



Representation of Huyula Local Wisdom Values as Character Strengthening for Elementary School Students

Kasim Dali¹, Rahmatiah², Rasid Yunus³

^{1, 2, 3} Gorontalo State University, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to analyze the strengthening of student character through the value of Huyula local wisdom that emphasizes the spirit of gotong royong at elementary school 21 Telaga Biru, Gorontalo.

Methodology: The method used was qualitative case study with data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and document analysis, involving teachers, principals, parents, and traditional leaders.

Main Findings: The results showed that huyula values are applied in thematic learning, extracurricular activities, and student social interactions, and form attitudes of empathy, tolerance, and responsibility. However, implementation is still constrained by low teacher understanding, exclusivity of student friendships, and minimal participation. Teacher training and strengthening learning methods that encourage active participation and inclusive interactions are needed.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The novelty of this study is that it reveals how Huyula's local wisdom values are not only taught as theory, but actually applied in daily life in elementary schools. This research shows that if local cultural values are incorporated into students' learning and activities, then character education can be built more strongly and relevant to the environment where children grow up.

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Corresponding Author:

Kasim Dali,
Gorontalo State University,
Jl. Jend. Sudirman No.6, Dulalowo Tim., Kec. Kota Tengah, Gorontalo City, Gorontalo 96128, Indonesia
Email: 716524007@mahasiswa.ung.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

In the educational landscape of the 21st century, strengthening the character of learners is a demand to create superior and competitive citizens. Therefore, strengthening the character of students in educational units in Indonesia is a must to be implemented [1]. Character is a manifestation of a person's personality, morals, and character traits that are formed through a deep internalization process of virtues, these values become the main foundation in shaping the perspective, mindset, attitudes, and behavior of individuals in everyday life [2]. The virtues in question include moral integrity such as honesty, courage in action, trustworthiness, and respect for others, all of which are the main pillars in building noble character.

In order to deeply understand the process of human character formation, Lickona suggests that character consists of three main components that interact integrally, namely: (1) moral knowing, which includes moral awareness, the ability to make ethical decisions, and knowledge of self; (2) moral feeling, which involves conscience, self-esteem, and empathy as the affective basis of morality; and (3) moral action, which reflects the capacity to act through competence, goodwill, and consistent moral habits [3]. In line with this, character strengthening, now known as character building, is the focus of attention, especially parents who expect their children to grow up with good personalities [4]. To realize this vision, various breakthroughs have been made by the government and education units throughout Indonesia.

One of the important milestones carried out by the government and educational units in Indonesia in

integrating character education into the learning process is of moral degradation in children in Indonesia can be seen from the behavior of students who often lie about their actions, engage in brawls, show disrespect for parents and teachers, and use impolite and even abusive language in communication [8]. Ironically, the decline in moral values among high school students and even the fact that 68 percent of elementary school students have actively accessed pornographic content. In addition, students in Indonesia are involved in many criminal acts such as theft, sexual harassment, and bullying or violence that even leads to the death of other students [9]. These behaviors reflect the decline of morals and ethics among our students.

Seeing this reality, there is still a wide gap between the learning methods applied at school and the character of students. The development of national character that has been pursued in various ways, until now has not been achieved optimally [10]. Even the condition of moral decline shows the low moral competence as a result of the education process in schools [11]. This big challenge is a serious warning for all parties in education to not only rely on policies and curriculum, but also develop a more comprehensive approach in shaping student character. One way is to link character education with the reality of their lives, including exploring and reviving local wisdom values that grow in the culture of the community [12]. That way, learning becomes more meaningful and character values are more easily applied in everyday life. Local wisdom can be used as an alternative strategic element that supports balance in the dynamics of community interaction [13].

To strengthen this view, [14] emphasizes that transforming local cultural values is one of the important means in building the nation's character. Therefore, the inheritance of noble cultural values to students is an urgent need in an effort to produce a generation with strong character and rooted in the nation's cultural identity. In the work *Teaching for Wisdom Through History: Infusing Wise Thinking Skills in the School Curriculum*, Sternberg, Jarvin, and Reznitskaya cited by Ferrari and Potworowski said that schools play an important role in developing wisdom. The concepts of local wisdom that are passed on from generation to generation through folklore, legends, and traditional advice serve as a strategy in transforming important values that children need to have [16]. Education based on local wisdom emphasizes learning that is always closely related to the real conditions and concrete experiences faced by students [17].

By [18] Character learning based on local wisdom should be applied at all levels of education because of its role as the main foundation in the formation of students' character. In line with this argument, various empirical findings also strengthen the urgency of integrating local wisdom in education. Research [19] confirms that the integration of local wisdom values into education has a transformative impact, which is able to foster deep cultural awareness, strengthen the construction of national identity, and shape the character of students. By [20] The implementation of character education strengthening programs based on local wisdom has high effectiveness in shaping the profile of a complete learner, namely believing and fearing God Almighty, having noble character, having awareness of global diversity, thinking critically, creatively, upholding the spirit of mutual cooperation. Various theoretical views and field findings have emphasized that authentic character education must rely on local cultural values that have long lived and been preserved in society. In this perspective, local wisdom cannot be positioned as a mere additional element in the educational process, but rather as a philosophical and moral foundation that is integrated into the identity of learners.

Through the integration of local values, the learning process not only functions to transfer knowledge, but also to transform the way of thinking, behaving, and conducting the younger generation. character becomes an element that must be developed and cultivated [21]. For this reason, appropriate learning strategies and methods are needed. In the author's opinion, character education based on local wisdom is a very appropriate choice to be applied, considering that Indonesia consists of various tribes, cultures, and traditions. Indonesia is a country rich in cultural diversity, where each ethnic group has local wisdom that reflects its identity and becomes an important part of its cultural heritage [22] so it can be a rich source in shaping the character of learners in accordance with their social environment. Several local culture-based learning approaches have been implemented in various parts of Indonesia. However, most of the research is still normative-conceptual or fragmented in its application. They have not fully addressed how these cultural values are represented in a holistic, contextualized educational practice in primary school settings.

In this framework, the Huyula local wisdom of the Gorontalo community needs serious attention. Huyula, which essentially contains the values of mutual cooperation, togetherness, and social harmony, not only reflects the wealth of local culture, but also contains high pedagogical potential in strengthening character education rooted in the social reality of students. Huyula's local wisdom value content contains characteristics of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and social solidarity in accordance with the principles mandated in the national education system, especially in efforts to shape the character and social skills of students [23]. The values in Huyula are in accordance with educational goals that not only focus on mastering academic material, but also on forming social attitudes and critical thinking skills. Thus, the integration of Huyula values in the learning process is very important. Basically, integration refers to the process or state of uniting various components into a unified whole [24].

At present, scientific studies that specifically discuss Huyula as a social practice transformed into a pedagogical instrument in character education are still very limited. Previously [23] has mentioned the

importance of local wisdom in developing critical thinking in Civics learning which shows that the integration of Huyula values in Civics learning not only strengthens students' understanding of the concept of citizenship and local culture, but also builds students' critical thinking skills in responding to social issues and making moral decisions based on local values. After covid-19, the character of junior high school 3 Limboto students has decreased and needs immediate recovery. Mohuyula local wisdom values such as Ambu, Hileiya, and Ti'ayo are integrated through the Character Laboratory as an effort to reshape student character, this process includes preparation, implementation, and follow-up stages involving teachers, parents, and students, the success of the program is supported by the school environment and facilities, while the challenges come from diverse student backgrounds and low understanding of Huyula values [25].

Although there have been studies that explore the integration of Huyula values in character education, there is no research that specifically highlights the representation of Huyula local wisdom values as a strategy to strengthen student character at the elementary school level. In fact, this level is an important foundation in the formation of children's character. Therefore, this research is here to fill this gap by focusing on how Huyula values can be adapted pedagogically in elementary schools as an effort to strengthen character early and contextually. This void indicates an epistemic gap that needs to be bridged through a more critical and reflective approach. This research is present to fill this void by raising Huyula not only as a cultural artifact, but as a source of values and life practices that have strong relevance to strengthening student character. This research presents novelty in the form of a representation of Huyula's local wisdom values as a pedagogical instrument for strengthening character at the elementary school level. So far, Huyula studies tend to be limited to the level of socio-cultural practices or at the secondary education level. This research focuses on how values such as Ambu, Hileiya, and Ti'ayo are not only taught as material, but transformed into contextual, participatory, and down-to-earth learning approaches for elementary school-age children. This is an aspect that has not been touched upon much in previous research.

The urgency of the research in the midst of globalization and the challenges of moral degradation, primary schools are a crucial point in instilling character values [26]. Therefore, an approach that is contextual and relevant to students' social life is needed. The value of Huyula local wisdom as Gorontalo's cultural heritage has great potential to strengthen the character of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and solidarity needed in 21st century learning. This research is important to explore local potential that can be systematically integrated in character education from an early age. The approach used is contextual and interpretative, by exploring how Huyula is represented in students' interaction patterns, habits and learning experiences in the school environment. This article offers an original contribution by synergizing the perspectives of character education and local cultural studies in an applicable practice framework. Thus, the purpose of this study is to critically analyze the representation of Huyula values in terms of basic education and examine its contribution to strengthening student character at elementary school 21 Telaga Biru, Gorontalo Regency. Through this approach, it is hoped that a new understanding will emerge that character can not only be taught, but also grown from cultural roots that live in the daily lives of students.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. This approach was chosen to explore thoroughly and in-depth how the value of Huyula local wisdom is represented in daily life in the environment of elementary school 21 Telaga Biru, and how this value contributes to strengthening student character. The qualitative approach was also chosen because it allows researchers to understand the perspectives of the actors directly and in detail, so that the results are richer and deeper. Support for the use of qualitative methods is also found in previous research, as revealed by Sugiyono that qualitative approaches are effective for researching social and cultural phenomena in natural environments, especially when the focus is on understanding the meaning and experience of the subject [27]. In addition, in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, the term case study is defined as an example or real event of an incident, the actual state of a situation, and a special condition or situation relating to a person or an object. In general, the meaning includes: [28] (1) an illustration of a particular event, (2) a representation of the real conditions of a state or situation, and (3) the special conditions or circumstances attached to a particular individual or object.... Therefore, this study is focused on deeply understanding the representation of Huyula value as Gorontalo local wisdom as a strengthening of student character in the elementary school environment, which reflects a typical and authentic situation at elementary school 21 Telaga Biru, Gorontalo Regency.

Data in this study were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted using semi-structured techniques to explore informants' perspectives more reflectively and openly. Informants were selected through purposive sampling technique with certain criteria, namely teachers, principals, parents, and traditional leaders who have a deep understanding of Huyula values. Primary data was obtained from interviews and direct observations in the field, while secondary data came from report documents, journal articles, school policies, curricula, and archives deemed relevant to the research

context.

Data analysis was carried out using analytical techniques developed by [29] namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data collection was carried out to obtain relevant, accurate, and in-depth information to answer the formulation of the problem, as well as to achieve research objectives in a systematic and measurable manner. Data reduction was carried out by selecting, focusing, and organizing the data obtained to make it easier to analyze. Data presentation was done in the form of descriptive narratives that were systematic and easy to understand. Furthermore, conclusions were drawn based on patterns found during the analysis process.



Figure 1: Data Analysis Technique

To ensure the validity of the data, source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation techniques were used, so that the findings obtained have high validity and credibility. Validation is done by comparing the results of interviews with various informants, matching them with the results of observations, and tracing consistency through available documents. With this approach, the research is expected to provide a complete and in-depth picture of the potential of Huyula value transformation as an instrument of character education rooted in Gorontalo local culture.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Representation of Huyula Local Wisdom Values at elementary school 21 Telaga Biru

The research findings show that the local wisdom value of Huyula, which is deeply rooted in the social culture of Gorontalo people as a form of mutual cooperation and togetherness, has been represented in various educational activities at elementary school 21 Telaga Biru. This representation is not merely symbolic, but is internalized praxis in students' daily lives, both through thematic learning activities, project programs to strengthen the Pancasila student profile (P5), as well as in social interactions between students and teachers.

The research findings show that the values contained in the local wisdom of huyula are not only understood conceptually by teachers and students at elementary school 21 Telaga Biru, but have become part of the behavior and social interactions of students. All representations of these values can be seen as follows: 1) In the teaching and learning process, the value of Huyula local wisdom is clearly seen when the teacher divides the group randomly. Through this method, students are invited to adapt to the diverse characters of their group mates, while practicing mutual acceptance and respect for one another. Although there are some students who are less active, the teacher consistently provides direction so that all students can participate, creating an open learning environment and full of togetherness. The strategy of random group formation is an important medium to teach students to adapt and appreciate differences in character, a practice that strengthens the Huyula value of mutual acceptance and respect.

Based on these findings, the value of Huyula local wisdom is used as a strengthening of student character because it clearly instills an attitude of adaptation, mutual acceptance, and respect for differences in their social life. The value of Huyula teaches students not only to focus on differences, but how to embrace diversity as a common strength. Through interaction in diverse groups, students are trained to develop empathy, tolerance, and effective communication skills, which are important foundations in social character building. The teacher's encouragement for all students to actively participate trains a sense of responsibility and courage in opinion, so that leadership and integrity characters are also formed. Thus, the value of Huyula local wisdom is not just a cultural concept that is understood in theory, but is realized practically in strengthening a complete character.

This finding is in line with previous research by [30] Implementation of local wisdom-based learning to improve student character, which states that local wisdom is able to form attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and a sense of social responsibility in students. In addition, research [31] shows that local wisdom values are the main pillars in the formation of student character, especially in the aspects of cooperation, tolerance, and emotional control.

The value contained in Huyula, which teaches students to embrace diversity as a common strength, is

also reinforced by the findings of research from [32] that incorporating local wisdom values into the learning process can increase students' and teachers' awareness of the importance of inclusive attitudes, not only when learning in class, but also in various activities at school. Values such as gotong royong, tolerance and mutual respect are proven to strengthen and deepen the meaning of inclusive education in the daily life of the school.

The following finding on the representation of the value of huyula local wisdom at elementary school 21 Telaga Biru is that non-academic activities such as scouting are optimally utilized to instill the values of teamwork, mutual support, and fair division of tasks among students. In this activity, students not only learn through direct practice, but are also formed to understand the importance of collaboration in achieving common goals. Through the experience of working in groups with diverse dynamics, students are trained to adapt, share responsibilities, and appreciate the contribution of each team member.

This directly shows how the local wisdom value of Huyula is represented in educational practices that shape students' social character. Huyula, which is rooted in the spirit of togetherness and mutual cooperation, becomes a principle that is brought to life in extracurricular activities. In this case, students' characters are strengthened through the habituation of attitudes of responsibility, solidarity and empathy towards others. Scouting activities, which emphasize the importance of teamwork and discipline, are a strategic vehicle for instilling these values in a sustainable manner. This finding is reinforced by a number of previous studies [33] which show that extracurricular activities based on local wisdom have an important contribution to student character building, especially in the aspects of responsibility, empathy, and collaboration. In addition, the study [34] also confirms that the integration of local wisdom values in educational practices can increase students' awareness of the importance of togetherness and tolerance in social life. Similarly, the [35] study highlights that scouting activities contextualized with local culture are able to shape the character of students who are adaptive, communicative, and have respect for traditional values. This finding corroborates and extends the results of previous studies such as by [33], [34] and [35] which show that local wisdom-based learning is able to shape student characters such as tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility. However, this research further shows the praxis dimension of the Huyula value which is strategically contextualized in thematic learning programs and non-academic activities. What distinguishes this research is the dialectical relationship between local values and national education practices through the integration of Huyula in the P5 program, so that character building is no longer top-down normative, but grows from social awareness and practices rooted in local culture.

From the results of this study, it can be generalized that primary schools in areas with strong local wisdom can integrate these values as strategic instruments in character education. Huyula is an example of how local culture can be transformed into a pedagogical framework that not only educates students in the cognitive domain, but also affective and social. Thus, local cultural values can be utilized as social resources in designing learning that is contextual, transformative, and relevant to students' lives. So the novelty of this research lies in emphasizing that Huyula is not just a local value that is included in the curriculum as cultural content, but is used as a learning method and pattern of social relations that are consistently implemented in all school dynamics. This research shows how Huyula becomes a participatory and sustainable social method of character building, not just a cultural narrative. This approach expands the concept of character education from mere value inculcation to value appreciation and habituation in a micro social environment such as an elementary school.

Although the results showed a significant integration between the value of Huyula and character building, limitations exist in the scope of the location which only focused on one elementary school. In addition, the descriptive qualitative approach used did not measure the quantitative impact of this value internalization on longitudinal changes in student behavior. Therefore, a comparative study between schools as well as a quantitative approach is needed to strengthen the generalization of the results and see the influence of local values in the long term. The practical implication of this research is the need for educational policies that open space for schools to integrate local cultural values flexibly and transformatively in learning. For educators, these results encourage the use of local culture-based approaches not only in the form of teaching materials, but also in teaching methods, classroom dynamics, and student social interactions. Furthermore, for curriculum developers, these findings can serve as a basis for formulating a contextualized local value-based character learning model in accordance with regional cultural identity and wealth. This also supports Merdeka Belajar's vision, which emphasizes school independence in developing a curriculum that is relevant to students' needs and local identity.

Overall, the representation of the value of Huyula local wisdom in elementary school 21 Telaga Biru shows that the value of Huyula, as a practice of mutual cooperation that is deeply rooted in the social structure of Gorontalo society, has been transformed into an effective pedagogical instrument in shaping the character of students. At elementary school 21 Telaga Biru, Huyula is not present as a cultural heritage that is merely remembered, but is actualized in real and repeated collective actions through learning dynamics, social interactions, and extracurricular activities. Values such as mutual acceptance, respect, cooperation, and responsibility are not only taught verbally, but experienced directly by students in a meaningful context. This shows that the educational process is able to become a dialectical space between local values and national character building. When Huyula is internalized in school life, what happens is not just cultural adaptation, but the integration of social values into a contextual and transformative education system. Thus, Huyula acts as a moral foundation as well as a collective ethos that enriches the practice of character education. It is proof that

local wisdom, when lived in praxis, is able to instill human values that are more substantive than a purely normative approach.

3.2. Factors that Hinder the Strengthening of Students' Character Through the Value of Huyula at elementary school 21 Telaga Biru

Strengthening the character of students through Huyula local values at elementary school 21 Telaga Biru faces structural and cultural challenges. Based on the results of field findings, there are five main factors that hinder the internalization of Huyula values into students' daily behavior, namely: 1) the role of peers and social collaboration that has not been directed; 2) uneven teacher competence and understanding of huyula local wisdom; 3) low active participation of students in the learning process.

The first finding is that the role of peers and social collaboration among students still shows an exclusive tendency based on personal interests and emotional closeness. Students tend to form homogeneous groups that do not reflect the spirit of mutual cooperation which is the essence of the Huyula value. This finding is in line with research[36] which emphasizes that peer interaction has a significant influence on student character building, especially in the aspects of empathy and social solidarity.[37] adds that interaction with peers has an influence on individual character and behavior, both for those in positive and negative friendship environments. Based on these findings, the researcher believes that if not directed, peer association can be counter-productive for the internalization of students' social values, uncontrolled interactions between students will also further deteriorate the quality of children's character.

The second finding is that teachers' competence and understanding of Huyula values are still uneven. Some teachers do not fully understand the substance of these local values philosophically and methodologically, making it difficult to integrate them into a meaningful learning process. This finding is in line with[38] which states that teachers have a central role as a moral force in character education. This means that when teachers do not have a complete understanding of the values taught, then students will not have a clear behavioral reference.[39] in the study concluded that the success of character education in schools is largely determined by the ability of teachers to be role models for their students, so as to form students who have strong character. teacher exemplary is at the heart of character education, and the absence of this exemplary is a major obstacle in the implementation of local values in schools.

So it can be understood that the real actions of teachers are more influential than verbal statements. if the pedagogical capacity of teachers is weak, it will be a major obstacle in character education based on local values. the integration of local values in the curriculum requires conceptual and technical understanding from teachers, which unfortunately is still a weak point at elementary school 21 Telaga Biru.

The third finding is that students' low active participation in the learning process is another obstacle in strengthening character. Many students tend to be passive, only following the teacher's instructions without being given space to discuss, explore, or collaborate. In fact, the value of Huyula rests on the spirit of togetherness, collective responsibility, and collaborative action. Participatory learning is a key prerequisite in character building. Learning that allows students to sit still without meaningful social experiences will fail to instill the expected moral values. The dialogical space created in learning plays an important role in fostering empathy, teamwork and social responsibility. Responding to the research findings at elementary school 21 Telaga Biru, we can conclude that learning that is not oriented towards strengthening character will only produce students who are cognitively intelligent but morally fragile.[23] emphasizes the importance of using project-based learning methods and collaboration to ground local wisdom values. Active participation of students is very important in learning because it not only makes them understand the material better, but also helps them use the knowledge learned in everyday life. When students participate in discussions, work in groups, or do practical activities, they can connect theory with the reality they experience [40] . That way, learning becomes more meaningful and students are more motivated to participate and develop their character and critical thinking skills.

Overall, the findings on the factors that hinder the strengthening of students' character through the value of Huyula at elementary school 21 Telaga Biru underline that the success of strengthening character through the local value of Huyula is highly dependent on changing the educational paradigm. This requires a synergy between the management of inclusive social relations, increasing the capacity and exemplarity of teachers, and transforming learning methods towards participatory and collaborative models. Failure to address these three factors not only hampers the internalization of Huyula values, but also has implications for the overall quality of character of the younger generation, which will ultimately affect the sustainability of local wisdom and social cohesion in the community. Thus, strengthening local value-based character must be seen as a strategic educational agenda that requires commitment and systemic innovation from all elements of education.

4. CONCLUSION

This research explicitly shows that the value of *Huyula* local wisdom has been integrated in educational practices at SD Negeri 21 Telaga Biru. Values such as mutual cooperation, mutual acceptance, respect, and cooperation are not only introduced theoretically, but are actually carried out in learning activities, social

interactions, and extracurricular activities. In other words, Huyula is an effective tool in shaping the character of students who are adaptive, empathetic, responsible, and able to work together.

The Huyula value also serves as a moral foundation that enriches local culture-based character education. When this value is consistently implemented in the school environment, education not only shapes knowledge, but also builds students' social awareness and humanity as a whole.

Therefore, it is recommended that schools continue to develop the application of Huyula values in various activities, and teachers are given an important role to instill them consistently. Collaboration between schools, parents and communities is also very important so that these values are truly alive and felt in the daily lives of students.

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