

Teacher Instructional Leadership in Integrating Local Values at SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the instructional leadership practices of teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo in integrating local values into the curriculum. It specifically focuses on identifying the forms of integrated local values, the leadership strategies employed by teachers, and the impact of this integration. This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were gathered through in-depth observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis. The collected data were then processed using descriptive-qualitative analysis techniques. The findings reveal that: (1) Local values are integrated into learning through the multifaceted roles of teachers as educators, instructors, mentors, and classroom managers; (2) Key leadership strategies for integration involve establishing a clear vision and learning policies, implementing the structured “Every Day Five Goodness” program, and fostering community collaboration via the “Learning with Cultural Experts” initiative; (3) The integration has a significant positive impact, leading to enhanced teacher professionalism and the cultivation of strong, positive character in students. This study offers a novel perspective by shifting the focus from principal-led instructional leadership to teacher-led instructional leadership, specifically within the under-explored context of integrating local Gorontalo values to strengthen character education. The findings provide a practical framework for teachers and school administrators to systematically integrate local wisdom into national curricula. The identified strategies, such as the “Every Day Five Goodness” program, serve as a replicable model for other schools seeking to promote cultural preservation and character building. This research contributes to the fields of educational leadership and curriculum development by demonstrating how teachers can act as instructional leaders and agents of cultural preservation. It provides an evidence-based model for enhancing both teacher professionalism and student character outcomes through the deliberate integration of local values.

Keywords: High School, Instructional Leadership, Local Values

A. Introduction

The integration of local values in learning aims to connect local culture with the subject matter of each course in schools. Through this approach, students are able to better understand, appreciate, and even preserve the cultural heritage of their local community. This integration may take the form of utilizing learning materials based on local culture or collaborating with local cultural communities. The local values present in society may encompass various cultural, moral, social, and environmental aspects that reflect the identity and traditions of a community. As highlighted in recent research on place-based education, students should actively engage with their local environment “Effective PBE approaches require students to become knowledge creators rather than consumers, engaging directly with local ecosystems through hands-on investigation and community partnership” (Yemini et al., 2025). UNESCO, through the LINKS program, emphasizes the importance of recognizing and utilizing local and Indigenous knowledge across various fields, including education. The program aims to strengthen dialogue between knowledge holders and scientists, ensuring that traditional knowledge is respected and applied in sustainable practices (UNESCO, 2020). This approach aligns with UNESCO’s LINKS program, which highlights the importance of recognizing and utilizing local and Indigenous knowledge in education and sustainable practices. By fostering dialogue between local knowledge holders and scholars, the program ensures that traditional knowledge is respected and incorporated across different fields, including education.

In the research conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo, several values are consistently instilled in students to cultivate positive character amidst the strong currents of globalization. Based on the findings, the principal emphasizes that the values of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and inclusivity (*kebinekaan*) are priorities consistently reinforced among students at SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo. The value of mutual cooperation encourages students to prioritize collaboration in both academic and non-academic activities within the school. Similarly, the value of inclusivity teaches students to respect diversity and differences, whether toward their peers or teachers. The principal highlighted these values for a particular reason: SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo accommodates students from various religious backgrounds. Of the total student population of 1,280, approximately 1.56% are Buddhist, 6.5% are Christian, 0.03% are Catholic, 0.07% are Hindu, and 91.4% are Muslim. Considering this diversity, the principal expects students to develop a sense of inclusivity in appreciating differences, so that these values remain ingrained within them even after they graduate from SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo.

Teacher instructional leadership plays a crucial role in integrating local values into the learning process. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering knowledge but also serve as educational leaders who carry the responsibility of instilling noble values, fostering character development, and preserving local culture amidst the

currents of globalization. Instructional leadership functions as a bridge that connects students with local values. As classroom leaders, teachers are tasked not only with conveying academic content but also with shaping students' character and cultural identity. In this context, effective instructional leadership enables teachers to create a learning environment that respects, preserves, and internalizes local values among students. Research indicates a strong link between school culture and teacher leadership, highlighting how teachers' professional practices can shape the learning environment: "The findings show that 'teachers' professionalism and goal setting' is the dominant school culture dimensions. Whereas, 'exemplify the best' and 'being referenced leader' are the widely practiced teacher leadership features. The correlation analysis shows that there is a very strong and significant correlation between school culture and teacher leadership" (Yusof et al., 2016). Teacher leadership also involves the ability to design innovative learning strategies to ensure that local values are effectively instilled in students. Furthermore, teachers act as facilitators who link classroom learning with the surrounding community. Through this approach, students are able to directly learn from cultural practitioners, such as local artists, craftsmen, or cultural figures. Consequently, the learning process becomes more contextual and meaningful, as students not only acquire theoretical knowledge but also gain an understanding of how local values are lived and preserved within society.

This study focuses on three sub-areas, namely the forms of local values integrated into learning, the strategies of teacher leadership in integrating these values into the learning process, and the impact of teacher leadership on the integration of local values.

B. Methods

This study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo, located in Gorontalo City, Indonesia, and employed a qualitative research approach. Following Moleong (2005) in Nasution (2023), qualitative research seeks to holistically understand phenomena experienced by research subjects through descriptive narratives within their natural context. In this study, the researcher acted as the primary instrument and data collector, utilizing field observations and interviews. The participants consisted of five key informants: the principal, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, and three subject teachers (Civic Education, History, and Arts and Culture). In this study, the Civic Education, History, and Arts and Culture teachers served as key informants, as they possess firsthand experience in integrating local values into classroom practices, including the strategies and teaching methods employed. These teachers also directly observed the impacts on students and how the integration of local values contributed to character formation. Supporting informants consisted of the principal and the vice principal for curriculum affairs. The principal played a role in formulating school policies and vision, supporting strategies for integrating local values, and providing structural and resource support such as teacher training and

school programs. Meanwhile, the vice principal served as a supporting informant due to his role in overseeing curriculum implementation, assisting in lesson plan development related to local value integration, and supervising subject teachers.

C. Result and Discussion

Forms of Local Values Integrated into Learning at SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo

The findings of this study indicate that the role of teachers as educators significantly contributes to the integration of local values into the learning process. Teachers not only deliver material on the importance of applying these values but also actively shape students' character by instilling local values such as *mo huyula* (mutual cooperation), responsibility, honesty, and tolerance. In line with this, research by Leenders, Veugelers, and De Kat (2008) highlights that teachers aim to equip students with the ability to analyze, communicate, and reflect on values, thereby fostering the development of values such as mutual cooperation, responsibility, honesty, and tolerance (Tadege et al., 2022). Research by (Yusuf et al., 2024) indicate that the role of teachers as educators significantly contributes to the integration of local values into the learning process. Teachers not only deliver material on the importance of applying these values but also actively shape students' character by instilling local values such as *mo huyula* (mutual cooperation), responsibility, honesty, and tolerance. As educators, teachers serve as role models who demonstrate behaviors that reflect local values, with the intention that students may directly emulate their teachers in developing positive attitudes and character both within and beyond the school environment. This provides students with role models to follow in their daily lives, for example, in respecting teachers and peers, maintaining the cleanliness of the school environment, and appreciating diversity within the school community. In this process, teachers are not merely transmitting knowledge but also cultivating student behavior through advice and exemplary conduct. This is consistent with Mustafa (2024), who states that as educators, teachers can serve as figures of authority, role models, and sources of identification for students and their surroundings. Therefore, teachers are expected to meet quality standards characterized by responsibility, integrity, independence, and discipline. The role and function of teachers as educators are closely related to efforts to enhance students' growth and development by providing them with meaningful experiences, such as maintaining physical health, fostering independence from parents and other adults, developing social responsibility, acquiring basic knowledge and skills, preparing for adulthood and family life, career decision-making, as well as nurturing personal and spiritual aspects.

As instructors, teachers are also required to transfer knowledge to students so that they can gain a deeper understanding of the core concepts of the subject matter being taught. Each subject teacher has their own way of integrating local values into the learning process. This practice must remain student-centered, ensuring that

learning is conducted in a comfortable and enjoyable manner, allowing students to engage in an interesting and meaningful learning experience. Teachers must master the subject matter so that, in transferring knowledge, students can fully comprehend the intended learning objectives. This aligns with Mustafa (2024), who argues that the role of teachers as instructors can be influenced by several factors, such as motivation, maturity, teacher-student relationships, verbal ability, degree of autonomy, sense of security, and teachers' communication skills. When these factors are fulfilled, students are more likely to benefit from effective teaching. Teachers are therefore expected to provide clear explanations of the material and possess problem-solving skills that support the learning process.

Furthermore, the role of teachers as mentors in integrating local values is crucial in shaping students' positive character in a holistic manner. As mentors, teachers are not only responsible for guiding the learning process but also for accompanying students in addressing challenges that arise during classroom activities. In this regard, teachers must be able to provide direction, offer solutions, and motivate students in understanding and applying local values. This is consistent with Ananda (2018), who emphasizes that as mentors, teachers should be able to clearly formulate objectives, set timelines, determine appropriate pathways, use proper guidance, and evaluate the learning process in accordance with students' needs and abilities. In the context of History learning, for example, teachers are tasked with guiding students during group discussions. When differing opinions are expressed, teachers must emphasize the importance of listening to one another and respecting peers' perspectives from various viewpoints, thereby fostering tolerance among students. Such practices not only contribute to academic knowledge but also cultivate empathy and social awareness, which are essential dimensions of students' character development.

Moreover, as classroom managers, teachers hold the responsibility of creating a conducive, organized, and supportive learning environment that facilitates the integration of local values such as *mo huyula* (mutual cooperation), responsibility, tolerance, and honesty. A well-managed classroom enables students to better understand the intended goals of learning. This is in line with Ananda (2019), who emphasizes that teachers, as classroom managers, must possess the ability to effectively manage the classroom, since it serves as the primary space for teacher-student interaction in the teaching and learning process. A well-managed classroom supports the smooth implementation of learning, while poor classroom management may hinder the process and disrupt educational interactions between teachers and students. In their role as classroom managers, Civic Education and History teachers employ similar strategies by dividing students into diverse groups, with the aim of fostering tolerance and appreciation of differences. This approach is particularly important, as students often tend to selectively choose peers. Through this method, teachers expect students to interact more inclusively and develop a stronger sense of tolerance. During group activities, teachers continuously ensure that discussions

remain dynamic and that students remain actively engaged and responsible in completing their tasks. Meanwhile, in Arts and Culture learning, teachers create an open classroom atmosphere that encourages students to explore practical activities such as playing traditional musical instruments, while still adhering to rules that instill discipline and responsibility. Throughout the practice sessions, teachers emphasize the importance of collective work, respecting others' opinions and creations, and providing mutual support, particularly when students encounter differences in perspectives while creating artistic works.

Overall, the role of teachers in integrating local values into the learning process encompasses four main dimensions, namely their roles as educators, instructors, mentors, and classroom managers. As educators, teachers instill local values through direct role modeling, allowing students to regard them as figures to emulate. As instructors, teachers connect learning materials with Gorontalo's local culture by employing practice-based methods, group discussions, and experiential learning, with the expectation that students will more easily grasp the meaning and objectives of the lessons taught. In their role as mentors, teachers actively accompany students not only in academic learning but also in extracurricular activities, thereby providing students with real-life experiences in internalizing local values such as respect for diversity and responsibility. As classroom managers, teachers implement strategies by emphasizing the importance of appreciating differences through heterogeneous groupings, creating an open classroom atmosphere while still adhering to established rules, thus ensuring a more conducive, comfortable, and organized learning environment. This aligns with Darmadi (2015), who states that as instructors, teachers are responsible for planning and implementing instructional programs; as educators, they are tasked with guiding students toward maturity and a well-rounded personality; as mentors, they are responsible for helping students grow into competent, skilled, and virtuous individuals; and as classroom managers, they are expected to create a learning environment that is both challenging and stimulating, while also fostering a sense of security and satisfaction in achieving learning goals. Similar research was also found by (Saud & Rahman, 2019), The findings of this study indicate that the role of teachers as educators significantly contributes to the integration of local values into the learning process. Teachers not only deliver material on the importance of applying these values but also actively shape students' character by instilling local values such as *mo huyula* (mutual cooperation), responsibility, honesty, and tolerance.

Teacher Instructional Leadership Strategies in Integrating Local Values at SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo

In the instructional leadership strategies implemented at SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo, the principal plays a vital role in setting the vision and policies for teachers' instructional practices through their roles as educators, instructors, mentors, and classroom managers. Through the policies provided by the principal, all subject

teachers are given the flexibility to contextualize learning in accordance with Gorontalo's local wisdom, thereby making the learning process more relevant to students' lives and local culture. These policies allow teachers to design learning strategies for integrating local values, adjusted to their respective roles as educators, instructors, mentors, and classroom managers. This aligns with Novibriawan (2023), who argues that contextual learning based on local wisdom creates meaningful and engaging learning experiences rooted in students' daily lives. Similar research was also reported by (Astuti et al., 2025). The findings of this study indicate that the role of teachers as educators significantly contributes to the integration of local values into the learning process. Teachers not only deliver material on the importance of applying these values but also actively shape students' character by instilling local values such as *mo huyula* (mutual cooperation), responsibility, honesty, and tolerance. This approach aligns with the collaborative model proposed in *Integrating Local Wisdom in Character Education: A Collaborative Model for Teachers, Parents, and Communities*, where character education is implemented through programs that involve teachers, parents, and the wider community, such as *sigaro malaha* (doing good), *dodoto se biasa* (teaching and habituation), and *maku gawene pekan* (mutual embrace). These programs demonstrate that character education grounded in local wisdom is most effective when it is embedded in both school practices and community life, thereby reinforcing the role of teachers in shaping students' character holistically. The integration of local values helps students better understand the character and traditions of their community. Implementation of local wisdom can take various forms, such as reintroducing social values through subject content, designing projects that incorporate local cultural elements, and developing as well as showcasing local potential as a source of learning. Teachers are also expected to adapt their Lesson Plans (RPP) to incorporate local content relevant to the subject matter. In this regard, they utilize teaching modules that embed cultural values in each session, particularly in Arts and Culture and History subjects. At SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo, teachers integrate local values through hands-on activities that involve students in creating artworks or handicrafts. For instance, in Arts and Culture classes, students not only learn theoretical concepts of traditional arts but are also given the opportunity to practice playing traditional musical instruments. Such activities allow students to directly experience and better understand local wisdom. These practices enhance students' engagement, foster a deeper appreciation of their cultural heritage, build character, promote creativity, and cultivate values of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and collaboration within group learning.

Another strategy employed by SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo to integrate local values into learning is the *Every Day Five Goodness* program. This initiative has successfully cultivated positive habits among students, such as cooperation, mutual respect, and kindness. More importantly, it incorporates Gorontalo's local cultural values, particularly the traditions of helping and sharing. Consistent with transformational leadership theory (Wirawan, 2013 in Gaol & Nababan, 2019), the principal, through a clear vision and inspirational leadership, has positively influenced students'

character formation, fostering empathy and responsibility. The program has gained full support from teachers across various subjects, which has strengthened its impact. For example, Civics Education teachers consider it aligned with the subject's goals of nurturing honesty, responsibility, and *gotong royong*. History teachers view it as relevant to preserving the cultural heritage of Gorontalo while simultaneously transmitting these values to future generations by connecting past traditions with present learning practices. Likewise, Arts and Culture teachers emphasize that values such as collaboration, respect for others' works, and accountability can become students' daily habits when consistently reinforced through the program. Thus, *Every Day Five Goodness* not only introduces ethical behavior but also embeds local values into everyday school life, ensuring their internalization as part of students' character development.

Another strategy implemented by SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo is collaboration with the local community through the *Learning with Cultural Experts* program. This initiative highlights the importance of school-community partnerships in promoting local values, in line with the concept of community-based leadership proposed by Masruroh & Kolis (2024). By involving traditional leaders and cultural practitioners, students not only acquire theoretical knowledge of local culture but also gain direct experiences that deepen their understanding of these values. The program demonstrates that the integration of local values in education extends beyond formal classroom instruction, encompassing community-based learning that provides tangible impacts on students. Teachers invite cultural experts to share insights on Gorontalo's traditions and customs, while interactive sessions allow students to engage directly with cultural figures. Such interactions enhance students' cultural awareness and encourage them to actively contribute to the preservation of their heritage. As Nawawi & Bedi (2025) argue, collaboration between schools and local communities creates opportunities for innovative and sustainable character education. Through this program, students are not only exposed to local wisdom but are also able to apply it in contexts that are relevant to their everyday lives and community needs.

Overall, the instructional leadership strategies implemented at SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo have successfully integrated local values into the learning process, producing positive impacts on students' character development and strengthening the school culture. This achievement was made possible through the collaborative support of teachers, the school, and the community, enabling local values to be preserved and practiced by the younger generation of Gorontalo in their daily lives. Findings from this study highlight the pivotal role of the principal's leadership, particularly in formulating a clear vision and educational policies that foster the integration of local values within the curriculum. This aligns with Rahmi (2018), who asserts that the success of education is strongly influenced by leadership that is capable of mobilizing and inspiring the entire school ecosystem toward shared goals. In line with this, Rasidi and Istiningsih (2025) highlight that integrating cultural

values into education positively contributes to students' understanding of cultural diversity, enhances their engagement in learning, and strengthens their character and cultural identity (Rasidi & Istiningsih, 2025).

The Impact of Teachers' Instructional Leadership in Integrating Local Values

The instructional leadership of teachers in integrating local values at SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo has a significant impact on the creation of contextual and more meaningful learning. Teachers are not limited to delivering subject matter as stated in textbooks but are able to adapt instruction to be more relevant to students' lives and the local culture. This reflects a transformation of the teacher's role, from merely being a transmitter of knowledge to becoming an instructional leader who can influence and facilitate students in expressing themselves. This aligns with Bowo et al. (2023), who state that instructional leadership is a crucial competence for teachers in managing a conducive learning process. It encompasses assessment in learning, student empowerment, and other components that contribute to the improvement of learning quality. Instructional leadership is also associated with the ability to design and communicate learning objectives and outcomes, prioritize the allocation of resources, conduct supervision and evaluation, enhance learning participation, and foster a safe, orderly, and supportive learning environment. "Culturally responsive instructional leadership embodies strong knowledge of teaching and curriculum and applies it to learning. It seeks to cultivate students' academic, cultural, and sociopolitical knowledge" (Gooden et al., 2023).

In their role as instructional leaders, teachers are responsible for shaping students not only to be academically competent but also to become individuals of noble character as future generations of the nation. Moreover, the reflective nature of teachers in evaluating their teaching methods demonstrates an awareness of the need to be more professional in developing and improving the quality of learning. Collaboration among teachers also reflects the strengthening of a culture of cooperation, which is in harmony with the value of *mo huyula* in Gorontalo society. This is in line with the concept of teacher leadership, which emphasizes the teacher's role as an educator, instructor, mentor, and classroom manager in order to create holistic learning. In their role as instructional leaders, teachers are responsible for shaping students not only to be academically competent but also to become individuals of noble character as future generations of the nation. Moreover, the reflective nature of teachers in evaluating their teaching methods demonstrates an awareness of the need to be more professional in developing and improving the quality of learning. Research indicates that collaborative reflective practices among teachers not only enhance instructional quality but also foster a culture of cooperation, positively influencing students' character development (Tobin et al., 2024).

The instructional leadership practiced by teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo in integrating local values has made a tangible contribution to shaping students' character and behavior. Teachers serve not only as instructors but also as cultural facilitators who actively embed local wisdom values into daily learning processes. This practice has demonstrated significant impacts across multiple dimensions, including the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of students. In line with this, the integration of local culture into education not only strengthens students' cultural identity but also enhances their enthusiasm and pride in their regional heritage (Ningsih & Wijayanti, 2019). "Effective school leaders create a culture that promotes learning, collaboration, and the holistic development of students, integrating local values and traditions into daily educational practices" (Plaku & Leka, 2025). One of the key outcomes of integrating local values into learning is the formation of stronger student character rooted in their regional culture. Through project-based learning, hands-on practice, and cultural narratives, students not only acquire knowledge of values such as cooperation (*mo huyula*), honesty, responsibility, and respect for culture, but also internalize these values in their everyday behavior. For example, civics teachers explained that the value of cooperation is taught through group learning models, where students who previously preferred to work individually began to demonstrate cooperative attitudes, mutual assistance, and appreciation of each other's contributions. Similarly, in arts and culture learning, students showed improved responsibility and discipline during rehearsals and performances.

The integration of local values also strengthens students' cultural identity. Many students who were previously less familiar with their regional culture became more enthusiastic and prouder after participating in learning activities based on local wisdom. This transformation occurred because teachers successfully contextualized the lesson materials with local cultural elements that were close to students' lives. In line with this, the integration of local culture into education not only strengthens students' cultural identity but also enhances their enthusiasm and pride in their regional heritage (Herlina et al., 2024). In an interview with a history teacher, it was explained that students were encouraged to visit museums and historical sites, as well as study local figures. Such activities enabled students not only to learn history as written text, but also to understand the values and spirit of their ancestors' struggles as part of their personal identity. As a result, students became more active in introducing Gorontalo culture to the public. Moreover, instructional leadership grounded in local values had a positive impact on patterns of interaction both among students and between students and teachers. Teachers reported that after reinforcing values such as tolerance, cooperation, and honesty, the classroom atmosphere became more conducive, inclusive, and democratic. Students showed greater respect for differences, listened to others' opinions, and were more open in communication.

Learning that incorporates local wisdom contributes not only to the development of character and culture but also enhances students' practical skills, particularly in entrepreneurship, arts, and life skills. Students learn to create culture-based products such as *karawo* crafts, traditional foods, and artistic performances. This process nurtures their creativity while also introducing the economic potential of local culture. The vice principal emphasized that co-curricular activities are directed toward encouraging students to innovate by using local wisdom as the foundation for entrepreneurship. Such practices instill independence, creativity, and appreciation for cultural heritage. Overall, the integration of local values in learning fosters a more culturally enriched school environment. Students are equipped not only with academic knowledge but also with life values that shape them into morally and socially grounded individuals. Local value-based learning plays a crucial role in preparing students as a generation deeply rooted in their cultural heritage while remaining capable of competing in the global arena.

D. Conclusions

In this regard, it can be concluded that the forms of instructional leadership practiced by teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo are carried out through their roles as educators, instructors, mentors, and classroom managers. The strategies of teacher leadership are implemented through the establishment of vision and policy by the principal, the implementation of the *Every Day Five Goodness* program, and collaboration with the community through the *Learning with Cultural Experts* program. Meanwhile, the impact of teacher instructional leadership lies in enhancing teacher professionalism, whereby teachers are not only limited to the role of instructors but also act as instructional leaders capable of connecting learning with students' daily lives and local culture. Furthermore, it contributes to the development of students' positive character, as evidenced by improvements in responsibility, cooperation, courtesy, and respect toward teachers and peers.

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