

## *Literary Ethnopedagogy: Integrating Local Wisdom into Literature Learning in Schools to Strengthen Character*

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**Abstract.** This study aims to examine the implementation of literary ethnopedagogy in literature learning at junior high schools (SMP) in Madura, with a particular focus on integrating local wisdom values to strengthen students' character. The research is grounded in the reality that the younger generation is increasingly influenced by the currents of globalization, which may marginalize local wisdom and regional cultural identity. In fact, literary works as educational media not only offer aesthetic value but also contain moral, social, and cultural principles that are essential for shaping students' character. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method using a case study approach. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis of local Madurese literary texts incorporated into the learning process. The findings reveal that integrating Madurese local wisdom – such as folktales, proverbs, and oral traditions – enhances students' appreciation of literature while fostering character values including religiosity, mutual cooperation, diligence, and respect for parents and teachers. Moreover, the strategy of literary ethnopedagogy proves to be relevant in cultivating students' cultural identity awareness amid the challenges of modernization. Thus, this study underscores the significance of literary ethnopedagogy as an innovative learning model that not only emphasizes academic achievement but also promotes character development and the preservation of local wisdom.

**Keywords:** ethnopedagogy, literary learning, local wisdom, character strengthening

### **Introduction**

Education, in essence, is not solely oriented toward the achievement of cognitive aspects but also plays a crucial role in shaping students' character. In the context of national education, character strengthening has become one of the primary goals as stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which emphasizes that education must develop learners' potential so that they become individuals who are faithful, pious, noble in character,

and possess strong moral integrity. One strategic effort to achieve this goal is through value- and culture-based learning, namely ethnopedagogy.

Ethnopedagogy is an educational approach grounded in local wisdom as a source of knowledge, values, and morals embedded within the community (Adisusilo, 2013; Alwasilah, A. C., Suryadi, K., & Karyono, T, 2009). Local wisdom functions as a guide for behavior, thinking, and social interaction, making it highly relevant as a foundation for school-based learning. In the context of literature learning, local wisdom values can be integrated through regional and national literary works that contain strong moral, social, and cultural messages. Through literature learning oriented toward ethnopedagogy, students are not only able to understand literary texts aesthetically but also to internalize the noble values embedded within them (Arifin, 2016; Damayanti, 2020; Fitri, 2012).

However, in practice, literature learning in schools today often remains focused on structural aspects and textual analysis, without deeply connecting them to local cultural values. Consequently, students tend to have difficulty grasping the moral messages and wisdom that can serve as guidance in everyday life. In fact, if local wisdom values within literary works are presented contextually in the classroom, they can strengthen cultural identity and shape students' character rooted in national values.

The integration of ethnopedagogy into literature learning aligns with the spirit of Merdeka Belajar, which emphasizes contextual, humanistic, and culturally grounded learning. Through the application of literary ethnopedagogy, teachers can develop more meaningful learning experiences, foster empathy, and cultivate positive character traits such as honesty, responsibility, cooperation, and love for national culture (Gloria, 2021; Kuntoro, 2019). Therefore, research on "Literary Ethnopedagogy: Integrating Local Wisdom in Literature Learning in Schools for Character Strengthening" is essential to identify effective and relevant strategies and models of literature instruction that meet the needs of character education in the era of globalization.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Ethnopedagogy in the context of literary education views the learning process as a medium for transmitting and reproducing local wisdom through texts, oral practices, rituals, and artistic expressions [8] [9] [10]. The main objective of this study is to examine how the integration of local wisdom in literary learning strengthens students' character formation.

The following are conceptual boundaries used in this study:

- 1) Ethnopedagogy: educational theories and practices that position local knowledge, cultural practices, and community values as sources and methods of learning (a synthesis of contemporary ethnopedagogical studies).
- 2) Local Wisdom: a set of knowledge, values, norms, and community practices that develop historically and contextually, which may be actualized through local literature (folklore, traditional poetry, oral narratives).
- 3) Character Strengthening: an educational process aimed at cultivating moral values, social attitudes, and behaviors that support diversity, such as responsibility, integrity, tolerance, and mutual cooperation.

### **Contemporary Ethnopedagogy Theory**

Recent perspectives emphasize that ethnopedagogy is not merely "local content," but a pedagogical approach that embraces community practices, language, and local values as both

methods and sources of learning (Miles, 2014). Its implementation has been shown to effectively enhance the relevance of learning materials and students' cultural identity. Implications include the selection or design of literary materials drawn from local sources and their delivery through cultural practices (drama, oral storytelling, creative works).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) – Contemporary Perspective  
CRP (Geneva Gay et al.) highlights the use of students' cultural backgrounds to enhance engagement and meaningful learning. Recent systematic reviews reaffirm four key pillars: cultural recognition, material adaptation, teacher-student relationships, and the development of critical consciousness. In the context of literary education, CRP encourages the use of local texts to foster emotional and cognitive connection among students (Miles, 2014; Moleong, 2019).

Funds of Knowledge & Place-Based Education (Samani, M., & Hariyanto, 2012).

The following is an explanation of Funds of Knowledge and Place-Based Education.

1. Funds of Knowledge: a framework that leverages the knowledge and practices of families and communities as learning resources. In the context of literature education, this involves integrating home narratives, storytelling traditions, and local rituals into the curriculum.
2. Place-Based Education: an approach that centers on the local environment—its places, histories, and cultural practices—to cultivate a sense of belonging and social responsibility. Together, these two frameworks support ethnopedagogy by connecting literary texts to students' real-life contexts (synthesized from the literature on local-wisdom-oriented educational models).

*Contemporary Character Education Theory*

Character education theories (e.g., Lickona and more recent adaptations) increasingly emphasize value learning through practice rather than merely normative instruction. The integration of local literature—moral stories, exemplary figures, and ethical conflicts—serves as a narrative medium for value internalization. Ethnopedagogy provides the cultural context that makes these values feel authentic and relevant (Sugiyono, 2021; Sutarto, 2020).

*Transformative & Narrative Pedagogy*

Transformative pedagogy positions aesthetic experiences (reading and storytelling) as catalysts for critical reflection and attitude change. Narrative pedagogy—teaching through stories—is effective for fostering empathy, moral identity, and reflective capacity, all of which are central to character development through literature.

*Conceptual Framework (Proposed)*

A model connecting the variables (Tilaar, 2004; Hikmah, 2023).

Input → Process → Output (with a character-strengthening mechanism)

1. Input

Local-wisdom-based literary materials (folktales, poetry, local theatre scripts); curriculum support (Merdeka Belajar policy and local-wisdom integration frameworks); teacher competencies (ethnopedagogy training).

2. Process (Pedagogical Interventions):

- a) Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP)-based instruction (material adaptation and differentiated strategies).
- b) Narrative/experiential methods: performances, oral storytelling workshops, community-based fieldwork.

- c) Family/community involvement (funds of knowledge).
- d) Mechanism  
Cultural relevance → emotional and cognitive engagement → critical reflection → value internalization.
- e) Output (Character-Strengthening Indicators.
  - 1) Affective: tolerance, sense of responsibility, cultural pride
  - 2) Behavioral: cooperative actions (gotong royong), cultural preservation (participation), ethical conduct
  - 3) Cognitive: understanding of cultural values, ability to analyze local texts.

## Methods

### *Main Variables*

**Independent Variable** (Intensity of Literary Ethnopedagogy Integration)  
Indicators: proportion of instructional hours using local texts (80%); frequency of field activities/performances per semester; number of instructional modules based on local wisdom [18].  
**Mediating Variable** (Cultural Engagement & Relevance)  
Indicators: student engagement scores (Likert scale); degree of self-identification with texts (scaled); observed participation levels.

### *Dependent Variable (Character Strengthening)*

**Quantitative Indicators:** character-attitude scale (pre/post); teacher reports on behavioral changes (rubric-based); measurement of participation in cultural activities. **Methods:** combination of quantitative approaches (pre-post questionnaires, character assessment rubrics) and qualitative approaches (in-depth interviews, focus group discussions with teachers and cultural leaders, analysis of local literary texts).

### *Methodological Implications of the Theoretical Review*

**Design:** Quasi-experimental or mixed-methods design (to capture both character development and the processes of cultural integration). **Units of Analysis:** students (individual level), teachers (pedagogical practices), schools (implementation policies), community (sources of local wisdom). **Ethics & Cultural Sensitivity:** involvement of traditional custodians and permission to use traditional materials; ensuring accurate and non-exploitative representation.

### *Empirical Evidence & Summary of Findings from Recent Literature (Supporting Arguments)*

Recent studies indicate that ethnopedagogical modules enhance students' literacy and cultural connectedness, and facilitate the internalization of social values (including studies on ethnopedagogy in language and science literacy). Systematic reviews on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) (2023) and implementation reports (2024) emphasize the need for curriculum adaptation and teacher capacity-building to achieve long-term effectiveness.

### *Character Education Theory*

Contemporary character education theory (rooted in Lickona and subsequent developments) has shifted from teaching normative values toward facilitating value learning through narrative practice and experiential engagement (Wachidah, L. R., Albaburrahim, & Fitri, 2023). Literature, as a medium of moral stories, ethical conflicts, and exemplary characters, is an effective tool for value internalization: building empathy, moral reflection, and prosocial behavior. The integration of local wisdom renders moral narratives more authentic to students, thereby increasing the potential for deeper internalization.

### *Narrative & Transformative Pedagogy*

Narrative pedagogy highlights the power of stories in shaping identity, empathy, and critical reflection. Transformative learning theory suggests that aesthetic experiences and dialogic encounters (such as reading and discussing local texts) can trigger perspective transformation, paving the way for character formation grounded in culturally specific experiences.

### *Integration of Theories into Literature Instruction*

Based on the theories above, ideal literature instruction for character strengthening comprises the following elements:

1. Selection of materials grounded in local wisdom (folktales, local manuscripts, traditional songs) that are rich in moral values and contextually meaningful to students (FoK & PBE).
2. CRP Strategies: teachers link texts to students' lived experiences, adapt assignments to ensure cultural relevance, and foster reflective dialogue on values.

Participatory & practice-based methods: dramatization, performances, storytelling workshops, and community fieldwork activate aesthetic and social experiences (Ethnopedagogy & Narrative Pedagogy).

Community involvement: inviting cultural custodians, storytellers, or cultural figures to share practices; this strengthens the authenticity of materials and legitimizes cultural values (Ethnopedagogy/FoK). Mechanism of the expected character transformation: increased relevance → enhanced emotional and cognitive engagement → moral reflection through narrative → value internalization → changes in attitudes and behavior.

### *Operationalization of Research Variables (proposed)*

#### Independent Variable

Intensity of ethnopedagogical literary integration

Indicators: percentage of instructional hours utilizing local texts; frequency of performance-based or community-visit activities per semester; presence or absence of learning modules based on local wisdom.

#### Mediating Variable

Cultural engagement and relevance

Indicators: student engagement scores (Likert scale); cultural identification scores with the texts; level of participation in cultural activities.

#### Dependent Variable

Character strengthening

Quantitative indicators: pre-post character scores (e.g., empathy, responsibility, tolerance) using valid and reliable instruments; behavioral observation rubrics; teacher and parent reports. Qualitative indicators: narrative evidence of change from student/teacher/community-leader interviews; students' reflective analyses in essay tasks or creative portfolios.

#### Data Collection Methods

This study adopts a mixed-methods design, combining quasi-experimental or pre-post designs with a control group to measure quantitative effects, and qualitative case studies (FGDs, in-depth interviews, brief ethnography) to understand processes and cultural meaning.

(This recommendation aligns with recent methodological practices in complex ethnopedagogical studies).

#### Methodological and Ethical Issues

Cultural sensitivity: any use of traditional materials must involve permission from cultural custodians (community leaders, tradition bearers) and ensure accurate, non-exploitative representation. (Ethnopedagogy demands partnership rather than extraction.)

Teacher capacity: the effectiveness of CRP and FoK depends on teacher training; community-based professional development is recommended.

Validity of character measurement: employ multi-instrument approaches (self-report + observation + third-party ratings) to minimize social-desirability bias.

#### Brief Empirical Evidence from Recent Literature

Studies in the Indonesian context show that ethnopedagogy is effective in revitalizing local wisdom and strengthening students' cultural identity; intervention-based research also reports improved student engagement. Systematic reviews of CRP (2023–2024) affirm that culturally responsive approaches enhance academic engagement when combined with institutional support and teacher training.

Research on FoK and PBE (2021–2024) provides evidence that integrating home knowledge and place-based contexts strengthens learning relevance and student identity—findings that are directly applicable to using local literature as a medium for character education.

## Results and Discussion

#### *Forms of Ethnopedagogical Literary Implementation in Teaching*

Based on classroom observations, lesson-plan analyses, and interviews with Indonesian language teachers, it was found that several junior high schools in Madura have integrated elements of local wisdom into literature instruction through the following strategies:

Selection of culturally grounded teaching materials, such as local folktales (Legenda Putri Cempo, Kerapan Sapi, Carok), Madurese macapat songs, and regional poetry. Contextual teaching methods—for example, discussions on cultural values embedded in Madurese literary texts, role-play of local characters, and projects rewriting folktales in modern versions.

Use of the Madurese language during the opening phase to foster students' emotional connection to the material. Value-reflection activities that guide students to identify character values (courage, courtesy, responsibility, mutual cooperation) embedded in folktales and relate them to everyday life.

#### *Student Responses and Participation*

Field findings show that students responded positively to instruction incorporating local cultural elements. Key findings include:

1. 88% of students reported greater interest in learning literature when the materials were connected to Madurese culture.
2. Students participated more actively in discussions, especially when sharing personal experiences or family traditions.

3. Students demonstrated increased enthusiasm for creative projects, such as producing comics based on folktales, writing poems in the Madurese language, and creating vlogs on Madurese traditions.

#### *Integration of Local Wisdom Values for Character Strengthening*

The study identified four local Madurese values most frequently integrated into instruction:

1. Bhun, Bhabhu, Ghuru, Rato (hierarchy of respect): fostering respect and courtesy.
2. Tengka (self-worth): interpreted by teachers as personal responsibility and integrity, rather than rigidity or carok.
3. Mutual cooperation and solidarity: reinforced through group-based literary projects.
4. Courage and honesty: connected to local characters in Madurese legends.

Teacher interviews indicate that these values were integrated through interpretation-based discussions, reflective assignments, and teacher modeling.

#### *Impact on Students' Character Development*

Questionnaire data and observations indicate the following impacts:

1. Improved discipline and responsibility, especially after teachers linked folktale values to daily behavior.
2. Increased pride in Madurese cultural identity.
3. Enhanced communication behavior – students became more polite and respectful of peers' opinions.
4. Higher empathy, evident in poetry-reading activities themed around family and local culture.

## **Discussion**

#### *Implementation of Ethnopedagogy in Literature Instruction*

The findings indicate that ethnopedagogy was implemented by integrating local culture as a source of values, context, and learning practices. This aligns with core ethnopedagogical principles:

1. education grounded in local wisdom,
2. preservation of cultural identity,
3. learning contextualized to students' lived experiences.

In literature instruction, folktales, legends, and local languages function as media that enrich learning experiences and enhance relevance.

#### *Students' Emotional and Cognitive Engagement*

High student interest demonstrates that culturally grounded instruction can:

1. increase sense of belonging,
2. foster emotional attachment to the material,
3. stimulate intrinsic motivation to participate.

Cultural familiarity prevents literature from feeling abstract, making it part of students' lived reality.

#### *Relevance of Madurese Local Wisdom Values*

Values such as Bhun-Bhabhu-Ghuru-Rato, tengka, courage, and mutual cooperation are found to be relevant for:

1. shaping students' character in a global era,

2. balancing external cultural influences,
3. strengthening the identity and self-concept of Madurese adolescents.

Teachers successfully reframed *tengka*—often perceived negatively—into positive values of dignity, integrity, and moral responsibility.

#### *Effectiveness of Ethnopedagogical Literature Instruction*

The integration of local wisdom was shown to:

1. enhance students' comprehension of literature,
2. build cultural awareness,
3. enrich literary interpretation.

Culturally grounded instruction also opens dialogic spaces connecting literary texts with students' lived experiences, facilitating moral understanding and character formation.

#### *Implications for Character Development*

Findings show that ethnopedagogical literature instruction has positive effects on students' character, particularly in:

1. courtesy (ethics)
2. collaboration
3. integrity
4. cultural identity
5. responsibility

Thus, literature learning serves not only as a medium for literacy but also as a culturally rooted character-education instrument.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the research findings on the implementation of ethnopedagogical literature instruction in junior high schools in Madura, several conclusions can be drawn. Ethnopedagogical literature instruction has been effectively integrated into teaching through culturally grounded material selection, contextual instructional methods, the use of regional languages, and value-reflection activities. Teachers utilize folktales, legends, traditional songs, and other cultural practices as literary resources.

Students demonstrated positive responses and high learning engagement. The incorporation of local cultural elements made instruction more appealing, meaningful, and relatable to students' experiences, thereby increasing motivation, participation, and creativity in literary learning activities.

The approach successfully integrated Madurese wisdom values—such as *Bhun-Bhabhu-Ghuru-Rato*, *tengka* (reinterpreted as personal integrity), mutual cooperation, courage, and honesty—into the learning process. These values were understood and applied by students through discussions, assignments, and reflective activities.

Ethnopedagogical literature instruction had a significant impact on strengthening students' character. Students became more polite, responsible, appreciative of diversity, proud of their cultural identity, and exhibited other positive behaviors. Literature learning thus becomes a medium for character development grounded in local cultural identity.



Overall, this study demonstrates that ethnopedagogical literature instruction is an effective, contextualized approach that contributes both to cultural preservation and to strengthening students' character amidst the challenges of globalization.

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