



A Model for Developing Cultural and Civic Literacy as a Means of Character Habituation Among Students at Public Elementary Schools in Pulubala Subdistrict, Gorontalo Regency

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to develop a cultural and civic literacy model based on character habituation that is systematically integrated into the learning process, in order to address the dominance of reading–writing and numeracy literacy, and to strengthen the sustained internalization of values in the character development of elementary school students

Methodology: This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) method using the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation). The research subjects included students and teachers from three public elementary schools in Pulubala Subdistrict, Gorontalo Regency. Data were collected through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation, and analyzed using descriptive qualitative and quantitative techniques, with effectiveness tested using the N-Gain score

Main Findings: The results indicate that the implementation of cultural and civic literacy in elementary schools remains fragmented and is not yet supported by systematic instructional design. Based on needs analysis, students require contextual, simple, visually-based learning that is integrated with local culture. The developed model, LITBUD-KAR, has a very high level of validity (>92%), practicality, and user acceptance (>96%), and is effective in increasing student engagement, understanding of cultural and civic values, and character development, with an N-Gain value of 0.75 (high category)

Novelty/Originality of this study: The novelty of this study lies in the development of a cultural and civic literacy model based on character habituation, which is systematically integrated across intracurricular, co-curricular, extracurricular, and school culture dimensions. This model contributes theoretically while also offering a practical and applicable solution for implementation in elementary school learning.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century is required not only to produce academically competent students but also to foster strong character as the foundation for social and civic life. Social transformation, marked by the acceleration of information flow, the complexity of social interactions, and global dynamics, positions education as a space for building a balance between intellectual intelligence and moral maturity [1], [2]. From this perspective, elementary education holds a fundamental position, as it is at this stage that an individual's initial values, attitudes, and habits begin to form and solidify into a relatively stable character [3]. In the context of character development, cultural and civic literacy serve as one approach that can be further developed.

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Cultural and civic literacy is not only related to the ability to understand symbols, norms, and social identities, but also encompasses an individual's ability to interpret, reflect on, and actualize values in daily life [4]. In other words, this literacy serves as a bridge between the cognitive and practical dimensions, so that students not only know the values but are also able to use them as a guide for action [5], [6].

Furthermore, cultural and civic literacy are closely linked to character education, particularly in efforts to foster social attitudes such as discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and concern for the social environment [7]-[9]. A number of studies confirm that effective character development cannot be achieved merely through the delivery of content or knowledge of values, but must occur through meaningful, participatory, and sustained learning experiences [10]-[12]. Cultural and civic literacy can serve as effective tools for presenting these values contextually within the learning process.

The effectiveness of cultural and civic literacy is fundamentally determined not merely by the existence of the literacy program itself, but by how the process of internalizing values is designed and implemented in learning [13]. Character education that emphasizes only cognitive aspects tends to produce normative understanding without ensuring the formation of consistent behavior [14], [15]. In this context, literacy cannot be viewed merely as the activity of reading or understanding texts, but rather as a medium for building awareness of values, cultural identity, and civic responsibility. Therefore, the habituation approach becomes a key element, as through systematically designed and repeatedly practiced routines, values can be internalized into habits that are ingrained in students. Habituation enables a transformation from "knowing values" to "living values," so that values are not merely understood conceptually but are also manifested in concrete actions [16], [17].

Although the conceptual relationship between cultural and civic literacy and character habituation has received attention in various studies, its implementation in elementary education practice still exhibits various limitations. Learning in elementary schools is generally still oriented toward academic achievements measured cognitively, while the integration of values into learning activities has not been designed within a systematic and sustainable pedagogical framework [18]. Cultural and civic values are often conveyed implicitly, sporadically, or merely inserted into learning materials without being supported by structured habituation mechanisms. Consequently, the process of internalizing values does not occur optimally and does not result in consistent behavioral changes. This situation indicates that character education remains at a conceptual and normative level and has not yet been fully realized in operational and measurable pedagogical practices [19].

In line with this, emerging empirical studies indicate a tendency that the development of cultural and civic literacy remains partial and has not been fully integrated. Some research focuses on integrating values into instructional materials or enhancing social attitudes through specific learning activities, yet has not addressed the aspect of habit-forming design as the core mechanism for character formation [20]. Other studies have developed experience-based learning approaches but have not explicitly linked them to cultural and civic literacy within a systematic framework [21]. These findings indicate that there are still limitations in presenting a model capable of integrating literacy, values, and behavior into a single, cohesive learning process.

Based on this conceptual and empirical review, the research gap in this study lies in the lack of an operational, systematic, and character-habituation-based model for the development of cultural literacy and citizenship. This gap not only impacts the weak implementation in the field but also makes it difficult to conduct authentic evaluations of the success of character education. Without a clear model, learning practices tend to proceed sporadically, inconsistently, and are highly dependent on individual teachers' initiatives [22], [23]. This ultimately weakens the position of literacy as a strategic instrument in shaping students' character.

This conceptual gap is further reinforced by empirical findings at public elementary schools in Pulubala Subdistrict, Gorontalo Regency. The implementation of literacy in schools remains dominated by reading, writing, and numeracy, while cultural and civic literacy have not been systematically integrated into the learning structure. Activities related to cultural and civic values tend to be incidental and ceremonial, such as flag ceremonies or celebrations of national holidays, without being followed by a process of reflection, internalization, and the sustained cultivation of these values. Thus, literacy has not yet functioned as a transformative pedagogical instrument but remains at a procedural level.

The implications of this condition are clearly evident in student behavior. Values such as discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and nationalism have not been substantively internalized but remain formalistic and situational. From a character education perspective, this situation indicates a gap between the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, which should be integrated into the learning process. This lack of integration underscores that the process of value internalization has not been effective, meaning that character education has not yet been able to produce sustainable behavioral change.

From a pedagogical perspective, this situation reflects structural problems in learning. Teachers, as the primary actors, do not yet have operational learning models to integrate cultural and civic literacy based on character habituation. The absence of a systematic learning framework, the limited availability of locally-based learning materials, and the lack of authentic assessment indicators prevent the learning process from bridging the gap between normative educational goals and practical classroom implementation. Furthermore, institutional

support, the availability of locally-based learning resources, and school policies have not yet fully been directed toward strengthening cultural literacy and citizenship in an integrated manner.

These findings are not merely normative assumptions but are based on the results of preliminary observations conducted through interviews, direct observation, and document analysis at several public elementary schools in Pulubala Subdistrict. The data indicate that while literacy activities have been implemented at a relatively high level, the integration of cultural and civic literacy, character development, the availability of local learning resources, and school policy support have not developed in a systematic and sustainable manner. Consequently, there is a significant gap between conceptual expectations and the reality of implementation on the ground. Initial empirical evidence regarding this situation is systematically presented in the following table.

Based on these conceptual and empirical gaps, this study aims to contribute by developing a systematic, operational, and applicable model of cultural and civic literacy grounded in character habituation. The contributions of this study are structured and aligned with the research questions, namely: (1) conducting a needs analysis as the basis for developing a contextual model; (2) designing a model of cultural and civic literacy integrated with a character habituation approach; (3) developing the model in the form of operational and easily implementable learning tools; (4) testing the model's implementation in elementary school learning practices; and (5) evaluating the results and impact of the model's application on student character development. Through these contributions, this study is expected not only to fill a gap in research on cultural and civic literacy but also to produce a learning model capable of bridging knowledge, values, and actions sustainably within the context of elementary education.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) method using the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) to develop the LITBUD-KAR model. A mixed-methods approach within a pragmatic framework was adopted, in which qualitative data were utilized during the needs analysis and model development stages, while quantitative data were employed to assess practicality and effectiveness. The effectiveness test was conducted using a one-group pretest–posttest design to measure changes before and after the implementation of the model [24].

2.2 Research Participants

The participants of this study consisted of fourth- and fifth-grade students and teachers from three elementary schools: SD Negeri 23 Pulubala, SD Negeri 2 Pulubala, and SD Negeri 3 Pulubala. The sample was selected using purposive sampling based on criteria such as location representativeness, teacher readiness, and institutional support. The total number of student participants was 80, while the study also involved 6 teachers.

2.3 Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study included:

1. Observation sheets to assess students' behavior,
2. Interview guidelines for teachers and school principals,
3. Questionnaires to measure practicality and user responses,
4. Expert validation sheets, and
5. Pretest and posttest instruments to evaluate improvements in cultural literacy, civic literacy, and character development.

2.4 Research Procedure

The research procedure followed the stages of the ADDIE model:

1. Analysis: conducting a needs analysis through observations, interviews, and document review;
2. Design: developing the model framework and instructional materials;
3. Development: carrying out expert validation and revising the product;
4. Implementation: conducting a limited trial using a one-group pretest-posttest design; and
5. Evaluation: performing both formative and summative evaluations to refine and improve the model.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed in an integrated manner. Qualitative data were examined through the processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired-samples *t*-test to determine the effectiveness of the model [25]. The results of expert validation and questionnaire responses were analyzed in percentage form to determine the feasibility and practicality levels of the model.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 A Snapshot of the Implementation of Cultural and Civic Literacy in Elementary Schools in Pulubala Subdistrict, Gorontalo Regency

The implementation of cultural and civic literacy in elementary schools in Pulubala Subdistrict, Gorontalo Regency, has essentially been carried out through various routine activities as part of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Basic literacy activities such as reading before lessons have become a relatively stable habit at SD Negeri 23 Pulubala, SD Negeri 2 Pulubala, and SD Negeri 3 Pulubala. This situation indicates that the schools have established an initial foundation for building a culture of literacy. However, upon closer examination, these practices have not yet fully evolved into consciously designed instructional strategies aimed at integrating cultural and civic values into the learning process.

In practice, teachers have attempted to link the curriculum to the local culture of Gorontalo through folk tales, the local language, and the introduction of traditional values. These efforts demonstrate that the local context has indeed begun to enter the classroom. However, this integration still occurs situationally and has not been structured into a sustainable program. This results in inconsistent learning experiences for students, as they are highly dependent on how individual teachers manage their instruction. From the perspective of experiential learning, this situation indicates that while students do gain experiences, these are not always guided through a complete learning cycle from experience, through reflection, to interpretation meaning the values acquired have not yet developed deeply [26], [27].

A similar pattern is evident in civic literacy. Activities such as flag ceremonies, community service, discipline training, and group work have provided opportunities for students to interact and learn social values. However, these activities are still treated as school routines rather than as meaningful components of the learning process. From a sociocultural learning perspective, learning should occur through meaningful social interaction, where students build understanding from shared experiences [28]. However, without reinforcement in the form of dialogue or reflection, such interactions do not yet fully result in a deep understanding of civic values.

Research findings also indicate a gap between the activities undertaken and the understanding formed. Students are accustomed to participating in various activities that reflect cultural and civic values, yet they are not always able to consistently apply these values in their daily lives. This suggests that the experiences gained have not yet fully become part of students' ways of thinking and acting. The concept of communities of practice explains that learning is more effective when students are not only engaged in activities but also feel they are part of meaningful social practices [29]. Engagement without strong meaning tends to result only in participation, not the formation of identity.

Additionally, the limited availability of locally-based learning resources and the lack of clear learning guidelines also contribute to this situation. Yet, within the "funds of knowledge" approach, the local environment and culture should serve as the primary learning resources closely tied to students' lives [30], [31]. When this potential remains unsystematically harnessed, learning loses the contextual relevance that elementary school students truly need.

These findings indicate that cultural and civic literacy in elementary schools in Pulubala Subdistrict actually has a solid foundation of practice, both in terms of activities and environmental potential. However, these practices have not yet been fully managed within a structured learning framework. Literacy remains at the activity stage and has not yet developed into a learning process capable of building sustained understanding and habits. The main issue does not lie in a lack of literacy activities, but rather in the absence of instructional management capable of holistically connecting experiences, interactions, and the interpretation of values. This situation underscores the need to develop a more structured, contextual, and student-centered model of cultural and civic literacy, so that the values already present in school activities can be truly understood and applied in daily life.

3.2 Needs Analysis for the Development of a Cultural and Civic Literacy Model as a Character-Building Strategy

An analysis of the need to develop a cultural and civic literacy model for elementary school students in Pulubala Subdistrict reveals a gap between students' engagement in cultural and civic activities and their ability to internalize these values in daily life. In this context, "needs" are not merely understood as a lack of learning materials but also as the gap between students' actual conditions, the learning experiences they have gained, and the forms of learning they expect. Therefore, needs analysis is a crucial stage to ensure that the developed model is not based solely on the researcher's assumptions but is grounded in the real-world conditions of students as the primary users of the learning process.

Research findings indicate that students have had initial experiences in activities related to culture and citizenship, such as culture-based school activities, community service, flag ceremonies, and other social activities. However, the findings also reveal that these experiences do not yet fully correlate with students' ability to consistently apply cultural and citizenship values. Most students still fall into the category of occasionally applying these values in their daily lives. This finding suggests that culture- and citizenship-based activities are indeed

present in schools, but they have not yet fully transformed into a learning process capable of fostering a deep understanding of these values.

This gap becomes even more apparent in the context of learning difficulties. Research findings indicate that unengaging instruction is the primary obstacle faced by students, compounded by the fact that some students still do not grasp the material being taught. This situation suggests that the core issue lies not merely in the availability of activities, but in how these activities are integrated into the learning process. Cultural and citizenship activities that are not accompanied by engaging, simple, and student-centered instructional designs risk becoming mere routines rather than spaces for the internalization of values.

Students' preferences regarding learning formats also reinforce the direction for developing the model. Students tend to prefer materials presented through picture books, visual media, and resources that are closely tied to their daily lives and the local culture of Gorontalo. This tendency indicates that elementary school students find it easier to understand values through concrete examples, real images, and contexts they are familiar with. Thus, cultural and civic literacy should not merely be presented as normative concepts but must be delivered through visual, contextual, and reality-based learning experiences that resonate with students' lives.

Findings from the learning needs analysis, as shown in the following table, also reveal the same trend. Students prefer simplified materials, straightforward presentations, real images from their surroundings, as well as images of local culture, the school environment, and community activities. Interestingly, no students directly selected images of civic attitudes. This indicates that the concept of citizenship remains difficult to grasp when presented abstractly. Students more easily grasp civic values through concrete representations, such as community service activities, community customs, the school environment, and everyday social practices[32].

From a learning perspective, these findings suggest that elementary school students require a bridge between abstract values and concrete experiences. Cultural and civic literacy cannot be conveyed solely through definitions, memorization, or verbal explanations but must be connected to social practices closely tied to students' lives[33]. The current learning process has not yet fully succeeded in transforming experiences into meaningful understanding of values. From a *constructive alignment* perspective, effective learning requires alignment between objectives, activities, and expected learning outcomes[34][35]. However, in this context, the cultural and citizenship activities students have engaged in have not been systematically directed toward achieving the internalization of values, so the experiences gained do not develop into stable attitudinal competencies. Therefore, student engagement in cultural activities is insufficient if it is not supported by a learning design that consciously directs these experiences to become part of the character-building process.

This finding can also be understood through the *contextual teaching and learning* (CTL) approach, which emphasizes that learning is more meaningful when the material is linked to the learners' real-life contexts[36]. In several elementary schools in Pulubala Subdistrict, the local culture of Gorontalo serves not only as a social backdrop but also as an authentic and relevant source of learning. Values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, social concern, and respect for others are easier to grasp when presented through real-life situations students experience in their daily lives, rather than when conveyed as abstract concepts detached from their experiences.

Compared to previous research, these findings align with studies showing that character education in elementary schools is often ineffective when presented only in a normative manner and not linked to students' concrete experiences[37][38]. Other research also confirms that visual media, local stories, and environment-based learning can enhance students' understanding and engagement because they align with the developmental characteristics of elementary school children[39][40]. However, the findings of this study place a more specific emphasis on the fact that students' needs extend beyond the aspect of media alone; they also require a model design capable of integrating content, experiences, visualizations, local culture, and character-building practices in a cohesive manner.

The results of this needs analysis confirm that the development of a cultural and civic literacy model as a character-building strategy must be directed toward a model that is contextual, simple, visual, and grounded in students' real-life experiences. The developed model must address three primary needs: the need to understand values concretely, the need to learn through engaging media, and the need to internalize values in daily activities. Therefore, the developed cultural and civic literacy model functions not only as instructional material but also as a pedagogical tool to bridge students' activities, understanding, and character development in a sustainable manner.

Data collection through the completion of instruments by students, as shown in Figure 1, serves as evidence that the needs analysis was conducted directly and based on field conditions. This documentation is important because it reinforces that the identified needs are not the result of estimates but are derived from the responses of students as the subjects of learning.



Figure 1. Students Filling Out the Needs Analysis Instrument

This documentation reinforces that the needs identified in this study truly stem from students' experiences and responses, not merely the researcher's assumptions. Thus, the presence of figures and tables in this study complements one another; the figures provide visual evidence of the data collection process in the field.

3.3 Design of the Cultural and Civic Literacy Model as a Strategy for Character Development of Students

The design of the cultural and civic literacy model in this study is a direct response to the findings regarding students' needs, which indicate a gap between cultural-civic activities and the internalization of values in daily behavior. Therefore, the designed model functions not only as instructional material but as a pedagogical tool capable of integrating the learning process, experiences, and character development into a systematic, unified whole. This design is a crucial stage because it determines how the results of the needs analysis are translated into operational and applicable solutions in elementary schools.

Based on the design outcomes, the model developed in the form of LITBUD-KAR modules and guides is structured to integrate cultural literacy, civic literacy, and character habituation within a comprehensive learning framework. This design does not stop at the development of materials but encompasses the entire learning system, from objectives, activity steps, and the roles of stakeholders to evaluation mechanisms. Thus, the resulting model not only addresses material needs but also addresses implementation needs in the field that had not previously been systematically accommodated. The model design is visualized in a diagram showing the interrelationships between components, the implementation flow, and the integration of intracurricular, cocurricular, extracurricular, and school culture programs. This diagram serves not only as an illustration but also as a representation of the conceptual structure of the developed model.



Figure 2. Design of the LITBUD-KAR Model as a Character Habituation Strategy

The model design indicates that character development is not treated as a byproduct of learning but as the primary objective integrated into every activity. Each component within the model is designed to be interconnected, ensuring that students' learning experiences are not fragmented but continuous across various school activity contexts. In its implementation, this model positions modules as learning tools containing structured activity scenarios, while the guide serves as an implementation reference for teachers and schools. The content in the modules is not presented solely in conceptual form but is packaged into contextual activities closely tied to students' lives, such as local cultural practices, social interactions, and school-based environmental activities. This demonstrates that the model's design is intentionally aimed at transforming learning from abstract to concrete and meaningful.

Structurally, the LITBUD-KAR model consists of key components including rationale, objectives, learning syntax, roles of actors, activity formats, and an evaluation system. The presence of a learning syntax serves as a crucial element previously absent in field practices. This syntax provides clear, step-by-step guidance for teachers in integrating cultural literacy and citizenship into instruction, ensuring that the character-building process no longer relies on improvisation but proceeds in a directed and consistent manner.

The design of this model indicates a shift in the learning approach from a previously fragmented approach toward learning that positions values as living social practices within daily activities. From the perspective of situated learning, learning does not occur through the mere transfer of knowledge, but through students' engagement in authentic social practices [41]. The LITBUD-KAR model, which integrates cultural activities, social interactions, and school activities, demonstrates that civic values are built through direct experiences in real-world contexts, so that students learn not only from what is taught, but from what they do and experience [42]. This is important because the weakness of previous learning methods lay in the separation between activities and meaning-making, so that values did not develop into ingrained habits.

Additionally, the design of this model reflects the principles of social learning theory, which emphasizes that the formation of attitudes and behaviors occurs through processes of observation, imitation, and social interaction [43], [44]. In this model, students not only receive content but also observe the practice of values through the roles of teachers, peers, and the school environment. The integration of intracurricular, cocurricular, and school cultural activities reinforces this process, as values are not only explicitly conveyed but also demonstrated through concrete actions that students can emulate and internalize.

Furthermore, this model also demonstrates the functioning of the hidden curriculum, in which values are not only taught formally but are transmitted through habits, interactions, and school culture [45]-[47]. The integration of Gorontalo's local culture into every activity shows that learning no longer separates content from life but instead makes the social environment a space for character development. Thus, this model not only transfers knowledge but builds a learning ecosystem that allows values to develop naturally within students' daily practices.

Compared to previous research, most models of cultural and civic literacy still focus on integrating specific content or activities without providing a systematic implementation framework. This study offers a novelty by presenting a model that is not only conceptual but also operational, complete with a learning syntax, implementation tools, and a measurable character evaluation system. This indicates that the developed model contributes not only at the theoretical level but also to learning practices in elementary schools.

The implications of this model's design suggest that character development through cultural and civic literacy requires a structured, contextual, and sustainable approach. The LITBUD-KAR model provides a framework that enables values to be not only learned but also practiced and internalized through various school activities. Thus, this model has the potential to bridge the gap between the concept of character education and its practical implementation in the field.

3.3 Development of Cultural and Civic Literacy Modules and Guidelines as a Character Development Strategy

The development of the LITBUD-KAR Program Model demonstrates that the designed products not only meet technical feasibility aspects but also exhibit conceptual consistency and strong implementation potential in supporting the character development of elementary school students. The following are the results of the curriculum expert validation presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Expert Validation Results for the Cultural and Civic Literacy Modules and Guides

Aspect	Validator's Assessment		RT
	Validator 1	Validator 2	
Alignment of Learning Objectives and Outcomes	100	100	100
Alignment of Curriculum Content and Structure	100	91.7	95.85
Alignment of Curriculum Implementation Strategies	91.7	83.3	87.5
Alignment of Evaluation and Assessment	87.5	87.5	87.5
Program Adaptability and Sustainability	87.5	87.5	87.5
Average Score			91.67

After being validated by curriculum experts, this model achieved an average score of 91.67%, falling into the "highly valid" category. These findings indicate that structurally, the model demonstrates alignment between learning objectives, curriculum content, implementation strategies, and the designed evaluation system. The high alignment in the aspects of learning objectives and outcomes indicates that the model is not only designed as a pedagogical innovation but is also integrated with the Merdeka Curriculum framework, which emphasizes character development and context-based learning.

More deeply, these validation results reveal that the model's primary strength lies in its ability to integrate the dimensions of cultural literacy, citizenship, and character into a unified learning system. This indicates a shift from a fragmented learning approach toward a more holistic and integrative one. From a *whole-school approach* perspective, character development is not sufficient through classroom learning activities alone but must be reinforced through school culture, social interactions, and the involvement of various educational stakeholders. Thus, the high level of curriculum validity in this model indicates that the developed design has successfully bridged the gap between formal curriculum requirements and contextual, sustainable learning practices. Furthermore, the results of the subject matter expert validation are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Results of Subject Matter Experts' Assessment of Learning Module Characteristics

Aspect	Validator's Evaluation		RT
	Validator 1	Validator 2	
Self-Instruction	81.1	100	90.55
Self-Contained	100	100	100
Stand-Alone	100.0	100	100
Adaptive	75	100	87.5
User-Friendly	100	100	100
Average Score			95.61

The results of the material validation showed an average score of 95.61%, classified as "highly valid." These findings indicate that, in substance, the LITBUD-KAR model meets the characteristics of good instructional materials, such as being self-instructional, self-contained, stand-alone, adaptive, and user-friendly. The high scores in the self-contained and stand-alone aspects indicate that the developed product possesses strong self-sufficiency, allowing it to be used directly by teachers without reliance on other resources. This is particularly important in the context of elementary schools, where limited learning resources often pose a barrier to the implementation of educational innovations.

From a learning perspective, these results indicate that the developed model has accommodated students' needs for independent and contextual learning. In the context of scaffolding learning, the systematically and communicatively organized material allows students to build understanding gradually through clear structural support. Furthermore, the model's high level of adaptability demonstrates its flexibility to be tailored to various school conditions, making it non-rigid and suitable for implementation in diverse contexts. This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing that effective instructional materials must be flexible, contextual, and capable of adapting to students' characteristics and the learning environment [48], [49].

Furthermore, content expert validation provided crucial insights regarding the model's conceptual positioning. While the model was generally evaluated as having rich content and comprehensive components, validators emphasized that it must be clarified as a school-culture-based program model, not merely a learning module. This finding is a crucial turning point in the development process, as it shifts the model's orientation from being merely a teaching tool to a character development system rooted in the school ecosystem. By revising the model based on this feedback, the LITBUD-KAR model was subsequently developed into a five-pillar framework: cultural literacy, civic literacy, character habituation, social participation, and school culture.

This change demonstrates a strengthening of the model's *novelty*, particularly in the aspect of integrating students' social participation as part of civic practice. From a *civic engagement* perspective, the formation of civic character does not occur solely through an understanding of values, but through students' active involvement in real-world social activities [50]. Thus, this model not only emphasizes habituation but also encourages students to become active agents in civic practices within the school and community environments.

The user validation results also reinforce previous findings, with a feasibility rate reaching 96.77% after the revisions; figure 3 presents the user results:

B. REKAPITULASI SKOR VALIDASI

No	Aspek Validasi	Skor Maksimal	Skor Dicapai	Persentase
1	Rasional Model	12	11	91,67
2	Tujuan Model	12	12	100
3	Komponen Model	12	11	91,67
4	Nilai Budaya & Kewargaan	12	12	100
5	Tahapan Implementasi	12	10	83,33
6	Peran Guru, KS, Orang Tua	12	11	91,67
7	Bentuk Kegiatan	16	14	87,50
8	Evaluasi Karakter	12	11	91,67
9	Kebahasaan & Keterbacaan	12	11	91,67
10	Kegunaan & Keunggulan	12	11	91,67
Total		124	114	

C. KESIMPULAN VALIDASI

Persentase	Kategori	Kesimpulan
80% - 100%	Sangat Valid	Dapat digunakan tanpa revisi
60% - 79%	Valid	Dapat digunakan dengan sedikit revisi
40% - 59%	Kurang Valid	Perlu revisi besar
<40%	Tidak Valid	Tidak dapat digunakan

Hasil: 92,08% (Kategori: Sangat Baik)

Kesimpulan: Model Program LITBUD-KAR dinyatakan Valid dan dapat diimplementasikan di lapangan dengan tanpa revisi / sedikit revisi / revisi besar.

D. SARAN PERBAIKAN

No	Saran
1	
2	
3	
4	

Demikian surat keterangan ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya.



Figure 3. User Validation Results for the Cultural and Civic Literacy Module and Guide

The high ratings in the aspects of objectives, cultural values, activities, and evaluation indicate that the model is not only theoretically valid but also practical and applicable by teachers in the field. These findings indicate that the model has met the principles of usability and practicality, which are key factors in the successful implementation of learning innovations. The involvement of teachers and supervisors as validators also demonstrates that the model has a high level of acceptability in the real-world context of elementary education.

Overall, the results of this development demonstrate that the LITBUD-KAR Program Model has achieved a very high level of validity across curriculum, materials, language, content, and user aspects with an average feasibility rating exceeding 92%. These findings not only confirm the model's suitability for use but also highlight its conceptual strength, novelty, and high implementability. The implications of these findings are that the LITBUD-KAR model has the potential to serve as a strategic alternative in addressing the issues of cultural and civic literacy learning, which have so far been partial and unstructured, and is capable of strengthening the character development of students through a systematic, contextual, and sustainable approach.

3.4 Implementation of the Development of Cultural and Civic Literacy Modules and Guides as a Character-Building Strategy

The implementation of the LITBUD-KAR Program Model demonstrates that the developed model is not only operationally applicable in elementary school settings but also capable of fostering meaningful learning experiences through the integration of cultural literacy, civic literacy, and character habituation into a unified educational practice. Based on the results of the implementation conducted through the intracurricular, cocurricular, extracurricular, and school cultural habituation pathways, it was found that all components of the model could be consistently implemented with the active involvement of teachers, students, and school stakeholders. These findings indicate that the model does not remain at the conceptual level but has transformed into a living pedagogical practice within the school's daily activities.

In the intracurricular track, the model's implementation demonstrated that integrating Gorontalo's local cultural values such as Huyula, Dulohupa, Moma'apu, and Ta'a Tiyolo into learning can shift the pattern of learning interactions from mere content delivery toward value- and experience-based learning. Students not only understand concepts cognitively but also begin to demonstrate the ability to connect cultural values and citizenship in learning activities, such as discussions, mock deliberations, and task completion based on local contexts. This indicates that learning that connects academic content with students' socio-cultural realities holds greater potential

for building meaning and internalizing values compared to abstract learning detached from their lived experiences. This implementation is also clearly evident in classroom learning activities, as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Implementation of cultural and civic literacy in classroom learning activities

Implementation through co-curricular and extracurricular pathways further reinforces these findings. Cultural projects, discussions on social values, environmental campaigns, and social practices such as community service and cultural exhibitions demonstrate that students are shifting from the role of knowledge recipients to active agents in civic practice. This engagement not only enhances participation but also fosters social awareness and collective responsibility. In this context, learning no longer takes place solely within the classroom but extends to more tangible social spaces, so that values are not merely understood but experienced.

The habituation of school culture is the most significant dimension in the implementation of the model. Habits such as cultural greetings, class deliberations, duty rotations based on Huyula values, and weekly character reflections demonstrate that character development occurs through a repetitive, consistent, and integrated process in daily life. These findings reveal that the strength of the LITBUD-KAR model lies in its ability to shift character education from an incidental approach toward a systemic approach rooted in school culture. In other words, character is no longer taught as a subject but is built through an ecosystem that enables students to experience, repeat, and internalize values continuously.

The results of the implementation evaluation reinforce these findings. Student responses showed a 97.33% rating in the “highly suitable” category, while teacher responses reached 97.03% in the same category. This data indicates that the model has a very high level of acceptance and practicality, both from the perspective of direct users and learning facilitators. The high positive response from students regarding engagement, understanding of values, and behavioral change indicates that the model is not only engaging in terms of activities but also impacts character development. Meanwhile, teachers’ responses indicate that the model is easy to understand, systematic, and relevant to learning needs in elementary schools.

These findings suggest that the success of the model’s implementation is determined not only by good design but also by the model’s alignment with the socio-cultural context and real-world needs in the field. From a *social learning* perspective, changes in student behavior occur through interaction, observation, and habituation within a supportive social environment [51]. Teachers serve as models, while school culture functions as a space for the continuous reproduction of values [52]. Thus, the LITBUD-KAR model operates not merely as a learning tool but as a social system that shapes behavior through collective experience.

Furthermore, from the perspective of culturally responsive pedagogy, the integration of local culture into learning has proven to be a key factor in enhancing student engagement and understanding[53]. Cultural values such as Huyula and Dulohupa serve not only as content but also as a medium for building identity and civic awareness. This aligns with previous research findings indicating that learning based on local culture can enhance relevance, participation, and the internalization of values among students, particularly at the elementary school level, which is still in the concrete operational stage of development.

The model’s effectiveness is further reinforced by N-Gain test results, which show an average score of 0.75 in the high category. These results confirm a significant improvement in students’ cultural literacy, civic literacy, and character following the model’s implementation. When compared to previous learning approaches that tended to be normative and unstructured, the LITBUD-KAR model demonstrates superiority in terms of the meaningfulness, engagement, and sustainability of learning. Thus, the model’s effectiveness is evident not only in cognitive outcomes but also in more tangible changes in attitudes and behavior.

The implementation of the LITBUD-KAR Program Model demonstrates that this model is capable of bridging the gap between the concepts of cultural and civic literacy and learning practices in elementary schools. This model is not only effective in enhancing the understanding of values but also capable of fostering character development through the integration of learning, school culture, and social participation. The implication of these findings is that character building in elementary schools requires an approach that is not partial, but rather systemic, contextual, and based on local culture so that values can be internalized deeply and sustainably

The novelty of this study lies in the development of the LITBUD-KAR model as an integrative approach that positions cultural and civic literacy not merely as learning content, but as a practical system that simultaneously connects intracurricular, co-curricular, extracurricular, and school culture dimensions within a single, operational framework of character habituation.

In contrast to previous studies that tend to be partial and cognitively oriented, this model emphasizes the creation of a culture-based learning ecosystem that enables the continuous internalization of values through direct experience, social habituation, and collective participation.

Furthermore, another distinctive contribution of this study is the integration of local Gorontalo values, such as Huyula and Dulohupa, as the foundational basis of the model design. This integration not only ensures contextual relevance but also enhances the model's adaptability and replicability for the development of character education grounded in local wisdom at the elementary school level.

4. CONCLUSION

This study indicates that the implementation of cultural literacy and citizenship in elementary schools in Pulubala Subdistrict has essentially been carried out through various routine activities as part of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum; however, it has not been systematically integrated into a learning framework capable of guiding the sustainable internalization of values. The results of the needs analysis confirm a gap between students' engagement in cultural and citizenship activities and their ability to understand and apply these values in daily life. This situation indicates that the primary issue lies not in a lack of activities, but in the absence of a learning design capable of holistically connecting experience, interaction, and the interpretation of values. The development results indicate that the model possesses very high levels of validity, practicality, and acceptability, and is capable of bridging the gap between character education concepts and actual teaching practices in the field. Furthermore, implementation results show that the LITBUD-KAR model is effective in increasing student engagement, understanding of cultural and civic values, and character development, as demonstrated by changes in attitudes and behavior in daily life. This confirms that contextual, experience-based learning integrated into school culture has greater potential for character building compared to normative and fragmented approaches. Schools are recommended to implement the LITBUD-KAR model systematically within both instructional practices and overall school culture. Teachers need to receive continuous professional development related to local culture-based learning and character habituation.

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