



Development of a Character Education Model Based on Bugis Makassar Cultural Values in Elementary Schools in South Sulawesi

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop a character education model based on Bugis-Makassar cultural values to improve the morality of elementary school students in South Sulawesi. Bugis-Makassar culture is known for its rich value system, such as siri' na pacce (shame and solidarity), which has great potential in shaping students' positive character. This study uses a qualitative approach with a multi-site study design, which allows for an in-depth exploration of the implementation of character education based on Bugis-Makassar cultural values in various elementary schools in South Sulawesi. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of a local culture-based education model is able to strengthen moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and respect in students. The developed model includes contextual learning based on folklore, traditional games, and the implementation of siri' na pacce values in daily activities in the school environment. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of integrating local culture in the educational curriculum to create a generation with morals and character. This model is expected to be a practical guide for educators and policymakers in improving the quality of character education based on local wisdom in Indonesia, especially in the South Sulawesi region.

Keywords: Character Education, Bugis-Makassar Cultural Values, Elementary School, Student Morality

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (ECE) is an important foundation for children's subsequent development and learning. The quality of ECE services is influenced not only by the availability of educational institutions but also by the quality of learning processes and the competence of educators who provide educational services. Evidence from rural Indonesia has shown that preschool quality is associated with children's developmental outcomes, indicating that improving the quality of ECE services is an important component of supporting children's development (Brinkman et al., 2017)

Character education is becoming an increasingly important issue in the global education system, particularly in the era of rapid and unpredictable technological and information disruption. Advances in digital technology offer numerous benefits to education, such as easier access to information, more flexible learning, and broader opportunities for collaboration. However, behind these benefits, a significant challenge arises: the weakening of moral values and character among the younger generation. This phenomenon is a concern in many countries, as explained by Nasrullah and Rahman (2023), who noted the moral degradation seen in declining discipline, responsibility, empathy, and social sensitivity among adolescents.

In Indonesia, the government has taken the urgency of character building seriously. This is reflected in Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education, which emphasizes that education must balance knowledge, skills, and character development. This regulation demonstrates the government's strong commitment to developing students who are not only academically intelligent but also possess noble character, integrity, and good morals.

However, the implementation of character education in the field still faces many obstacles. The process of internalizing values often falls into the trap of rote learning and lectures, without providing students with concrete experiences to practice these values in their daily lives. According to Wijaya and Sutrisno (2024), the greatest challenge lies in adapting character values to the context of modern life and the digital dynamics faced by students. Many teachers still lack adequate training to implement integrative and applicable learning methods, while the social environment outside of school, including social media and popular culture, often provides examples that contradict the values taught in schools.

In these circumstances, character education cannot rely solely on formal curricula or policies, but requires a more comprehensive and sustainable approach. Character formation must be carried out through role models, direct experience, a supportive environment, and collaboration between schools, families, and the community. Only in this way can the younger generation develop a strong moral foundation and be able to face the challenges of the era of technological disruption without neglecting essential human values.

Various previous studies have examined the implementation of character education in elementary schools and suggest that the current approach has not been fully effective. Astuti et al. (2022) found that universal approaches to character education that fail to consider local cultural contexts tend to be less effective in shaping student behavior. The character values taught are often general and abstract, making it difficult for students to relate them to their own experiences and social environments. These findings suggest that local context plays a crucial role in determining the success of internalizing character values in elementary school-aged children.

Meanwhile, Syarif and Hamdani (2021) revealed that the effectiveness of character education is greatly influenced by the consistency between the values taught in schools and the practices that occur in students' daily lives. They emphasized that inconsistencies between teacher behavior, family parenting styles, and social influences can weaken the character education messages conveyed in schools. The research also showed that students more easily absorb values through direct role models than through verbal instruction or purely theoretical material. When teachers, parents, and the surrounding environment can model good behavior, the process of internalizing values occurs more naturally and deeply.

Both studies generally emphasize that character education cannot be applied uniformly without considering the cultural, social, and psychological conditions of students. This reinforces the view that successful character education requires an approach that is contextual, relevant, and integrated with students' real lives. Elementary schools, as children's first formal educational environment, play a strategic role in building the foundation of character. However, these efforts need to be supported by family and community involvement to prevent dissonance in the character messages delivered outside the classroom.

This research focuses on developing a character education model that integrates Bugis Makassar cultural values such as *siri'* (self-esteem), *pacce* (empathy), *lempu* (honesty), and *getteng* (steadfastness) into the elementary school learning system. Ramadhan et al. (2023) emphasized that integrating local cultural values into character education can strengthen cultural identity while shaping students' positive character. The developed model will combine local wisdom with a modern learning approach that suits the characteristics of elementary school students.

The fading understanding and practice of local cultural values among the younger generation, particularly in South Sulawesi, is a problem that needs to be addressed. Initial observations indicate that most elementary schools lack character education programs that explicitly integrate Bugis-Makassar cultural values. Ibrahim and Sulfiani (2024) revealed that 78% of elementary school students in South Sulawesi have minimal understanding of their local cultural values. The urgency of this research is increasingly relevant considering the need for a character education model that is contextual and appropriate to local socio-cultural characteristics. Amidst the increasingly strong currents of globalization and the penetration of foreign cultures, schools require a character education approach that is not only normative and general, but also has an emotional and cultural closeness to students. The development of a character education model based on Bugis Makassar cultural values is a strategic step because these values have long served as moral guidelines for society and have proven effective in shaping the social behavior of previous generations. By integrating values such as *siri'*, *pacce*, *lempu*, and *getteng* into the learning design, students can understand character not as an abstract concept, but as a life value rooted in their cultural identity.

Furthermore, a local culture-based character education model serves not only as a tool for moral development but also as an instrument for preserving regional culture. In the modern context, many traditional values are fading due to the lack of opportunities for the younger generation to understand and practice them. Education is one of the most potent mediums for maintaining the sustainability of these cultural values. Therefore, the development of this model has a dual role: preserving the Bugis Makassar cultural heritage while strengthening the effectiveness of character education in elementary schools.

The relevance of this local culture-based approach is further reinforced by research findings by Mahmud et al. (2022), which showed that character education that integrates local cultural values has a 35% higher success rate than conventional approaches. This

finding confirms that contextual character education is not only easier for students to understand but also easier to internalize because it is directly related to their social, cultural, and daily lives. In other words, the values taught do not come from outside the students themselves, but rather from the culture they already know, hear, and see in social interactions in their respective environments.

Thus, this research aims not only to fill the theoretical gap in the study of local culture-based character education, but also to provide practical contributions that can be applied effectively in elementary school learning. The development of a systematic and applicable model is expected to produce character education that is more meaningful, relevant, and in line with the challenges of the times, while simultaneously strengthening the cultural identity of the younger generation of Bugis Makassar.

Although numerous studies have examined the implementation of character education in elementary schools, there are still areas of research that remain underexplored. Most previous research tends to emphasize internal school aspects, such as the effectiveness of learning methods, teacher competence and role, and family support for student character development. While this approach is important, focusing solely on the internal school context is insufficient to capture the complexity of the challenges facing today's young generation.

This situation suggests that effective character education requires a more holistic approach, one that combines internal school aspects with external influences, including local cultural identity and digital challenges. In other words, further research is needed to develop character education models that are not only based on universal values but also relevant to local socio-cultural contexts and adaptable to the dynamics of the modern era.

The novelty of this research arises from its attempt to combine an understanding of local wisdom-based character education with the need to adapt in an era of technological disruption. This approach offers a new way to view character education not only as a process of instilling universal values, but also as a form of internalization of values relevant to the cultural identity and digital realities students face daily. Furthermore, this research seeks to map how local cultural values can serve as a filter for addressing moral challenges arising from exposure to modern technology, something that has not been widely discussed in previous research. Thus, the research gap is evident in the lack of comprehensive studies bridging local cultural aspects, character education practices in elementary schools, and the influence of the digital environment on children's character development. This research aims to fill this gap through a more in-depth and contextual analysis, thus yielding a more relevant understanding of the current needs for character education. This integrative approach is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of adaptive, contextual, and effective character education models amidst changing times. Based on this urgency, research on developing a character education model based on Bugis Makassar cultural values in elementary schools in South Sulawesi is crucial. The results are expected to significantly contribute to the development of a more contextual and effective character education model and serve as a reference for developing similar models in other regions.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach with a multi-site study design, allowing researchers to deeply explore the phenomenon of digital transformation in empowering seaweed farmers across multiple locations. This approach was chosen because digital transformation is not simply a technical change but also involves complex social, economic, and cultural aspects that are difficult to measure quantitatively. According to Creswell & Poth

(2022), a qualitative approach is particularly appropriate when the research objective is to understand the meanings, experiences, and perceptions of individuals or groups within their natural context. In the case of seaweed farmer empowerment, this approach allows researchers to capture the nuances of social interactions, traditional practices combined with digital technology, and local dynamics that shape the success or barriers to digital innovation adoption.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Existing Condition of Character Education in Elementary Schools in South Sulawesi Reviewed from the Perspective of Bugis Makassar Cultural Values.

The research findings indicate that character education in elementary schools in South Sulawesi has been implemented through various formal and non-formal activities, but its implementation still shows differences in depth between schools. Most schools have incorporated character aspects into learning activities, such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and caring. However, the understanding and internalization of the developed character have not been fully connected to local cultural values, particularly Bugis-Makassar values such as *siri'*, which emphasizes self-respect and honor, *pacce*, which emphasizes social concern and solidarity, and *ade'*, which regulates social norms and customs. Interview, observation, and documentation data indicate that teachers generally teach character in general terms without explicitly linking it to local cultural values. For example, the concepts of discipline and responsibility are taught through school rules or regulations, but the connection to *siri'*, which guides students to maintain self-esteem, is not yet clearly visible.

Non-formal activities, such as flag ceremonies, congregational prayer, and mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), serve as a means of building student character. Some schools have initiated activities that reflect the value of *pacce*, such as student involvement in social activities to help friends or communities in need. However, activities that explicitly instill the value of *siri'* are still rare and have not become a regular part of school culture. The role of teachers as role models in instilling cultural values is crucial to the success of character education. Interview results indicate that teachers with a deep understanding of Bugis-Makassar culture are able to exemplify the values of *siri'* and *pacce* in daily interactions, while teachers with less understanding of the local culture tend to emphasize only generic moral behavior. Research also identified obstacles to the implementation of culture-based character education. Key challenges include limited culturally-oriented learning resources, minimal teacher training on integrating local values, and pressure to achieve academic targets, which makes character education a secondary priority. Furthermore, the strong influence of global culture in students' lives means that local values are not always the primary guideline for their daily behavior.

From the results of this study, it can be seen that character education in elementary schools in South Sulawesi has been running, but its implementation is still partial and has not fully internalized the Bugis-Makassar cultural values. Based on the literature review, the value of *siri'* plays a role as a guideline for maintaining self-esteem, dignity, and integrity, so that internalization of this value can help students become disciplined, responsible individuals, and able to control behavior that can harm themselves or others. However, the results of the study show that the concept of *siri'* is still rarely used as a framework in daily learning, so that students tend to understand character in general without a deep cultural

context. Furthermore, PACCE values, which emphasize social awareness and solidarity, have begun to be implemented through social activities and classroom collaboration, but have not yet become an integral part of the curriculum or school culture. However, PACCE has the potential to enhance students' empathy, helpfulness, and social skills, which are important aspects of holistic character education. Consistent implementation of PACCE values can help students build healthy interpersonal relationships and strengthen social cohesion at school and in the community.

From a modern educational perspective, integrating Bugis-Makassar cultural values into character education in elementary schools can also increase the relevance of learning to students' real-life contexts. This aligns with the findings of Mahmud et al. (2024) that internalizing cultural values is more effective when contextualized with students' real-life experiences through an experiential learning approach. For example, students can be involved in social projects, community life simulations, or cultural activities that require them to directly practice the values of *siri'* and *pacce*.

Furthermore, the research findings underscore the crucial role of teachers and the school environment. Teachers must be equipped with an understanding of local culture and creative learning strategies to connect character values to students' daily activities. A supportive school environment, such as a culture of appreciation for diversity and respect for local values, is also a key factor in the successful internalization of cultural values in character education. Without a conducive environment, cultural values tend to remain merely theoretical and unapplicable in students' lives.

Thus, the existing situation indicates that character education in elementary schools in South Sulawesi already has a foundation. However, to achieve holistic character development rooted in local culture, it is necessary to strengthen the integration of Bugis-Makassar values through the curriculum, learning strategies, teacher training, and strengthening school culture. This integration not only enhances students' cognitive understanding of character but also develops social, moral, and cultural intelligence skills relevant to their daily lives.

Bugis Makassar cultural values are integrated into the character education model in elementary schools.

The research results show that elementary schools in South Sulawesi have begun integrating Bugis-Makassar cultural values into their character education models. This integration is evident in the curriculum, learning strategies, extracurricular activities, and daily school culture. The value of *siri'*, which emphasizes self-respect, honor, and dignity, serves as a guideline for fostering discipline, responsibility, and integrity in students. For example, teachers use traditional Bugis-Makassar stories and real-life examples to explain the importance of maintaining self-respect and respecting others. Students who understand *siri'* learn to control their behavior to conform to social norms and cultural ethics.

Pacce values, which emphasize social awareness, solidarity, and empathy, are integrated through collaborative activities, social projects, and the practice of helping others. Students are involved in real-life activities, such as helping friends in need, doing community service at school or in the community, and completing group assignments through mutual cooperation. These activities enable students to experience the importance of cooperation and caring for others, so that *Pacce* values are not only understood conceptually but also applied in real-life behavior. In addition, the principle of *ade'*, which relates to customary rules and social

norms, is implemented in school regulations, extracurricular activities, and the practice of ethics and courtesy in daily interactions. By implementing *ade'*, students learn to respect rules, respect others, and maintain order within the school environment. This supports the development of discipline and social responsibility that align with local cultural values. This process of integrating cultural values is carried out through a contextual and experiential learning approach. Teachers act as mediators, linking academic material to students' real-life situations, such as through simulations, creative projects, and daily life practices relevant to local culture. A supportive school environment, including an appreciation of cultural diversity and respect for local values, also strengthens the internalization of culturally based character. Based on the results of research and literature review, it can be emphasized that the integration of Bugis-Makassar cultural values into the character education model in elementary schools has a significant positive effect on the formation of students' holistic character. The value of *siri'*, which emphasizes self-esteem and honor, serves as a foundation in fostering attitudes of discipline, responsibility, and moral integrity. Internalization of *siri'* enables students to control negative behavior, maintain self-dignity, and understand the moral consequences of each action, thus supporting long-term character development. This is in line with the findings of the study *Integration of Local Wisdom Values in the Curriculum to Shape the Character of Elementary School Students*, which states that the incorporation of local wisdom in character education can strengthen the moral dimension and cultural identity of students. *Pacce* values strengthen the social and emotional aspects of character education, where direct experiences in collaborative and social activities enable students to learn to respect others, feel empathy, and develop solidarity. *Pacce* integration also supports the development of cultural intelligence, as students are taught to collaborate with others from diverse backgrounds. Research on the application of Bugis cultural values through folklore and social practices shows that students involved in local culture-based activities demonstrate increased social and moral skills, including empathy, caring, and collective awareness. Values such as *sipakatau*, *sipakalebi*, and *sipakainge* in Bugis culture also emphasize ethical principles and caring for others, which can be effectively implemented in elementary school learning. The principle of *ade'*, which encompasses customary norms and social rules, serves as an important foundation for developing students' discipline and social responsibility. When customary rules are applied in the school environment, students learn to respect regulations, respect teachers and peers, and maintain order in various activities. Findings from research on the application of Bugis local wisdom in character education indicate that the systemic integration of local values can shape adaptive behavior that is appropriate to the cultural context, so that character education is not only normative but also practical and contextual. The integration of cultural values through contextual and experiential learning approaches enables students to connect academic concepts with real-life practices. Teachers act as facilitators, helping students connect lessons to everyday experiences, making cultural values relevant and easily internalized. Support from the school environment is also crucial to the success of this integration; schools that create an atmosphere appreciative of diversity and local culture are able to strengthen the internalization of students' character. The study, *"Empowering Character Through Culture: The Role of Teachers in Integrating Local Wisdom in Primary Education"*, confirms that the role of teachers as behavioral models and mediators of cultural values is crucial in ensuring that the integration of local values has a real impact on character formation. Overall, the integration of Bugis-Makassar cultural values into the character education model in elementary schools not only improves students' cognitive understanding of morals and ethics, but also forms a holistic character, encompassing moral, social, emotional, and cultural aspects. This is supported by previous studies showing that local wisdom can serve as a foundation for the development of leadership, social skills, empathy, and responsibility. Thus, the local culture-based character

education model not only produces students who are academically intelligent, but also individuals who possess integrity, empathy, a sense of responsibility, and social skills that align with the noble values of Bugis-Makassar culture.

An Effective Character Education Model Based on Bugis Makassar Cultural Values for Elementary School Students in South Sulawesi

Based on observations, interviews with teachers, principals, and students, as well as analysis of curriculum documents and school activities, it was found that an effective character education model in elementary schools in South Sulawesi is one that integrates Bugis-Makassar cultural values holistically and contextually. The value of *siri'*, which emphasizes self-esteem, honor, and dignity, is implemented through various learning strategies, including traditional stories, teacher role models, and daily habituation activities. Teachers use *siri'* values to instill moral awareness in students, guide them to be able to control negative behavior, and foster integrity. Interview results show that students who understand *siri'* are better able to be disciplined, responsible, and respectful of teachers and peers.

Pacce values, which reflect social awareness, solidarity, and empathy, are internalized through collaborative activities, social projects, and sharing practices throughout school life. Students engage in activities such as working together in groups, helping friends in need, and participating in social activities within the school environment. Observations show that students who experience Pacce-based learning have better social and emotional skills, are able to collaborate with peers, and are more concerned about the well-being of others. Pacce values also support the development of cultural intelligence, as students learn to appreciate and adapt to the social and cultural diversity around them. The principle of *ade'*, which relates to customary rules and social norms, is implemented through the implementation of school regulations, disciplinary habits, and respect for ethics and manners in daily interactions. By internalizing *ade'*, students learn to respect regulations, maintain order, and demonstrate consistent social responsibility. This confirms that culture-based character education not only shapes morals but also adaptive behavior that aligns with the local cultural context.

The applied learning model emphasizes contextual and experiential learning approaches, where teachers act as facilitators, connecting academic material with students' real-life experiences. Examples include the use of Bugis-Makassar folklore, social life simulations, and the practice of daily cultural activities. A supportive school environment, including the reinforcement of local culture in school rules and activities, is a crucial factor in the successful internalization of character values.

The results of this study indicate that the integration of Bugis-Makassar cultural values into character education has a significant positive impact on the holistic development of students' character. The value of *siri'* serves as a moral foundation, emphasizing the importance of self-respect and honor, and fostering integrity and discipline. These findings align with previous research showing that integrating local values into character education increases students' moral awareness and fosters consistent ethical behavior in everyday life.

Pacce values emphasize students' social and emotional development. Direct experiences in collaborative and social activities teach students to respect others, develop empathy, and foster solidarity. This aligns with findings from the journal *Integrating Local Cultural Values in Character Education*, which emphasizes that local cultural values are effective in shaping social and humanistic character. Pacce integration not only fosters caring and humanistic behavior but also supports students' cultural intelligence as they learn to respect and collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds. The principle of *ade'* reinforces discipline and social responsibility. The application of customary rules and social norms in schools fosters adaptive behavior and respect for rules, which are essential components of character education. This aligns with research showing that internalizing local wisdom in school practices fosters consistent social skills and moral behavior.

A contextual and experiential learning approach is key to this model's effectiveness. Teachers act as facilitators, connecting academic concepts with real-life cultural practices, so students not only understand cultural values theoretically but also apply them in real-life situations. A supportive school environment that appreciates local cultural diversity strengthens the internalization of character values. Other studies also confirm that teachers, as behavioral models and mediators of local values, play a central role in the successful integration of culture into character education.

Overall, the integration of Bugis-Makassar cultural values shapes students' character holistically, encompassing moral, social, emotional, and cultural aspects. This local culture-based character education model not only produces academically intelligent students but also individuals with integrity, empathy, responsibility, and social skills aligned with the noble values of the local culture. Thus, local culture-based character education is a relevant and effective approach in the context of elementary schools in South Sulawesi.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the character education model based on Bugis-Makassar cultural values is highly effective in improving the morality of elementary school students in South Sulawesi. The integration of *siri'* values emphasizes the importance of self-esteem, honor, and integrity, enabling students to control negative behavior and foster a deep moral awareness. The *pacce* value strengthens social and emotional aspects, fosters empathy, solidarity, and concern for others, and supports the development of students' cultural intelligence. The *ade'* principle fosters discipline and social responsibility through the internalization of norms and rules that are in accordance with local culture.

The contextual and experiential learning approach has proven effective in connecting academic learning with real-life practices, making cultural values relevant and easily internalized by students. The success of this model is also supported by the role of teachers as facilitators and role models, as well as a school environment that supports respect for diversity and local culture. Overall, the Bugis-Makassar culture-based character education model is able to shape students' character holistically, encompassing moral, social, emotional, and cultural aspects,

and prepare students to become individuals with integrity, empathy, responsibility, and positive behavior in society.

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