**Local wisdom-based history learning and students' cultural identity:**

**A case study at SMAN 11 Medan,** **Indonesia**

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to determine the implementation of local wisdom-based history learning in shaping students' cultural identity at SMA Negeri 11 Medan. This study used a qualitative descriptive research method. Data were obtained through observation, in-depth interviews with 15 informants, consisting of 10 students and 5 teachers. In addition, document analysis was used to supplement existing data. The data collected were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The results showed that increasing cultural awareness, strengthening student identity, and increasing active student participation in the learning process can be achieved through the integration of local history materials, such as local customs and traditions. Learning that is carried out contextually with students' cultural lives turns out to be more relevant and has a better influence on the formation of their cultural identity.

*Keywords: history learning; local wisdom; cultural identity; high school*

1. **INTRODUCTION**

There are many definitions of history, in substance history is a science about human activities over time, in the sense that humans always experience dynamics and changes continuously (Smith, 2021). One way to spread cultural values ​​is through education. Education and culture are basically related to each other. Culture often changes along with the development of education. Quality and character human resources are greatly influenced by education. Education is the basis of every human life, and education continues to be built from generation to generation that must receive the best education.

Indonesia is a pluralistic country with a rich history and culture. However, currently we are faced with the question of whether the younger generation is really interested in history. History is often considered boring and uninteresting. History is almost forgotten and denied because of the very rapid development of the era.

History is a part of human life that tells what happened, who did it, where it happened, and how it affected the world. As a collective memory of a great nation, history always produces various events that change human life from time to time, and to this day there are still various events carried out by the perpetrators, namely humans. History is a story about past events that really happened. Therefore, the history that I can conclude is past events that really happened. In addition, each era has its own story or tale.

In the education system, history is a very important subject. Students are expected to be able to understand the evolution of civilization, cultural values, and the origins of national identity through history learning, which also serves as a tool to shape their identity, character, and social awareness. However, many students today consider history lessons uninteresting and irrelevant to everyday life. Much information that focuses on world progress makes history related to local and national culture seem less noticed. However, history can foster a sense of pride in the heritage and culture owned by the local community.

To understand the process of forming cultural identity, learning history is not only remembering important events but also helps students understand the social, cultural, and traditional contexts that surround the events. One of the main challenges in education in Indonesia is integrating local values ​​and local culture into history learning, so that students do not get carried away. History learning aims to provide students with an understanding of the past and learn about important events that affect their present and future lives. Students can learn, understand, and maintain cultural values ​​through learning about their local history.

Incorporating cultural elements into the school curriculum is a great way to preserve local culture. This can be achieved by teaching student local languages, arts, and local culture from an early age. That way, the younger generation will be more familiar with and love their own cultural heritage. Several educational institutions in Indonesia have begun to include regional language materials, batik, and traditional dances into their extracurricular activities.

History helps students understand the history of civilization, including basic values ​​and social and cultural dynamics that have occurred over time, and provides a better understanding of the cultural roots and identity of the community. History education plays an important role in the formation of national identity because through understanding history, people can recognize and appreciate the cultural heritage and values ​​that have shaped their nation. Education in Giroux's view is a political intervention in the world and has the ability to give birth to social change (Amir, 2021).

Therefore, history learning is very important for education. However, in reality, many history lessons overemphasize national or global history without providing an opportunity to learn about local history and wisdom. Nevertheless, as a country rich in cultural diversity, it is very important for the younger generation to understand local wisdom. Local wisdom contained in the culture, traditions, and customs of the local community can enrich history learning and make it more alive, relevant, and meaningful for students. Through history education, students not only learn about past events, but also understand how history shapes the character and values ​​of the nation that are inherited to this day (Reiser et al., 2019).

In general, local wisdom consists of mutual cooperation culture, customs, and norms. It is considered as a way of life, knowledge, and various life strategies. Local wisdom is a way of life and knowledge in various life strategies. This local wisdom is not only related to customs or habits; it also includes life perspectives, value systems, and methods that have been proven to be successful in overcoming various challenges that arise in life. By combining history learning with local wisdom, students have the opportunity to better understand and appreciate their own culture. This can have an impact on the formation of students' cultural identity because the influence of global culture is getting weaker, which can threaten the sustainability of local culture.

As attention to the importance of contextual and culturally relevant education increases, a number of previous studies have examined the role of local wisdom-based history learning in strengthening students' cultural identity. One of them was conducted by Januardi et al. (2024), who highlighted how the integration of local values ​​in history learning can shape students' cultural identity more strongly. In the context of their research, they found that students find it easier to understand and appreciate history when the material presented is closely related to their own cultural environment. This approach not only improves cognitive understanding but also encourages a sense of ownership and pride in regional cultural heritage.

Another study by Nasir et al. (2025) in South Sulawesi showed that strengthening local values ​​in history learning, such as the values ​​of siri' and pacce in Bugis-Makassar culture, contributes to the formation of students' character, especially in terms of tolerance and appreciation for cultural diversity. The same thing was also found by Miskawi et al. (2025) who emphasized that the locality approach in the history curriculum bridges the gap between the macro national historical narrative and the micro and local life experiences of students. According to them, history learning that ignores the local context risks losing its vitality in front of students. Research by Hasudungan et al. (2020), that local wisdom of *pela gandong* as material and learning resources for social studies subjects in post-conflict junior high schools in Ambon, Maluku.

Compared to these studies, this study occupies a relatively different position. Its main focus is on the local context of Medan, especially at SMAN 11 Medan, a state school in a big city that has very diverse student backgrounds, both ethnically and culturally. Medan is known as a multicultural city that is a meeting point for various ethnic groups such as Deli Malay, Batak, Javanese, Chinese, and others. However, in the context of education, this diversity has not been fully utilized as a learning resource, especially in history learning.

The novelty of this study lies in its courage to raise the complexity of students' cultural identities in urban areas such as Medan, and how history learning can play a strategic role in strengthening a sense of culture amidst this diversity. This study not only assesses the teaching-learning process, but also investigates more deeply how students reflect their cultural identity through historical materials sourced from local wisdom. In this case, the approach used does not stop at the transfer of historical knowledge, but emphasizes cultural experiences that are affective and reflective.

In other words, this study offers a new perspective in the discourse of local wisdom-based history learning, namely by placing it as a means of forming cultural identity in the context of multicultural education in big cities. Therefore, the contribution of this study is conceptual and practical: expanding theoretical understanding of the relationship between history education and cultural identity, while providing inspiration for teachers to design more relevant and contextual history learning. According to this study, history learning based on local wisdom at SMAN 11 Medan (public senior high school) is effective in forming students' cultural identity. By using local cultural values ​​when learning history, students not only gain a better understanding of important events in history, but they also get to know and love their own culture. This learning also encourages students to better appreciate local traditions, arts, and languages, which are part of their identity, and helps them strengthen their sense of pride in their local cultural heritage.

The results of the study show that this approach can enrich students' understanding of their history and culture, as well as reduce the impact of global culture that can threaten the sustainability of local culture. This is despite the fact that there are still challenges in implementing a curriculum based on local wisdom. It is undeniable that advances in information and communication technology have had a major impact, especially on the education sector.

The values ​​of local wisdom that have long been upheld by our ancestors have been lost as a result of the fading love for culture. History is a lesson that aims to foster behavior based on values ​​and norms that reflect the nature of individuals, society, and the state. History learning seeks to combine local wisdom values ​​with subject matter, so that students can recall the values ​​they have forgotten. Rekindle students' interest in history and change their view of history as a boring lesson. This is done by including elements of local history or oral traditions, especially those related to the principles of local wisdom and local traditions.

In local wisdom-based history learning in Medan City, students not only learn about ancestral cultural values, but also understand their relevance in modern life. For example, when studying politeness in Malay culture, they not only learn about manners, but also understand these values ​​as a social strategy that builds harmony, especially when associated with the history of the Deli Sultanate and inter-ethnic relations.

Likewise, the spirit of mutual cooperation in Batak customs, which is not only seen in the practice of helping each other, but also becomes a collective strength in facing social problems and the history of community struggles. This value is a real inspiration in building solidarity. Meanwhile, egalitarianism in Karo customs, which is reflected in customary deliberations, teaches the importance of listening to all voices in living together. When associated with local democratic practices, students learn to appreciate differences of opinion in a pluralistic society. With this approach, history is understood not only as the past, but as a reflection of cultural values ​​that shape the attitudes and behavior of today's society.

Here, teachers must be able to combine interesting and relevant history learning, choose teaching methods and learning styles, and organize teaching materials properly. Ultimately, this will result in their love for their own culture (Muhtarom et al., 2020). History learning is useful for raising awareness of the importance of learning from the past and if you know how to convey history well so that it is interesting and not boring. History learning can be more interesting and not boring if we can utilize Information and Communication Technology properly.

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.1 History Learning and Its Role in Cultural Education**

History learning has strategic benefits for education because it not only provides information about the past but also instills principles that shape the character and identity of the nation. History as a discipline helps students understand value conflicts, cultural conflicts, and the process of state formation. History is an important tool for learning the noble values ​​inherited from our predecessors through important events. Students will be more aware of their culture as part of the national culture if they understand the history of their country. History plays an important role in the formation of students' identities, especially in relation to their relationship with their environment and place of residence (Arifansyah et al., 2023).

The goal of cultural education is to improve students' understanding of local and national principles used in everyday life. History learning helps students understand how values, norms, and cultures change which shape the collective identity of society. This allows them to bridge the younger generation with their cultural roots, so that they not only learn about historical events but also understand the meaning and cultural values ​​contained therein. Therefore, learning history is a process of building cultural awareness through critical thinking and introspection.

Education has the ability to help solve various problems in society, including problems related to diversity. As a solution, education can at least teach society about the importance of tolerance, diversity, and solidarity (Amalina, 2022). History learning that integrates cultural values ​​also helps students become more tolerant, appreciate diversity, and love their own culture. By looking at historical figures, local and national events, and cultural developments over time, students can learn about the importance of maintaining cultural heritage and avoiding apathy towards tradition. This is very important especially in the midst of globalization which has the potential to erode the nation's cultural identity. Good history learning can balance global insight with local love.

History learning can be a powerful vehicle for building students' identity as part of a culture if it is carried out with a contextual approach and based on local wisdom. Indonesian local wisdom can be defined as a view of life and philosophy that can be found in various aspects of life, such as social and economic values, architecture, health, environmental management, and so on (Perwira, 2024). History teachers are very responsible for conveying information that includes facts as well as values ​​and ethics contained in historical events. Cultural education is formed when students can relate these values ​​to their own lives. This is a form of cultural education that is not only in theory but also in real life. Therefore, cultural education is very dependent on the approach used to teach history, not just what is taught.

History learning not only helps students remember the past, but also shapes their identity and cultural awareness. Students are invited to understand who they are in a cultural and national context through local stories, characters, and events. When history is taught contextually and based on local wisdom, students not only understand what events happened, but also know why these events are important to the present. As a result, history education is very important to instill values ​​such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and pride in their own culture, which are very important in today's era of globalization.

**2.2 The Concept of Local Wisdom in the Context of Education**

Local wisdom is the knowledge, principles, and practices that emerge from the interaction of a community with its social, cultural, and natural environment over many years. These values ​​have been inherited and are an important part of a community's identity. Local wisdom is reflected in everyday life through unique and contextual customs, languages, beliefs, and lifestyles. They have universal principles, such as mutual cooperation, honesty, responsibility, and respect for nature, even though they are local in nature. In general, local wisdom is interpreted as a local or local idea or concept that has good value and is implemented by the local community (Ragil et al., 2020).

In education, local wisdom is a rich and relevant source of learning, especially for building student character in accordance with the cultural values ​​of their region. Education that includes elements of local wisdom can bring students closer to their socio-cultural environment, so that they not only become academically intelligent people but also sensitive to the identity and values ​​of their community. This is important to stop the cultural alienation that often occurs due to education that is too dependent on external models.

Local wisdom in education is not only limited to subject matter; teacher-student interactions, learning approaches, and non-academic activities in schools are all examples. For example, local figures, local events, or community traditions can be discussed in social studies or history lessons. Meanwhile, activities such as traditional ceremonies, local art performances, or school mutual cooperation can be a means to foster a sense of togetherness and love for culture. Local wisdom in education has the ability to make students have an emotional bond with their place of origin. Students tend to feel proud of their local culture and feel a sense of responsibility to preserve it after learning more about it. Local values ​​strengthen the roots of the nation's culture and can protect the country from the negative effects of globalization that tends to be homogenous. In this way, Indonesia's cultural diversity can be maintained through education based on local wisdom.

To create an adaptive and inclusive curriculum, contextualization of local wisdom is needed. A curriculum that is designed with local context in mind allows learning to be more interesting for students and more meaningful for them. This method is in line with the principle of education that places students as active subjects in the learning process; this means that learning must begin with their own experiences and environment. Therefore, cooperation between schools, communities, and local governments is very important to build local-based education.

Overall, incorporating local wisdom into the education system not only maintains culture but is also a strategy to form strong, characterful, identity-based people who are able to adapt to the global community without losing their cultural roots. Education that wisely utilizes local wisdom will be able to create a generation that is not only intellectually educated, but also has cultural awareness and social responsibility for what they do.

**2.3 Local Wisdom-Based History Learning**

Local wisdom-based history learning links historical material with local principles, figures, events, and traditions (Wijayanti et al., 2025). The goal of this approach is for students to not only gain a better understanding of historical events that occurred, but also learn about the meaning and benefits contained therein in the context of their own lives. Because students are closer to the material being studied when history is taught through a local lens, students feel more emotionally and intellectually involved.

This method has the ability to involve students in the story. For example, students can understand that history does not only belong to the nation as a whole, but also lives in the small stories that shape local identity by learning about the struggles of local figures or the history of their community. Because they see a direct connection between school lessons and the world around them, this can increase their desire to learn and foster a sense of pride in their hometown.

History learning that uses local wisdom can also shape students' character (Firmansyah et al., 2025). Values ​​such as tolerance, leadership, mutual cooperation, and courage are often reflected in local stories that can be used as learning materials. By learning history from their own cultural perspective, students not only gain academic understanding but also internalize social values ​​that are important for community life.

This shows that history learning has greater value as a method of character development. Teachers must be creative in creating contextual materials and methods if they want to implement local wisdom-based history learning effectively. Practical examples that can be done include inviting speakers from the local community, visiting historical sites in the area, or creating mini research projects on family and environmental history. Therefore, learning history becomes more relevant, interesting, and meaningful. This also enhances the function of schools as places for preserving culture and forming the identity of the younger generation.

**2.4 Cultural Identity and Its Formation in Students**

The identity of individuals in a community group is greatly influenced by their cultural identity. The values, norms, symbols, and ways of thinking and behaving that have been passed down from generation to generation reflect this identity (Yana et al., 2023). The cultural identity of students is very important to build self-confidence, understand their position in society, and understand the diversity around them. A strong identity can help students appreciate their cultural roots and interact well with people from different cultures.

The interaction between family, school, local community, and media is part of the process of forming students' cultural identity. Education, as a formal social institution, has a strategic goal to improve cultural understanding through implicit and explicit learning. Schools are not only places to learn, but also places to build cultural identity and understanding. Curriculums that integrate local cultural principles have the ability to create learning environments that are not only informative but also transformative, which contributes to the formation of students' cultural identity.

Culture-based education strategies can be used to improve students' cultural identity (Zahrika & Andaryani, 2023). Local identity is often threatened by globalization, and culture-based education is essential to protect it. These strategies can include introducing local arts, mother tongue, history, and traditional practices in the classroom or extracurricular activities. This method allows students to experience their ancestral culture directly rather than just learning it as academic knowledge. This contextual method has proven successful in fostering students' emotional attachment to inherited cultural principles. This method also strengthens students' sense of pride in their own culture.

Education plays an important role in maintaining social cohesion through the formation of a strong cultural identity in Indonesia's highly diverse society. Students who have a strong cultural awareness tend to be more open to diversity, better able to live side by side well, and less easily influenced by differences in tradition, religion, or ethnicity. Cross-cultural learning, also known as intercultural learning, is essential to creating an atmosphere that supports tolerance and togetherness. This condition is beneficial for society as a whole, not just in the classroom.

As educational leaders, teachers must have the ability to actively participate and think critically in cultural processes. They are not only tasked with conveying information; they are also responsible for creating an environment where people talk, reinforcing local principles, and developing learning methods that take students' cultures into account. In this way, students' cultural identities are not only recognized but also developed in an empowering and inclusive environment. This method emphasizes that schools are places to build a deep-rooted and forward-looking understanding of culture.

Therefore, education is a process of forming cultural identity that involves the entire community, not just schools. Local media, indigenous communities, and families greatly influence students’ cultural insights. Each of these components must work together to create a healthy educational ecosystem where students can grow as people who are rooted in their culture but also open to changes in the world. A strong cultural identity is essential to building the character of an independent, competitive, and unique Indonesian nation.

1. **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type and a case study strategy (Fossey et al., 2002). The qualitative approach was chosen because it is appropriate for exploring in depth complex social phenomena, especially related to the meaning and process of local wisdom-based history learning in shaping students' cultural identity. The descriptive type is used to provide a detailed and systematic description of the events, conditions, and interactions that occur in the context of the learning.

The case study strategy allows researchers to thoroughly explore the phenomena that occur at SMAN 11 Medan as a single unit of analysis (single case), with a focus on how local values ​​are integrated into history learning and how they influence the construction of students' cultural identity.

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely participatory observation, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, and analysis of documentation such as syllabus, lesson plans, and teaching materials. In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 informants, consisting of 10 students and 5 history teachers. The selection of informants was done purposively, based on their involvement in learning activities relevant to the research topic. Through these interviews, researchers obtained information about students' and teachers' perceptions, experiences, and reflections on history learning integrated with local cultural values. In addition, document analysis was conducted to complement and enrich field data.

The documents analyzed included RPP (Lesson Implementation Plan), syllabus, teaching materials, and student learning notes or products related to local history and culture themes. The collected data were analyzed using the Huberman & Miles (1983) interactive analysis model, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. Data reduction is done by selecting, focusing, and simplifying relevant information. Data presentation is done in the form of descriptive narratives and direct quotes from informants. Meanwhile, conclusions are drawn gradually through the process of interpreting thematic patterns that emerge during the analysis process. Through this method, the study aims to present a complete and meaningful picture of how history learning that carries local wisdom values ​​is able to shape the cultural identity of students in the context of a multicultural society such as Medan City.

1. **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**4.1 History Learning**

History learning is basically an effort to improve human ability to build themselves (Irawan, 2024). History education is very important to teach national values ​​because this subject is always in accordance with the culture and principles that develop in society. Students have the opportunity to learn about historical events that shape their identity. This helps them appreciate their culture, maintain local wisdom values, and make connections with their own experiences.

History lessons are very important to shape students' understanding and insight into the history of the nation and the values ​​contained therein.

At SMA Negeri 11 Medan, history lessons not only teach facts chronologically but also teach cultural values ​​contained in local wisdom. This method offers a new aspect that is more relevant and contextual for students' understanding of their cultural identity. The history learning method based on local wisdom allows students to get closer to local culture. For example, by raising local folklore, traditions, and historical figures, they are invited to recognize the cultural roots that exist in everyday life. This method not only makes lessons more interesting, but also makes students understand the deeper and more personal meaning of history.

History teachers at SMAN 11 Medan make extensive use of contextual approaches, such as simulations, group discussions, and local cultural activities such as local dances. This method fosters a deep sense of curiosity and encourages students to participate actively. Therefore, learning becomes an interactive process that requires students' intellectual and emotional participation. In addition to the method, learning materials are also adapted to existing local wisdom. For example, one of the important topics studied is the role of the Deli Malay community in the struggle for independence.

The material not only increases students' understanding of the nation's history but also instills respect and love for local culture, which is part of the student's identity. The success of history learning depends on the teacher's ability to link historical material to the cultural principles that exist in the community around them. Building student engagement with the material and strengthening their understanding will be easier for teachers who package learning in an interesting and relevant way. In addition, the use of technology in history learning also helps. Students can gain a clearer and more interesting understanding by using media such as interactive maps and documentary videos about local culture. Technology helps students learn, increasing their ability to absorb material.

Local wisdom-based history learning faces many problems. Inadequate learning resources, especially those that cover local principles comprehensively, are one of the main obstacles. In addition, teachers do not receive special training to implement a local wisdom-based approach. Nevertheless, schools continue to strive to create relevant teaching materials and teacher training. Collaboration between schools and cultural institutions and local communities helps provide authentic learning resources and enrich learning content. This collaboration also provides students with opportunities to interact directly with cultural actors and gain real learning experiences.

Overall, local wisdom-based history learning at SMAN 11 Medan can improve the quality of education. This method has succeeded in shaping students' cultural identity in addition to making learning more lively, and interesting. It is hoped that awareness of the importance of local history and culture will help the next generation to have more character and appreciate their cultural heritage. It is hoped that history learning will continue to develop by increasingly prioritizing local wisdom as the main source of learning in the future. For learning to remain effective, innovation and increased teacher capacity are needed. Therefore, history education can function as a useful tool to shape students' cultural identity permanently and sustainably.

**4.2 Local Wisdom**

Etymologically, local wisdom consists of two words, namely wisdom and local. Other terms for local wisdom include local policy (local wisdom), local knowledge (local knowledge) and local intelligence (local genious) (Shufa, 2018). Meanwhile, according to (Chaiphar et al., 2013) explains that local wisdom is a way of life that is inherited from one generation to another in the form of religion, culture, or customs that are common in the social system of society. Local wisdom can be considered as a national identity, especially in Indonesia, because it allows cultural exchange to become national cultural values.

Based on this quote, it is clear that local wisdom is a value system that is inherited from generation to generation and is more than just conventional knowledge. Local wisdom consists of customs, beliefs, and cultural practices that shape the identity of a community and serve as a basis for maintaining social balance. The diverse local wisdom in Indonesia shows a unique and complex national identity. As a result, local wisdom is very important to increase the sense of nationalism and can help build the character of the younger generation, especially through education that links local values ​​to learning, such as in history lessons.

Local wisdom is a very valuable cultural heritage that grows and develops in a community. It reflects the results of a long process of human adaptation to its environment. In addition, it serves as a foundation for norms and principles that regulate the social, spiritual, and ecological life of the local community. Local wisdom in Medan can come in various forms, from oral traditions such as pantun and folklore to social practices such as customary deliberations, cultural celebrations, and respect for elders. When local wisdom is incorporated into history learning at SMA Negeri 11 Medan, the lesson no longer feels abstract or far from students' lives. Instead, the material becomes closer, more familiar, and contextual because students learn things that are directly related to themselves.

The effectiveness of history learning based on local wisdom can be seen from the extent to which students experience changes in their views and understanding of the cultural values ​​that exist in their environment. Students are not only asked to study historical events, but also asked to understand how local cultural values ​​shape the nation's identity. For example, students are asked to learn about the resistance of the people of North Sumatra against colonialism and how these values ​​shape This method allows history learning to function as an academic tool and instill values.

SMAN 11 Medan is an educational institution that is integrated with a multicultural society. Local wisdom-based education has great potential to develop the cultural and ethnic diversity of students.

“I see that history teachers actually have a great opportunity to make the classroom a space for intercultural discussions. In Medan, we are rich in cultures such as Batak Toba, Mandailing, Karo, Melayu Deli, and many more. All tribes live side by side, and that can be a strength in learning. For example, in history material, we can raise traditional ceremonies, traditional lifestyles, or kinship systems as case studies. That not only brings the lesson to life, but also helps students understand their own identity,” (AK, History Teacher, Interview, 2025)

This method uses a learning approach that focuses on direct exploration of cultural objects rather than just listening to lectures or textbooks. Project-based learning, such as interviews with indigenous figures, making documentation of local culture, or visits to historical and cultural sites, are things that teachers can design to teach. Activities like this not only make students more interested in historical materials, but also help them learn to think critically and work together in groups.

“I feel that history lessons do not only discuss the past, but also have a direct connection to present life. Local values ​​are actually not fixed, but change with the times. Therefore, studying local wisdom in history is very important. For example, when indigenous peoples adjust their cultural values ​​to national laws or change the way they interact between groups, it can be an interesting topic of discussion in class. That way, we as students can learn to think historically and reflectively—understanding the past by considering present and future conditions,” (BA, Student at SMAN 11 Medan, Interview, 2025).

Students' cultural identities are formed through the process of internalizing the social and historical values ​​they receive from their families, communities, and schools. This identity-building process becomes stronger when schools actively incorporate local wisdom values ​​into their curriculum. Students will gain awareness that they are part of a living culture and history. This is important to protect the next generation from the dangers of globalization, which often brings cultural homogenization and the destruction of local identities.

From a pedagogical perspective, this methodology also increases the relevance of learning. One of the main problems with current history learning is the impression that the material is far from students' lives. When students cannot relate lessons to the real world, their desire to learn decreases. Because local wisdom is a direct part of students' lives, local wisdom helps overcome this distance. Therefore, students' emotional and intellectual involvement in the learning process increases.

“In my opinion, the success of local wisdom-based history learning is highly dependent on teacher readiness. Teachers must understand the principles of local wisdom well and be able to design interactive and contextual learning. But that alone is not enough. Support from the principal, education office, teacher training, and the availability of local-based learning tools are also very much needed. Without such support, learning innovation will only be discourse without real impact. At SMAN 11 Medan, I see progress—students' interest in local history has increased, and they are also more enthusiastic in school cultural preservation activities,” (TK, History Teacher, SMAN 11 Medan, Interview, 2025)

Students can find elements of local culture in their daily lives and have a positive attitude towards existing cultural diversity. Therefore, to ensure that this method can continue to develop as needed, evaluation of the learning process and outcomes must be carried out periodically. Overall, local wisdom is an important component in the formation of student identity and is a tool in learning history. In the case of SMAN 11 Medan, local wisdom can function as a bridge between local cultural values ​​and national values ​​in the past. This is a character education model that is rooted in culture. This is a wise and prudent approach to instilling a strong, relevant, and sustainable cultural identity for the younger generation amidst the changing currents of globalization.

**4.3 Cultural Identity**

Cultural identity can be defined as a representation of values, norms, beliefs, language, symbols, and social practices that are owned and inherited by a particular community group. Cultural identity gives individuals a sense of belonging and distinguishes them from other groups. Students of SMA Negeri 11 Medan who come from various cultures must be strengthened in the process of building their cultural identity. History learning based on local wisdom is a strategic tool in this process. This method teaches students not only about the past but also about the culture that shapes them today.

History learning that includes elements of local wisdom has advantages in terms of contextuality and emotional closeness to students. Local wisdom is a cultural expression that contains moral, social, and spiritual values, which are recognized by society and become a guideline for life (Sartini, 2004). By introducing local history such as the struggle of the Deli Serdang community or Batak customs in the context of the past, students not only understand historical facts but also foster a sense of pride in their own cultural identity. Students are invited to reflect on the noble values ​​that exist in their own culture when history learning is combined with local wisdom.

“In my opinion, learning history with a local wisdom approach not only broadens our horizons, but also shapes our attitudes and perspectives on culture. In our school, which consists of people from various backgrounds, such as Batak, Karo, Malay, and Mandailing, this approach helps us understand differences more openly. Our cultural identity becomes more reflective, less rigid, and can adapt to the reality of multicultural life. We also understand more that values ​​such as politeness in Malay culture, mutual cooperation in Batak customs, or egalitarian attitudes in Karo customs, are not only part of the past, but can be applied in today's life. From there, we learn that history is not just a record of events, but also about how culture shapes the way we live and think today,” (AS, Student, SMAN 11 Medan, Interview, 2025)

Rahyono (2009) shows that local wisdom can be used as a foundation in learning national character values. At SMAN 11 Medan, when history teachers are able to bridge historical events and local cultural values, the learning process is not only informative but also transformative. Students learn not only to memorize dates and figures, but also to understand who they are in a pluralistic society.

History teachers play an important role in facilitating the formation of this cultural identity during the learning process in the classroom. Teachers not only provide historical information to students, but they also encourage them to think about the role of local culture in shaping the history of their society. For example, when teachers talk about the history of colonialism, they can bring up the story of the struggle of the Deli Serdang people or local figures who are committed to protecting their culture from outside influences. This local storytelling will foster a sense of respect and pride in their own cultural heritage.

The increasing awareness and participation of students in preserving culture is evidence that local wisdom-based history learning is successful. They begin to be actively involved in activities at school, such as traditional dances, folklore competitions, or cultural seminars. These activities show that students not only gain a theoretical understanding of their cultural identity, but they also participate directly in maintaining and transferring the culture to the next generation.

History learning based on local wisdom is an important tool for maintaining identity in an era of globalization that tends to encourage cultural homogenization. Students are educated to see differences as wealth rather than threats. They learn to respect and appreciate the symbols of other cultures. This is a true type of character education where a deep understanding of each local culture fosters tolerance and pride in the nation.

At SMAN 11 Medan, where people from various ethnicities interact every day, understanding and appreciating cultural identity is very important. Students will build strong intercultural relationships by studying history that takes into account the local context. When students understand and appreciate each other's cultural identities, the possibility of conflict and cultural prejudice will decrease and will be replaced by strong collaboration and solidarity.

History learning shapes students' cultural identity not only symbolically, but also influences the way they think and act in everyday life. When they know that local culture teaches them responsibility, respect, and solidarity, they will behave well at school and in society. This shows that not only academic results are measured by the effectiveness of learning, but also changes in students' perspectives and characters. Therefore, it can be concluded that history learning based on local wisdom plays a strategic role in the formation of students' cultural identity at SMA Negeri 11 Medan.

During this process, an educational space is formed that not only provides knowledge but also instills cultural awareness, identity, and a sense of responsibility as part of a pluralistic nation. In the long term, education like this will produce a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also strong in its identity, resilient in facing change, and open to diversity.

**4.4 Learning Effectiveness**

Learning effectiveness is how well the learning process runs and changes students' knowledge, attitudes, or skills (Sartini, 2004). Learning effectiveness is defined as the extent to which the learning process can change students' understanding, attitudes, or skills. Learning effectiveness is measured based on the achievement of learning objectives, the use of appropriate methods, a conducive classroom atmosphere, and the active involvement of teachers and students. This process is considered effective when learning objectives are achieved through appropriate methods, a supportive classroom atmosphere, and active involvement between teachers and students.

“As teachers, I see that our role is very important as facilitators so that the learning experience becomes interesting, relevant, and easy to understand for students. When students feel connected to the material, they will be more active in the learning process. Therefore, proper and continuous evaluation also needs to be carried out so that the learning process can continue to be improved. Based on my experience teaching in grade XI, the application of local wisdom in history learning has proven to be very effective. Students seem more enthusiastic when the material is linked to local culture, such as Batak customs, the history of the Deli Kingdom, or Malay cultural practices in Medan. This is in accordance with the constructivism approach, where students find it easier to understand the material when they can relate it to their own experiences and environment,” (TK, History Teacher, SMAN 11 Medan, Interview, 2025)

Teachers play an important role in creating learning approaches that are relevant and adaptive to the local context. Visits to historical sites around Medan, group discussions about local culture, and project assignments about local community traditions are all strategies used. It is proven that these methods encourage students' emotional and intellectual involvement. It also helps students understand history as part of real life, not just a story of the past. Students showed increased cultural awareness and appreciation for their cultural heritage after participating in local wisdom-based learning.

Many students began to show pride in their origins and the values ​​inherited from their ancestors after previously not knowing about the history and culture of their area. This method shows that learning is successful in creating students' cultural identity, which is in accordance with the character education objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum.

History learning based on local wisdom has proven successful, but there are several obstacles to implementing it. Limited teaching materials that are appropriate to the local situation are a major problem. Often, teachers have to compile additional materials themselves, which requires more time and innovation. In addition, another obstacle that needs to be considered by schools and education offices is the lack of formal training for teachers in creating local curricula. This method is very effective in building context-based curricula.

Local wisdom not only functions as additional content, but also functions as a basis for learning that strengthens the affective aspect in the formation of student identity. This integrity is in accordance with the values ​​of the Pancasila student profile, especially in terms of the dimensions of "global diversity", "faith and piety", and "character". Interviews with history teachers confirmed that this method is not only fun for students but also helps teachers convey complex material. Students also feel more confident and motivated to learn when their cultural identities are recognized and appreciated at school.

**4.5 Student Responses at SMAN 11 Medan**

Senior High School (SMA) students are at a very important stage of cognitive and emotional development to build their identity. At this age, children begin to question their values, identity, and origins. Because it is memorized and not relevant to everyday life, conventional history learning is often considered boring. Therefore, history learning based on local wisdom is the right choice because it is able to bridge the subject matter with the social and cultural realities that they experience in their surroundings.

By using a local wisdom approach, students not only learn about historical events as a whole, but also understand how local culture contributes to the progress of the country. Senior High School students at SMA Negeri 11 Medan feel closer to the material when they learn about the history of the Deli Kingdom, Batak customary practices, or Deli Malay cultural values. This results in emotional engagement, which increases the desire to learn and improves understanding of contextual history. Learning now looks like something abstract; it is now part of their own identity.

Observation results of students at SMAN 11 Medan show that this method increases student participation in history projects, group work, and class discussions. They become more courageous in voicing their opinions, comparing local and national cultures, and linking cultural principles to current challenges. Direct experiences, such as visits to historical sites, interviews with traditional figures, or presentations on local culture, increase memory and a sense of belonging to one's own culture.

Local wisdom-based learning involves students' affective aspects in addition to cognitive aspects. They not only remember past events but also understand noble values ​​such as mutual cooperation, respect for parents, and a sense of unity that exist in local culture. This contributes to increasing students' ability to build their own character as part of the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum. Through this learning process, their cultural identity builds an important moral foundation for their future social life. It is important to note that high school students are basically looking for examples and standards that they can use as references.

Students gain new values ​​that are relevant to real life when local culture is presented positively in history learning. They begin to appreciate their own local traditions and stop following foreign trends or cultures. This awareness fosters self-confidence and pride, which are components of a healthy cultural identity. The results of student assessments and reflections can also indicate how effective learning is.

Students of SMA Negeri 11 Medan who used this method showed improvements in making creative presentations, writing reflective essays, and thinking critically. Teachers said that students were more active in finding out about history from local sources than textbooks. This shows that using the local wisdom method can help create independent education and skills needed in the 21st century. Therefore, focusing on high school students in learning history based on local wisdom has proven to be good from a strategic and effective perspective. This method fits the dynamic age of adolescents, the need for identity, and the tendency to seek meaning in learning experiences. SMAN 11 Medan is an example of how education can shape a young generation that has a strong cultural and academic identity. This is in line with the vision of national education which emphasizes a sense of nationalism, diversity, and character.

1. **CONCLUSION**

The results of the study indicate that local wisdom-based history learning significantly contributes to the formation of students' cultural identity at SMAN 11 Medan. Students are able to link historical materials with local values ​​and social contexts that they experience every day, so that learning becomes more contextual, relevant, and meaningful. The combination of national historical narratives and local cultural practices allows students not only to understand historical facts, but also to internalize ancestral cultural values ​​as an integral part of their identity. These findings emphasize the importance of the role of history teachers in designing and implementing learning models that explore the potential of local wisdom as a source of learning. In addition, school policy support is needed to encourage the preservation of local culture through integration into the curriculum and strengthening extracurricular activities. This effort aims to strengthen the character and cultural awareness of the younger generation, as well as make history education a vehicle for preserving the nation's cultural values.

Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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