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## Implementation of Character Management Through an Ethnopedagogical Approach at SMPN Satap Kalama

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### Abstract

*Character education often feels rigid if it is not connected to the local culture where students live. SMPN Satap Kalama has a significant opportunity to shape student character through local wisdom values (ethnopedagogy) so that students are not only academically intelligent but also possess conduct that aligns with their regional identity.*

*This study aims to determine how the school plans, implements, and evaluates character education based on culture and local wisdom at SMPN Satap Kalama using qualitative methods. The researcher collected data through interviews with teachers and the school principal, direct observations at the school, and by documenting school activity records related to culture.*

*The research findings indicate that:*

- 1. Planning: The school incorporates local cultural values into classroom learning materials.*
- 2. Implementation: Student character is formed through daily habituation, such as the use of polite regional language and mutual cooperation (gotong royong) activities within the school environment.*
- 3. Evaluation: Teachers monitor changes in student behavior through direct observation and communication with parents.*

*The implementation of character education management using an ethnopedagogical approach at SMPN Satap Kalama is proceeding effectively. This approach enables students to better appreciate their own culture while still keeping pace with modern developments.*

**Keywords:** Educational Management, Character Education, Ethnopedagogy, Local Wisdom.

## INTRODUCTION

This article guides a stepwise walkthrough by Experts for writing a Character education in Indonesia is currently at a crucial tipping point where global digitalization often clashes with local moral values. Schools are no longer merely places for the transfer of knowledge; they must transform into cultural laboratories. In areas with geographical challenges and limited access, such as SMPN Satap Kalama, educational management requires a more contextual approach to ensure that character values do not feel foreign to students. The ethnopedagogical paradigm emerges as a strategic solution to bridge the national curriculum with local wisdom.

This aligns with the perspective of M. Rustam et al. (2022), who state that ethnopedagogy is an educational practice that positions local wisdom as a source of learning innovation to build a strong cultural identity amidst the onslaught of foreign cultures.

The implementation of character education management depends heavily on school managerial policies. Plianorya, S. Pd, Gr (Principal of SMPN Satap Kalama) expressed that the primary challenge in 3T zones (Frontier, Outermost, and Disadvantaged regions) with limited internet access is fostering student independence and integrity without relying on modern technology. He emphasized that school management is directed toward adopting the traditions of the Kalama community as a foundation for discipline and responsibility. Theoretically, this step is supported by Mulyasa (2022) in his study on modern educational management, which asserts that school leadership in the new era must be adaptive and based on local potential (resource-based management) to create an authentically superior school ecosystem with strong character.

At the instructional level, the internalization of these values is manifested through strategic subjects. Hesli, S. Pd, Gr (Pancasila and Civic Education teacher at SMPN Satap Kalama) noted that students demonstrate high social sensitivity when Pancasila values are analogized with local customary laws or oral traditions. The teacher stated that an ethnopedagogical approach makes civic materials more "grounded" and easier for students to internalize in their daily lives. This phenomenon is relevant to the findings of Lickona & Davidson (in Zubaedi, 2021), who emphasize the importance of character-based classroom management, where teachers must link universal virtues with the sociocultural realities experienced by students to create sustainable moral habituation.

Despite the rich potential of local values in Kalama Village, systematic integration into management functions—from planning to evaluation—still faces infrastructural hurdles and limited digital literacy. Therefore, comprehensive character education management is required to convert ethnopedagogical values into measurable character achievement indicators within the school.

Based on this background, this article aims to analyze the implementation of character education management using an ethnopedagogical approach at SMPN Satap Kalama. This study seeks to dissect how the synergy between the principal's managerial role and the pedagogical creativity of the Civics teacher can optimize regional limitations into a strength based on local wisdom to form resilient student characters.

## RESEARCH ELABORATIONS

This research builds upon previous studies that examine the link between school management, local wisdom, and character

building. The following are the three primary references used as benchmarks:

1. Prasetyo, A. (2023). "Managerial Strategies for Character Education in Marginalized Secondary Schools: An Ethnopedagogical Case Study." This paper highlights that in schools with limited infrastructure, the success of character education relies heavily on the principal's managerial ability to convert sociocultural values into concrete school policies. It provides a foundation for the researcher to dissect the functions of planning and actuating carried out by the Principal of SMPN Satap Kalama in overcoming the challenges of the 3T zone.
2. Sari, R., & Handayani, T. (2022). "Applying the Ethnopedagogical Approach in Civics Education to Enhance the Pancasila Student Profile." *Jurnal Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan*, 12(2). This article proves that an ethnopedagogical approach in Civics (PKn) subjects effectively increases students' moral efficacy. Pancasila values become easier to understand when teachers utilize analogies from local traditions and customs. It supports the insights from the Civics teacher at SMPN Satap Kalama regarding the effectiveness of using local philosophy in the classroom teaching and learning process.
3. Hidayat, M. N., et al. (2024). "Digital-Free Character Education: Managing Local Wisdom in Remote Areas." *Journal of Educational Management and Leadership*, 5(1). This study concludes that limited internet access is not a barrier to character education. Instead, it serves as an opportunity for school management to optimize "social technology" in the form of local wisdom as the primary medium for learning. It provides theoretical reinforcement that the management model at SMPN Satap Kalama is a form of Resource-Based Management that is highly relevant to the geographical conditions in Mamasa.

## METHODS

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach was selected to obtain an in-depth overview of the character education management phenomenon at SMPN Satap Kalama, which possesses unique sociocultural characteristics. In accordance with the views of Sugiyono (2025), qualitative methods are highly relevant for examining natural object conditions where the researcher acts as the key instrument.

The research was conducted at SMPN Satap Kalama, Mamasa Regency, West Sulawesi. The location was selected through purposive sampling, considering that the school is located in a 3T zone (Frontier, Outermost, and Disadvantaged) with limited infrastructure but a wealth of strong local values. The research subjects include:

- The School Principal: As the key informant regarding managerial policies (planning and supervision).
- The Civics (PKn) Teacher: As the primary informant for pedagogical implementation in the classroom.

- Students and Traditional Leaders: As supporting data sources regarding the impact and validity of ethnopedagogical values.

Data Collection Techniques Data were collected through three primary techniques synthesized based on contemporary field research protocols (Rahman, 2025):

1. Participant Observation: Directly observing the integration of local values in routine school activities and the teaching-learning process.
2. In-depth Interviews: Conducting semi-structured dialogues with the Principal and the Civics teacher to explore management strategies and constraints.
3. Documentation Study: Reviewing curriculum documents, ethnopedagogy-based lesson plans (RPP), and photographs of activities representing the application of local character.

Data Analysis Techniques The data analysis follows the model of Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (in Ardiansyah, 2026), which consists of three concurrent activity flows:

- Data Reduction: Summarizing and selecting core points from the interviews and observations conducted in Kalama Village.
- Data Display: Presenting data in the form of descriptive narratives and matrices showing the correlation between management functions and ethnopedagogical values.
- Conclusion Drawing/Verification: Reviewing the data to obtain a credible final conclusion regarding the effectiveness of character management at the school.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

#### 1. Research Results

Based on the research conducted at SMPN Satap Kalama on March 2, 2026, the implementation of character education management through an ethnopedagogical approach is described through four primary management functions:

- Planning The Principal of SMPN Satap Kalama established a school vision oriented toward the preservation of Mamasa's local wisdom. Planning was carried out by developing the School-Level Operational Curriculum (KOSP), which integrates ethnopedagogical values into character achievement indicators. The Civics (PKn) teacher was actively involved in mapping local values—such as "*Mesa Kada Dipotuo, Pantan Kada Dipomate*" (United we stand)—to be embedded into teaching modules.
- Organizing The school formed a character development team involving teachers, staff, and community leaders from Kalama Village. This organization ensures that every subject, particularly Civics, bears the responsibility of exploring local cultural values. Amidst internet limitations, the school utilizes the natural and social environment as a character "laboratory."
- Actuating (Implementation) Classroom implementation is conducted through contextual learning methods. The

Civics teacher reported that students are more enthusiastic when the material on rights and obligations is linked to customary rules in Kalama. Extracurricular activities also include traditional arts and games that instill values of discipline and cooperation.

- Controlling (Supervision) Supervision is performed qualitatively through student reflection journals and daily behavioral observations. The Principal conducts classroom supervision to ensure that the ethnopedagogical approach is not merely a label but is practiced in the interactions between teachers and students.

#### 2. Discussion

- Managerial Synergy and Local Wisdom in the 3T Zone The research findings indicate that infrastructure limitations in Kalama Village actually serve as a catalyst for the effectiveness of ethnopedagogy. When digital access is limited, school management is compelled to optimize sociocultural wealth as an educational medium. This confirms Mulyasa's (2022) theory regarding Resource-Based Management, where school success is determined by the manager's ability to manage the unique potential of the surroundings.
- Ethnopedagogy as a Bridge to Pancasila Values The response from the Civics teacher, stating that students understand Pancasila values more easily through a local cultural approach, aligns with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's concept of education being in harmony with the "Nature of Reality" (*Kodrat Alam*). Ethnopedagogy at SMPN Satap Kalama functions as a decoding instrument that translates the universal values of Pancasila into the cultural language understood by students in the Mamasa hinterlands.
- Adaptive Leadership within Geographical Constraints The Principal's response regarding the importance of student independence without technology reflects an adaptive leadership model. In Lickona's (2021) view, character is not just about instruction but about habituation. In Kalama, school management has successfully created an ecosystem where traditional values, such as honesty and hard work, are practiced as solutions to the challenges of living in a remote area.
- Analysis of Barriers and Solutions Although managerially well-organized, the primary obstacles remain the damaged road access and the lack of digital literacy among teachers to document these best practices. However, substantively, character management at SMPN Satap Kalama has successfully performed the function of value internalization by utilizing local wisdom as the primary foundation for students' moral education.

### DISCUSSION

#### 1. Internal Factors (Strengths and Weaknesses)

Internal factors refer to the conditions within the SMPN Satap Kalama ecosystem that influence the effectiveness of character education management.

- Vision and Leadership of the Principal (Strength): The leadership's commitment to establishing local wisdom as the school's identity. Without managerial support,

ethnopedagogy would merely remain a discourse at the classroom level.

- Civics (PKn) Teacher Competency (Strength): The teacher's ability to perform re-contextualization, specifically translating Pancasila values into the local language and culture of the Kalama community.
- Limited Infrastructure and Facilities (Weakness): Inadequate building conditions or supporting facilities resulting from damaged road access and the difficulty of distributing materials to the research site.
- Low Digital Literacy (Weakness): Limited internet access hinders teachers from searching for contemporary references or documenting best practices on a wider scale (digitalization of management).

## 2. External Factors (Opportunities and Threats)

External factors refer to influences from outside the school environment that provide pressure or support for the educational process.

- Richness of Mamasa Local Wisdom (Opportunity): The social environment in Kalama Village still strictly adheres to customs and traditions. This serves as an inexhaustible resource (living laboratory) for character education.
- Support from Traditional Leaders and Parents (Opportunity): The synergy between the school and the community creates consistency in character education. What is taught at school (ethnopedagogy) is synchronized with what is practiced at home.
- Geographical Barriers and Accessibility (Threat): The location's status as a 3T zone with damaged roads acts as a barrier for external parties (supervisors or the Education Office) to provide routine, direct guidance.
- Waves of Modernization (Threat): Despite limited internet, outside influences through other media or social interactions remain a threat to the preservation of local values if not fortified by strong character management.

## 3. Environmental Factors

- a. Geographical Environment and Infrastructural Isolation (3T Zone) Damaged roads and limited internet access in Kalama Village force the school to be resource-independent. Mulyasa (2022) proposes the Resource-Based Management theory, stating that schools in remote areas must convert geographical limitations into managerial uniqueness. Geographical isolation actually strengthens the cohesion between the school and local values due to minimal cultural distortion from the internet. At SMPN Satap Kalama, the "isolated" environment serves as a natural buffer for preserving ethnopedagogical values.
- b. Cultural Ecosystem and Local Wisdom The Kalama community environment, which still upholds customs, is a living character laboratory. M. Rustam et al. (2022), in their research on cultural identity, found that environments maintaining oral traditions and customary laws significantly impact the efficacy of character education. Ethnopedagogy will not function effectively in an environment that has lost its cultural roots. The sociocultural support in Mamasa provides the "raw

materials" for Civics teachers to package into relevant learning for students.

- c. Social-Familial Environment (The Three Hubs of Education) Parenting patterns and resident interactions around the school remain communal and based on gotong-royong (mutual cooperation). Zubaedi (2024) emphasizes that character education management in the era of disruption requires synchronization between the school and the family environment. He notes that character success in school only lasts if the student's social environment provides reinforcement for the same values. The synchronization of values between the school and the Kalama community (e.g., values of honesty and hard work in farming) creates behavioral consistency in students.
- d. Contextual Physical School Environment The utilization of public spaces, the surrounding nature, and school buildings as media for internalizing cultural values. Ardiansyah (2026), in his theory of Space-Based Pedagogy, states that the design of a school's physical environment that incorporates local symbols (such as building ornaments or school gardens based on local plants) subconsciously reinforces ethnic pride and student character. SMPN Satap Kalama utilizes the natural environment as an outdoor learning space to instill character traits of environmental care and patriotism through an ethnopedagogical approach.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion regarding the implementation of character education management through an ethnopedagogical approach at SMPN Satap Kalama, the following primary conclusions can be drawn:

1. Managerial Effectiveness in Remote Areas: Character education management at SMPN Satap Kalama has been implemented systematically through the functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. The principal has successfully applied an adaptive leadership model that transforms infrastructure limitations in the 3T zone into opportunities by optimizing sociocultural wealth as the school's primary asset (Resource-Based Management).
2. Ethnopedagogy as an Internalization Instrument: The ethnopedagogical approach has proven to be an effective medium for bridging universal Pancasila values with the reality of students' lives. Through Civics (PKn) subjects, the internalization of character values becomes more "grounded" as it utilizes analogies from Mamasa's traditions, philosophy, and local wisdom. This enhances student responsiveness and understanding of moral and civic norms.
3. Educational Ecosystem Synergy: The success of this program is strongly supported by a social environment that still upholds traditional customs. The synchronization of values between the school, families, and traditional leaders in Kalama Village creates consistent and sustainable character education, where noble values are practiced both within and outside the school environment.

4. Obstacles and Creative Solutions: Although geographical constraints, damaged roads, and the lack of internet access hinder the digitalization of management, these factors do not diminish the character education process. Creative solutions, such as utilizing nature as a character laboratory and fostering collective collaboration among teachers, are key to the school's resilience in carrying out its educational mission.

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