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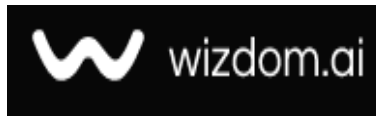
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Ethical Values in Narit Maja as Teaching Material for Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) to Develop Students' Character

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Abstract

General Background Character education is a core mandate of Indonesia's national education system, yet classroom practices often prioritize cognitive achievement over value internalization. **Specific Background** In Pancasila and Civic Education learning, especially in Lhokseumawe City, teaching remains largely normative and theoretical, with limited integration of students' socio-cultural realities. **Knowledge Gap** Although Acehese local wisdom contains rich ethical teachings, Narit Maja as an oral tradition has not been systematically utilized as contextual teaching material in Civic Education. **Aims** This study aims to explore the ethical values embedded in Narit Maja and examine their relevance for integration into Pancasila and Civic Education learning. **Results** Using a descriptive qualitative ethnopedagogical approach, the study identifies values of honesty, deliberation, mutual cooperation, responsibility, and patriotism within Narit Maja that align with the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. The findings also reveal structural and practical challenges, including limited regulations, insufficient documented materials, and institutional sectoral constraints, while highlighting digitalization as a strategic pathway. **Novelty** This study positions Narit Maja as a culturally grounded source of Civic Education content that bridges national curriculum objectives with Acehese socio-cultural contexts. **Implications** Integrating Narit Maja into Civic Education supports contextual character formation, strengthens students' cultural identity, and offers a sustainable approach to aligning national character education with local wisdom in Lhokseumawe City.

Highlights:

- Acehese oral expressions contain structured ethical principles aligned with national character frameworks.
- Contextual learning rooted in local culture addresses gaps between normative curriculum and student realities.
- Digital-based materials provide a feasible pathway for preserving oral traditions in formal schooling contexts.

Keywords: Narit Maja, Civic Education, Character Education.

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Introduction

Character education is a fundamental aspect of Indonesia's national education system [1][2]. This is emphasized in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System [3], which states that national education aims not only to educate the nation, but also to develop individuals who are faithful, pious, noble, and have a good personality [4]. In line with this, various policies of the Ministry of Education have emphasized the importance of character education in the curriculum and learning process in schools.

However, the reality on the ground shows that there is a significant gap between the normative objectives of character education and its implementation in the world of education, particularly in the context of Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) learning. The PPKn subject, which should be a strategic vehicle for instilling national values, social ethics, and noble character, is often still delivered in a normative and theoretical manner, without touching on the real-life context of students [5]. This imbalance can be seen from the increasing symptoms of moral degradation among teenagers, such as low levels of politeness, a decline in the spirit of mutual cooperation, an increase in cases of bullying in schools, and a weakening of the spirit of tolerance amid diversity [6].

Another gap is the lack of integration between learning materials and the social and cultural realities of students. In fact, one strategy to bridge this gap is to utilize local wisdom resources that are rich in character values [7]. In the context of Aceh, the Narit Maja tradition is an oral cultural treasure that contains advice, counsel, and expressions full of moral values such as honesty, responsibility, hard work, tolerance, and love for the homeland [8]. Unfortunately, the values in Narit Maja have not been mainstreamed in the formal curriculum and have even begun to be marginalized in modern society, especially in cities such as Lhokseumawe, which are increasingly influenced by globalization and digitalization [9].

This creates a gap between the potential of local wisdom as a source of character education and the reality that this cultural heritage has not been optimized in the formal education process [10]. If left unchecked, there will be a loss of cultural values and identity that are valuable for shaping the character of the younger generation [11]. Lhokseumawe, as a city with a long history of Islamic education and a strong Acehese culture, is a strategic location for implementing a local wisdom-based learning approach [12]. Therefore, this research is important and urgent to fill this gap, with the aim of formulating and integrating the ethical values in Narit Maja into Civic Education learning [13]. Through this research, it is hoped that a contextual, relevant, and impactful learning model will be formed to strengthen the character of students holistically, not only academically intelligent, but also with a strong cultural identity and high social ethics.

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with an ethnopedagogical method. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for the characteristics of the data to be explored, namely the ethical values in the oral tradition of Narit Maja of the Acehese people, which were then analyzed for integration into Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) learning. Through ethnopedagogy, local wisdom is positioned as a source of contextual learning that can strengthen the character education of students [14].

The research location was set in the city of Lhokseumawe, considering that this city has a strong tradition of Islamic education and Acehese culture. In addition, Lhokseumawe also faces the challenge of moral degradation among students, so the integration of local wisdom such as Narit Maja is considered strategic to strengthen character education [15]. The research subjects were determined using purposive sampling techniques, involving several categories of informants: Civic Education teachers at the junior high and high school levels, administrators of the Regional Education Council (MPD) and the Aceh Customary Council (MAA), Acehese traditional leaders and cultural figures who understand Narit Maja, as well as students as beneficiaries of the local wisdom-based learning model [16].

Data collection was carried out using several techniques. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers, traditional leaders, and MPD-MAA administrators to gain an understanding of the ethical values in Narit Maja and their potential in learning. Second, participatory observation was used to directly observe the learning process and cultural activities related to Narit Maja. Third, documentation in the form of collecting manuscripts, archives, and literature about Narit Maja and character education policies. Fourth, a literature study examining character education theory, ethnopedagogy, and previous research related to the integration of local culture into the curriculum [17]. The collected data was analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which includes: (1) data reduction, which is selecting and focusing on relevant data; (2) data presentation, which is compiling data in the form of narratives, interview excerpts, and ethical value tables; and (3) drawing conclusions/verification, which is interpreting data to formulate a model for integrating Narit Maja into Civic Education learning [18].

To maintain validity, source triangulation (teachers, students, traditional leaders, and written documents), technique triangulation (interviews, observations, and documentation), and member checks were conducted by confirming the findings with informants. The research stages included preparation, field data collection, preliminary analysis, and final report preparation [19]. With this method, it is hoped that the research will produce a Narit Maja-based Civic Education learning model that is not only contextual but also capable of strengthening the cultural identity and character of students in Lhokseumawe City.

Result and Discussion

A. Character Education and Implementation Challenges

Character education is a fundamental aspect of Indonesia's national education system, as mandated by Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which emphasizes the development of individuals who are faithful, pious, and have noble character [20]. However, the reality on the ground shows that Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) learning in many schools, including in Lhokseumawe City, still tends to emphasize cognitive aspects. Teachers more often use lecture and memorization methods, while the affective and psychomotor dimensions related to character building in students have not received adequate attention [15].

This phenomenon has implications for the emergence of moral degradation among students, such as a decline in politeness, a reduction in the spirit of mutual cooperation, and an increase in cases of bullying [17]. In fact, Lhokseumawe, as one of the centers of Islamic education and culture in Aceh, has rich socio-cultural capital that can be integrated into character education. One such asset is the oral tradition of Narit Maja [21].

Narit Maja is an Acehnese cultural heritage in the form of advice, proverbs, and expressions that are rich in moral, religious, and social values. Some of them contain ethical messages that are relevant to the goals of character education, such as:

1. Honesty: "Jih that peuëh haba, hana that peuëh lakëe" (Talking a lot does not necessarily mean working a lot).
2. Deliberation and democracy: "Ngön mupakat, ureung meuubah lagee buleun meuhaba" (Through deliberation, people can unite like a full moon).
3. Mutual cooperation: "Buleun meurumpok, mata ie meuraseuki" (The moon becomes full because it is united, water is abundant because it gathers).

The ethical values in Narit Maja are in line with the vision of the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasizes faith, mutual cooperation, independence, critical thinking, and global diversity [22]. Thus, Narit Maja can be used as contextual teaching material in Civics, because it is able to bring abstract concepts to life through local language that is familiar to students.

In the context of Lhokseumawe City, the use of Narit Maja in civic education has several urgent purposes:

1. Bridging the gap between the national curriculum and the local context, so that students not only understand Pancasila normatively, but are also able to internalize it in their daily lives.
2. Strengthening students' cultural identity amid globalization and digitalization, which often weaken appreciation for local traditions.
3. Improving the effectiveness of character education, as values packaged in the form of expressions, poems, and proverbs are easier for students to remember and internalize [14].

However, the integration of Narit Maja into civic education still faces a number of challenges. First, there are no technical regulations that explicitly require the use of local wisdom in Civic Education learning. Second, there is a lack of documented teaching materials that link Narit Maja with Civic Education learning outcomes. Third, there is a generation gap, where students are more accustomed to digital culture than oral traditions [19].

As part of strengthening character education, the Lhokseumawe Regional Education Council (MPD) is one of the institutions implementing Aceh's special provisions on education [13]. In an interview with the Head of the MPD, he emphasized the importance of integrating local wisdom into the curriculum. One form of this is through the Narit Maja tradition (Acehnese oral tradition), which is rich in moral values, customs, and ethics. Narit Maja is considered effective in touching the hearts of students because it takes the form of poetry, art, and messages that are easy to remember. However, the MPD is aware of its limitations in changing the national curriculum. Therefore, the MPD's scope of action is more focused on strengthening local content that is in line with Islamic values and Aceh's special status. To achieve this, the MPD has established cross-institutional collaborations, including with the Aceh Customary Council (MAA), language teachers, religious teachers, and school committees. This collaboration is intended to integrate traditional values and Islamic law into the educational process in a more contextual manner. Language and religious teachers are encouraged to use literary works and classical texts to instill noble character in students, while the school committee serves as a liaison between the school and parents. In this way, education is expected to touch on both the intellectual and moral aspects of students.

Looking ahead, MPD Lhokseumawe has formulated a number of priority programs until 2026. These programs include teacher training to integrate character education into every subject, the launch of the Acehnese language as the language of education, and increasing the involvement of traditional leaders in guiding students' morals. These programs are in line with the national education vision, while still providing space for the strengthening of local identity and Islamic law. The MPD's philosophical view is also in line with Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts on education, namely *ing ngarso sung tulodo* (leading by example), *ing madyo manguk karso* (building enthusiasm in the middle), and *tut wuri handayani* (providing encouragement from behind). According to the MPD, the exemplary nature of teachers is the most important aspect in shaping student character, even more important than the mere transfer of knowledge. Therefore, character-based education requires teachers to play a real role as role models in everyday life. From a regulatory perspective, the existence of the MPD is an implementation of Aceh's special status, which is regulated in a number of laws and regulations, including the Law on the Special Status of Aceh and qanuns (local regulations).

related to education. The MPD is positioned as a companion to the education office, playing a role in ensuring that the implementation of education remains in accordance with Islamic law and the local values of the Aceh community.

Thus, it can be concluded that MPD Lhokseumawe plays an important role in strengthening character-based education and local wisdom. Through the synergy between the national curriculum and local content, the MPD strives to maintain a balance between achieving national educational goals and preserving traditional and Islamic values. This makes the MPD at the forefront of ensuring that education in Aceh not only enlightens, but also instills moral and spiritual values that are in line with the identity of the region.

According to MAA in an interview, he emphasized the importance of incorporating Narit Maja into the school curriculum, especially through local content. According to the source:

"Narit Maja should be made into teaching material. Its values can be incorporated into character building, problem solving, and moral education. Because the original customs of Aceh never conflict with religion."

Teaching Narit Maja in schools not only introduces students to Aceh's oral literary heritage, but also serves as a strategic means of instilling education based on local wisdom that is relevant to real life. Through the teaching of Narit Maja, students not only gain cultural knowledge, but also internalize moral, religious, and social values that are important for character building.

In the context of policy, the Regional Education Council (MPD) and the Aceh Customary Council (MAA) have shown their commitment to preserving Acehese culture in education. However, the role of these two institutions is still limited to strengthening local content, while integration into core subjects such as Civics Education has not been optimally realized. In fact, both the MPD and MAA are strategically positioned to transform local culture into part of the national education system, as mandated by the Aceh Special Autonomy Law.

One of the issues that has emerged is structural ego between institutions, especially in the relationship between the MPD, MAA, and the Education Office. The MPD often acts as a policy recommendation institution, the MAA as the guardian of traditional values and sharia law, while the Education Office has technical authority in curriculum implementation. This lack of synchronization of roles and sectoral ego often leads to a tug-of-war over authority, which has an impact on the slow integration of Narit Maja into cross-subject learning.

For example, the MPD's initiative to strengthen culture-based character education often conflicts with the Education Office's priority of emphasizing academic achievement in line with national standards. On the other hand, the MAA encourages the strengthening of traditional values in education, but sometimes lacks space in the formal curriculum design. As a result, Narit Maja is only included as additional material in the local content, rather than being an integral part of national character education through PPKn.

In Lhokseumawe City, observations show that Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) lessons are still dominated by lectures and memorization. Teachers emphasize mastery of normative concepts rather than encouraging students to reflect on values in their daily lives.

A civics teacher at a public high school said:

"We often focus on theory and memorizing articles, because that's what's tested. Meanwhile, to build character, we need different methods. But there aren't any special modules that link civics with local culture, such as Hadih Maja."

This situation has led to the emergence of moral degradation among students, such as bullying, declining solidarity, and a lack of politeness in social interactions. An 11th grade student stated:

"When we learn civic education, it's usually just theory and memorization. Sometimes it feels far removed from everyday life. But when the teacher explains it using examples from stories or Acehese proverbs, it's easier for us to understand."

However, these challenges are not insurmountable obstacles. One strategic step that can be taken is the development of Narit Maja-based learning modules. These modules not only serve as pedagogical tools but also as a bridge between local wisdom and the educational needs of the 21st century. For Generation Z, who are familiar with technology and digital media, the modules can be packaged in interactive forms such as e-books, animated videos, or learning applications, making them easier to accept, more interesting, and more suited to their learning styles.

This effort is essentially not just a technical innovation, but also a form of commitment to preserving Acehese cultural values in formal education. By making Narit Maja an integral part of civic education, students not only understand the norms and theories of citizenship, but also internalize the ethics, morality, and social values inherited from their ancestors. Therefore, the ethical values in Narit Maja have great potential as a basis for PPKn learning in the city of Lhokseumawe. This integration is expected to produce a young generation that is not only intellectually superior but also has a strong character, a strong cultural identity, and the moral resilience to face global challenges without losing sight of local values.

B. Relevance to National Character Education

The integration of Narit Maja into Civic Education is based on a strong constitutional foundation. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System emphasizes that education is not only a means of enlightening the nation, but also an instrument for shaping individuals who are faithful, pious, and noble in character [20]. Within the framework of the latest

policy, the Pancasila Student Profile (PPP) program from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology presents six dimensions of character that serve as the orientation for national education, namely: (1) faithful, pious, and noble character, (2) global diversity, (3) mutual cooperation, (4) independence, (5) critical thinking, and (6) creativity [23].

In this context, Narit Maja has direct relevance as a source of concrete values that can enrich the achievement of the PPP dimensions [24]. For example, the value of mutual cooperation is reflected in the proverb “Buleun meurumpok, mata ie meuraseuki” (the moon becomes full because it is united, water overflows because it gathers). The values of deliberation and democracy are present in the expression “Ngön mupakat, ureung meuubah lagee buleun meuhaba” (through deliberation, people can unite like a full moon). Meanwhile, the values of honesty and integrity are taught through the proverb “Jih that peuëh haba, hana that peuëh lakèe” (talking a lot does not necessarily mean working a lot) [25].

These values make Narit Maja a medium that connects national norms with local experiences. While the Civic Education curriculum tends to be normative and abstract, Narit Maja presents a concrete, contextual form that is close to the daily lives of students in Aceh. Thus, it bridges the gap between macro character education policies and local socio-cultural realities.

Furthermore, this integration also strengthens the cultural identity of Acehnese students within the framework of Indonesianness. Narit Maja-based education enables students to not only understand the values of Pancasila as a concept, but also to internalize them through language, symbols, and ancestral traditions. In this way, Civic Education is not only a vehicle for knowledge transfer, but also an arena for the internalization of values relevant to the Pancasila Student Profile.

Finally, it can be emphasized that Narit Maja provides rich and contextual “content” for the six dimensions of PPP. Through this integration, it is hoped that PPKn learning in Lhokseumawe City will not only produce students who are intellectually intelligent but also have strong character, Acehnese cultural identity, and are ready to face global challenges without losing their local roots.

Conclusions

This study shows that Narit Maja, as an oral tradition of the Acehnese people, contains ethical values that are highly relevant to the objectives of national character education. The values of honesty, deliberation, mutual cooperation, responsibility, and love for the homeland contained in the expressions of Narit Maja are in line with the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. This confirms that Narit Maja has strong potential to be used as contextual teaching material in Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) learning.

In the context of Lhokseumawe City, the integration of Narit Maja can be a solution to the gap between the normative curriculum and the real needs of student character building. PPKn learning, which has so far emphasized cognitive aspects, can be strengthened through the internalization of local cultural values, so that students are not only academically intelligent, but also have a strong cultural identity and high social ethics.

However, the implementation of Narit Maja in PPKn still faces several obstacles, such as the lack of supporting technical regulations, limited documented teaching materials, and sectoral egos between educational and traditional institutions. These obstacles require synergy between schools, the Regional Education Council (MPD), the Aceh Customary Council (MAA), and the Education Office.

As a strategic step, digitizing Narit Maja in the form of interactive modules, learning modules, or e-learning can be a solution to make this cultural heritage relevant to Generation Z. Thus, the integration of Narit Maja into Civic Education (PPKn) learning is expected to produce a young generation in Lhokseumawe City that is not only knowledgeable but also has character, noble morals, and is able to face global challenges without losing its local cultural identity.

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