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Design and Validation of Teaching Modules for the Merdeka Curriculum Based on Local Wisdom to Instil Character Values

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Abstract: This study aims to design and validate teaching modules for the Merdeka Curriculum based on local wisdom to instill local wisdom values. These modules are designed to provide practical guidance for educators to integrate local values into the learning process, thereby enhancing students' character education. The research method employed is a research and development approach, involving systematic stages from needs analysis to module validation. Data were collected through various methods, including questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using the Aiken's V validity test. The validation results by experts indicated that the developed teaching modules have a high level of validity. This research has significant implications for improving education quality and fostering appreciation for cultural diversity. Additionally, it contributes to understanding the effectiveness of a local wisdom-based approach in character education.

Keywords: Character Values, Design and Validation, Local Wisdom, Teaching Modules

A. Introduction

Education in Indonesia plays a crucial role in shaping the nation's intellectual and moral character, as mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia of 1945, article 31, Clause 3, which states that "the government shall conduct and organize a national education system." To achieve these goals, efforts must be made to instil character values in students. According to (Nursalam, 2018), these values can be inculcated through various approaches, one of which is the integration of natural and social sciences (IPAS). IPAS plays an essential role in shaping the nation's character, helping students understand history, culture, and social values. Through this understanding, students can develop patriotism, tolerance, and social responsibility.

Despite the recognized importance of character education, many schools struggle to implement it effectively. The challenge lies in finding teaching methods and materials

that resonate with students and make character education meaningful. Current curricula often fail to integrate local wisdom, which could provide a rich source of character-building material. This gap in the curriculum limits the potential for students to connect deeply with their cultural heritage and internalize important character values.

Various studies have highlighted the significance of incorporating indigenous knowledge into educational curricula. Jacob et al. (2018) underscore the importance of integrating Indigenous Knowledges into public school curricula to promote Indigenous self-determination and enhance public education objectives. This integration helps educate students responsibly and fosters better community relationships. Saud (2020) emphasizes that including indigenous knowledge in the curriculum promotes equity, inclusion, and the recognition of diverse perspectives, which is essential for student engagement and participation. Similarly, Stephensen and Cunningham (2023) highlight the need for educators to collaborate with Indigenous Peoples to develop curricula that prepare students for ethical and respectful practices.

While these studies provide a robust theoretical foundation for integrating indigenous knowledge into curricula, there is a gap in practical applications, especially within the Indonesian context. Handayani et al. (2018) suggest that integrating indigenous knowledge into the science curriculum bridges the gap between traditional and modern knowledge systems, offering a more meaningful learning experience. However, there is limited research on how to effectively develop and validate teaching modules based on local wisdom in Indonesia. The studies by Murwati et al. (2022) and Nuryana & Sahrir (2021) emphasize the role of teachers and the need to identify and incorporate local wisdom into the curriculum, yet they also highlight the challenges due to inadequate teacher competencies and lack of validated teaching modules.

This research aims to address the identified gap by designing and validating a teaching module for the Kurikulum Merdeka based on local wisdom to instil character values. Unlike previous studies, this research will focus on creating a practical, validated module that teachers can use to integrate local wisdom into their lessons effectively. This approach ensures that the curriculum not only covers academic content but also fosters a deep connection between students and their cultural heritage, thus enhancing character education.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to transform character education in Indonesian schools. By providing a validated teaching module that incorporates local wisdom, this research can help educators deliver more effective character education. It can also serve as a model for integrating indigenous knowledge into curricula in other regions, contributing to the broader discourse on educational equity and inclusion. As

highlighted by (Puspoko et al, 2019; Sakti et al. 2024), incorporating local wisdom into educational frameworks can nurture character development and cultural appreciation among students, making education more relevant and engaging.

The primary purpose of this study is to design and validate a teaching module for the Kurikulum Merdeka that is based on local wisdom to instil character values. This module aims to provide educators with practical tools to integrate local wisdom into their teaching, thereby enhancing the character education of students. The study seeks to fill the gap in practical applications of indigenous knowledge integration in the curriculum, offering a validated solution that can be adopted and adapted by schools across Indonesia.

Curriculum development is a dynamic process that includes the design, implementation, and evaluation of teaching materials and instructional strategies. This process aims to meet the evolving educational needs in line with social, technological, and economic changes (Herman et al., 2023). An effective curriculum should facilitate the achievement of national educational goals and the specific needs of students.

Local wisdom encompasses values, knowledge, and traditions that have developed within a community and are passed down through generations. Incorporating local wisdom into the curriculum is crucial because: strengthens students' cultural identity and preserves local cultural heritage, makes learning more relevant and contextual to students' everyday lives, and teaches moral, ethical, and social values inherent in local wisdom (Suprapto et al. 2021).

The Merdeka Curriculum is an initiative in Indonesia that gives schools and teachers more freedom in designing and implementing education that is contextually relevant and meets the needs of students. Key characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum include: (1) Grants autonomy to schools and teachers in determining content and teaching methods. (2) Emphasizes the development of basic competencies and 21st-century skills. (3) Encourages the use of innovative and creative teaching methods (Kemendikbud, 2019).

Various studies have examined the integration of local wisdom into curriculum development and shown its positive impact on learning. Key findings include: 1) Increased Student Motivation and Participation: Local wisdom enhances the relevance of educational content, thereby increasing student motivation and participation in learning (Ali, 2023); 2) Character and Moral Value Formation: Teaching modules that incorporate local wisdom are effective in instilling character values such as cooperation, responsibility, and respect for diversity (Tohri et al. 2022); 3) Development of Basic Competencies: Learning based on local wisdom helps students develop essential

competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills (Sarkawi, 2024).

The integration of local wisdom into teaching modules involves several key steps, including the identification of relevant local values, the development of appropriate teaching materials, and the application of effective teaching methods. The general steps include: (1) Identifying elements of local wisdom that are relevant and beneficial for inclusion in teaching modules. (2) Designing teaching materials that incorporate local wisdom using interactive and contextual approaches. (3) Providing training to teachers on how to integrate local wisdom into the teaching process. (4) Evaluating the effectiveness of teaching modules and making revisions based on feedback from students and teachers (Sumardi & Wahyudiati, 2022).

The development and validation of teaching modules for the Merdeka Curriculum based on local wisdom are crucial for enhancing the quality of education and instilling character values in students. By integrating local wisdom, education becomes more relevant and contextual, strengthens cultural identity, and fosters good character development in students. Various studies support the importance of this approach and demonstrate its positive impact on learning and competency development in students.

B. Methods

Research Design and Approach

This research adopts a research and development approach focusing on developing independent curriculum teaching modules based on local wisdom to instil character. The research design involves a series of systematic stages (Meredith D. Gall, Walter R. Borg, 1996).

1. Needs Analysis: The initial stage involves needs analysis to identify the character values to be instilled, relevant local wisdom, and the educational context in which the teaching modules will be applied.
2. Module Design: After identifying the needs, module design encompasses content selection, instructional structure, and material development.

Data Collection Methods

To gather relevant data for developing teaching modules, several data collection methods can be utilized (Louis Cohen & Morrison, 2007) 1) Questionnaires: Surveys can be distributed to teachers and students to collect information on educational needs, learning preferences, and perceptions of the developed modules; 2) Interviews: Interviews with

education experts, community leaders, and teachers can provide in-depth insights into local needs, cultural values, and student characteristics; 3) Observations: Direct observation of classroom learning processes can provide insights into student interactions with learning materials; 4) Documentation: Data can also be collected from official documents such as school curricula, teaching guidelines, and student academic records.

Data Analysis Techniques

After collecting data, the next step is to analyse it to gain deep insights into the impact of the teaching modules on character development. Several data analysis techniques can be used (Matthew et al. 2013). Qualitative Analysis: Qualitative data from interviews, observations, and discussions can be analysed using thematic analysis techniques to identify patterns and key themes. Quantitative Analysis: Quantitative data from the questionnaire was analysed using the Aiken's V validity test to measure the level of validation of the independent curriculum teaching module based on local wisdom to instil character.

The Aiken's V validity test is used to evaluate the content validity of the developed teaching modules. This validation procedure involves assessment by a number of experts in the relevant field to determine the level of consistency and suitability between module content and learning objectives. Aiken's V value is calculated for each module item, and high values indicate good consistency between items and the measured construct (Aiken, 1980).

C. Results and Discussion

Design of Teaching Module

The needs analysis stage is the crucial initial step in designing effective and relevant learning programs. In this stage, data collection is conducted through interviews with teachers and studying student learning documents. The aim is to obtain a clear picture of the actual needs and conditions in the field. In this research, the topics covered by the researcher include five main sections.

Firstly, understanding of the independent curriculum. This section aims to ascertain the extent to which teachers understand and apply the principles of the independent curriculum in the teaching process. The independent curriculum emphasizes the freedom of teachers and students to develop a creative and innovative learning process according to their respective contexts and needs. The results of interviews with fifth-grade teachers

regarding their understanding of the independent curriculum provide interesting insights into how this curriculum is received and implemented in schools.

The independent curriculum, introduced by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, aims to provide more flexibility and autonomy to schools and teachers in developing learning processes that are suitable for students' needs and potentials. In these interviews, most teachers stated that they welcomed the concept of the independent curriculum. They felt that this curriculum allowed them to be more creative in designing learning activities and placed greater emphasis on the development of students' character.

However, despite the relatively high enthusiasm for the independent curriculum, some teachers also expressed challenges in implementing it. The main challenges frequently mentioned include the lack of adequate training and socialization regarding this new curriculum. Some teachers feel that they need more support and resources to truly understand and apply the principles of the independent curriculum in their teaching. Additionally, there are concerns about the readiness of school infrastructure and facilities to effectively support the implementation of this curriculum.

Secondly, teachers' understanding of locally-based learning. This section explores the extent to which teachers are familiar with and integrate local wisdom into their teaching. Local wisdom includes the values, traditions, and practices unique to a region that can enrich students' learning. The observation results conducted to understand the needs of teachers in locally-based learning indicate several important aspects to consider.

Firstly, teachers require a deep understanding of the local wisdom present in the environment where they teach. This knowledge includes the history, culture, traditions, and values that apply in the local community. Without a strong understanding, it is difficult for teachers to effectively integrate these elements into the learning process. Secondly, there is a need for adequate resources. Teachers require relevant teaching modules that support locally-based learning. Additionally, training and workshops for teachers are crucial to enhance teachers' abilities in developing and using locally-based teaching modules.

Thirdly, understanding of character values. This section assesses the extent to which teachers understand and apply character education in teaching and learning activities. Character values such as honesty, responsibility, and cooperation are crucial for shaping students who are not only academically intelligent but also morally upright.

Observation results regarding teachers' needs in understanding character values reflected in the Pancasila student profile emphasize the importance of teachers as the main facilitators in shaping students' character. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering subject matter but also must be able to instil Pancasila values such as mutual cooperation, integrity, independence, global diversity, critical thinking, and innovation. To achieve this, teachers need a deep understanding of how these values can be integrated into daily learning processes. Additionally, teachers also need access to relevant and quality educational resources. Guidebooks, modules, and teaching materials that reflect Pancasila values are essential to assist teachers in teaching. With adequate support, teachers can be more confident and competent in developing students' characters in accordance with the Pancasila student profile.

Fourthly, teachers' opinions on the importance of teaching modules in the learning process in class. This section gathers teachers' views on the role of teaching modules as aids in learning. Good teaching modules can help teachers deliver material in a more structured and effective manner. Teaching modules are an important component in the teaching and learning process in class as they serve as systematic guides for teachers and students to achieve learning goals.

To improve the quality of the teaching and learning process in class, observations and interviews were conducted with several teachers to identify teachers' needs regarding teaching modules. Observations were conducted for one week in several different classes, while in-depth interviews were conducted with five teachers from various classes.

During observations, it was found that teachers often have difficulty in managing time to organize and deliver teaching materials in accordance with the curriculum. Teachers also appear to spend more time searching for relevant and up-to-date teaching materials than focusing on direct interaction with students. Additionally, some teachers show confusion in determining the most effective teaching methods for various types of student learning.

The results of the interviews revealed several main needs of teachers regarding teaching modules such as (1) Availability of Structured Materials: Teachers want teaching modules that already have a clear and easy-to-follow structure. Teachers mention that structured modules will help deliver material more consistently and systematically. (2) Relevant Learning Resources: Teachers feel the need for up-to-date and relevant learning references and resources with the development of science and technology. Teachers also want variations in the form of materials, such as pictures, case studies, and interactive worksheets. (3) Assessment and Feedback: Teachers want clear evaluation mechanisms in the teaching modules, as well as guidelines for providing constructive feedback to

students. This is considered important to help students understand their strengths and areas for improvement.

From the observation and interview results, it can be concluded that teachers greatly need teaching modules that are structured, relevant, and equipped with effective teaching method guidelines. The availability of teaching modules that meet these needs is expected to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process in class and facilitate teachers in carrying out their duties.

Fifthly, the steps and methods that teachers have taken to instil local wisdom in children during learning. This section identifies various strategies and methods used by teachers to integrate local wisdom into the learning process. In an increasingly advanced era of globalization, the need for teachers to instil local wisdom in students' learning becomes increasingly important. Local wisdom includes the values, norms, traditions, and knowledge passed down from generation to generation in a society. The integration of local wisdom into learning not only helps enrich students' insights but also plays a role in maintaining cultural identity and strengthening a sense of togetherness.

One of the main needs of teachers in instilling local wisdom is a deep understanding of local culture. Teachers need to have sufficient knowledge about local customs, regional languages, arts, and history. Thus, they can integrate these elements into their curriculum and teaching methods. For example, in history subjects, teachers can teach local history using folklore or local legends. Additionally, in art subjects, students can be taught about local dances, music, or traditional crafts of their region.

Observation results with several teachers indicate that the initial needs of teachers in instilling local wisdom include adequate resources and locally-based teaching modules as well as support from schools and the community. Challenges faced include time constraints, but with creativity and cooperation, these obstacles can be overcome. Further support from various parties is crucial for the success of locally-based learning.

Integration of local wisdom in teaching module

The integration of local wisdom into teaching modules involves incorporating indigenous knowledge, values, traditions, and practices unique to a specific community or region into the curriculum and instructional materials. This integration aims to enrich students' learning experiences, promote cultural appreciation and understanding, and foster a sense of identity and belonging among learners.

The following are the results of developing independent curriculum teaching modules based on local wisdom to instill character values.

Figure 1. Cover, User Guide, and Concept Map of the Local Wisdom-Based Teaching Module

Figure 2. Learning achievements and objectives, Pancasila student profile, and local wisdom value profile

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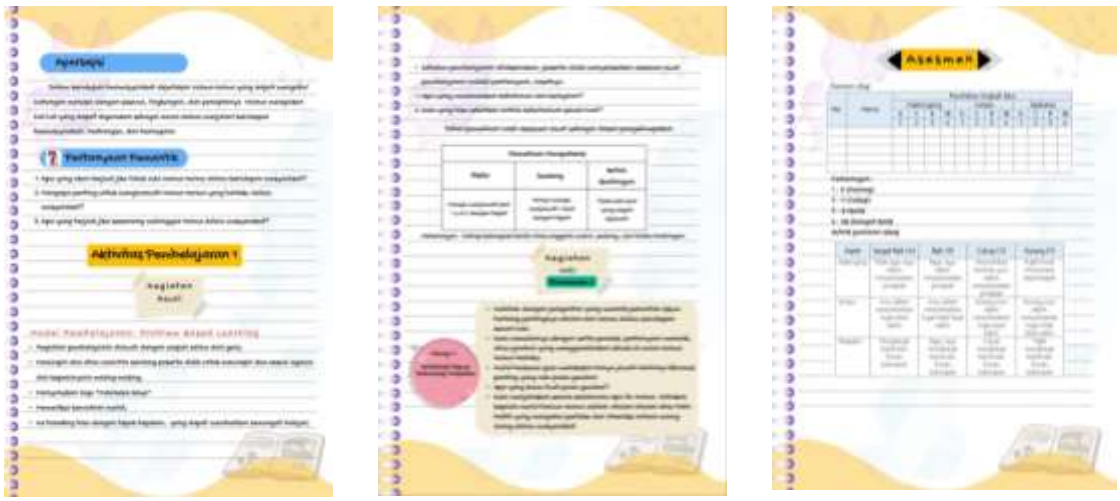

Figure 3. Learning Activities and Assessment

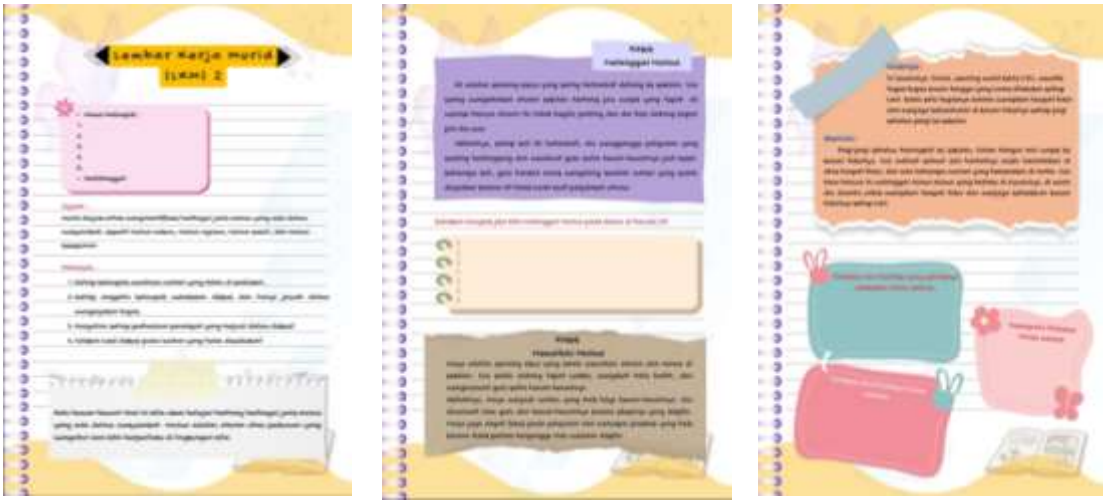

Figure 4. Student Worksheet

Figure 5. Materials, Glossary, and Summative Assessment

The independent curriculum teaching modules above can be implemented in the classroom after testing the validity of various experts, to determine the validity of the teaching modules that have been developed.

Validation Results

The validation results by experts are an essential part of the teaching module development process, where the module is evaluated and validated by a group of relevant experts to ensure the quality, accuracy, and suitability of the IPAS teaching module based on local wisdom. Validation was conducted from March 16th to 25th, 2024, by three experts. The three validators validated the IPAS teaching module and its components such as module usage instructions, Learning Activity Sheets (LKM), content, learning implementation feasibility questionnaire, teacher and student responses, character value questionnaire, and student learning outcome tests using the validation sheet instrument prepared by the researchers. In this stage, the researchers involved three validators as follows:

The assessment stages by expert validators for the developed teaching module looked at content validity and agreement among experts. After the IPAS teaching module was deemed suitable, the next stage was the limited-scale trial, main field trial, and operational field trial. The assessment results by experts using Aiken's V technique are as follows:

Table 1. Expert Validation Results

Teaching Module Components	Evaluator			S1	S2	S3	∑*s*	n(c-1)	V	Explanation
	1	2	3							
Teaching Module	4.4	4.4	4.5	3.4	3.4	3.5	10.3	12	0.9	Very valid
Usage Instructions	4.5	4.0	4.5	3.5	3.0	3.5	10.0	12	0.8	Valid
Content	4.4	4.9	4.9	3.4	3.9	3.9	11.2	12	0.9	Very valid
Student Worksheet	4.4	4.2	4.6	3.4	3.2	3.6	10.2	12	0.8	Valid
Teacher's Response	4.2	4.4	4.3	3.2	3.4	3.3	9.9	12	0.8	Valid
Student's Response	4.6	4.5	4.6	3.6	3.5	3.6	10.7	12	0.9	Very valid
Teacher's Ability to Manage Learning	4.7	4.9	4.4	3.7	3.9	3.4	11.1	12	0.9	Very valid
Student Activities	4.5	3.9	4.6	3.5	2.9	3.6	10.0	12	0.8	Valid
Student Character Questionnaire	4.8	4.8	4.6	3.8	3.8	3.6	11.1	12	0.9	Very valid
Learning Outcome Test	4.6	4.4	4.7	3.6	3.4	3.7	10.7	12	0.9	Very valid

Based on the scores of each category, the validity level of the teaching module is determined. The validity scores of the teaching module are presented in the table above. The results indicate that the validity outcomes from the three validators are highly valid. The results of the teaching module's validity test are crucial to ensure that the usage instructions, materials, and student worksheets (LKM) taught in the module are indeed relevant, accurate, and aligned with the intended learning objectives. Considering these analysis results, it can be concluded that the developed teaching module is ready to be tested by fourth-grade elementary school students.

Discussion

The humanistic theory in education emphasizes the importance of fulfilling individual potentials, self-development, and meaningful learning. Maslow (1986) developed the hierarchy of needs theory consisting of five levels: physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. The relevance of this theory to research findings is that local wisdom-based teaching modules help fulfill students' social and self-esteem needs by involving them in activities relevant to their culture and community. Moreover, meaningful and relevant learning fosters self-actualization.

Furthermore, Carl Rogers' theory (Liontin, 2020) emphasizes the importance of student-centered learning, where students are considered individuals with the potential to develop optimally in a supportive environment. The developed teaching module focuses on students by providing them with opportunities to actively participate, explore local wisdom, and develop character values such as honesty and responsibility.

This study is consistent with the findings of research conducted by Harun et al. (2020), which hypothesized four dimensions of character education, each with four indicators. However, after confirming empirical data, two indicators were invalidated: the sincerity indicator in the dimension of divinity and the discipline indicator in the self-dimension. Therefore, the divinity dimension only has belief, worship, and ethical values indicators. The self-dimension has honesty, responsibility, and independence indicators. The dimension of fellow humans still has four indicators: rights and obligations, obedience to the law, respecting others' work, and being polite to anyone. The environmental dimension also has four indicators: national spirit, love for the homeland, communicative, and environmental care.

This is also in line with research conducted by Nur (2017). This research is a research and development referring to Borg & Gall's opinion, but the instructional device development design only includes nine steps: (1) preliminary research and information gathering, (2) planning, (3) product draft development, (4) limited trial, (5) revision of limited trial results, (6) field trial, (7) refinement of product results from field trials, (8) operational field trial, and (9) final product refinement. The research results show that this instructional device is feasible according to subject matter experts and learning experts with a highly valid category.

Similar research was conducted by Utami et al. (2020) regarding the instructional module, including syllabi and lesson plans, categorized as valid. The implementation of learning is 87.65% in the excellent category. The n-gain acquisition is 0.64 in the moderate category. In addition, the student response score is 3.6 with a very good category. Students responded positively to the learning process. Thus, the local wisdom-based science teaching module is considered suitable for improving students' cognitive learning outcomes.

The results of this study indicate that students who learn with local wisdom-based teaching modules are more engaged and show significant improvement in understanding. This aligns with Maslow (1986), which states that meeting social needs (engagement in local community and culture) and self-actualization (developing individual potential through meaningful learning) are essential for effective learning.

Student-centered teaching modules allow them to actively participate and engage in the learning process, consistent with Carl Rogers' theory. This learning supports students' self-development and potential, as well as encourages their involvement in contextually relevant learning. Previous studies by (Nafiah, 2020; Shofa, Su'Ad, & Murtono, 2021) have shown that local and contextual wisdom-based learning is effective in enhancing students' understanding, engagement, and character education. The results of this study

support and reinforce these findings, indicating that this approach is effective in the context of the Merdeka curriculum and science subjects.

The results of the development study of local wisdom-based Merdeka curriculum teaching modules in science subjects for fourth-grade elementary school students are highly consistent with humanistic theory, which emphasizes the importance of fulfilling individual potentials, self-development, and meaningful learning. This study also supports and strengthens the findings of previous research indicating that local and contextual wisdom-based learning is effective in improving material understanding, student engagement, and character values. Thus, this approach can be considered an effective method for achieving holistic and student-centered educational goals.

The effectiveness of teaching modules in local wisdom-based learning refers to how well the teaching modules help the student learning process by integrating local values, knowledge, and wisdom into the educational curriculum. Here are some points explaining the effectiveness of teaching modules in local wisdom-based learning: Well-designed teaching modules can activate student engagement in the learning process. By incorporating content relevant to their culture and environment, students are more likely to be interested and actively engaged in learning. Teaching modules based on local wisdom help improve students' understanding of the subject matter by linking concepts to local cultural and historical contexts. This makes learning more meaningful and relevant to students.

Integrating local wisdom into teaching modules can also help in character development. Through learning about local values such as mutual cooperation, honesty, and responsibility, students can internalize and apply these values in their daily lives. Local wisdom-based modules often include activities and case studies relevant to students' daily lives. This helps students see the relevance and practical application of what they learn in class in their own lives. Through learning about local wisdom, students can develop greater appreciation for the cultural diversity and traditions around them. This helps build attitudes of mutual respect and tolerance for differences.

Thus, the effectiveness of teaching modules in local wisdom-based learning can be assessed by how much they enhance students' understanding, develop their character, and make learning more meaningful and relevant in their cultural and environmental contexts.

D. Conclusion

One approach to instilling character values is the integration of natural and social sciences (IPAS). IPAS plays an essential role in shaping the nation's character by helping students understand history, culture, and social values. The significance of this study lies in its potential to transform character education in Indonesian schools. By providing validated teaching modules that incorporate local wisdom, this research can help educators deliver more effective character education. The primary purpose of this study is to design and validate teaching modules for the Merdeka Curriculum based on local wisdom to instil character values. These modules aim to provide practical tools for educators to enhance students' character education. The results of this research indicate that teaching modules based on local wisdom are effective in improving students' understanding, developing their character, and making learning more meaningful and relevant in their cultural and environmental contexts.

Subsequent research could involve more schools and educational environments to test the effectiveness of locally based wisdom teaching modules in various contexts. This could provide a deeper understanding of how the modules function in different educational settings. Further studies could be conducted to understand students' perceptions and engagement in locally based wisdom learning. This could help identify factors influencing the effectiveness of the modules and improve their design and implementation. Subsequent research could focus on developing practical guidelines for teachers to integrate local values into their day-to-day teaching. These guidelines could provide additional resources for teachers to develop their skills and knowledge in this area.

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