

Designing a culture-based learning model: A qualitative exploration for strengthening local identity in primary education

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Abstract

In an era of globalization, the erosion of local cultural identity among young learners presents a critical challenge for educational systems. This study addresses this gap by designing a comprehensive culture-based learning model aimed at strengthening the local identity of primary school students. Employing a qualitative exploratory case study design, data were collected from five elementary schools in Sleman, Yogyakarta, through in-depth interviews with principals, teachers, students, and community stakeholders, complemented by classroom observations and document analysis. The findings culminate in a three-pillar Culture-Based Learning Model: (1) Curricular Integration, embedding local wisdom (e.g., Javanese folklore, language) and experiential arts (e.g., batik, gamelan) into core subjects; (2) Structured Extracurricular Programs for deeper cultural immersion; and (3) the creation of a Culturally Responsive School Environment. The model is operationalized through implementation strategies emphasizing community collaboration and digital technology, alongside a robust tripartite evaluation mechanism assessing cognitive understanding, attitudinal pride, and practical skills. The study demonstrates that systematic cultural integration fosters early internalization of local values, builds resilience against global homogenization, and strengthens community-school ties. This research provides educators and policymakers with a theoretically grounded and actionable framework for designing learning ecosystems that effectively preserve cultural heritage while nurturing culturally confident students.

Keywords: Culture-based learning; local identity; primary education; curriculum integration; Javanese culture

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization has reshaped cultural life and schooling by accelerating cross-cultural contact through information and communication technologies (Litz, 2011). While global connectivity expands access to ideas and learning resources, it also pressures local identities, especially among younger generations who increasingly adopt values and lifestyles shaped by global cultural flows distributed via media, entertainment, and schooling that often privilege global over local content (Hahn & Narjoko, 2011). These pressures are intensified by digital technology use: studies suggest heavy internet reliance is associated with weaker national and local identity among adolescents, and online spaces may circulate cultural narratives that conflict with local

values (Syarifah & Kusuma, 2016). The COVID-19 shift to online education further reduced students' direct engagement with their cultural environments, limiting opportunities to experience local traditions and contributing to declining cultural understanding and attachment (Yao, 2025). Prolonged virtual learning diminished opportunities for students to interact with local traditions, contributing to a decline in their understanding of and connection to local and national identities.

Education is therefore central to strengthening local identity by integrating local culture into curricula and school life. Culture-based learning, supported by policy initiatives in the Special Region of Yogyakarta such as Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2011 and Governor Regulation No. 66 of 2013, promotes learning *about* cultural contexts, enabling students to appreciate, own, and help preserve their heritage. These efforts underscore the potential of education to serve as a bulwark against cultural homogenization.

In primary schools, cultural integration can be enacted through regional languages, locally grounded social practices, and the inclusion of local arts and traditions across subjects, reinforced by extracurricular performances and community engagement (Rijo & Souto, 2014). However, implementation faces obstacles, including limited alignment between local culture initiatives and national curricula, discontinuity across schools, and student cultural diversity that requires flexible (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2014). Additionally, the diverse cultural backgrounds of students problematize uniform implementation, as varying levels of cultural familiarity require tailored approaches. The discontinuous nature of culture-based initiatives, often dependent on regional or school-specific policies, underscores the need for more flexible and sustainable frameworks to ensure consistent application across educational system.

Conceptually, culture-based learning aligns with culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching, which connect instruction to students' cultural contexts to support achievement, meaning-making, and critical awareness (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Pesurnay, 2018; Taylor & Sobel, 2011). Local identity, a reflection of this cultural heritage, is a critical component of students' character and sense of self. Education, therefore, plays a crucial role in preserving and strengthening local identity through culturally grounded pedagogies.

Culture, encompassing material and immaterial dimensions such as values, norms, customs, and traditions transmitted across generations, forms the basis of local identity that education can nurture through culturally grounded pedagogy (Măduța, 2014). Similarly, culturally responsive teaching, as explored by Taylor and Sobel, creates stronger connections between students and their communities, making learning more meaningful and motivating active participation (Ghufron, 2017). These frameworks emphasize that culturally informed education not only imparts knowledge but also deepens students' cultural roots, equipping them to navigate global influences with confidence.

Experiential activities traditional music, dance, and local wisdom practices support cultural internalization, especially when strengthened by family and community involvement (Milena & González, 2018). Community and familial involvement further enhance these efforts, creating a cohesive cultural learning ecosystem that extends beyond the classroom. Such collaborative approaches ensure that students sense their cultural identity as valued and integral to their daily lives.

Empirical studies in Indonesia and international contexts indicate that culturally oriented curricula can reinforce local and national identity, character, and social responsibility when supported by teachers, parents, and adequate infrastructure (Larasati et al., 2014). Internationally, studies in contexts like Romania illustrate that local cultural heritage shape national identity, with education serving as a key preservation tool (Măduța, 2014). These findings affirm the universal relevance of culture-based education in sustaining community identities across diverse settings.

Innovative pedagogical models further enhance the efficacy of culture-based learning. For instance, applying Carl Rogers' non-directive learning approach in Yogyakarta's primary schools allows students to explore cultural elements experientially, fostering critical cultural

understanding (Ghufron, 2017). This flexible, student-centered model contrasts with rigid instructional methods, enabling deeper cultural internalization. Additionally, integrating local culture into foreign language instruction strengthens identity by connecting linguistic and cultural values (González, 2018). Exceeding identity formation, culture-based learning enhances students' social- emotional development, academic motivation, and psychological well-being, and contributes to the holistic growth (Singh & Espinoza-Herold, 2014).

The challenges posed by globalization amplified by technology, media, and rapid information flows, necessitate robust educational responses to preserve local identities. Culture-based learning offers a systematic approach to counter these pressures by embedding cultural values into education, fostering students' cultural awareness and pride. Effective implementation requires detailed and careful planning, integrative execution, and continuous evaluation to ensure alignment with educational goals. A structured design for culture-based learning involves clear curriculum integration, interactive teaching methods, and consistent evaluation to measure impact. Extracurricular cultural activities, such as festivals and traditional games, complement formal learning, while community collaboration reinforces cultural experiences in students' daily lives.

Sustainability in culture-based learning hinges on institutional commitment and policy support. Educational policies must prioritize cultural integration, ensuring it is not an ancillary component but a core pillar of the curriculum. Teacher training programs should equip educators with the skills to deliver culturally responsive instruction, while infrastructure investments support cultural activities. Regular assessments, both qualitative and quantitative, are essential to gauge the effectiveness of culture-based programs and identify areas for improvement. By fostering a cultural learning environment that is adaptive and inclusive, schools can empower students to embrace their heritage while engaging in global contexts.

In conclusion, culture-based learning designates vital strategies for preserving local identity in the face of globalization's homogenizing forces. By integrating cultural values into education, this approach not only enriches students' academic experiences but also strengthens their character, cultural pride, and social connectedness. As global cultural marks intensify, education must evolve to serve as both a repository of knowledge and a guardian of cultural heritage. Through systematic, collaborative, and innovative culture-based learning models, schools can cultivate generations that are deeply rooted in their local identities yet equipped to succeed in a globalized world.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design to examine how culture-based learning enhances local identity among primary school students. The exploratory case study method allows in-depth investigation of phenomena within real-world contexts, particularly those underexplored in prior research (Yin, 2018). This approach facilitates a comprehensive analysis of perspectives from school principals, teachers, and students, offering a holistic understanding of culture-based learning implementation in primary education.

The research was conducted in five public primary schools in Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. The schools were chosen as designated as model schools for culture-based learning since 2014 by the Head of the Yogyakarta Education, Youth, and Sports Agency. The data collection was from September 2023 to July 2024, encompassing administrative preparation, classroom and cultural extracurricular observations, in-depth interviews. The research participants interviewed included five school principals each, one classroom teacher each as the person in charge of cultural education and cultural extracurricular activities from the selected schools, and two students from each school. The extracurricular activities such as cultural ceremonies and art performances. Document analysis reviewed from school curricula, teachers lesson plan, and assesment reports to evaluate cultural integration. These methods ensured the data collection of rich that validates the effectiveness of culture-based learning.

Additional informants, such as the Sleman Education Regional Coordinator and local

Cultural Office representatives, offered broader perspectives on policy and governmental support. This multi-source strategy ensures a concentrated exploration of the policy, implementation, and impact of culture-based education.

To ensure data validity, the study employed triangulation of sources, member checking, reflective analysis, and systematic field notes. Reflective analysis mitigated researcher bias, and detailed field notes provided systematic documentation. Data analysis is utilized descriptive pattern matching comparing empirical findings with theoretical patterns from literature to assess the effectiveness of culture-based learning in strengthening local identity (Trochim, 1989). This rigorous methodology aims to produce evidence-based findings to inform sustainable culture-based education policies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study investigated the implementation of culture-based learning in five public primary schools in Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, and its contribution to strengthening students' local identity. The findings reveal four interrelated dimensions: (1) procedures for culture-based learning, (2) implementation strategies, (3) evaluation mechanisms, and (4) the role of culture-based learning in reinforcing students' local identity. These dimensions informed the formulation of a contextually grounded culture-based learning model for primary education.

Procedures for Culture-Based Learning

Curriculum integration of cultural values. The findings indicate that culture-based learning is systematically integrated into the formal curriculum, ensuring that local culture is embedded within core academic subjects rather than treated as supplementary content. Bahasa Indonesia lessons incorporate local folklore rich in moral and social values, while social studies emphasize regional history, customs, and community-based livelihoods. Additionally, the use of the Javanese language including "*krama*" (polite forms) and Javanese script functions as a key medium for reinforcing cultural identity.

School leaders emphasized that curricular integration follows regional policy frameworks while allowing teachers pedagogical flexibility. The principal of Banyurejo elementary school stated:

"We integrate culture-based learning into the school curriculum. The curriculum includes Javanese language electives in accordance with the Governor's Regulation, and teachers develop their own lesson plans."

Similarly, a classroom teacher explained that cultural integration is contextualized to students' immediate environments:

"In thematic Social Studies lessons, we focus on local topics, such as types of jobs found in the students' surroundings. Cultural material is always connected to the culture around them."

These findings demonstrate that cultural content is delivered through meaningful contextualization, enabling students to connect academic learning with their lived cultural experiences.

Implementation of Experiential Learning. Experiential learning emerged as a central procedural element in culture-based instruction. Students actively participated in cultural practices such as playing *gamelan*, performing traditional dances, producing batik, and wearing traditional attire during school activities. These practices transformed cultural concepts into embodied learning experiences.

Observations revealed that *gamelan* instruction fostered collective discipline and cooperation, as students were required to coordinate rhythm and timing. Batik-making activities cultivated patience and aesthetic sensitivity, while traditional dance practices emphasized expressive movement rooted in local philosophy. Teachers reported that students demonstrated

heightened engagement and social interaction during these activities, indicating deeper internalization of cultural values through direct participation.

Cultural extracurricular programs. Cultural extracurricular programs function as a structured extension of classroom learning. All participating schools offered regular extracurricular activities, including traditional dance, batik art, and *karawitan* (gamelan music). These programs not only developed technical competencies but also strengthened students' cultural awareness and confidence.

The principal of Jetisharjo Elementary School highlighted the institutionalization of cultural routines:

"Extracurricular activities strongly support our culture-based school system. Dance and gamelan are the most prominent. We also require students to wear Mataraman traditional clothing every Thursday Pahing and during important regional commemorations."

The involvement of local artists as instructors further enhanced authenticity, connecting students with community-based cultural knowledge. Participation in cultural festivals and competitions provided public recognition of students' cultural skills, reinforcing motivation and cultural pride.

Culturally supportive school environment. A culturally reflective school environment was found to be essential in sustaining culture-based learning. School spaces were decorated with Javanese script murals, batik motifs, traditional instruments, and local proverbs (*paribasan*), creating an immersive cultural atmosphere. Institutional policies reinforced this environment through designated days for wearing traditional attire, using regional languages, and practicing cultural etiquette.

Schools also collaborated with local cultural figures to conduct performances, storytelling sessions, and ceremonial activities. These initiatives positioned the school as a cultural hub, ensuring that students encountered local culture consistently in both formal and informal settings.

Culture-Based Learning Implementation Strategies. Five primary implementation strategies were identified: curriculum integration, extracurricular exploration, culturally reflective environments, community involvement, and technology utilization. Curriculum integration ensured that cultural values were embedded within academic instruction, while extracurricular activities enabled experiential engagement with cultural practices. Culturally reflective environments normalized daily cultural interaction, reinforcing identity formation beyond classroom instruction.

Community involvement strengthened authenticity through collaboration with local artists, craftsmen, and cultural practitioners. Meanwhile, digital technology expanded cultural learning beyond the school context. At one of Sleman elementary school, for example, social media platforms were used to disseminate cultural activities:

"We use Instagram, YouTube, and Canva and share them with parents. We also involve media during cultural events so our school is recognized as a culture-based school," explained the school principal.

These strategies collectively formed an integrated ecosystem supporting sustained cultural engagement.

Evaluation of Culture-Based Learning

Assessment of learning processes and outcomes. Evaluation encompassed cognitive, attitudinal, and skill-based dimensions. Cognitive assessments measured students' understanding of local history, folklore, and cultural symbols. Attitudinal assessments relied on teacher observations of behaviors such as politeness, respect, and the use of Javanese language. Skill-based assessments evaluated students' performance in cultural practices, including dance, *gamelan*, and batik-making.

Monitoring and follow-up actions. Continuous monitoring ensured program consistency and improvement. Teachers and school leaders regularly reviewed instructional

practices and identified areas requiring adjustment. Follow-up actions included revising teaching strategies, enriching cultural content, and strengthening cultural routines.

Community involvement in evaluation. Parents and community members contributed evaluative feedback, particularly regarding students' application of cultural values outside school. Parents frequently reported increased use of polite Javanese language at home, indicating transfer of learning beyond the classroom.

Comprehensive evaluation instruments. Multiple instruments were employed, including written tests, classroom observations, and performance-based assessments. At SDN 4, the principal emphasized teacher-centered evaluation:

"We ask teachers to evaluate how the children respond in class because they understand the students best."

At another school, evaluation followed a diagnostic–formative–summative sequence, as described by a classroom teacher:

"We conduct diagnostic assessments before learning, formative assessments during learning, and summative assessments after learning to measure achievement."

Strengthening Local Identity Through Culture-Based Learning

The findings demonstrate that culture-based learning effectively strengthens students' local identity through early cultural internalization, fostering cultural pride, enhancing community connections, and building resilience against global cultural influences. Early exposure to cultural values across subjects and activities ensured deep-rooted understanding. Opportunities to perform and display cultural competencies cultivated pride and confidence. Community engagement bridged school learning with lived cultural practices, fostering a sense of responsibility for cultural preservation. Finally, students developed cultural resilience, enabling them to engage with global influences while maintaining a strong local identity. Overall, culture-based learning emerged as a comprehensive educational approach that not only supports academic development but also nurtures culturally grounded, confident, and resilient learners.

Discussion

Procedures for culture-based learning

This study shows that culture-based learning in primary schools operates through four interrelated procedures: (1) integrating cultural content into the formal curriculum, (2) providing experiential cultural activities, (3) strengthening cultural learning through structured extracurricular programs, and (4) building a culturally supportive school environment. Together, these procedures function as a coherent system rather than separate initiatives, because students encounter cultural values repeatedly across subjects, routines, and social practices. This pattern supports the principle of culturally responsive pedagogy, where learning becomes meaningful when it is anchored in students' lived cultural contexts and supports identity development in a globalized world (Benson, 2019). The findings also reinforce the argument that incorporating local wisdom into everyday instruction is not only a cultural preservation effort but also a pathway to strengthen engagement and character formation when cultural values are embedded in regular classroom practice (Fusco, 2025). Schools highlighted that culturally infused lessons not only improve academic engagement but also cultivate a sense of belonging, corroborating the current study's emphasis on contextual relevance in cultural education.

The first procedure, curriculum integration, is visible in how local folklore, regional language, and local customs are embedded across core subjects. Culture is not restricted to arts-related lessons but appears in Bahasa Indonesia through local storytelling, in Social Studies through local history and customs, and in school language practices through the use of Javanese registers and script. This integration strengthens cultural literacy because students encounter cultural knowledge within academically valued learning spaces, not only in informal

contexts. It also supports emotional attachment to local identity because cultural narratives, proverbs, and social etiquette are framed as relevant to students' lives and success in school. Prior scholarship similarly suggests that culturally infused curricula can strengthen belonging by aligning school knowledge with community knowledge systems, thereby reducing the distance between students' lived experiences and formal learning (Benson, 2019). In this study, curriculum integration functions as a foundational procedure that legitimizes local culture as "school knowledge," which is important for identity formation, since legitimacy influences whether students perceive cultural practices as valuable or outdated.

The second procedure, experiential cultural learning, is operationalized through activities such as gamelan practice and batik-making, which require direct participation, coordination, and sustained effort. These practices appear to support identity formation by translating cultural content from "information to be memorized" into "skills and values to be lived." In qualitative terms, experiential learning shifts students from being cultural observers to cultural participants, which can intensify both cognitive understanding and affective engagement. The findings are consistent with research suggesting that hands-on cultural practices deepen learning because students develop meaning through experience, reflection, and social interaction, and this process enables internalization of values such as teamwork, patience, responsibility, and discipline (Afryanto, 2012; Iswanto et al., 2025). In this study, experiential learning also appears to facilitate social-emotional development because many cultural practices are inherently collaborative, requiring students to listen, synchronize, negotiate roles, and manage emotions during performance and practice. These competencies reinforce identity not only as "knowing culture" but as "being able to enact culture" within a peer community.

The third procedure, structured extracurricular programs, functions as a sustained reinforcement mechanism. Programs like traditional dance, karawitan, and batik workshops provide regular practice space for cultural skills and offer opportunities for students to showcase competencies through performances, festivals, and competitions. This procedure strengthens cultural pride and motivation, particularly when students receive recognition from peers, teachers, and community members. Prior studies similarly report that extracurricular cultural activities can enhance pride and engagement, especially when supported by community practitioners who provide authentic guidance and convey cultural meanings that extend beyond technique, (Larasati et al., 2014; Safitri et al., 2023). bridges school experiences with community cultural authority, which can increase students' perception that cultural skills are socially valued and worth preserving.

The fourth procedure, the creation of a culturally supportive school environment, reinforces cultural learning through daily immersion. The schools use visual cultural cues such as Javanese script murals, batik motifs, and traditional symbols, as well as routine practices such as designated traditional attire days, regional language use, and culturally grounded ceremonies. These environmental and routine cues matter because identity formation is influenced by what students see normalized and celebrated in their daily environments. International evidence suggests that culturally immersive school environments can sustain cultural engagement by making cultural identity visible, practiced, and socially affirmed in everyday life, thereby strengthening identity resilience amid global cultural influences (Duong & Khuong, 2025; Nguyen et al., 2024; Truong & Underwood, 2020). In the present study, this procedure strengthens the other procedures, since curriculum integration and extracurricular learning become more effective when the wider school environment consistently signals that local culture is legitimate and valued.

Taken together, the four procedures indicate that culture-based learning is most effective when implemented as a coherent educational ecosystem. The findings suggest that local identity is strengthened not through isolated events but through continuous, multi-context exposure and participation. This has important implications for sustainability. Schools that depend only on festivals or occasional cultural days may fail to produce sustained identity

outcomes. By contrast, schools that embed culture across curriculum, practice, enrichment, and environment are more likely to create durable cultural engagement. Future research should examine which of these procedures is most critical under conditions of limited resources and how the procedures can be adapted to schools with diverse student demographics and varying levels of policy and community support (Nguyen et al., 2024).

Culture-based learning implementation strategies

Beyond procedural design, this study highlights implementation strategies that enable culture-based learning to function in daily practice. The schools implement five key strategies: curriculum integration, extracurricular cultural exploration, culturally reflective environments, community collaboration, and technology utilization. These strategies align with broader scholarship on culturally responsive education, which emphasizes that identity-supporting learning requires consistency across multiple dimensions of school life and strong connections between school knowledge and community knowledge (Nadia Dinihari, 2019; Niswatun et al., 2024). The findings suggest that implementation is strongest when strategies reinforce each other, rather than when schools rely on a single pathway such as classroom instruction alone.

Curriculum integration as an implementation strategy is not merely about adding cultural topics. It involves aligning cultural content with learning objectives, instructional methods, and assessment routines so that culture is represented as academically meaningful. In this study, cultural integration appears to increase relevance and engagement because students encounter cultural narratives and language practices in ordinary lessons, not only in special activities. This supports culturally responsive claims that relevance improves motivation and learning quality when instruction is anchored in students' cultural worlds (Niswatun et al., 2024).

Extracurricular cultural exploration is a second strategy that extends identity work into participatory domains. Activities like karawitan and traditional dance facilitate experiential learning by allowing students to practice cultural skills and values in collective settings. Research in related contexts suggests that participatory cultural activities can deepen emotional and cognitive engagement and foster discipline and cultural appreciation, which is consistent with the present findings (Munir & Zaheer, 2021). In the schools studied, extracurricular programs appear to serve an additional function as identity affirmation spaces because they offer performance opportunities and social recognition, which can strengthen students' cultural pride and commitment.

Culturally reflective school environments operate as a third strategy by providing continuous reinforcement. Visual cues and daily norms are not trivial; they create a "cultural atmosphere" that shapes how students interpret culture's place in modern schooling. Studies in other settings show that immersive cultural environments can sustain identity by embedding cultural familiarity in daily routines and interactions (Nadia Dinihari, 2019; Niswatun et al., 2024). In this study, the use of murals, symbols, and language norms makes cultural identity visible and practiced. This reduces the risk that culture-based learning becomes episodic or purely symbolic.

Community collaboration is a fourth strategy that strengthens authenticity. The schools' partnerships with local artists, cultural practitioners, and community figures position cultural learning as linked to living traditions rather than school simulations. Research on school-community partnerships indicates that successful collaborations are typically reciprocal and rely on strong leadership, an inviting school culture, educator commitment, and effective communication with partners (Haines et al., 2015; Ugobueze, 2024). The present findings align with this, as schools that facilitate workshops and performances with community practitioners appear to enhance students' cultural understanding, pride, and responsibility. Importantly, community collaboration also supports sustainability because it distributes cultural learning beyond the school and increases community ownership of cultural education.

Technology utilization is the fifth strategy, which extends cultural learning into digital expression and dissemination. The schools' use of digital media to showcase cultural projects

such as student documentaries or digital storytelling can amplify cultural appreciation and connect students' cultural work to wider audiences. Emerging research suggests that digital platforms can support cultural heritage preservation and education when used to strengthen participation and documentation, rather than replacing deep cultural immersion with superficial representation (Bian et al., 2025; Liang et al., 2021). In this study, technology appears most valuable when it functions as a bridge that links school-based cultural learning to the broader social environment, strengthening students' sense that culture matters beyond classroom boundaries. Future research should explore how schools can manage the balance between digital visibility and cultural depth, particularly to ensure that technology supports cultural internalization and not only cultural display (Bian et al., 2025).

Overall, the findings suggest that implementation strategies are effective because they create multiple pathways for cultural learning, including academic, experiential, social, environmental, community, and digital pathways. This multi-pathway approach increases the likelihood that students will not only learn cultural facts but also develop cultural pride and identity resilience. Future studies could examine which combinations of strategies are most feasible and impactful for schools with fewer cultural resources or weaker community partnerships, and how policy structures might support consistent implementation across diverse school contexts (Haines et al., 2015; Niswatun et al., 2024).

Evaluation of culture-based learning

This study indicates that evaluation is central to sustaining culture-based learning, since cultural programs can easily become symbolic or inconsistent without systematic monitoring. The evaluation framework observed includes cognitive, attitudinal, and skill-based assessment, supported by continuous monitoring, follow-up actions, community engagement, and diverse evaluation instruments. This approach reflects the complexity of culture-based learning outcomes, which include not only knowledge acquisition but also value internalization, cultural competence, and identity-related behaviors (Wijayanti et al., 2025).

Cognitive assessment measures students' understanding of cultural content, such as local history, customs, folklore, and language. However, the findings suggest that cognitive assessment alone is insufficient, since identity formation depends on how students behave and participate. Attitudinal assessment, often conducted through observation, captures whether students demonstrate cultural values such as respect, politeness norms, and appropriate language use. Skill-based assessment focuses on students' competence in cultural practices such as dance, music, or batik-making, which are direct indicators of cultural participation. Taken together, these dimensions provide a more holistic picture of cultural learning outcomes than single-method evaluation.

Continuous monitoring and follow-up actions emerge as essential mechanisms for maintaining program quality. Culture-based learning relies heavily on consistent teacher practice and school routines, so monitoring helps identify gaps, such as uneven cultural integration across classes or inconsistent implementation of cultural norms. Evidence from primary education suggests that iterative monitoring supports program refinement by identifying implementation weaknesses and enabling targeted improvement (Zhou et al., 2025). This aligns with the present study's emphasis on adjusting materials, routines, and strategies when cultural learning becomes fragmented.

Community engagement in evaluation strengthens ecological validity by capturing whether cultural learning transfers beyond school. Parents and local stakeholders can provide feedback on students' cultural behaviors at home and in community contexts. This is important because identity outcomes are not confined to school performance. Community-based approaches such as interdisciplinary projects and service learning can strengthen engagement and provide authentic indicators of cultural learning success by linking cultural knowledge to real-world community participation. findings imply that evaluation should not treat families as passive observers but as partners who can validate outcomes and strengthen cultural continuity.

Finally, the findings highlight the need for diverse evaluation instruments, including written tests, observation protocols, student performance tasks, cultural projects, and reflective outputs. For identity-related outcomes, performance and project-based indicators may be more informative than conventional tests. Future research should develop and validate age-appropriate instruments that can capture changes in local identity, including cultural pride, sense of belonging, cultural participation, and identity resilience, particularly for use across diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts (Wijayanti et al., 2025).

Strengthening local identity through culture-based learning

The findings suggest that culture-based learning strengthens local identity through four core mechanisms: early cultural internalization, pride-building experiences, enhanced community connections, and resilience amid global cultural exposure. These mechanisms are consistent with culturally responsive education perspectives that view identity as shaped through sustained recognition, participation, and culturally meaningful learning experiences (Ramlan et al., 2023).

Early cultural internalization is supported by consistent cultural exposure across curriculum and extracurricular activities. In this study, students encounter cultural narratives and practices as part of regular schooling, which supports cultural literacy and belonging. Evidence from other contexts suggests that early value integration can strengthen character formation by embedding values such as patience, honesty, sociability, and deliberation into learning indicators and daily routines (Ramlan et al., 2023). This early grounding matters because students who develop cultural confidence early may be more capable of negotiating external cultural influences later.

Pride-building experiences occur when students have opportunities to demonstrate cultural competence and receive recognition for cultural participation. Performances, exhibitions, and competitions provide social validation, which can strengthen emotional attachment to culture. In the present study, pride appears not only as an outcome but also as a mechanism that motivates continued engagement, creating a positive cycle of participation and identity reinforcement. Enhanced community connections strengthen identity by linking school-based learning with living cultural environments. Engagement with local artists, cultural figures, and cultural spaces helps students see culture as present and relevant in the community. This supports the development of responsibility for cultural preservation, since students recognize that cultural practices are sustained by real people and institutions.

Resilience amid globalization emerges when students develop a stable cultural self-concept that enables them to interact with global content without losing cultural grounding. Research in Southeast Asia indicates that educational institutions are key arenas for negotiating tensions between preserving local heritage and adapting to global influences, including the dominance of global languages and foreign cultural content that may erode local uniqueness (Fahrudiana, 2025). The present findings suggest that students with stronger cultural grounding exhibit greater confidence and stability when facing global cultural flows. Related evidence also indicates that cultural identity is positively associated with psychological outcomes such as meaning in life, with perceived social support and resilience serving as important pathways (Zhou et al., 2025). Implies that identity resilience is not only cultural but also socio-emotional, supported by school culture and community relationships.

Overall, the findings position culture-based learning as an identity formation approach that strengthens cultural competence, pride, belonging, and resilience. In practical terms, the study implies that sustainable culture-based learning requires coherent procedures, multi-pathway implementation strategies, and robust evaluation systems that capture knowledge, practice, and identity outcomes. Future research should examine adaptation across varied contexts, including schools with different cultural compositions and different levels of policy support, to determine the conditions under which culture-based learning most effectively

strengthens local identity in increasingly globalized and digital environments (Fahrudiana, 2025; Zhou et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Comprehensive Learning Model for Strengthening Local Identity effectively reinforces local identity among primary school students through a culture-based learning approach. The model integrates local culture into the curriculum, experiential learning activities, extracurricular programs, and culturally supportive school environments, enabling students to internalize cultural values and develop cultural awareness and pride. Implementation is strengthened through collaboration with community cultural actors and the use of digital media, while a comprehensive evaluation framework ensures alignment between learning processes and outcomes. The study contributes an operational model that demonstrates how culture-based learning can be systematically implemented across school practices. Practically, the findings provide guidance for schools and policymakers to support cultural integration and teacher capacity building in culturally responsive pedagogy. However, the focus on schools in Sleman Regency limits generalizability. Future research should examine the model's applicability in diverse contexts and its long-term impact on students' identity development. Overall, culture-based learning is confirmed as a strategic approach to sustaining local identity while preparing students to engage with global influences.

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