

Comparative Analysis of Sundanese and Javanese Indigenous Educational Philosophies

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Background: Modern education often prioritizes cognitive achievement while overlooking moral, emotional, practical, and physical dimensions of human development. Indigenous educational philosophies offer holistic frameworks that can enrich contemporary educational theory. The Sundanese philosophy of *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, *singer* and the Javanese philosophy of *ngerti*, *ngrasa*, *nglakoni* represent valuable indigenous perspectives on human development and learning.

Objectives: This study aims to compare the conceptual structures of these two indigenous educational philosophies, identify their similarities and differences, and explore their potential integration into a holistic educational model.

Method: A qualitative comparative philosophical approach was employed. Data were collected from cultural texts, philosophical writings, and relevant academic literature. The analysis involved conceptual, comparative, and integrative stages to examine meanings, relationships, and complementarities between the two frameworks.

Results: The findings indicate that the Sundanese philosophy is outcome-oriented, emphasizing ideal human qualities, whereas the Javanese philosophy is process-oriented, focusing on the transformation of learning from understanding to action. Despite these differences, both frameworks converge across cognitive, affective, moral, and practical domains. The analysis further resulted in an integrative indigenous educational model that combines educational outcomes and developmental processes to support holistic human development.

Conclusion: The Sundanese and Javanese educational philosophies are complementary rather than contradictory. Their integration results in a holistic indigenous educational model that combines educational outcomes and developmental processes, offering a culturally grounded framework for enriching contemporary educational theory and practice.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental process for developing human potential in a comprehensive and meaningful manner. Ideally, education should not only focus on intellectual achievement but also foster moral integrity, emotional maturity, social awareness, and physical well-being (Cohen, 2006; Meher et al., 2025). In practice, modern educational systems often place greater emphasis on cognitive performance, especially quantifiable academic results, at the expense of other essential dimensions of human development. This imbalance has led to increasing concerns among scholars and educators, as it may produce individuals who are intellectually capable but lack ethical sensitivity, emotional resilience, and practical competence. In response to these challenges, there has been a growing interest in holistic approaches to education that emphasize the development of the whole person. Holistic education focuses on integrating cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual dimensions of human development (Haynes, 2009; Huitt, 2011).

Instead of treating these domains as discrete elements, holistic education conceptualizes them as interconnected and interdependent. This view highlights that education should cultivate not only cognitive knowledge but also character, values, and experiential understanding (Iksal et al., 2024; Lickona, 1999). One important pathway toward holistic education is the exploration of indigenous philosophies as sources of educational values and frameworks. Indigenous knowledge systems are not merely inherited traditions but rather complex, coherent philosophical systems that reflect the worldviews, ethics, and lived realities of particular cultural communities (Khupe, 2020; Mawere, 2014; Mazzocchi, 2020). These systems offer contextually grounded insights into human development and learning processes, which can complement and enrich modern educational theories. Unlike many contemporary frameworks that tend to compartmentalize aspects of learning, indigenous philosophies often present a more integrated and relational understanding of human existence.

In educational theory, Bloom (1956) categorized learning into three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. While this framework has been influential in shaping educational objectives and assessment practices, it often treats these domains as analytically distinct. As a result, educational practices may emphasize one domain over others, particularly the cognitive domain, which is more easily measured and evaluated. This limitation has prompted scholars to seek alternative frameworks that can provide a more holistic and integrated understanding of education.

Within the Indonesian context, local cultural traditions offer rich philosophical insights that are highly relevant to contemporary educational discourse. Among these, Sundanese and Javanese philosophies stand out as significant sources of indigenous educational thought. The Sundanese concept of *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, *singer* reflects a multidimensional understanding of human development (Aprily et al., 2021; Sofyan et al., 2026). It encompasses physical and mental well-being (*cageur*), moral goodness (*bageur*), ethical correctness (*bener*), intellectual competence (*pinter*), and practical skills (*singer*). This framework emphasizes that an ideal human being is not defined solely by intellectual ability but by a balanced integration of various dimensions of life.

On the other hand, the Javanese concept of *ngerti*, *ngrasa*, *nglakoni* offers a process-oriented perspective on learning and human development (Fitrianto, 2025). It highlights the importance of understanding knowledge (*ngerti*), internalizing it emotionally (*ngrasa*), and applying it in real-life actions (*nglakoni*). This framework suggests that learning is not complete until knowledge is embodied in behavior and becomes part of one's lived experience. It reflects a deep philosophical insight into the transformative nature of education.

Despite their richness and relevance, these indigenous philosophies have not been extensively examined within comparative educational studies. Prior studies have generally discussed each framework in isolation, focusing either on the Sundanese values of *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, *singer* (Aprily et al., 2021; Sofyan et al., 2026; Utami, 2021) or on the Javanese principles of *ngerti*, *ngrasa*, *nglakoni* (Dewantara, 1977; Fitrianto, 2025), so that their conceptual relationship, points of convergence, and integrative potential remain largely unexplored. Most existing research tends to focus on Western educational theories, often neglecting local knowledge systems that may offer equally valuable perspectives. This gap indicates the need for more systematic and critical engagement with indigenous philosophies, particularly in relation to their potential contributions to holistic education.

Therefore, this study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of Sundanese and Javanese educational philosophies, focusing on the concepts of *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, *singer* and *ngerti*, *ngrasa*, *nglakoni*. Specifically, this study seeks to (1) examine the conceptual structure of each philosophical framework, (2) analyze their similarities and differences, and (3) explore their potential integration in constructing a holistic educational model. By doing so, this study contributes to the development of culturally grounded and theoretically enriched perspectives in educational philosophy.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a comparative philosophical design to analyze indigenous educational philosophies from the Sundanese and Javanese traditions. A comparative philosophical design refers to an analytical approach that systematically examines and contrasts philosophical concepts, frameworks, or traditions to identify their meanings, underlying assumptions, similarities, differences, and potential integration (Libbrecht, 2009). This approach is particularly relevant for exploring value-based and conceptual constructs that cannot be measured empirically but require interpretive and critical analysis.

The study focuses on two conceptual frameworks, namely *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, *singer* and *ngerti*, *ngrasa*, *nglakoni*, which are treated as philosophical constructs representing distinct yet complementary perspectives on human development and education. The data were obtained from various sources, including cultural texts, philosophical writings, and relevant academic literature. These sources were carefully selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the meaning, context, and significance of each concept within its respective cultural tradition. Sources were included when they (a) explicitly discussed the concepts of *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, *singer* or *ngerti*, *ngrasa*, *nglakoni*; (b) took the form of peer-reviewed articles, scholarly books, or authoritative cultural texts; and (c) offered sufficient conceptual depth for philosophical interpretation. Sources that mentioned the concepts only incidentally, without conceptual elaboration, were excluded. To strengthen the trustworthiness of the interpretation, source triangulation was applied by comparing readings across cultural texts and academic literature, and the emerging interpretations were discussed among the authors until interpretive consensus was reached.

The data analysis was conducted through several interrelated stages. First, a conceptual analysis was carried out to identify and clarify the meanings, dimensions, and internal relationships of each philosophical framework (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). This stage involved interpreting key concepts, uncovering implicit assumptions, and understanding how each element contributes to a broader view of human development.

Second, a comparative analysis was conducted to examine similarities and differences between the two philosophical frameworks. This comparison focused on their educational orientations, particularly whether they emphasize outcomes or processes, and how they conceptualize the relationship between knowledge, values, and action.

Third, an integrative analysis was conducted to explore the potential complementarity of the two frameworks. Rather than viewing them as competing perspectives, this stage sought to identify how they could be combined to form a more comprehensive and holistic model of education. This integrative approach is particularly important in addressing the complexity of human development, which cannot be fully captured by a single framework.

The use of a comparative philosophical approach is appropriate for this study because the objects of analysis consist of value-based concepts rather than empirical data. This approach allows for a deeper exploration of meaning and provides a systematic way to interpret and compare indigenous educational philosophies within an academic context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that the Sundanese and Javanese indigenous educational philosophies provide complementary perspectives on holistic human development. Although both frameworks emphasize the integration of cognitive, affective, moral, and practical dimensions of education, they differ in their conceptual orientation and educational emphasis. The following sections present the comparative analysis, educational dimensions, and integrative potential of these two indigenous philosophical traditions.

Comparative Structure of Sundanese and Javanese Educational Philosophies

The findings of this study indicate that both Sundanese and Javanese philosophies offer comprehensive and meaningful perspectives on education, although they differ in their primary orientation and emphasis. The Sundanese concept of *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, *singer* represents a structural framework of human development. This framework is widely known as *pancawaluya*, the gate of five perfections, whose values have been traced to classical Sundanese sources, including the ancient manuscript *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* of 1518 AD (Koswara et al., 2024). Each element reflects a distinct yet interconnected dimension of an ideal human being. *Cageur* emphasizes the importance of physical and mental well-being as the foundation for all forms of learning and development (Sofyan et al., 2026). Without a healthy body and mind, individuals may struggle to fully engage in educational processes. *Bageur* and *bener* highlight the moral and ethical dimensions of human life, emphasizing kindness, empathy, and integrity (Cahyono et al., 2025). These values are essential for building harmonious social relationships and fostering a sense of responsibility toward others. *Pinter* represents intellectual competence, including the ability to think critically, understand

complex ideas, and acquire knowledge (Utami, 2021). Finally, *singer* refers to practical skills and adaptability, emphasizing the importance of being able to apply knowledge in real-life contexts (Agustina et al., 2025).

In contrast, the Javanese concept of *ngerti*, *ngrasa*, *nglakoni* represents a process-oriented framework that focuses on how learning occurs (Dewantara, 1977). *Ngerti* refers to the cognitive aspect of learning, where individuals acquire knowledge and understanding. *Ngrasa* involves the affective dimension, where individuals internalize values and develop emotional awareness. *Nglakoni* represents the behavioral dimension, where knowledge and values are translated into action. This framework emphasizes that true learning involves a transformation of the self, where knowledge is not only understood but also felt and practiced.

The comparison between these two philosophies reveals both convergence and divergence. Both frameworks acknowledge the importance of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in education. However, they differ in their orientation. The Sundanese philosophy is primarily concerned with defining the qualities of an ideal human being, while the Javanese philosophy focuses on the process through which these qualities are developed.

The comparative analysis reveals that the Sundanese and Javanese educational philosophies represent two distinct yet complementary epistemological orientations toward human development. While both frameworks aim to cultivate a holistic individual, they differ substantially in their conceptual emphasis and educational logic.

The Sundanese philosophy of *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, and *singer* can be interpreted as a normative framework that defines the desired attributes of an ideal person. The framework specifies educational outcomes across multiple domains, including physical well-being, moral character, intellectual competence, ethical integrity, and practical capability. In this sense, the Sundanese perspective resembles contemporary competency-based educational models that emphasize clearly articulated learning outcomes and character attributes.

In contrast, the Javanese philosophy of *ngerti*, *ngrasa*, and *nglakoni* functions as a developmental framework that explains the process through which learning becomes embodied. Rather than defining what learners should become, it focuses on how transformation occurs. Knowledge is expected to progress through sequential stages of understanding, internalization, and enactment. This processual orientation reflects an educational philosophy in which learning is considered incomplete until it manifests in behavior and lived experience. The conceptual distinction between these frameworks is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Conceptual Comparison of Sundanese and Javanese Educational Philosophies

Aspect	Sundanese Philosophy (Cageur, Bageur, Bener, Pinter, Singer)	Javanese Philosophy (Ngerti, Ngrasa, Nglakoni)
Orientation	Structural (outcome-oriented)	Processual (process-oriented)
Main Focus	Ideal human qualities	Process of human formation
Nature	Descriptive (what to become)	Transformative (how to become)
Core Dimensions	Physical, moral, cognitive, practical	Cognitive, affective, behavioral
Educational Direction	Output-oriented	Process-oriented

As shown in Table 1, the Sundanese philosophy demonstrates a predominantly outcome-oriented orientation, whereas the Javanese philosophy adopts a process-oriented perspective. This distinction suggests that the two frameworks address different but complementary dimensions of education. While the Sundanese framework defines the characteristics of an ideal human being, the Javanese framework explains the developmental pathway through which these characteristics are cultivated.

Indigenous Educational Philosophies and Holistic Human Development

A significant finding of this study is that both Sundanese and Javanese educational philosophies embody principles consistent with contemporary holistic education, albeit through different conceptual pathways. While the Sundanese framework emphasizes the multidimensional qualities that characterize an ideal individual, the Javanese framework focuses on the developmental processes through which such qualities are cultivated. Together, these philosophies provide a comprehensive understanding of human development that extends beyond the predominantly cognitive orientation often found in modern educational systems.

The Sundanese philosophy of *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, and *singer* reflects a holistic conception of education that integrates physical, moral, intellectual, and practical dimensions of human development (Hasanah et al., 2016). The inclusion of *cageur* underscores the importance of physical and psychological well-being as foundational conditions for learning and personal growth. This perspective is particularly relevant in contemporary educational contexts, where academic achievement frequently receives greater attention than student well-being. Furthermore, the concepts of *bageur* and *bener* emphasize moral virtue, ethical responsibility, and integrity, highlighting the role of education in character formation rather than merely knowledge transmission. Meanwhile, *pinter* and

singer acknowledge the importance of intellectual competence and practical capability, suggesting that education should prepare individuals not only to understand the world but also to function effectively within it.

This multidimensional perspective aligns with holistic education theory, which views human beings as integrated entities whose cognitive, emotional, social, moral, and physical dimensions are fundamentally interconnected (Marchuk et al., 2024). However, unlike many contemporary holistic education models that originate from Western philosophical traditions, the Sundanese framework derives from indigenous cultural wisdom and lived social experience. Consequently, it offers a culturally embedded perspective on holistic development that broadens existing educational discourse.

In contrast, the Javanese philosophy of *ngerti*, *ngrasa*, and *nglakoni* contributes a process-oriented understanding of learning and transformation (Dewantara, 1977). Rather than defining the attributes of an ideal person, it explains how educational development occurs. The progression from *ngerti* (understanding), to *ngrasa* (internalizing and experiencing), and finally to *nglakoni* (practicing and embodying) illustrates a sequential learning process in which knowledge evolves into personal commitment and meaningful action. This perspective suggests that education is incomplete when learning remains confined to cognitive understanding; genuine learning occurs only when knowledge becomes internalized and reflected in everyday behavior. This process-oriented perspective bears strong similarities to contemporary theories of transformative learning, which argue that meaningful education involves changes in individuals' perspectives, values, and actions rather than mere acquisition of information (Mezirow, 1997). The Javanese framework therefore provides an indigenous conceptualization of transformative learning that emphasizes the inseparable relationship between cognition, emotion, and practice.

The comparative analysis further reveals that the two philosophies differ primarily in their educational orientation. The Sundanese framework is predominantly outcome-oriented, specifying the qualities that education seeks to develop, whereas the Javanese framework is process-oriented, explaining the mechanisms through which these qualities emerge. This distinction may be interpreted as the difference between educational ends and educational means. While the Sundanese philosophy answers the question of what kind of person education should produce, the Javanese philosophy addresses how such a person can be formed through a process of learning and self-transformation.

Importantly, these differences should not be interpreted as contradictions. Instead, the findings suggest that the two frameworks are conceptually

complementary. The Sundanese philosophy provides a vision of the desired outcomes of education, whereas the Javanese philosophy offers a pathway for achieving those outcomes. Their integration therefore creates a more comprehensive educational model that incorporates both developmental goals and transformative processes.

A noteworthy contribution of this study is the identification of a conceptual relationship between outcome-oriented and process-oriented indigenous educational philosophies. Existing discussions of holistic education often emphasize the integration of multiple developmental domains; however, the present findings suggest that holistic education should also integrate clearly defined educational outcomes with meaningful developmental processes. In this regard, the Sundanese and Javanese philosophies collectively offer a culturally grounded framework that enriches contemporary understandings of holistic education.

These findings demonstrate that indigenous educational philosophies should not be viewed merely as cultural heritage or traditional wisdom. Rather, they constitute sophisticated educational frameworks capable of contributing to contemporary educational theory and practice. By integrating the strengths of both traditions, educators may develop learning environments that nurture physical well-being, intellectual competence, moral integrity, emotional maturity, and practical action in a coherent and culturally relevant manner.

Mapping Indigenous Educational Philosophies onto Educational Domains

Building upon the comparative analysis presented in Table 1, the present study further examines how the core concepts of the Sundanese and Javanese philosophies correspond to established educational domains. Rather than viewing these philosophies as separate cultural constructs, this mapping seeks to uncover their underlying educational logic and their potential contribution to holistic human development. By identifying the dimensions represented within each framework, it becomes possible to develop a more comprehensive understanding of their complementary roles in education. The conceptual mapping is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Mapping of Educational Dimensions

Educational Dimension	Sundanese Concept	Javanese Concept	Description
Physical & Mental	Cageur	–	Foundation for learning readiness
Cognitive	Pinter	Ngerti	Knowledge and understanding
Affective	Bageur	Ngrasa	Emotional internalization of values
Moral	Bener	Ngrasa, Nglakoni	From ethical awareness to action
Practical Skills	Singer	Nglakoni	Application in real-life contexts

Table 2 presents a conceptual mapping between the educational dimensions embedded within the Sundanese philosophy of *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, *singer* and the Javanese philosophy of *ngerti*, *ngrasa*, and *nglakoni*. The mapping reveals substantial convergence between the two frameworks despite their different cultural origins and philosophical orientations.

The first notable finding is that the Sundanese framework explicitly incorporates the dimension of physical and mental well-being through the concept of *cageur*. Unlike the Javanese framework, which primarily focuses on cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes, the Sundanese philosophy recognizes physical and psychological readiness as a prerequisite for effective learning. This suggests that educational development should begin with the cultivation of personal well-being, as individuals who are physically and mentally healthy are better positioned to engage in learning and self-development.

The cognitive dimension demonstrates a strong correspondence between *pinter* and *ngerti*. Although both concepts relate to knowledge and understanding, they emphasize different aspects of cognition. *Pinter* refers to intellectual competence as a desirable educational outcome, whereas *ngerti* represents the process of acquiring understanding. This distinction reinforces the broader finding that the Sundanese philosophy tends to emphasize educational outcomes, while the Javanese philosophy emphasizes educational processes.

A similar relationship can be observed in the affective domain. The concept of *bageur* reflects moral goodness, empathy, and positive social character, while *ngrasa* refers to the internalization and emotional experience of values. Together, these concepts suggest that character development requires not only the possession of desirable moral qualities but also the emotional engagement necessary for values to become personally meaningful.

The moral dimension further illustrates the complementary nature of the two philosophies. The Sundanese concept of *bener* emphasizes ethical correctness, integrity, and adherence to moral principles. In contrast, the Javanese concepts of *ngrasa* and *nglakoni* describe the process through which moral awareness is internalized and translated into concrete behavior. This relationship indicates that morality is not merely a matter of knowing what is right, but also of embodying ethical principles in everyday actions.

The strongest conceptual convergence appears in the practical dimension, represented by *singer* and *nglakoni*. Both concepts emphasize the application of knowledge and values in real-life situations. This finding suggests that indigenous educational philosophies place considerable importance on praxis, namely the integration of thought, value, and action. Learning is therefore considered

successful not simply when individuals acquire knowledge, but when they are able to demonstrate that knowledge through meaningful and socially responsible behavior.

Overall, the mapping presented in Table 2 demonstrates that the Sundanese and Javanese philosophies address complementary dimensions of human development. While the Sundanese framework provides a comprehensive description of the qualities that individuals should possess, the Javanese framework explains the processes through which these qualities are cultivated and enacted. The alignment between the two frameworks supports the argument that indigenous educational philosophies offer a holistic understanding of education that integrates physical well-being, cognitive development, emotional internalization, moral formation, and practical action into a coherent model of human development.

Toward an Integrative Indigenous Educational Model

The comparative and dimensional analyses suggest that the Sundanese and Javanese philosophies can be synthesized into a unified educational framework. Rather than functioning as separate philosophical traditions, the two frameworks appear to represent complementary aspects of human development, with the Sundanese philosophy providing educational outcomes and the Javanese philosophy providing developmental processes. This synthesis resulted in an integrative educational model that describes a progression from physical and psychological readiness, to cognitive understanding, value internalization, and finally the practical enactment of knowledge and values. The proposed model is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Integrative Educational Model

Stage	Sundanese Concept	Javanese Concept	Educational Meaning
1	Cageur	–	Physical and mental readiness
2	Pinter	Ngerti	Understanding knowledge
3	Bageur & Bener	Ngrasa	Internalizing values
4	Singer	Nglakoni	Applying knowledge in practice

As illustrated in Table 3, the proposed model begins with *cageur*, which emphasizes physical and mental readiness as the foundation for learning. This stage reflects the assumption that meaningful education requires learners to possess sufficient well-being before engaging in cognitive development. The second stage integrates *pinter* and *ngerti*, highlighting the acquisition and understanding of

knowledge. The third stage combines *bageur*, *bener*, and *ngrasa*, emphasizing the internalization of moral and ethical values. Finally, the integration of *singer* and *nglakoni* represents the application of knowledge and values in real-life situations. Together, these stages illustrate a developmental progression from readiness and understanding to internalization and practice.

The integrative model represents a significant contribution of this study because it bridges outcome-oriented and process-oriented educational philosophies within a single conceptual framework. While the Sundanese philosophy contributes a vision of the qualities that education seeks to develop, the Javanese philosophy provides a mechanism through which these qualities can be cultivated. Consequently, the model offers a culturally grounded approach to holistic education that integrates educational goals, learning processes, and behavioral outcomes.

Notwithstanding these contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. As a comparative philosophical inquiry, its findings rest on interpretive analysis of textual sources rather than empirical data; the proposed integrative model therefore remains conceptual and has not yet been tested in educational practice. The analysis was also confined to two Indonesian traditions, so other indigenous frameworks may extend, enrich, or challenge the model. Accordingly, the transferability of the findings depends on further contextual validation rather than statistical generalization.

CONCLUSION

This study examined and compared two indigenous educational philosophies from Indonesia, namely the Sundanese concepts of *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, and *singer* and the Javanese concepts of *ngerti*, *ngrasa*, and *nglakoni*. The findings revealed that both philosophies provide comprehensive perspectives on human development and education, although they differ in their primary orientations. The Sundanese philosophy represents an outcome-oriented framework that emphasizes the qualities of an ideal individual, including physical and mental well-being, moral integrity, intellectual competence, and practical capability. In contrast, the Javanese philosophy represents a process-oriented framework that explains how learning progresses from understanding to internalization and ultimately to action. The comparative analysis demonstrates that these two philosophical traditions are not contradictory but complementary. While the Sundanese framework defines the educational outcomes to be achieved, the Javanese framework provides a developmental pathway through which those outcomes can be cultivated. Their conceptual convergence is evident across

cognitive, affective, moral, and practical domains, highlighting a shared commitment to holistic human development.

A key contribution of this study is the development of an integrative indigenous educational model that synthesizes the strengths of both philosophies. The proposed model outlines a sequential developmental process that begins with physical and mental readiness (*cageur*), followed by cognitive understanding (*pinter-ngerti*), value internalization (*bageur-bener-ngrasa*), and practical enactment (*singer-nglakoni*). This framework demonstrates how educational goals and learning processes can be integrated into a coherent model of holistic education. The findings contribute to contemporary educational philosophy by demonstrating that indigenous knowledge systems are not merely cultural traditions but sophisticated conceptual frameworks capable of enriching modern educational theory. The study further suggests that culturally grounded educational models can serve as valuable complements or alternatives to predominantly Western approaches to holistic education. Future research may extend this work by examining how these indigenous educational principles can be operationalized within curriculum design, pedagogical practices, and educational assessment across diverse educational settings.

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