



***Mendoan* as a culinary feature of Banyumasan culture and its relevance as local content material for elementary schools**

Astiana Ajeng Rahadini^{1*}, Zuniar Kamaluddin Mabururi², Rimajon Sotlikova³, Anindya Syam Choudhury⁴

¹Department of Javanese Language Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret

Ir. Sutami Street 36A, Kentingan, Jebres, Surakarta City, Central Java, 57126, Indonesia

²Department of Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya

Lidah Wetan Street, Lidah Wetan, Lakarsantri, Surabaya, East Java, 60213, Indonesia

³Department of Foreign Language and Literature, Webster University in Tashkent

21a, block G-9a, S. Yusupov street, 100138 Tashkent, Uzbekistan

⁴Department of English, Assam University

Assam University, Silchar - 788011, Assam, India

*Corresponding Author. E-mail: ajengrahadini_pbj@staff.uns.ac.id

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Abstract: *Mendoan* represents a traditional culinary heritage of Banyumas that remains preserved as a significant cultural identity. Beyond its status as a regional icon, *Mendoan* embodies historical values and symbolic meanings that are essential for the younger generation to understand. This study aims to identify the history, production process, and symbolic significance of *Mendoan*, as well as its relevance to local content curricula in elementary education. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were gathered from various informants, events, and documents through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman framework, and the symbolic meanings were interpreted using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. The results show that the history of *Mendoan* originates from an accidental discovery in its preparation. The production process involves several structured stages, and the symbolic meaning is rooted in the term *mendo* (half-cooked), reflecting the flexible yet resilient characteristics of the Banyumas people. These findings suggest that *Mendoan* is highly relevant as instructional material for local content subjects. In conclusion, *Mendoan* serves as a cultural icon that plays a vital role in preserving and promoting local wisdom within elementary school education.

Keywords: history, symbolic meaning, *mendoan*, traditional Banyumas food, local elementary school content

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Introduction

Indonesia is rich in diverse cultures and is among the most culturally diverse countries in the world (Achroni, 2017; Pribadi et al., 2021). One aspect of culture that has been passed down through generations is regional specialties, commonly known as traditional foods. Traditional foods are those passed down from generation to generation in a region and prepared with locally available ingredients and spices (Tavika & Masjid, 2022).

Traditional food is not only about meeting the nutritional needs of a population in a given region but also reflects the identity and culture of its people. According to Xiaomin (2017), the criteria or characteristics of traditional food include the use of endogenous ingredients in cooking, namely unique and distinctive local ingredients. Because the ingredients and spices are unique, the resulting flavours and aromas are unique as well. As Utami (2018) stated, food can be a medium for people to express themselves. What is eaten, how it is prepared, and how the resulting taste reflects the inherent character

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of a culture's society. This pattern is an adaptation to nature, shaped by what is available in the environment and how it survives (Berkes, 1993). The community is accustomed to choosing and consuming certain food ingredients, processing them with techniques passed down from generation to generation, and to the tastes they have known since they first tasted food (Kittler et al., 2016). The raw materials used in traditional foods come from the region's natural resources.

In ancient times, humans were highly dependent on nature. They chose what they found in nature to use for survival. These natural resources became a source of staple and complementary foods. What people chose to consume from nature reflected their identity, family customs, cultural assimilation, survival methods, and the changes that occurred within that culture over time (Almerico, 2014). Traditional food as a cultural identity reflects the distinctive characteristics that distinguish one culture from others. This will continue to be carried over and become part of one's life, ultimately shaping one's character (Almerico, 2014).

Traditional foods in a region are usually rooted in a history closely tied to the region's culture (Pribadi et al., 2025; Yovani, 2019). There are events or occurrences that underlie the creation of these traditional foods. These foods are then consumed continuously and passed down through generations by the community and become part of that society. These traditional foods also embody certain philosophical values held by the local community (Cherry et al., 2011). This philosophy is closely related to the outlook on life they adhere to. These traditional foods are passed down from generation to generation, becoming symbols of cultural identity and pride for the people of a region. Philosophical values can be symbolized by the components inherent in traditional foods, including type, shape, color, taste, or texture. Therefore, we often recognize a culture by the symbolic meanings of its traditional foods.

To analyze symbolic meaning in this study, semiotic theory is used. Semiotics derives from the Greek word *semion*, meaning 'sign,' or from the word *semiotikos*, which also means 'sign' (Rusmana, 2014). Semiotics is the science that studies signs and the meanings they contain. Components of semiotics, such as meaning, denotatum, and interpretant, can be applied in everyday life, which is full of things in the form of form, meaning, and interpretation. More specifically, according to Hoed (2011), semiotics is the science that studies various signs in human life. This means that in life, everything can have meaning if carefully considered, including traditional food. This meaning often contains life values and should be known by the community (Achroni, 2017).

The semiotic theory used in this study is Roland Barthes's. Barthes (2017) emphasizes the interaction between text/language and the personal and cultural experiences of its users, as well as between the conventions of the text and those experienced and expected by its users. Barthes's idea is known as the "order of signification," which includes denotation (the literal meaning according to the dictionary), connotation (multiple meanings arising from cultural and personal experiences), and myths that characterize a society. "Myth" according to Barthes (2017), lies at the second level of signification. So, after the sign-signifier-signified system is formed, the sign becomes a new signifier, which then has a second signified and forms a new sign. When a sign with connotative meaning develops into denotative meaning, the denotative meaning becomes a myth.

In Banyumas Regency, Central Java, there is a famous dish and a signature dish: *mendoan*. *Mendoan* is made from a special type of tempeh (tempeh *mendoan*), coated in a flour batter with spring onions and fried until half-cooked. Tempeh is a traditional Indonesian food and considered a superfood due to its nutritional content (Tamam, 2022). Tempeh *mendoan* is a type of thin tempeh wrapped in banana leaves. *Mendoan* is one of the most popular processed tempeh dishes in Indonesia.

Mendoan is a favourite among the people of Banyumas. It can be enjoyed as a snack or as a side dish. *Mendoan* is typically served warm. As a snack, it's usually served with soy or chilli sauce. As a side dish, *mendoan* can be eaten with white rice or with stir-fried vegetables. *Mendoan* is a ubiquitous part of Banyumas' daily lives. It's a staple at every moment, both special and ordinary. From special occasions like Eid al-Fitr to formal village events, it's also a staple in the daily menu. It's not uncommon for *mendoan* to be served at three meals a day. It's even a lifeline during times of economic hardship, as *mendoan* tempeh is very affordable.

Year after year, *mendoan* remains a favourite dish of the Banyumas people. For natives who have migrated outside of Banyumas or abroad, *mendoan* is a much-cherished dish. Some even have their own memories associated with *mendoan*, so they often seek it out when visiting Banyumas Regency. As

Almerico (2014) noted, "food from our culture, The foods we eat from our families become comfort foods we seek out when we're frustrated or stressed. Eating traditional foods often creates a pleasant, relaxing, and nostalgic feeling (Bessiere & Tibere, 2013). Research shows that tourists spend up to a third of their total expenditure on food in tourist areas. Gastronomic tourism is a new trend in the tourism world (Manimont et al., 2026). Traditional foods are sought after because they are unique to that region. This has led to the widespread distribution of some traditional foods due to demand from people outside their cultural areas. Nowadays, *mendoan* is consumed not only in Banyumas but also abroad. Tempeh *mendoan* is also a popular souvenir for Banyumas residents residing in other areas.

As a commodity that holds a special place in the hearts of the Banyumas people and is highly sought after by tourists, it is hoped that *mendoan* will remain enduring. It is hoped that the younger generation will learn to understand the ins and outs of tempeh *mendoan* and its symbolic meaning. We must ensure that the younger generation is more exposed to foreign cultures and alienated from their own. However, a survey conducted to assess citizens' patriotism found that 34.1% of the society is not proud to be Indonesian (Hasyim & Tukiran, 2024). The survey results also showed that 75% of the younger generation prefer foreign products to local products, and 65% have low awareness of Indonesians' problems (Nudji, 2015). One thing that can be done is to provide a massive, structured introduction through educational channels.

Materials on local wisdom can be incorporated into lessons to provide students with structured information. Local wisdom is an accumulation of knowledge and policies that develop within a community and represent theological, cosmological, and sociological perspectives (Nadlir, 2014). Preserving the local wisdom of various ethnic groups in Indonesia is part of the effort to maintain national character (Ristiani, 2019). Hadirman and Ardianto (2021) stated that learning about local wisdom can improve national character.

Albantani and Ahmad (2018) stated that local wisdom is part of a nation's distinctive characteristics and identity. Studying the value of local wisdom with a multicultural perspective in local culture can be an effort to discover wisdom in the traditional cultures and foods of Indonesian ethnic groups. With such studies, the study of wise and meaningful language can be developed to collect data, develop, and transmit it to future generations.

Several studies have been conducted on *mendoan*. These include the meaning of communication in *mendoan*, *mendoan* distribution, the nutritional content of tempeh *mendoan* (Siregar et al., 2019), tempeh *mendoan* processing, *mendoan* sales strategies, *mendoan* as a commodity of tourism (Hindami et al., 2018) and ethnomathematics in *mendoan*. Research on the history and philosophical values, as well as their integration into learning materials, has not been conducted. Therefore, this study aims to examine the history, manufacturing process, and philosophical values, as well as their relevance in learning as a manifestation of the cultural identity of the Banyumas people, especially at the elementary school level.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach. The data consisted of explanations and events related to the production of *Mendoan*, derived from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included Banyumas residents (randomly selected), cultural experts, *Mendoan* producers, and elementary school teachers. Beyond human informants, the actual *Mendoan* products and their production processes served as primary data points. Secondary sources comprised documents such as academic journals, textbooks, and the Banyumasan Culture local content curriculum.

Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and document analysis. The researchers acted as the primary instrument, supported by observation guides, interview protocols, and document analysis checklists. Observations focused on the preparation, selling, and serving of *Mendoan* across various vendors and households in the Banyumas Regency. Interviews were conducted with cultural figures, vendors, residents, and Javanese language teachers, all selected through purposive sampling based on age, domicile, and social status.

The data analysis integrated interview transcripts, field notes, and document reviews. Roland Barthes' semiotic theory was applied to interpret the symbolic meanings embedded in the form and texture of *Mendoan*. Following the framework by Miles and Huberman (1994), the analysis involved

data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, the study applied both theoretical and methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing and comparing data from different techniques, observations, interviews, and document analysis to ensure a comprehensive and unbiased interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Results

The Banyumas people possess a traditional dish that remains highly popular today: *mendoan*. This dish is readily available throughout the regencies of Banyumas, Cilacap, Banjarnegara, Purbalingga, and across most of the *Ngapak* linguistic region (see Figure 1). *Mendoan* serves as a staple of Banyumas life, consumed almost daily as either a snack or a side dish. Furthermore, the unique flavour and texture of *mendoan* reflect the distinct character of the Banyumas people.

The historical origins of *mendoan* are understood by only a few, as most recognize it as a cultural icon without knowing its specific history. One cultural expert who provides a clear historical account is Ahmad Tohari. Based on interviews and document analysis, the history of *mendoan* began with a technical failure during the production of *tempe kripik* (fried tempeh chips). While *tempe kripik* is a primary commercial commodity in the region, *mendoan* emerged as a semi-finished product of this process. Surprisingly, it was well received by the community and eventually surpassed the chips' popularity.

The production of *mendoan* involves several stages and specific ingredients, with an emphasis on achieving the correct batter texture and the proper frying technique. The essence of the dish lies in its *mendo* (half-cooked) form. If the tempeh is fried until dry, the *mendo* essence is lost, transforming the dish into standard fried tempeh or *tempe kripik*.

The symbolic meaning of *mendoan* is derived from an analysis using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. Denotatively, *mendoan* is thinly sliced tempeh dipped in seasoned flour batter and half-fried (KBBI). Connotatively, *mendoan* conveys a "middle-of-the-road" attitude, being neither rigid nor overly soft. Figuratively, the texture of *mendoan* reflects the Banyumas people's flexible character, known for their ability to socialise across all social strata, from the upper to the lower classes.

Discussion

History of *Mendoan*

Every community and ethnic group has its own distinctive traditional foods. Traditional foods in each region are prepared according to recipes or spice combinations that have been known and practised for generations within the family or community. The raw materials for traditional foods are locally available, either from local farms or markets. Processing methods are also specific, based on methods developed by the local community (Nurhayati et al., 2013).

Mendoan originates from Banyumas Regency, Central Java Province, Indonesia. Banyumas is a regency in Central Java Province that is hundreds of years old. Banyumas culture still exists today. Several cultural products have become hallmarks or icons of Banyumas culture. One of these is the traditional food, *mendoan*.



Figure 1. Map of Banyumas Regency in Central Java Province, Indonesia

Figure 1 illustrates that the Banyumas Regency is situated in the western part of Central Java Province. Geographically positioned between Cilacap, Banjarnegara, Purbalingga, Tegal, and Brebes, the region is characterized by the *Banyumasan* dialect, a distinct variation of the Javanese language.

The emergence of *mendoan* is historically intertwined with the introduction of tempeh, a soybean-based food originally cultivated in Central Asia and Indochina. Following the migration of Central Asian peoples to Southeast Asia, soybean cultivation flourished in Banyumas. Consequently, the local community processes soybeans into various traditional staples, including tempeh, tofu, soy sauce, and tofu dregs. Due to abundant local soybean production, tempeh has long been a primary food source for the Banyumas people.

Although it has served as a staple for generations, *mendoan* only began to transition into a commercial commodity within the tourism sector in the early 1960s. This era marks the opening of the Sawangan souvenir center and the establishment of "Mrs. Sutrisno's Kripik." These pioneers specialized in processing tempeh into *kripik* (thin, crispy chips), which are renowned for their long shelf life.

Data from interviews and document reviews suggest that *mendoan* was discovered inadvertently during the production of these tempeh chips. Traditionally, the chip-making process requires two stages of frying: the tempeh is first half-fried, cooled, and then fried again until dry. However, a technical deviation resulted in a batch that remained soft and moist. Surprisingly, this "half-fried" version was well received by the public, with many preferring its texture to the traditional crispy chip. This culinary variant is thus called *mendoan*, derived from the Banyumasan term *mendo*, meaning 'half-cooked'. Its rapid preparation style aligns with the concept of traditional fast food, which is designed to expedite service time. Today, *mendoan* persists as a culinary icon and a significant tourism asset. The authentic experience of consuming this traditional dish remains a primary attraction for visitors (Fatimah et al., 2019), with the Sawangan area in Purwokerto serving as its most prominent commercial hub.

Mendoan Making Process

The primary raw material for *mendoan* is tempeh, a traditional Indonesian staple that has existed for centuries. Produced from fermented soybeans, tempeh is known for its high protein content. While various types of tempeh exist, the variety used for *mendoan* differs significantly from that used in vegetable dishes or in standard fried tempeh. Historically, *mendoan* was prepared using black soybeans with the skins intact, resulting in a dark aesthetic. However, contemporary *mendoan* typically utilizes white soybeans.

In terms of morphology, *mendoan* tempeh is characterised by its thin, square shape, contrasting with the long, thick dimensions of vegetable tempeh or *tempe guru*. The standard size for *mendoan* is approximately 8 cm x 15 cm, with a wide, slender profile. Nevertheless, regional variations exist; for instance, in the Jetis Beach coastal area of Cilacap, the dimensions are notably larger, reaching approximately 20 cm x 15 cm. To achieve this specific thinness, soybeans are often split during processing. Currently, *mendoan* is commercially available at an affordable price point, approximately Rp1,000 per package.



Figure 1. *Mendoan* Tempeh



Figure 2. *Mendoan* Tempeh Packaging



Figure 3. Vegetable Tempeh

Figures 1, 2, and 3 illustrate the distinctive physical appearance of *mendoan*, with its entire surface covered in white mycelium (mould), which significantly enhances its flavour profile. During the production process, fermented soybeans are arranged by size and wrapped in banana leaves (*daun pisang*), as shown in Figures 1 and 3. This traditional packaging distinguishes *mendoan* from vegetable

tempeh (Figure 2), which is commonly wrapped in clear plastic. While banana leaf midribs are traditionally used for tying, contemporary producers occasionally utilize raffia string. Each package typically consists of several layers of tempeh arranged in a stacked format separated by banana leaves, a technique known as *tempe lempit*. This specific arrangement further differentiates *mendoan* from other tempeh varieties.

Once wrapped, the mycelium grows uniformly across the entire surface (see Figure 1), increasing its palatability. Although *mendoan* can be prepared using thinly sliced thick tempeh, the flavour remains distinct from specialized *mendoan* tempeh; in standard vegetable tempeh, the mycelium growth is often restricted to the outer surface. To prepare the dish, the tempeh is coated in a seasoned batter made from a 1:1 ratio of wheat and rice flour. The batter is seasoned with crushed garlic (*bawang putih*), salt, and coriander (*ketumbar*). The mixture maintains a relatively thick liquid consistency to ensure the coating remains substantial. A defining characteristic of *mendoan* is this thick flour layer, which differs from typical fried tempeh. Additionally, the batter is enriched with finely chopped spring onions, locally referred to as *loncang*.



Figure 4. Flour and Tempeh *Mendoan* Dough

As seen in Figure 4, the *mendoan* batter maintains a balanced consistency, neither too runny nor excessively thick, which significantly influences the final shape of the dish. A defining feature of *mendoan* is its substantial flour layer, complemented by the addition of sliced *muncang* leaves.

The preparation involves dipping the tempeh into the flour mixture and turning it to ensure the surface is evenly coated. The tempeh is then fried in a generous amount of hot oil until fully immersed. Using a large volume of oil is essential to achieve the signature chewy texture and ensure the flour coating cooks uniformly.



Figure 5. How to Serve *Mendoan*

Mendoan is encased in a thick layer of batter, as illustrated in Figure 5. *Mendoan* is best served hot, as it tends to become soggy upon cooling. It is typically enjoyed with bird's eye chilies, a practice commonly known as *nyigit*. Alternatively, *mendoan* is now frequently served with a side of sweet soy sauce and chili flakes. Once cooled, the dish becomes less palatable due to the resulting soggy texture.

Symbolic Meaning

Traditional foods serve not only as culinary markers of regional uniqueness but also embody the philosophical values held by local communities. Wahyuni et al. (2017) state that traditional foods symbolize regional culinary diversity, enrich knowledge, and connect individuals with their historical and cultural roots. Furthermore, traditional culinary heritage offers one of the most effective pathways to understanding local culture, values, and legacy (Sims, 2010).

Traditional foods do not emerge overnight, as geographical factors heavily influence food availability and regional variations. Such foods can also reveal the character of a community (Carretero, 2025). Preparation methods, often taught by ancestors and closely tied to nature with minimal technological intervention, create distinct sensations that may be lost if the techniques are altered. Furthermore, historical events—such as colonial encounters, major disasters, or cultural acculturation—contribute to the preference for specific local ingredients.

The same principles apply to *mendoan*, which possesses profound symbolic meaning. When analyzed through Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, it is essential to identify the signifier and the signified. Barthes (2007) posits that the core of semiotics is the existence of a signifier (the sound or written word) and a signified (the mental image, thought, or concept) (Salsabila & Sobur, 2023).

The term *mendoan* originates from the *Banyumasan* dialect word *mendo*, meaning half-cooked. *Mendo* refers to a frying technique that produces a texture that is neither dry nor crisp, but remains chewy and tender. This *mendo* texture reflects the character of the Banyumas people, who are perceived as flexible and highly adaptive (Priyadi, 2003).

Furthermore, *mendoan* conveys the meaning of *tanggung*, representing a middle ground between *mendhak* (downward) and *mendhuwur* (upward). This signifies a moderate attitude (*moderat*) (Rohyati, 2023), defined as maintaining focus despite worldly distractions. The upward direction suggests that while humans should aspire to great heights through hard work, they must remain vigilant to avoid failure. Conversely, the downward direction suggests that one should not despair during life's lower phases, serving as a reminder to stay humble and grounded. As a culinary midpoint between crispy chips and raw tempeh, *mendoan* characterizes the Banyumas people as neither rigid nor "raw."

Mendoan is also integral to the *slametan miniti* and *sambatan rumah* traditions. In the *slametan miniti* tradition, specifically during *ndaud* (harvesting rice seeds for planting) and *njabeli* (post-planting), *mendoan* is served as a form of respect and gratitude to *Dewi Sri*, the Goddess of Fertility. During *sambatan*, a collective house construction, a *slametan* is held upon completion of the roof to honour *Bapa Akasa* and *Ibu Pertiwi*. These practices demonstrate the Banyumas people's belief in the protective power of the spirits that *mbaureksa*.

In contemporary contexts, *mendoan* serves as a symbol of the Banyumas character, with its preparation and presentation closely linked to communication concepts. Its roles include participation in life-cycle rituals, serving as a symbol of brotherhood, and functioning as a product of cultural acculturation (Chusmeru & Kuncoro, 2020). According to informant Sri Wahyuni, *mendoan* has become a definitive cultural characteristic that expresses social and familial bonds. It functions as a traditional medium of communication, fostering camaraderie and warming the atmosphere of family gatherings. *Mendoan*, or *mendo-mendo*, implicitly encourages social interaction and integration.

In 2021, *mendoan* was officially registered as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Central Java under the domain of Knowledge and Practices concerning Nature and the Universe. Its philosophical values are deeply embedded in the Banyumas community and must be continuously promoted to the younger generation, particularly through formal education.

The Historical Relevance, Manufacturing Process, and Symbolic Meaning of *Mendoan* to Learning

Local wisdom is a form of communal sagacity for navigating life and is a vital part of a nation's cultural identity, enabling society to respond to foreign influences in accordance with indigenous values (Suryanti et al., 2020). These values must be recognised by future generations through education, specifically in local content (*muatan lokal*) and Javanese-language subjects. Local content curricula serve to adapt school-based learning to the specific environmental and regional needs of the community (Faturahman et al., 2022).

Local culture plays a significant role in character education, teaching students to embrace concrete situations encountered in daily life (Sumardjoko & Musyiam, 2018). Experts suggest that local wisdom is a potential source of knowledge for the sustainability of community life (Bonacho et al., 2026; Vargas et al., 2026). Culture serves as a crucial foundation for character formation, particularly during childhood, where daily environmental experiences shape core values (Sakti et al., 2024).

Integrating local wisdom into the classroom can be achieved by utilizing it as a learning resource—defined as any reference that enhances student skills and facilitates the learning process (Wulandari, 2020). According to Susanti et al. (2020), local wisdom is a viable learning resource due to its inherent moral values and contextual knowledge. Consequently, teachers must map environmental potentials to be utilized as instructional assets.

To preserve local culture, the Banyumas Regency Education Office issued Decree Number 420/1763/2007, which governs the implementation of the *Banyumasan* Culture local content curriculum. Currently, this curriculum is implemented in elementary schools under the regency's auspices, though it has not yet been adopted by madrasas under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This subject is managed as a separate curriculum, with a time allocation of two lesson hours, each lasting 35 minutes.

The *Banyumasan* Culture subject introduces the younger generation to traditions, dances, folklore, handicrafts, and traditional foods. According to several elementary school teachers, the history, production process, and philosophical values of *mendoan* are highly relevant for this curriculum. *Mendoan* embodies symbolic meanings that align with the character of the Banyumas people, providing guidance on resisting the negative pressures of globalization.

Mendoan is suitable for fourth-grade instruction and aligns with the traditional food curriculum. Previous research indicates that local wisdom-based science supplements are effective for fourth-grade thematic-integrative learning (Aji & Pujiastuti, 2022). Furthermore, integration can be realized through innovative models, such as Project Module-Based innovations to enhance creativity (Rukmi & Nisa, 2025) or media-based values integration to increase patriotism (Irvan & Mustadi, 2021).

In this study, *the focus is on mendocan material* as teaching material. It is considered appropriate because *mendoan* is accessible to all social strata, uses readily available ingredients, and requires minimal preparation time. By presenting contextual materials, students more easily internalize local wisdom values and become more familiar with their own culture than with foreign ones. This aligns with Nur (2017), who states that nationalistic character develops through collaborative learning grounded in local wisdom.

The utilization of *mendoan* as a learning resource involves developing objectives aligned with curriculum outcomes, preparing supporting tools, and establishing assessment plans. Beyond theoretical presentation, the preparation process of *mendoan* can be directly integrated into the learning process. This is particularly suitable for fourth graders who are beginning to learn basic cooking skills, and can be implemented through Project-Based Learning (*PjBL*).

With readily available ingredients and a straightforward method, students can engage in hands-on practice to familiarise themselves with the shape, ingredients, and preparation of *mendoan*. Providing concrete and meaningful experiences through such independence increases student engagement. It is hoped that once children can prepare *mendoan* themselves, they will use these skills at home, ensuring the dish is preserved. As argued by Sarfiyo (Yuliana, 2017), local wisdom is a strategic approach for integrating culture into the science learning process. This approach is highly suitable for Indonesian education, as local wisdom contains scientific knowledge, morals, and technology derived directly from the community (Sudarmin & Pujiastuti, 2015).

Conclusion

Mendoan holds significant value for the Banyumas community. *Mendoan* is closely tied to history and holds symbolic meaning. The physical form of *mendoan* symbolizes the character of the Banyumas people. This demonstrates that *mendoan* has become an icon of the Banyumas community. Whenever the word *Mendoan* is mentioned, images of the Banyumas region and its people appear. Utilizing local *Mendoan* wisdom as a learning resource for elementary school students, particularly through traditional foods, is highly relevant and plays a crucial role in introducing and instilling cultural and moral values

in the younger generation of Banyumas residents from an early age. Banyumas residents need to continue to understand their character and identity as honest, kind, and self-reliant individuals.

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