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Integration of Tabe' Culture in Character Education of Elementary School Students: Systematic Literature Review within the Context of the Merdeka Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

Character education is a key focus in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly at the elementary school level. However, the rise of globalization and digital culture has led to a decline in students' values of courtesy, respect, and social ethics. One approach that can be taken is to integrate local wisdom into the educational process. The Tabe' culture, as a cultural tradition of the Bugis-Makassar people, embodies values of respect, politeness, empathy, and social responsibility that are relevant to strengthening students' character. This study aims to analyze the implementation of Tabe' culture in elementary school students' character education through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The study followed the PRISMA guidelines by reviewing national articles published between 2019 and 2025 via Google Scholar, GARUDA, and accredited national journals. Of the 63 articles identified, 20 met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results indicate that the implementation of Tabe' culture occurs through daily routines, teacher modeling, integration into learning, and the development of school culture. The character values fostered include respect, courtesy, discipline, empathy, and social responsibility. This study also found that the Tabe' culture has strong relevance to the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile within the Merdeka Curriculum. The research findings affirm that local culture can serve as a contextual strategy for strengthening character education in elementary schools.

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Introduction

Character education occupies a central position in Indonesia's national education system, particularly at the elementary school level. Education serves not merely as a vehicle for knowledge transfer, but also as a process of shaping students' personalities, moral sensibilities, and social attitudes. The elementary school years represent a pivotal phase in character formation, as children at this age begin developing habits, cognitive patterns, and social behaviors that will shape their lives in the years ahead. Character education must, accordingly, be delivered in a planned, sustained, and contextually relevant manner that connects with students' everyday experiences.

In recent years, various manifestations of moral degradation have emerged among students, including a decline in courteous behavior, diminished respect toward teachers and parents, a rise in individualistic conduct, and bahasa the use of discourteous language in social interactions. The rapid advancement of digital technology and the intensification of globalization have contributed to behavioral shifts among younger generations. Students are increasingly exposed to foreign cultures through social media, resulting in a gradual erosion of

local cultural values. This condition underscores the urgent need to strengthen character education within contemporary schooling.

Mazid, Prasetyo, and Farikah (2020) argued that local wisdom embodies noble values transmitted across generations, which can serve as a foundational basis for shaping community character. These values encompass respect, responsibility, communal cooperation, discipline, and social care, all of which are directly relevant to the needs of character education at the elementary level. Local wisdom also functions as a cultural identity that reinforces students' national character amid the currents of modernization and globalization.

Character education grounded in local wisdom is considered more effective because students engage with moral values that are closely tied to their own social and cultural environment. Faiz and Soleh (2021) noted that integrating local culture into instruction can create more contextual and meaningful learning experiences for students. When learning is rooted in regional cultural practices, students gain not only academic knowledge but also a deeper understanding of the life values that flourish within their communities. Character education anchored in local wisdom can thus serve as a strategic approach to both reinforcing cultural identity and cultivating students' character.

The implementation of character education grounded in local culture also carries strong relevance to the Merdeka Curriculum policy. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, character strengthening, and the development of the Pancasila Student Profile. Local cultural values can support the formation of Pancasila Student Profile dimensions, including faith and noble character, collaborative spirit, global diversity appreciation, and independence. Hetarion, Hetarion, and Makaruku (2020) argued that character education rooted in local wisdom can enhance students' social awareness, cultural pride, and sense of responsibility toward their surrounding environment. This demonstrates that local culture holds significant potential in shaping student character within the context of modern education.

One enduring form of local wisdom preserved within Bugis-Makassar society is Tabe' culture. Tabe' is an expression of courtesy used when seeking permission, passing by elders, or initiating respectful communication. Within the Bugis-Makassar community, Tabe' is more than a verbal gesture; it embodies values of respect, humility, social ethics, and appreciation for others. These values are highly relevant to the aims of character education at the elementary level, as they are capable of nurturing courteous attitudes and positive social behavior in students.

Sakman and Syam (2020) found that character education grounded in local culture can enhance students' attitudes of respect, courtesy, and social concern in elementary schools. Local culture introduced through daily habituation has been shown to help students internalize moral values in a concrete and socially relevant manner. Rahman (2020) further explained that character education rooted in Bugis-Makassar local culture can cultivate a generation characterized by integrity, moral awareness, and a strong cultural identity. Tabe' culture therefore holds considerable potential for integration into both instructional practice and school culture as a medium for character formation.

In practice, the implementation of Tabe' culture in elementary schools can be carried out through daily habituation, teacher modeling, integration into learning activities, and the development of school culture. Teachers play a pivotal role as exemplary figures in applying Tabe' culture, enabling students to observe and emulate courteous conduct in everyday life. The habitual use of the Tabe' expression in social interactions at school can also assist students in appreciating the importance of showing respect to others and maintaining ethical communication.

Notwithstanding its potential, the application of Tabe' culture in elementary education continues to encounter a range of challenges. The influence of digital culture has led some students to become less familiar with the local traditions of their own regions. Not all teachers

possess adequate knowledge of strategies for integrating local culture into instruction. The scarcity of locally-based instructional media, along with insufficient family support in habituating cultural values, also constitutes an obstacle to implementing local culture-based character education at the elementary school level (Suttrisno et al., 2025).

Studies on character education grounded in local wisdom have been conducted extensively; however, research specifically addressing Tabe' culture within the context of elementary education remains relatively limited. Most existing studies address local culture in general terms without examining the implementation of Tabe' culture in depth. Yet Tabe' culture carries profound moral and social values that are directly relevant to the character formation of elementary school students. This study is therefore significant in providing a more comprehensive account of Tabe' culture's implementation, the character values it fosters, and the challenges involved in its application within primary education.

This study employed a *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) approach to analyze research related to the implementation of Tabe' culture as local wisdom in shaping the character of elementary school students. This approach is expected to yield a comprehensive synthesis of the forms of Tabe' culture implementation, its contributions to character education, and its relevance to the Merdeka Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile.

Method

This study employed the *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) method, guided by the PRISMA (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*). The SLR method was selected because it enables systematic, objective, and comprehensive synthesis of previously published research findings regarding the implementation of Tabe' culture as local wisdom in the character formation of elementary school students. This approach was used to identify, evaluate, and analyze relevant research findings, yielding a thorough understanding of Tabe' culture implementation, the character values it cultivates, and the challenges of its application within the elementary education context.

a. *Research Questions* (RQ)

This study was formulated around several research questions (*research question*) as follows:

- RQ1: How is Tabe' culture implemented in character education at the elementary school level?
- RQ2: What character values are cultivated through Tabe' culture?
- RQ3: What challenges arise in implementing Tabe' culture at the elementary school level?

b. Data Sources

The data sources for this study consisted of national scientific articles retrieved from databases and academic journal portals relevant to the themes of character education and local wisdom. The databases used included:

- Google Scholar
- GARUDA (*Garba Rujukan Digital*)
- SINTA (*Science and Technology Index*)
- Nationally accredited journal portals

The articles included were published between 2019 and 2025. This time frame was selected to obtain data to ensure the data and findings were current and relevant to the implementation of local culture in elementary school character education.

c. Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted systematically using keywords relevant to the research focus. Keywords were applied in both Indonesian and English to broaden the scope of the search. The keywords used included:

- "Budaya Tabe'"

- "Pendidikan karakter
- "Kearifan lokal Bugis Makassar
- "Sekolah dasar
- *Character education*
- *Local wisdom*

The search process combined keywords using Boolean operator techniques *Boolean operator* such as "AND" and "OR" to retrieve more specific and relevant articles. All identified articles were subsequently collected and screened based on their titles, abstracts, keywords, and alignment with the research focus.

d. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure that the articles analyzed were aligned with the research objectives, the following inclusion and exclusion criteria were established:

1) Inclusion Criteria

- Articles published between 2019 and 2025.
- Articles discussing Tabe' culture or Bugis-Makassar cultural values.
- Articles related to character education.
- Research situated within the context of primary or elementary education.
- Articles available in full-text form (*full text*).
- Articles sourced from scientific journals or conference proceedings relevant to the field of education.

2) Exclusion Criteria

- Articles not relevant to the theme of character education.
- Articles not addressing Bugis-Makassar local culture or Tabe' culture.
- Articles that are duplicates from other databases.
- Articles not available in full text (*full text unavailable*).
- Articles in the form of opinion pieces, news reports, or non-academic writing.

e. Literature Selection Procedure

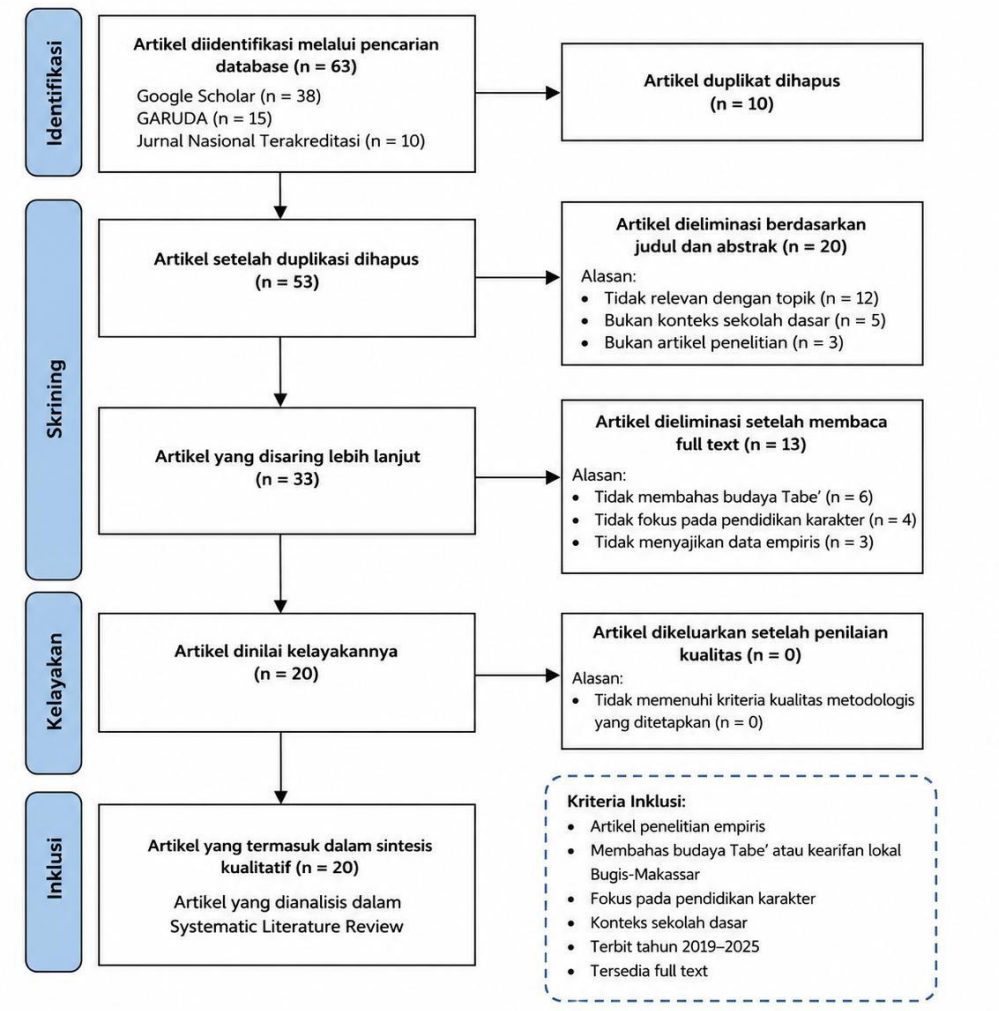
The literature selection process followed the PRISMA stages, encompassing identification, *screening*, *eligibility*, dan *included*. At the identification stage, 63 articles were retrieved from various databases. Subsequently, a *screening* process was conducted based on titles and abstracts, yielding 45 relevant articles.

The subsequent stage was *eligibility*, wherein articles were evaluated based on their full content, topical relevance, and the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. A total of 28 articles met the requirements. Following deeper analysis, 20 articles were deemed eligible and used as primary sources for this study.

The article selection process followed the PRISMA stages, comprising identification, *screening, eligibility, dan included*. At the identification stage, 63 articles were found across various databases. Screening based on titles and abstracts yielded 45 relevant articles. Following eligibility evaluation based on content alignment and inclusion criteria, 28 articles met the requirements. Upon final analysis, 20 articles were used as primary research sources. The article selection process is presented in the following table:

Table 1. Proses Seleksi Artikel

Stage	Number of Articles
Identification	63
Screening	45
Eligibility	28
Included	20



Gambar 1. Diagram PRISMA Proses Seleksi Artikel

f. Data Analysis Procedure

Data obtained from the selected articles were analyzed using *thematic analysis*. This technique involved identifying, categorizing, and interpreting key themes emerging from various study findings related to Tabe' culture and character education.

The analysis was conducted through several stages:

1) Reading and thoroughly comprehending each article in its entirety.
2) Identifying key information relevant to the research focus.
3) Categorizing data according to specific themes, including forms of Tabe' culture implementation, character values cultivated, and challenges encountered in its application.
4) Synthesizing research findings to derive comprehensive conclusions.

Through this analytical approach, the study aims to provide a systematic account of Tabe' culture as a form of local wisdom in shaping the character of elementary school students.

Result and Discussion

a. Implementation of Tabe' Culture in Elementary Schools

The analysis of 20 reviewed articles revealed that the implementation of Tabe' culture in character education at the elementary level is carried out through various approaches that are integrated into both instructional activities and school culture. Implementation extends

beyond the use of the expression "Tabe'" as a courtesy form; it also involves the internalization of respect, social ethics, and regard for others in students' daily lives.

1. Daily Habituation

The most frequently identified form of implementation is through daily habituation within the school environment. Teachers habituate students to say "Tabe'" when entering the classroom, seeking permission, passing by teachers or elders, and when interacting with peers. This habituation is practiced consistently so that it becomes an embedded part of students' communicative culture at school.

Research findings indicate that repeated habituation is effective in shaping courteous behavior and heightening students' awareness of the importance of respecting others. In the context of character education, habituation plays a vital role since character is not formed instantaneously; rather, it develops through sustained practice and cumulative social experience. The more frequently students apply Tabe' culture, the more deeply the values of courtesy and respect become embedded in their conduct.

Beyond individual conduct, the habituation of Tabe' culture contributes to creating a more harmonious and conducive school atmosphere. Interactions between students and teachers become more respectful, fostering stronger social relationships within the school community. This situation highlights that local culture carries relevant social functions in constructing a positive educational environment.

2. Teacher Modeling

Tabe' culture is also implemented through teacher modeling. Teachers function as primary role models in demonstrating courteous conduct within the school environment. Rather than providing only verbal guidance, teachers actively demonstrate how to communicate and interact with courtesy in accordance with Tabe' cultural values.

Teacher modeling exerts considerable influence on students' character development, as elementary-aged children tend to observe and emulate the conduct of adults in their surroundings. A teacher who consistently applies Tabe' culture provides students with tangible examples of the importance of valuing others in social life. The success of Tabe' culture implementation is therefore substantially shaped by teachers' commitment to serving as character exemplars for their students.

Several articles further indicate that schools successfully implementing local culture-based character education generally possess a strong culture of modeling. Teachers, school principals, and all school community members collectively create an environment that supports the habituation of cultural values in daily school life.

3. Integration into Classroom Learning

Tabe' culture is also integrated into classroom instruction, particularly in subjects such as Indonesian Language, Pancasila Education, Social Studies, and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). Integration is achieved through the use of polite communication examples, discussions of local cultural values, role-play activities (*role play*), Bugis-Makassar regional folklore, and character reflection activities.

The analysis indicates that integrating local culture into instruction enhances students' understanding of moral values in a more contextual manner. Students not only learn theories of courtesy but also develop practical understanding of how to apply those values in daily life through Tabe' culture. Instruction connected to local culture also facilitates comprehension, as the content resonates with students' own social environment.

Within the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, Tabe' culture holds relevance to the project-based learning approach and character strengthening. Local cultural values can serve as learning resources that support the development of the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly the dimensions of faith and noble character, global diversity appreciation, and collaborative spirit.

4. School Culture Development

The implementation of Tabe' culture is also evident through the development of school culture rooted in local wisdom. Schools design various cultural programs, including routine activities, welcoming students with polite regional language expressions, use of character slogans, traditional ceremonies, and cultural literacy activities.

A school culture grounded in local wisdom helps create an environment that supports holistic character development among students. Cultural values are not confined to classroom instruction but become woven into the fabric of daily school life. Dengan Students thereby gain authentic experience in applying Tabe' cultural values across their social interactions.

Research findings indicate that schools adopting local wisdom-based school cultures tend to demonstrate higher levels of discipline, courtesy, and social awareness. This points to local culture as a meaningful foundation for building a character education climate at the elementary school level (Suttrisno, 2025).

Overall, the findings of this study align with a range of studies on local culture-based character education that emphasize the critical roles of habituation, modeling, and social environment in shaping students' character. Tabe' culture has been demonstrated to carry educational value that is relevant and applicable within primary education as a means of strengthening student character in the contemporary era.

b. Character Values Cultivated

Analysis of the reviewed articles reveals that the implementation of Tabe' culture contributes to the formation of a range of positive character values among elementary school students. These values emerge through habituation, social interaction, and cultural internalization within the school environment.

1. **Respect for Others**
   Tabe' culture teaches students to show respect toward teachers, parents, and peers. The use of the expression "Tabe'" when seeking permission or passing by others reflects an attitude of appreciation for the presence of others. Respect emerges as one of the primary character values cultivated, as students are habituated to uphold ethical conduct in social interaction.
2. **Politeness**
   Politeness is the most prominent character value embedded within Tabe' culture. Students become accustomed to using courteous language, maintaining appropriate tone, and attending to communicative ethics. This habituation helps students appreciate the significance of respectful communication in social life.
3. **Empathy**
   Tabe' culture carries within it a sense of care for the feelings of others. Students learn that every action and utterance must take into account the comfort of those around them. This empathic value assists students in building harmonious social relationships within the school environment.
4. **Social Responsibility**
   The implementation of Tabe' culture cultivates students' awareness of the importance of maintaining positive social relationships with their surroundings. Students learn to respect social norms and take responsibility for their behavior in communal life.
5. **Discipline**
   The consistent habituation of Tabe' culture fosters regularity in students' conduct. Students become accustomed to observing the norms of courtesy in social interaction, which in turn cultivates a disciplined disposition in school life.

   These findings corroborate prior research demonstrating that local wisdom holds a significant contribution to students' character formation. Local cultural values serve not merely as markers of regional identity, but as an effective medium for moral education in shaping the character of younger generations.

c. Implementation Challenges

Although Tabe' culture holds considerable potential for character education, its implementation in elementary schools continues to face a number of challenges.

1. **The Impact of Globalization**
   The proliferation of digital technology and social media has led some students to become more familiar with foreign cultures than with the local traditions of their own regions. As a result, the use of courteous language and regard for local cultural practices has gradually declined.
2. **Limited Teacher Competence**
   Not all teachers possess sufficient knowledge of strategies for integrating local culture into instruction. Some teachers continue to experience difficulty in developing locally-grounded learning methods that are both engaging and contextually relevant.
3. **Shortage of Learning Media**
   Instructional media based on Tabe' culture remains severely limited. Textbooks, instructional videos, and teaching materials that incorporate Bugis-Makassar local culture are not yet widely available, which has constrained the optimal implementation of Tabe' culture in classroom learning.
4. **Varying Family Support**
   Not all families habituate Tabe' cultural values at home. Differences in parenting approaches and social environments result in varying degrees of Tabe' culture application among students.
5. **Limited School Programs Grounded in Local Culture**
   Several schools have yet to establish specific policies or programs for strengthening local culture, which has prevented the optimal implementation of regionally-grounded character education.

d. Implications for the Merdeka Curriculum

Tabe' culture holds strong relevance to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly in strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile. The values of Tabe' culture align with the following dimensions:

- Faith and noble character
- Global diversity appreciation
- Collaborative spirit
- Independence
- Critical reasoning in social life

The integration of Tabe' culture into instruction can serve as a contextually grounded and relevant strategy for local culture-based education that connects directly with students' lived realities. Beyond its role in preserving regional cultural heritage, the application of Tabe' culture also reinforces students' cultural identity and character formation amid the advancing tide of globalization.

Schools can develop various programs such as local cultural projects, habituation of courteous communication, regional cultural literacy, and Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) activities grounded in Bugis-Makassar culture. Through such initiatives, Tabe' culture transcends its role as a mere regional cultural symbol and becomes a relevant medium for character education in twenty-first-century schooling.

Table 1. Comparison of Articles/Journals (SLR)

No	Author(s)	Year	Article Title	Source Journal	Method	Key Findings	Relevance to Tabe' Culture
1	Rukiyati & L. Andriani Purwastuti	2016	Local Wisdom-Based	Jurnal Pendidik	Qualitati ve	Local culture is effective in	Foundatio n for Tabe' culture

			Character Education Model in Elementary Schools in Bantul Yogyakarta	an Karakter		shaping student character	implement ation
2	Irsan dkk.	2022	Internalizati on and Actualization of Local Culture-Based Character Values in Elementary Schools	Jurnal Basicedu	Qualitati ve	Local culture strengthen s respectful and social character	Relevant to Tabe' culture habituatio n
3	Lalu Parhanudd in dkk.	2023	The Urgency of Sasak Ethnic Local Wisdom-Based Character Education in Elementary Schools	Jurnal Paedagog y	Descripti ve Qualitati ve	Local wisdom supports character education	Strengthen ing regional culture in elementar y schools
4	Desyi Rosita & Farida Hanum	2024	Application of Local Cultural Values through an Axiological Approach to Student Character in Elementary Schools	Pendas	Qualitati ve	Local cultural values shape character	Highly relevant to Tabe' culture
5	Ridwan Ardi dkk.	2024	Integration of Local Wisdom Values in Learning to Instill Character Education in Elementary Schools	Catha	Literatur e Study	Cultural integration supports student character	Supports integration of Tabe' culture
6	Fitriatun Nisa dkk.	2022	Strengthenin g Character Education Based on	Prosiding FKIP UMC	Qualitati ve	Local wisdom strengthen	Relevant to character education

			Local Wisdom Values in Elementary Schools			s social character	
7	Hetarion dkk.	2020	Implementation of Cuci Negeri Local Wisdom-Based Character Education in Social Studies Learning	JTP	Qualitative	Local culture enhances social awareness	Relevant to empathy and responsibility
8	Sakman & Syam	2020	Strengthening Local Wisdom-Based Character Education for Students in Schools	SUPREMASI	Qualitative	Local wisdom improves attitudes of respect	Relevant to the value of courtesy
9	Rahman	2020	The Concept of Siri' Na Pacce Culture and Character Education	Al-Qalam	Literature Study	Bugis-Makassar culture shapes students' morality	Highly relevant to Tabe' culture
10	Faiz & Soleh	2021	Implementation of Local Wisdom-Based Character Education	JINoP	Descriptive	Cultural learning is more contextual	Supports integration of Tabe' culture
11	Mazid, Prasetyo, & Farikah	2020	Local Wisdom Values as Shapers of Community Character	Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter	Literature Study	Local culture as a medium for moral education	Theoretical basis for character education
12	Siti Khasanah Maisaroh & Zela Septikasari	2025	Comparative Study of School Culture Implementation in Student Character Formation	Basicedu	Case Study	School culture influences character	Supports Tabe'-based school culture

13	Andreoklandagessa Gessa dkk.	2024	Analysis of Minangkabau Natural Cultural Education Implementation on Student Character Formation	Jurnal Pendidikan Nusantara	Qualitative	Regional culture builds student identity	Example of local culture implementation
14	Yunita & Prihandono	2025	Analisis Implementation of Local Wisdom-Based Character Education Tradisi Kasada Suku Tengger	Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan SD	Qualitative	Local tradition cultivates tolerance	Relevant to social character
15	Rahayu dkk.	2023	Implementation of Local Culture-Based Pancasila Student Profile in Elementary Schools	Jurnal Obsesi	Qualitative	Local culture supports the P5	Relevant to the Merdeka Curriculum
16	Wibowo dkk.	2022	Character Education through Local Wisdom in Elementary School Thematic Learning	Jurnal Basicedu	Qualitative	Cultural learning enhances discipline	Relevant to cultural habituation
17	Syarifuddin dkk.	2021	Integration of Local Cultural Values in Primary Education	Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia	Literature Study	Local culture reinforces student identity	Supports culture-based education
18	Hidayat & Nuraini	2022	Strengthening Student Character through Local Culture-	Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar	Qualitative	Cultural learning enhances empathy	Relevant to Tabe' culture

			Based Learning				
19	Suastra, Sudiana, & Suci	2021	Implementation of Ethnopedagogy in Primary Education	Jurnal Etnopedagogi	Qualitative	Ethnopedagogy strengthens local culture	Supports Tabe' culture-based learning
20	Hasriani dkk.	2025	Strengthening Character Education for Elementary School Students through Local Wisdom	Pendas	Qualitative	Local culture improves social character	Relevant to the formation of courteous character

Conclusion

Based on the results of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR), this study demonstrates that Tabe' culture holds strong relevance in the character formation of elementary school students within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum. The implementation of Tabe' culture is carried out through daily habituation, teacher modeling, integration into classroom learning, and the development of school culture grounded in local wisdom. These forms of implementation have been shown to be capable of instilling character values such as respect, courtesy, discipline, empathy, and social responsibility in students.

The findings also confirm that Tabe' culture is closely linked to the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly in the dimensions of faith and noble character, collaborative spirit, and global diversity appreciation. The integration of local culture into learning provides more contextual learning experiences, enabling students not merely to understand moral values at a theoretical level but also to apply them in their everyday lives.

The implementation of Tabe' culture in elementary schools, however, continues to confront a number of challenges, including the influence of globalization and digital culture, limited teacher competence in integrating local culture into instruction, a scarcity of locally-grounded instructional media, and insufficient family support for cultural value habituation in the home environment.

Tabe' culture can accordingly serve as a contextually relevant and locally-grounded character education strategy for supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in elementary schools. This study affirms that the preservation of local culture not only functions to safeguard the cultural identity of the Bugis-Makassar community, but also plays a meaningful role in shaping the character of younger generations in the contemporary era.

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