa Majasto 02 mirrors that of TK Sukoharjo 01. The activities begin with forming a facilitator team consisting of the principal and teachers as project P5 coordinators and a kindergarten supervisor as a counselor or resource person. The facilitator

team has the following duties: 1) developing leadership skills in managing the student profile project at the educational unit; 2) managing the system needed by educators and students to complete the Pancasila student profile strengthening project, with support and collaboration from the coordinator and educational unit leaders; 3) ensuring collaboration among educators involved in the P5 project facilitator team; 4) ensuring that the project profile has rich and varied activities to optimize exploratory principles; and 5) ensuring that the assessment design aligns with the predetermined objectives.

Interviews with TK Desa Majasto 02 teachers revealed that character education, which strengthens the Pancasila student profile through local culture, can help students constructively face differences, adapt well, and create synergy between students and the community. Additionally, the components of character education implementation related to strengthening the Pancasila student profile through local culture at TK Desa Majasto 02 include recognizing, understanding, expressing, and managing children's emotions and building healthy social relationships.

Based on the learning planning documents at TK Desa Majasto 02, the learning module's objectives are to develop the dimensions of global diversity, cooperation, and independence. The analysis results indicate that the school is at the initial readiness stage, so the developed project is still simple. Nonetheless, the school utilizes external potentials, such as resource persons and local culture, specifically *Ngapem*. *Ngapem* is a local cultural tradition in Sukoharjo Regency performed before and after the fasting month, aiming to seek safety and avoid danger through almsgiving.

3.2.2. Designing Dimensions, Themes, and Time Allocation for the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project through Local Culture in Children

Observations with the Principal of TK Desa Majasto 02 indicate that character education development activities in strengthening the Pancasila student profile focus on global diversity, cooperation, and independence with the theme of local culture. The aim of implementing character education in strengthening the Pancasila student profile through local culture is to introduce and preserve local culture, thereby fostering nationalism.

Document reviews of the curriculum at TK Desa Majasto 02 show that the theme "I Love Indonesia" is used to develop the dimensions of global diversity, cooperation, and independence, divided into four aspects: potential, problems, local issues, and celebration calendar. The problem identification results show that parents and community members have a sense of patriotism, pride in local culture, cooperation, village cleanliness, Nyadran, and Bancaan. However, there is a lack of collaborative activities between parents and children at TK Desa Majasto 02, prompting teachers and the principal to create a project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile by preserving the Nyadran culture practiced by the surrounding community.

According to the Operational Curriculum Document (KOSP) of TK Desa Majasto 02 for the 2022-2023 academic year, the Pancasila profile strengthening project is carried out in a block system, taking the fourth week of May 2023 with the theme "I Love Indonesia" and the sub-theme "*Ngapem*." The character education development activities in the Pancasila student profile dimensions for global diversity, cooperation, and independence emphasize local culture as an effort to maintain national identity and foster patriotism.

The type of local culture used in the Pancasila student profile strengthening project at TK Desa Majasto 02 is the *Ngapem* culture. This is because the *Ngapem* local culture can instill healthy social relationships. *Ngapem* means "*Afwan*" or "sorry," signifying asking for forgiveness by sharing food and eating together. The focus and objectives of observation and development by teachers for children are as follows: 1) to stimulate children to recognize the identities and habits of others around them; 2) to understand the existence of different cultures in their surroundings; 3) to foster collaboration or teamwork among children; and 4) to encourage care and sharing with their friends.

3.2.3. Developing a Teaching Module for the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project through Local Culture in Children

The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening project module contains objectives, steps, teaching aids, and assessment plans necessary to carry out the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening project. Based on the teaching module documents for the second semester of the 2022-2023 academic year at TK Desa Majasto 02, there is a co-curricular teaching module with the theme "I Love Indonesia" and the sub-theme "*Ngapem*." TK Desa Majasto 02 independently designs the teaching module from theme selection and objectives to activity and assessment development. The stages are as follows: 1) the introduction stage with the question "What is *Ngapem*?"; 2) the development stage with experimental and socio-dramatic activities related to *Ngapem*; and 3) the conclusion stage for reflection.

Observations through teaching module documents and daily assessment documents created by TK Desa Majasto 02 reveal that for learning preparation, teachers conduct research a day before implementation to learn about the meaning of *Ngapem*, the origin of the *Ngapem* culture, and find videos about *Ngapem* as an introduction to be presented to the children. The activities are as follows: 1) teachers invite children to share stories about *Ngapem*; 2) conduct brainstorming sessions; 3) watch a video on making encek (a container for carrying "Apem") from YouTube; 4) teachers invite children to explore the materials for making encek prepared on the table; 5) practice making encek; and 6) closing activity where teachers evaluate the activities with the children.

The plan for developing the teaching module for the Pancasila student profile strengthening project at TK Desa Majasto 02 covers global diversity, cooperation, and independence. The global diversity dimension aims to introduce local culture. Through knowledge of local culture, children can explore and compare cultural knowledge, beliefs, and practices to recognize and appreciate the culture in Indonesia. The cooperation dimension aims to accustom children to working together in activities, enabling them to collaborate with other children. The independence dimension aims to foster children's confidence, courage to try, resilience, adaptability to new situations, and persistence in facing challenges. These three dimensions can be implemented through *Ngapem* cultural activities. *Ngapem* activities include demonstrations of making *Ngapem* and practicing making Apem, from preparing ingredients to serving Apem with friends.

3.2.4. Strategy Planning for Project Reporting

From the teaching module documents, teachers conduct assessments in two ways: observing during play-based learning activities and documenting the children's activities. Observations are conducted using a checklist assessment technique to determine the children's learning outcomes, including the following: 1) recognizing others' identities and their habits; 2) understanding the existence of different cultures in the surrounding environment; 3) being brave, adaptable in new situations, and trying not to give up easily when completing project activities; 4) being accustomed to working together in group activities. The assessment planning indicators at TK Desa Majasto 02 are as follows.

The assessment in the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile at TK Desa Majasto 02 covers three main dimensions: global diversity, cooperation, and independence. The global diversity dimension involves recognizing and respecting culture, including understanding one's own and others' cultural identities and habits, as well as developing the habit of respecting different cultures. The cooperation dimension includes communication and interaction across cultures, such as using meaningful ways to express feelings and thoughts and establishing positive social interactions in family and school environments. The independence dimension involves reflection and responsibility towards multicultural experiences, such as demonstrating awareness of accepting friends from different cultures and recognizing people based on specific traits or attributes.

The character education activities in this project aim to build the Pancasila student profile from an early age through the application of local culture. These assessment indicators highlight

the importance of cultural recognition and respect, cross-cultural communication, and reflection and responsibility towards diversity. All these aspects contribute to shaping students' character in line with Pancasila values. The character education activities in the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile through local culture at TK Desa Majasto 02 can be seen in the following image.



Figure 3. *Ngapem* Activities

Discussion

The research aimed to explore and describe the planning of character education projects to strengthen the Pancasila student profile through local culture among early childhood students in TK Sukoharjo 1 and TK Desa Majasto 02. This objective aligns with the broader educational discourse emphasizing the integration of local culture into character education to cultivate values such as cooperation, nationalism, and global diversity. As observed in several studies, integrating local cultural elements in early education enhances cultural awareness and fosters holistic character development. Previous research has highlighted the importance of culturally relevant education in forming a solid character foundation, which is critical for developing young learners in a multicultural society (Ashar et al., 2024; Zakiah et al., 2023).

The study's main results revealed a structured approach to planning character education projects involving forming facilitator teams, identifying readiness stages, and developing specific learning modules. For instance, at TK Sukoharjo 01, implementing themes like "I Love Earth" and "I Love Indonesia" promoted hands-on activities that nurtured values such as cooperation and environmental care. Practical experiences such as gardening and traditional markets instilled these values in students. Similarly, TK Desa Majasto 02 utilized the local culture of "*Ngapem*" to instill nationalism and teamwork among students. The focus on real-life applications and cultural relevance in these projects underscores their effectiveness in embedding character values deeply within students (Afriliani et al., 2023; Ashar et al., 2024).

Comparing these findings with previous studies, there is a notable alignment with research that underscores the efficacy of character education through local cultural integration (Nurhayati et al., 2022; Sakti et al., 2024). For instance, Astawaa (2024) found that integrating humanitarian values based on local culture into independent curriculums significantly improved students' holistic development and character in line with the Pancasila student profile. Similarly, Afriliani (2023) emphasized the importance of introducing local culture early to shape respectful personalities, strong nationalism, and openness to other cultures. These parallels suggest a broad consensus on the value of culturally integrated character education. However, some studies have identified challenges in implementing such initiatives, particularly concerning teacher preparedness and policy comprehension (Palangda et al., 2023; Utami et al., 2023).

Contradictions arise when considering the constraints highlighted in other studies. For example, Utami et al. (2023) noted that the lack of understanding of the "Merdeka Belajar" policy hampers the optimal realization of character education goals. This contrasts with the current

study, where a clear understanding and effective execution of character education projects were evident. Furthermore, Walukow et al. (2023) identified barriers related to teachers, schools, and students that hinder the implementation of Pancasila student profile projects. These discrepancies suggest that successful implementation may significantly depend on individual schools' specific contexts and readiness to embrace and integrate these cultural projects. Additionally, Zakso et al., (2021) highlighted that leadership and community involvement are critical factors for successful character education, which were well-addressed in this study's context.

The findings can be explained by the strong collaboration between school staff, parents, and local communities, which has been crucial for successfully executing these character education projects. This collaboration ensures that educational initiatives are contextually relevant and supported by all stakeholders, enhancing their effectiveness (Nurdyansyah et al., 2022; Sukirno et al., 2023). The proactive involvement of community leaders and parents in planning and implementing these projects has created a supportive environment that promotes character development aligned with local cultural values. This approach mirrors the findings of Dasmana et al., (2022), who emphasized the role of comprehensive planning and community involvement in effective character education.

Caution is advised in interpreting these findings due to potential limitations such as the specificity of the local cultures and the unique conditions of the participating schools, which may not be generalizable to other regions. Additionally, the study's reliance on qualitative assessments might introduce subjectivity in evaluating the effectiveness of character education projects (Sarkadi et al., 2020; Zakso et al., 2021). Moreover, factors such as differing levels of community engagement and varying educational resources could affect the outcomes of similar projects in other settings. Future research should consider a more diverse sample and employ mixed-method approaches to validate these findings further and ensure broader applicability. This would help understand the scalability and adaptability of such culturally integrated character education projects across different educational contexts (Ratnawati et al., 2024; Saylendra et al., 2023).

The implications of these findings are significant for educational policy and practice. They suggest integrating local cultural practices into character education can strengthen the Pancasila student profile, fostering values essential for national cohesion and global citizenship. Policymakers and educators should consider adopting similar culturally embedded educational frameworks, ensuring that character education is theoretically sound, practically relevant, and contextually appropriate. This approach can transform early childhood education, embedding foundational values through culturally resonant and engaging learning experiences. The successful implementation in TK Sukoharjo 01 and TK Desa Majasto 02 is a model that can be replicated and adapted to other regions, promoting a national character rooted in local culture and oriented towards global citizenship.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate and describe the planning of character education projects to strengthen the Pancasila student profile through local culture in early childhood at TK Sukoharjo 1 and TK Desa Majasto 02. The findings revealed comprehensive strategies for planning, implementing, and evaluating character education projects tailored to local cultural themes. In TK Sukoharjo 01, the project planning involved forming a facilitator team, identifying readiness stages, and developing specific learning modules. The implementation utilized real-life experiences such as gardening and local markets, while the evaluation focused on assessing cooperation, communication, and care through checklist techniques. Similarly, in TK Desa Majasto 02, the preparation included curriculum development, facilitator team formation, and methods centered around the local culture of "*Ngapem*." The implementation emphasized global diversity, cooperation, and independence, with evaluations based on identity recognition, cultural habits, and positive social interactions. The implications of these findings

highlight the significant impact of integrating local cultural practices into character education, which enhances the Pancasila student profile by promoting essential values for national cohesion and global citizenship. Policymakers and educators are urged to adopt culturally embedded educational frameworks to ensure character education is theoretically sound, practically relevant, and contextually appropriate. This approach, exemplified by successful implementations in TK Sukoharjo 01 and TK Desa Majasto 02, can transform early childhood education by embedding foundational values through culturally resonant learning experiences. However, the study's scope, limited to two early childhood centers, and reliance on qualitative assessments suggest the need for future research to apply similar projects in diverse settings, investigate long-term impacts, and incorporate quantitative measures to enhance the evidence base.

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