

Local Wisdom Based Learning of the Mandar Tribe to Foster Social Awareness in Elementary School Students

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Abstract

Character education is a crucial pillar in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also socially sensitive and caring towards others. However, in practice, the instilling of character values in elementary schools is often theoretical and not fully internalized by students in their daily lives. This study aims to explore how learning based on the local wisdom of the Mandar tribe can foster social awareness in elementary school students. The study was conducted in three elementary schools in Polewali Mandar Regency, involving nine informants, consisting of teachers, principals, and students. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and observation of learning activities, and then analyzed thematically. The study's results reveal three key findings. First, Mandar cultural values such as Siwaliparri (mutual cooperation), Metawe (mutual respect), Mepuang (hospitality and empathy), and Metabe (shared responsibility) are applied through contextual learning activities based on student experiences. Second, teachers act as value facilitators, connecting the learning process with social practices and daily role models. Third, the internalization of these cultural values has a tangible impact on students' social awareness, as evidenced by the increase in mutual assistance, politeness, empathy, and responsibility within the school environment. These findings confirm that local wisdom-based learning has the transformative power to naturally foster children's social character. Further studies can be conducted to explore the application of cultural values from other regions as an effort to strengthen character education and the Pancasila Student Profile, which is rooted in the nation's culture.

Keywords: Mandar Local Wisdom; Character Education; Social Care; Teacher's Role; Elementary School

Abstrak

Pendidikan karakter merupakan pilar penting dalam membentuk generasi yang tidak hanya cerdas secara intelektual, tetapi juga memiliki kepekaan sosial dan kepedulian terhadap sesama. Namun, dalam praktiknya, penanaman nilai-nilai karakter di sekolah dasar masih sering bersifat teoritis dan belum sepenuhnya dihayati oleh siswa dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menelusuri bagaimana pembelajaran berbasis kearifan lokal Suku Mandar dapat menumbuhkan karakter peduli sosial pada siswa sekolah dasar. Penelitian dilakukan di tiga sekolah dasar di Kabupaten Polewali Mandar dengan melibatkan sembilan informan, terdiri atas guru, kepala sekolah, dan siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi kegiatan belajar, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga hal utama. Pertama, nilai-nilai budaya Mandar seperti Siwaliparri (gotong royong), Metawe (saling menghormati), Mepuang (keramahan dan empati), serta Metabe (tanggung jawab bersama) diterapkan melalui kegiatan belajar yang kontekstual dan berbasis pengalaman siswa. Kedua, guru berperan sebagai fasilitator nilai, yang menghubungkan proses belajar dengan praktik sosial dan keteladanan sehari-hari. Ketiga, internalisasi nilai-nilai budaya tersebut membawa dampak nyata terhadap tumbuhnya karakter peduli sosial siswa, yang tampak dari meningkatnya rasa saling membantu, kesantunan, empati, dan

tanggung jawab di lingkungan sekolah. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pembelajaran berbasis kearifan lokal memiliki kekuatan transformatif dalam menumbuhkan karakter sosial anak secara alami. Kajian lanjutan dapat dilakukan untuk menggali penerapan nilai-nilai budaya dari daerah lain sebagai upaya memperkuat pendidikan karakter dan Profil Pelajar Pancasila yang berakar pada budaya bangsa.

Kata Kunci: Kearifan Lokal Mandar; Pendidikan Karakter; Peduli Sosial; Peran Guru; Sekolah Dasar

INTRODUCTION

Character education is one of the main pillars of the national education system, which aims to shape a generation with noble character, social responsibility, and the ability to play an active role in society (Dirgantoro, 2016; Kamila, 2023; Raharjo, 2010; Zuhra & Harahap, 2024). In the context of Indonesian education, character building is not only understood as an addition to the academic process but also as an integral part of the overall educational process itself. Successful education not only produces intellectually intelligent students, but also emotionally and morally mature ones (Anita et al., 2020; Sumiyati et al., 2025).

At the elementary school level, character education occupies a strategic position. The elementary school age is considered the golden age of personality formation, laying the groundwork for attitudes and behavior in the future. Values such as empathy, social awareness, honesty, and mutual cooperation begin to grow at this stage. Therefore, instilling character values from an early age is a crucial investment in the nation's sustainability. However, the reality on the ground shows that the implementation of character education still faces many challenges. The Elementary School Student Character Survey revealed that more than 60% of elementary schools in Indonesia have not consistently integrated character values into their learning processes (Mauluda et al., 2025). Most teachers admit that they find it challenging to design learning activities that promote social values without compromising academic achievement.

This condition has a real impact on students' social behavior. According to data from Balitbangristek (2022), only about 47% of elementary school students in Indonesia exhibit prosocial behaviors, such as sharing, cooperating, and caring for their peers. On the other hand, the phenomenon of declining social empathy, increasing cases of bullying, and weak awareness of mutual cooperation in the school environment indicate that character education remains only a concept on paper (Darmayanti, 2024; Syarif et al., 2024). In fact, character values such as social awareness cannot be developed solely through lectures or memorization, but rather through concrete and meaningful learning experiences.

In this context, it is essential to harness the great potential of the Indonesian people, specifically their local wisdom. Each region in Indonesia has a system of values that has been passed down from generation to generation, serving as a guideline for the community. Local wisdom encompasses not only social norms and ethics but also a philosophy regarding human relationships with one another, nature, and the Creator (Aldi & Barizi, 2025; Darmayanti et al., 2024; Syahputra et al., 2025). When local wisdom is integrated into education, these values can serve as a bridge between learning at school and real-life experiences in the community. This process makes character education more contextual, closer to the students' social environment, and easier to understand.

The culture of the Mandar tribe in West Sulawesi is a rich source of local wisdom, encompassing moral and social values. The Mandar people are known for upholding solidarity, togetherness, and social awareness through various traditions, such as Siwaliparri (mutual cooperation), Metawe (mutual respect), Mepuang (hospitality in welcoming guests), and Metabe (mutual assistance). These values are not merely cultural customs, but rather a representation of the Mandar people's worldview, which emphasizes a balance between personal interests and social

responsibility. This philosophy aligns with the goal of character education, which emphasizes the importance of empathy, collaboration, and mutual assistance in the development of good citizens.

The integration of Mandar local wisdom values into elementary school learning is highly relevant. Students not only learn about their culture, but also internalize the moral meaning behind it. For example, mutual cooperation activities at school can be linked to the value of Siwaliparri, or storytelling and role-playing activities can highlight Mandar folk tales that contain moral messages about mutual respect and helping one another. Through this approach, learning is no longer abstract but becomes a living process, close to students' daily lives, and has a direct impact on the formation of their social attitudes.

The role of teachers in this context is very important. Teachers are not merely instructors, but also facilitators of values and role models for students (Aini & Ramadhan, 2024; Basyori, 2025; Judrah et al., 2024). In local wisdom-based learning, teachers are required to understand the substance of the culture being taught and be able to design learning activities that encourage students to experience these values in a tangible way. The challenges faced, as identified by Sumartini et al. (2024), include the limitations of references, learning media, and training that support teachers in integrating local culture into the curriculum. As a result, the enormous potential of local wisdom is often underutilized in character education in elementary schools.

Previous studies have demonstrated that culture-based learning has a positive impact on character development. (Monika et al., 2023) emphasized that the application of Project-Based Learning that incorporates elements of local culture can increase empathy, responsibility, and cooperation among students. The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) program, developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, also shows similar results, where the integration of local cultural themes strengthens the values of mutual cooperation, environmental awareness, and social responsibility (Ardiansyah & Sagjuddin, 2025; Napitupulu et al., 2025; Septiany et al., 2024). However, most of these studies are general in nature and have not specifically examined Mandar cultural values as a basis for character learning.

Studies on the Mandar culture have so far been found more in the social and anthropological fields. For example, research by Nasrullah et al. (2023) highlights the value of solidarity in the Siwaliparri tradition as a form of togetherness among the Mandar coastal community. However, studies linking these cultural values to education, especially at the elementary school level, are still very limited. There has been limited research that describes in concrete terms how teachers incorporate Mandar cultural values into teaching and learning activities and how this process fosters students' social awareness. This gap is the reason why more focused and applicable studies are needed.

This study attempts to fill this gap by presenting a new perspective on culture-based character education. The novelty of this research lies in two main points. First, the local wisdom of the Mandar tribe is positioned not merely as a cultural object to be studied, but as a pedagogical foundation that shapes the learning process. Mandar's cultural values are systematically presented through learning activities, allowing students to directly experience, understand, and internalize social awareness values. Second, this research not only highlights student learning outcomes but also provides an in-depth description of the role of teachers, learning strategies, and social interactions that are formed during the process of value internalization.

This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how learning based on the local wisdom of the Mandar tribe can be an effective way to foster social care in elementary school students. In addition, the findings of this study are expected to enrich contextual and participatory character education practices, while supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasizes the values of mutual cooperation, empathy, and concern for others. Character education based on local culture will not only produce

students who behave well, but also build a generation that is proud of its cultural identity and cares for its environment.

This study aims to describe in depth how Mandar tribal wisdom-based learning is applied in the elementary school education process and how these cultural values contribute to fostering social awareness in students. The research focuses on three main aspects: first, the forms and strategies used by teachers in integrating Mandar cultural values such as Siwaliparri, Metawe, Mepuang, and Metabe into learning activities; second, students' responses and experiences during local wisdom-based learning; and third, changes in students' social attitudes that reflect the growth of caring character towards others. Through this research, it is hoped that a contextual, participatory, and culturally rooted character learning model can be identified, thereby strengthening character education in elementary schools while enriching the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the Mandar tribe's local wisdom-based learning practices in fostering social awareness in elementary school students. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore experiences, meanings, and the process of internalizing cultural values in an educational context in a natural and unobtrusive manner.

The research was conducted in three elementary schools in Polewali Mandar Regency, West Sulawesi, specifically at SD Negeri A, SD Negeri B, and SD Negeri C (school names have been changed to protect data confidentiality). The three schools were selected purposively because they had implemented learning activities that integrated elements of Mandar local wisdom. During the two months of the study, the researcher was directly involved in school activities to understand the patterns of interaction and learning dynamics that occurred.

There were nine informants, comprising three classroom teachers, three principals, and three upperclassmen (fifth graders), who served as supporting informants. The students were selected based on teacher recommendations, taking into account their communication skills and active involvement in local culture-based learning activities. Before the interviews were conducted, the researchers obtained official permission from the school and consent from the students' parents. The children were also given a simple explanation of the purpose of the interview and their right not to answer or to stop the interview at any time, in accordance with the principles of child research ethics.

Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were made to observe learning activities and student social behavior that reflected Mandar cultural values such as Siwaliparri (mutual cooperation), Metawe (mutual respect), Mepuang (hospitality in welcoming guests), and Metabe (mutual assistance). Interviews with teachers and principals were used to explore strategies, motivations, and challenges in implementing local wisdom-based learning. Interviews with students were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere, using simple language, so that they felt comfortable sharing their learning experiences. Documentation, including photos of activities, teacher notes, and learning documents, was used to reinforce the results of observations and interviews.

Data analysis was conducted interactively with reference to the Miles and Huberman (2014) model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was carried out repeatedly from the beginning of data collection to find the main themes that describe the application of Mandar cultural values and their impact on students' social care character. Data validity was maintained through the triangulation of sources and techniques, member checks, and extended observation periods, ensuring the consistency and accuracy of the information.

The entire research process was conducted with due regard for local cultural values and educational research ethics, ensuring that the data obtained not only represented factual learning practices but also accurately described the authentic experiences of educators within the socio-cultural context of the Mandar community.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Learning rooted in the local wisdom of the Mandar tribe demonstrates that cultural values not only endure in society but can also be revived in the classroom as a source of meaningful learning. In the three elementary schools where the research was conducted, local culture became an integral part of the learning process, fostering empathy, togetherness, and a sense of social responsibility in students. Values such as Siwaliparri (mutual cooperation), Metawe (mutual respect), Mepuang (hospitality in welcoming guests), and Metabe (mutual assistance) are not merely topics of learning, but are put into practice in daily learning activities.

Teachers and students are actively involved in presenting these values through classroom activities, group projects, and social interactions in the school environment. From the results of observations and interviews, it appears that each school has its own unique characteristics in applying Mandar cultural values within its respective context. Overall, local wisdom-based learning in these three schools shows a close relationship between culture and social character education. To provide a deeper understanding, the results of this study are presented in three main themes, namely:

1. Forms of Application of Mandar Cultural Values in Learning

Mandar culture is a rich heritage of social, moral, and spiritual values. The noble values that have developed in the community's life not only govern human relations with God but also guide the way humans interact with one another (Rifai, 2023; Tahara & Bahri, 2018). Among these values, there are four main principles that form the basis of Mandar community behavior, namely Siwaliparri, Metawe, Mepuang, and Metabe. These four values are not only passed down through stories and traditions, but also serve as a source of contextual character education for elementary school students.

The application of these values in learning is carried out naturally through learning activities and social habits at school. Teachers do not treat culture as an additional material, but rather as an integral part of the learning experience. The first value that stands out in daily practice is Siwaliparri, which means "helping each other and working together voluntarily." This value reflects the spirit of mutual cooperation among the Mandar people, which is carried out sincerely and selflessly.

At one school, the teacher began the lesson with a story about Mandar residents who helped their neighbors build houses without asking for anything in return. The story was then translated into a project to make miniature stilt houses from recycled materials. The children worked in groups, sharing tasks and collaborating to complete the project together. One teacher said, "Children learn cooperation not through theory, but through experience. If someone has difficulty, their friends immediately help. We call it Siwaliparri, working together with the heart." (Interview, Elementary School Teacher B, June 18, 2025)

Through activities like this, Siwaliparri comes alive among the students. They learn that helping is not an obligation, but a habit that strengthens social relationships. In some schools, this value is reinforced through Clean Friday activities, where students clean their classrooms and school grounds together. One student innocently said, "When we work together on Fridays, it's like helping our parents at home. Our teacher says that's called Siwaliparri." (Interview, Elementary School Student C, June 20, 2025)

From this spirit of mutual cooperation, students gradually learn to appreciate togetherness. The sense of mutual assistance they experience then develops into an attitude of respect, which is the core of Metawe values. If Siwaliparri fosters a spirit of working together, Metawe teaches how to maintain that togetherness with manners and respect.

In Mandar culture, Metawe means maintaining good manners, respecting elders, and valuing others (Ridwan, 2024). Teachers instill these values through daily habits such as greeting others politely, listening to friends speak, and using the Mandar language in classroom interactions. A teacher at SD Negeri A explained, "We want children to know that respecting others is part of our culture. They learn to greet others in the Mandar language, listen when their friends are talking, and ask permission politely." (Interview, SD A Teacher, June 17, 2025)

This habit trains students' social sensitivity, making them aware that respecting others is not only a form of politeness but also a reflection of respect for human dignity and their own culture. The respectful attitude that emerges from Metawe is further enhanced by the value of Mepuang, which embodies hospitality and sincerity in welcoming others. If Metawe regulates how students speak and behave towards others in the school environment, Mepuang extends this to a broader social context, namely how students interact with guests and the community outside the classroom.

The application of Mepuang values is seen when the school receives visitors. Students welcome guests with smiles, shake their hands, and escort them to the principal's office. The principal of Elementary School C said, "We want children to learn to welcome guests with smiles and greetings. It's simple, but it shapes a friendly and respectful attitude. The children are happy because they feel trusted." (Interview, Principal of Elementary School C, June 25, 2025)

Through activities such as "School Guest Day," students not only practice polite behavior, but also learn to be open and empathetic individuals. The hospitality they show is a tangible form of the Mepuang value that teaches openness of heart towards others.

From Mepuang, students' social experiences at school continue with the application of the Metabe value of working together to help each other in shared responsibilities. This value strengthens the collective spirit that has been built through Siwaliparri and deepens the meaning of empathy instilled through Metawe and Mepuang. Metabe teaches that cooperation is not limited to certain activities, but also extends to caring for the environment, maintaining relationships, and completing tasks together.

Teachers at the three schools often hold activities that require collaboration, such as classroom decoration competitions, flower planting projects in the schoolyard, and activities at Mandar Green School. One teacher said, "We accustom children to work together without waiting for orders. If their friends are having difficulty, they automatically help. This is what we call Metabe cooperation with empathy." (Interview, Elementary School Teacher C, June 27, 2025)

From the observations, it was evident that a sense of togetherness grew naturally. Students reminded each other, shared equipment, and encouraged each other to complete tasks together. They understood that responsibility belonged not only to individuals but also to the group as a whole.

The application of these four cultural values forms an intertwined educational pattern: Siwaliparri fosters care, Metawe instills respect, Mepuang broadens empathy, and Metabe reinforces cooperation. These values reinforce each other and form a unity in meaningful learning. In the classroom, culture comes alive; children do not merely learn about morality, but practice it in real actions.

Teachers play a crucial role in ensuring that these values continue to flourish naturally within the school environment. Through guidance and exemplary behavior, teachers create an atmosphere that encourages children to learn with their hearts. In this atmosphere of familiarity and openness, students learn not only to be smart but also to be people who know how to appreciate, cooperate, and care for others.

2. The Role of Teachers as Value Facilitators

Teachers play an important role as key drivers in local wisdom-based learning. Their role is not limited to imparting knowledge, but also includes providing moral and social guidance to students. In elementary schools in the Mandar region, teachers serve as a link between local culture and the educational process, bringing traditional values into contextual and meaningful learning experiences.

Every learning activity reflects the teachers' efforts to instill Mandar cultural values without being patronizing. They directly exemplify how Siwaliparri, Metawe, Mepuang, and Metabe can be practiced in everyday behavior. One teacher at SD B revealed, "Children cannot just be given advice. They learn from what they see. If teachers want to help and behave politely, children will follow suit." (Interview, SD B Teacher, June 18, 2025)

Role modeling is at the core of teachers' practice as facilitators of values. Children observe and imitate the consistent behavior demonstrated by teachers. The patience, honesty, and empathy shown by teachers serve as a mirror for students to understand how cultural values can be applied in real life. Teachers become strong moral references for children in elementary school, especially in a cultural context that upholds politeness, such as the Mandar community.

The teacher's job does not stop at setting an example. They serve as interpreters of the meaning behind every activity that embodies cultural values. After group activities or community service, teachers engage students in light dialogue about their recent experiences. A teacher at SD C said, "After the community service activity, I asked them how they felt. The children said they were happy because they helped each other. From there, I explained the meaning of Siwaliparri, working wholeheartedly and selflessly." (Interview, Elementary School C Teacher, June 27, 2025)

Such simple dialogues help students understand the meaning of values deeply. The learning process does not stop at action but involves reflection and moral awareness. Every activity becomes a space for children to realize why a value is important for communal life.

The classroom atmosphere created by the teacher reinforces these moral habits. A warm and open learning space enables students to feel safe expressing their opinions, making mistakes, and correcting them. At Elementary School A, teachers implement simple communication rules: speak softly, refrain from laughing at friends, and always ask permission before speaking. The teacher explains, "We want children to learn to respect not because they are afraid of being punished, but because they feel it is the right thing to do." (Interview, Elementary School A Teacher, June 19, 2025)

This attitude shapes a classroom culture that fosters mutual trust and respect. Children learn discipline through social awareness, not pressure. Teachers position themselves as facilitators of the atmosphere, not controllers. They maintain a balance between firmness and warmth, allowing social values to develop naturally among students.

Teachers' efforts to maintain the relevance of cultural values in modern learning are evident in their creativity in linking local traditions to lesson themes. Mandar folk tales, traditional games, and social practices in the community are used as learning media that bring character values to life. Teachers at Elementary School C use the Lopi-Lopi Sappoang folk tale to instill a spirit of cooperation. He explains, "Folk tales are not just entertainment, but contain values that can be used as lessons. Children feel close to it because it comes from their own culture." (Interview, Elementary School C Teacher, June 23, 2025)

This approach makes learning feel natural. Students do not feel that they are being taught values; rather, they discover values through experience. Values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy arise in contexts that they understand as part of their daily lives. Collaboration between teachers and families strengthens the process of internalizing these values. Teachers at Elementary School B initiated the "Learning Together with Mandar Families" activity, in which students are asked to share their experiences of applying the value of mutual cooperation at home. The teacher

explained, “We want the values taught at school to also be practiced at home. When teachers and parents are on the same page, it is easier for children to understand and practice these values.” (Interview, Elementary School B Teacher, June 22, 2025)

Cooperation between schools and families enhances the character education process (Fanny, 2020; Subianto, 2013; Wulandari & Kristiawan, 2017). Children receive consistent examples from the two main environments in their lives. Learning at school does not stop at the classroom walls, but is integrated with social life at home and in the community.

The role of teachers as facilitators of values shows that character education does not depend on theory, but on the human relationships that are built every day. Through exemplary behavior, meaningful guidance, and a loving learning atmosphere, teachers revive the Mandar cultural values in the classroom. Values such as mutual cooperation, respect, hospitality, and teamwork grow not because they are commanded, but because they are exemplified and felt. School also becomes a place where children learn to become individuals who are not only good at thinking, but also sensitive to others and rooted in their national culture.

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3. Impact on the Development of Students' Social Awareness

The process of applying Mandar cultural values in elementary schools does not stop at classroom learning activities. These values gradually develop into new habits that shape the way children think, behave, and interact with others. Every activity they engage in, from playing and learning to interacting with teachers, becomes a space where culture and character intersect.

In everyday life, the influence is evident. Children who were previously passive are now more courageous in taking initiative, more sensitive to their friends, and beginning to show a sense of social responsibility. They not only understand the importance of mutual cooperation, respect, and politeness but also demonstrate them in their daily actions. From field observations and conversations with teachers and students, there are four notable changes, namely:

a. The Growth of Mutual Assistance and Cooperation

In the schools that were the locations of the research, the values of Siwaliparri are felt to be alive in every corner. Children are accustomed to helping each other without being asked. When a friend fails to bring writing utensils or misunderstands the lesson, other friends spontaneously offer help. A teacher at Elementary School B smiled when she said, “If a child is missing writing utensils or does not understand the lesson, their friends immediately help without being told. They are already accustomed to doing so.” (Interview, June 19, 2025)

This mutual cooperation is also seen outside the classroom. Every Friday, students clean the school grounds together. No one feels forced; they do it while joking and singing. One student said innocently, “On Fridays, we work together to keep the school clean. The teacher says that's called Siwaliparri, working with your heart.” (Interview, June 21, 2025)

From this simple habit, children learn that cooperation is not just about sharing tasks, but about building a sense of togetherness. They find satisfaction in seeing the results of their joint efforts. The

value of Siwaliparri fosters a feeling that school is their home, where every hand has a role and every heart works together.

b. Increased Respect and Politeness in Social Interactions

The value of Metawe adds a gentle touch to the children's behavior at school. Polite and respectful attitudes have now become a natural habit. When the teacher enters the classroom, the children stand up and greet them. During discussions, they wait for their turn and listen to their friends as they speak. A teacher at SD A said, "Now the children are more patient. They wait for their turn to speak and rarely interrupt. When greeting teachers, their tone is soft." (Interview, June 19, 2025)

One of the students also shared his experience: "When speaking, we must use polite language. The teacher said that Mandar people must practice metawe so that everyone feels respected." (Interview, June 22, 2025) Behind this habit lies a deep meaning. Children learn that respecting others means protecting their feelings and emotions. They begin to understand that politeness is not just a school rule, but a reflection of who they are as members of the Mandar community. The politeness that grows from Metawe also makes the classroom atmosphere feel calmer and warmer; there are no more interruptions or mocking laughter when a friend is speaking. Teachers provide guidance, while children learn to respect one another.

c. The Formation of Friendly and Empathetic Attitudes Towards Others

The value of Mepuang is clearly evident in the way children interact with one another. They are not only friendly towards teachers, but also towards anyone who comes to school. When researchers came for observation, several students immediately smiled and greeted them, saying, "Welcome to our school, ma'am." The principal of SD C also conveyed a similar sentiment: "Now the children are more open. When guests come, they greet them with smiles and words of welcome. Some even take the initiative to lead guests to the teachers' room without being asked." (Interview, June 25, 2025)

However, what is most touching is seen in the relationships between students. When a friend seems sad, some children approach them without being told to do so. They offer to play games, sit together, or just keep them company in silence. One student said, "If a friend is feeling down, we invite them to play or sit with us. The teacher says that's mepuang, so that everyone feels accepted." (Interview, June 20, 2025)

A teacher at Elementary School A added, "If a child doesn't join in the game, their friends immediately invite them. They are already accustomed to being sensitive, not letting anyone be alone." (Interview, June 19, 2025). This attitude makes the school feel warmer. Children learn that being friendly is not just about smiling, but about making others feel accepted and appreciated. They begin to understand the meaning of empathy, realizing that small gestures can bring happiness to others. In their daily lives, Mepuang makes the classroom a place where children learn to understand others with their hearts.

d. Increased Responsibility and Concern for the School Environment

Metabe values broaden children's concern for their surroundings. Awareness of maintaining cleanliness and order no longer arises from teachers' commands but grows from their own desires. A teacher at SD B said, "If there is trash on the floor, the children immediately pick it up. They say, 'This is part of Metabe, working together to take care of the school.'" (Interview, June 22, 2025) Children also begin to develop a sense of responsibility by helping teachers without being asked, such as arranging chairs, erasing the blackboard, or preparing teaching aids. When one of their friends fell ill, they took the initiative to collect a small amount of money and send a message of prayer together. A teacher at Elementary School C said, "The children are now quick to respond when a friend is in trouble. They learn to care without waiting for instructions." (Interview, June 26, 2025)

This caring attitude reflects how Metabe values teach children to be responsible not only for themselves but also for the space in which they grow. The school becomes a small community that

thrives on a spirit of mutual care and support. From simple habits such as picking up trash or helping friends, children learn that caring is a form of tangible love.

These four forms of change show that Mandar's cultural values are truly alive in schools. Social caring character is not born from advice or theory, but from habits, examples, and experiences that are repeated every day. Values such as Siwaliparri, Metawe, Mepuang, and Metabe make the learning space more humane, full of empathy, and deeply rooted in its own culture.

Children learn that being a good person does not always require doing great things; it is enough to help, respect, and care for one another. From a simple classroom in Polewali Mandar, these values grow slowly, warmly, vividly, and touchingly.

CONCLUSION

Local wisdom-based learning among the Mandar tribe shows that culture is not merely a legacy of the past, but a living source of values that can nurture children's social character today. Values such as Siwaliparri, Metawe, Mepuang, and Metabe present a more humane approach to learning, as they place children not only as recipients of knowledge but also as part of a community that learns to understand and respect one another. Through simple but meaningful activities, students learn that cooperation, respect, hospitality, and responsibility are not just words, but actions that give meaning to life together.

The role of teachers is key in this process. They function not only as educators, but also as role models and guardians of values. The sincerity of teachers in guiding and creating a warm learning atmosphere allows Mandar's cultural values to grow naturally in the hearts of students. Teachers do not instill values through theory, but through life experiences that are presented every day in the classroom, such as working together, helping each other, or comforting friends who are sad. From this, children understand that education is not only about being smart, but also about being good and caring.

Schools that instill cultural values like this are not just places of learning, but social spaces that nurture humanity. In them, students learn to respect themselves and others. They grow up with open hearts, strong empathy, and the awareness that small acts of kindness can change the atmosphere around them. Mandar's cultural values no longer remain as traditions, but become a new breath of life that connects the past and the future within the younger generation.

This research also opens up space to view education from a broader perspective. Local wisdom proves to have great power in shaping the character of a nation, especially amid global challenges that often distance children from their cultural roots. Further study is still needed to explore how local values, such as those found in Mandar, can be integrated more systematically into the national curriculum, or how similar approaches can be applied to other cultures in Indonesia. Further research can also examine the extent to which these values impact the development of empathy, cross-cultural cooperation, and the formation of the Pancasila Student Profile in a more diverse context.

Ultimately, local wisdom-based learning is not just an alternative approach, but a return to education rooted in the values of life. From the simple classrooms in Polewali Mandar, we learn that social awareness does not grow because it is commanded, but because it is exemplified, felt, and lived every day.

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