Principals' Values and Beliefs in Integration Curriculum the Local Character Education at Kindergarten

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ABSTRACT

Values and beliefs form the foundation of every policy and decision aimed at achieving optimal school goals. This study aims to describe the values and beliefs held by school principals regarding the integration of local character education within the kindergarten curriculum. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research subjects included principals, teachers, students, and parents. The validity of the findings was ensured through criteria including credibility (via triangulation of data sources and techniques), transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (2014) interactive model, which comprises data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The study's results revealed that principals' values and beliefs in the integrated local character education curriculum encompass Religious Values (such as sincerity in work and faith), Local Character Values (including bauntung, batuah, Waja sampai kaputing—i.e., commitment, consistency, and responsibility; Haram manyarah—i.e., perseverance and independence; and Gawi sabumi—i.e., mutual cooperation), Exemplary Values (values of asah, asih, and asuh), and Values of Kolegalitas (sense of belonging and sense of kinship). The implications of this research provide recommendations for school principals as tools for self-evaluation and personal development, particularly in implementing an integrated local character education curriculum.

Keywords: Principal's Values and Beliefs, Local Character, Integration Curriculum, Kindergarten

INTRODUCTION

Effective environmental management in schools Atieka, T. A., & Budiana, I. (2019) The role of character education and student creativity in facing the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 aims to shape good character in students who are equipped with high intelligence, religious abilities, and creativity, so that they are useful for themselves, their religion, nation, and country. Yuza, A., Azkiya, H., Madona, A. S., Yulisna, R., & Susanti, D. (2022) The elements of human life, such as emotional, intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual aspects, which are maintained in the Society 5.0 era, are expected to be used by society as aspects to consider in the use of technology while still considering humanity as a whole.

It can be concluded that the era of the 4.0 industrial revolution and the era of society 5.0 demand human resources who are not only qualified and intelligent but also have the character to face challenges and very tight competition globally. Darman, R. A. (2017) states that in order to prepare quality human resources in Indonesia, it is important for the world of education to change its mindset, because education is not only defined as academic (scientific) transfer, but also includes character building so that a balance between academics and character can be

prepared from an early age. Suriansyah (2018) states that Indonesia's human resources, both now and in the future, are required to have character (hard work, discipline, persistence, resilience, thoroughness, and moral values such as faith and piety, honesty, humility, and politeness), competence (creative thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration, and problem solving), literacy (reading and writing, numeracy, scientific literacy, ICT fluency, language skills, cultural awareness, logical thinking), and communication skills in a global world.

Based on the above description, quality is an issue that concerns everyone, including the field of education, in order to achieve optimal educational goals. For this reason, quality assurance is needed in the implementation of quality education, including learning.

Suriansyah (2019) states that the philosophy of TQM is an orientation for developing quality in an institution. Bafadal (2020) states that there is no great school without a great principal. Mulyasa (2015) states that the success of education and learning in schools is greatly influenced by the principal's ability to manage every component of the school (who is behind the school).

It can be concluded that the philosophy of total quality management is an orientation to develop quality in an institution and is more directed towards a process improvement paradigm (De Leon et al., 2020). This lies primarily in management improvement. Usman (2013) states that one of the objectives and benefits of educational management is to address issues of educational quality, because 80% of quality issues are caused by management.

Triwiyanto (2019) states that one aspect of educational management that is often referred to as the heart of education is the curriculum and learning. Curriculum and learning management as one of the substances or standards of educational management shows that there needs to be a strong connection between each part. Oliva, Peter F (1992) states that the definition of curriculum lies in the intent or purpose of the curriculum, the context in which the curriculum is found, and the strategies used throughout the curriculum. Yulianto, E., & Fitri, A. Z. (2021) implement curriculum management in schools with a good planning process, integrated curriculum implementation, especially local character education, and internal and external evaluations.

Character is formed when there is harmony between family, school, and community. Furkan (2019) states that character education is education that instills moral values in children so that they have attitudes and behaviors that are in accordance with the ideal norms of daily life that apply at school, at home, and in the community. Mulyasa (2019) states that character education at the educational unit level leads to the formation of a school culture, namely in the form of values that underlie behavior, traditions, and habits that are distinctive characteristics or traits in the eyes of the wider community (Muniruddin et al., 2024; Yanti et al., 2023).

Sarbaini (2020) states that the Target Values of Wasaka Character Education are religious, sincere, hardworking, resilient, honest (transparent), diligent, intelligent, caring, responsible (consequential), disciplined, independent, patriotic, and love for the country. Then there is TALUBA (Baiman, Bauntung, and Batuah). Latief, S. (2020). Character education is a path taken by the government through educational policies outlined in the curriculum. Thus, the government has established early childhood education as the foundation for character building for future generations.

Salim, K., Sari, M. P., Islam, J. M. P., & Riau, S. A. K. (2014) The development of education in Indonesia cannot be separated from the influence of globalization, where science and technology are developing rapidly in various forms and interests and can spread widely throughout the world. Therefore, globalization is inevitable, especially in the field of education. Advances in science and technology, accompanied by the accelerating flow of globalization, have had a distinct impact on the world of education.

Currently, Indonesia's education problems are diverse and difficult to address. This is evident from the environmental conditions and the abundance of news in the media about the real situation in Indonesia, especially regarding education issues. Therefore, education must be carefully prepared, especially for early childhood education (PAUD), because early childhood education is the foundation of all levels of education. If this foundation is not strong and solid, it will cause the quality of education at higher levels to collapse.

Latief, S. (2020) Character education that begins in PAUD must be measured through indicators set out in the curriculum and must apply to all learning activities in schools. The most strategic step to prepare early childhood to have a strong character is to carefully prepare an integrated curriculum between global, national character, and local character (local wisdom).

According to Suriansyah, A (2011), an integrated curriculum with global, national, and local content will be able to filter children's behavior in society. Research conducted by Yang, Weipeng & Hui Li (2019) reveals that the curriculum in each case is an integrated system that balances different curriculum approaches. Furthermore, Yang, Weipeng & Hui Li (2022) found that local culture plays an important role in the development of early childhood curricula. From the two cases studied, there are various models and approaches in curriculum transformation, resulting in demands and motives that can foster conflicts and/or contradictions (Winarti, 2018). This can be resolved by using local culture to achieve curriculum hybridization and innovation, as well as cultural inheritance.

Oliva, Peter F (1992) stated from a cultural perspective that the curriculum in every educational unit needs to be integrated with the noble values of the customs, culture, and traditions of the local community so that children

are not uprooted from their cultural roots and can become a filter for themselves in facing the rapid development of community values.

Manullang, B. (2013) states that the most important thing to do in efforts to build and strengthen the character and identity of the nation is to utilize global culture with an emphasis on public awareness of the importance of adopting local cultures that have positive values as a source of learning in the comprehensive or total development of children. Based on the above description, an integrated local character education curriculum is needed. This study examines the values and beliefs of school principals in the integrated local character education curriculum, resulting in a best practice model for the integration of the local character education curriculum in kindergarten.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Curriculum Management

Saylor, J.G and W.M.Alexander (1956) define curriculum as the sum total of the school's efforts to influence learning, whether in the classroom, on the playground, or outside of school. Broadly speaking, curriculum can be defined as all learning experiences of students under the responsibility of the school. This responsibility includes direct and indirect responsibilities, both written and unwritten, visible and invisible. Learning experiences in the broad context of the curriculum include learning experiences in the classroom, in the school environment, and outside of school. All of these are still within the scope of the school's responsibility. For example, students playing while running on the school grounds is included in the concept of the curriculum. Likewise, assignments given by teachers to students to be done at home are also included in the scope of this concept (Toenlioe, 2017).

Educational management activities in schools have a broad scope. This scope covers both the various substances and the management process activities. These various substances indicate the scope or fields of activity, while the management activity process consists of hierarchical steps or processes that indicate the stages of the activity. The combination of the substance and management activity process constitutes the scope of educational management activities in schools. Usman (2013) states that there is one substance of educational management, namely the curriculum or learning. Hajjaj, Wafi Ali (2020) defines curriculum management as the management of a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, and materials of lessons, as well as the methods used as guidelines for conducting learning activities to achieve specific educational goals.

Character Education

Education is the main path to developing high-quality human resources who are faithful, pious, and skilled. Education aims to shape the character of students as the nation's future generation. Comprehensive education also includes culture. Character education is incomplete if it does not include culture. Thus, character education must take culture into account; in fact, education itself is carried out on the basis of culture. Therefore, the education promoted by Ki Hadjar Dewantara is education based on the diverse cultures of the Indonesian people spread throughout Indonesia with all their distinctive characteristics. According to Ki Hadjar, education is not only carried out in schools but must be carried out in three places, namely in the family, at school, and in the community, which is called the Tripusat Pendidikan (Ki Hadjar Dewantara, 1977).

Lickona (1991) has studied the basic values that can be applied in everyday life when interacting with other communities so that one has good ethics when meeting and greeting the outside world. The first is knowing how to do good to everyone without discrimination because, fundamentally, all humans are equal. Second, by desiring the good, when doing an activity, one should love what they are doing so that a balanced feeling is created in relating to the outside world. Third, by doing the good to everyone and not being selective when giving help.

A person's interaction with others fosters the character of society and the character of the nation (Wahab et al., 2010: 3). Therefore, the development of national character can only be done through the development of individual character. However, because humans live in a particular social and cultural environment, the development of an individual's character can only be done in the relevant social and cultural environment.

This means that the development of national culture and character can only be done through an educational process that does not separate students from their social environment, community culture, and national culture. The social and cultural environment of the nation is Pancasila; therefore, education on national culture and character must be based on the values of Pancasila. In other words, educating the nation's culture and character means developing the values of Pancasila in students through education of the heart, mind, and body. Character is a form of attitude that is constant and expressed in the form of actions, but it is specifically defined as a form of special attitude in which a person displays absolute values in their actions towards others. This means that universal values such as respect, responsibility, and trust, which are displayed in an attitude and action, are a form of character (Kuntoro, Sodiq A., 2012).

Character determines a person's personality in terms of thoughts and actions. Good character will encourage a person to do something in accordance with the norms that apply to the situation. Conversely, a person's bad character encourages them to act in a way that deviates from the applicable norms and regulations. In addition, character determines a person's existence in interactions in social, family, and community environments. Ayatrohaedi (1986) states that local character is the identity or cultural personality of a nation that enables it to absorb and even process cultures from outside/other nations into its own character and capabilities. Local wisdom is integrated with the character of the community, because its existence is always practiced and preserved in certain conditions, it is even highly respected.

Rahyono (2009) defines local wisdom as the intelligence possessed by a particular ethnic group, which is obtained through the experience of that ethnic group in dealing with its environment, local wisdom is result of the experiences of a particular community or ethnic group and is not necessarily experienced by other communities. This local wisdom is strongly attached to a particular community or ethnic group. This is because the values of local wisdom have been tested and have undergone a long process; in fact, they are almost as old as the existence of a particular community or ethnic group.

Suhartini (2009) defines local wisdom as an ancestral heritage related to the values of life. These values of life are integrated not only in the form of religion, but also in culture and customs. When a community adapts to its environment, it develops wisdom in the form of knowledge or ideas, tools, combined with traditional norms, cultural values, and activities to manage the environment in order to meet its needs. Suhartini refers to this wisdom related to adaptation to the environment as local wisdom. Local wisdom as a form of wisdom is also a way of life that exists in a community in a certain place or region. Thus, local wisdom refers to a specific locality and community. In other words, it is the values or behavior of the local community in interacting wisely with the environment in which they live.

Keraf (2002) asserts that local wisdom is all forms of knowledge, beliefs, understanding or insight, as well as customs or ethics that guide human behavior in life within an ecological community. All forms of local wisdom are internalized, practiced, taught, and passed down from generation to generation, while also shaping human behavior towards other humans, nature, and the supernatural.

The urgency of local wisdom, seen from the existence of forms of local wisdom for local communities, makes it their identity or self-identity; which is not possessed by other communities in exactly the same form; whether viewed from the dimensions of language, place of origin, value, benefits, and use of local wisdom within the community. A social order cannot exist without local wisdom as its very identity. Similarly, a large nation such as Indonesia has a national identity that is derived from the identities of all the ethnic groups within the Indonesian nation. This is not easy and cannot be imitated by other nations to be recognized as a form of local wisdom of those other nations. The analysis of the urgency of local wisdom can be divided into macro and micro scales. Macro-scale local wisdom is an analysis in the context of a country at the international level. Meanwhile, micro-scale local wisdom is an analysis of urgency in the context of a region within a country. Local wisdom in the micro context possessed by the Indonesian nation was not only used in the war against colonialists, but has also proven to be a means of nation building (Lembaga Administrasi Negara Republik Indonesia, 2019). It can be concluded that preserving and maintaining local wisdom, which contains the noble and honorable values of national identity, is undeniably one of the assets we have to defend our country.

Leadership

Bafadal (2003) defines leadership as the entire process of influencing, encouraging, inviting, and motivating others in the work process to think, behave, and act in accordance with the applicable rules in achieving predetermined goals. According to him, leadership is the influence between individuals that is tested in a situation and directed through a process of direct communication towards the achievement of one or several goals.

Leadership is a matter of the relationship and influence between leaders and followers. Leadership emerges and develops as a result of automatic interactions between leaders and individuals who are led (there is an interpersonal relationship). This leadership can function on the basis of the leader's power to invite, influence, and mobilize other people to do something in order to achieve a specific goal (Kartono, 2016). Komariah and Kurniady (2022) emphasize that leadership means a leader is someone who influences followers to achieve organizational goals through empathetic communication and careful consideration of the environment. Usman (2019) states that leaders inspire their followers to continue to be innovative, creative, cooperative, have integrity, be committed, service-oriented, highly disciplined, confident, and dominant.

Educational leadership relates to the principal's role in increasing opportunities to hold effective meetings with teachers in a conducive situation. In this case, the principal's behavior must be able to encourage teacher performance by showing friendliness, closeness, and consideration towards teachers, both as individuals and as a group. The principal's instrumental behavior consists of tasks that are oriented and directly clarified in the roles and duties of teachers, both as individuals and as a group. Positive behavior on the part of the principal can encourage,

guide, and motivate the entire school community to work together in realizing the school's vision, mission, and goals. The performance of the principal's leadership is the efforts made and the results that can be achieved by the principal in implementing school management to realize educational goals effectively, efficiently, productively, and accountably. Therefore, the principal has a very important position in driving school management to run in accordance with the demands of society and the development of the times (Mulyasa, 2015).

Leadership in an organization serves to achieve organizational goals by mobilizing people. The functions of the principal as a leader include functions related to: goals to be achieved; directing the implementation of each activity; and creating a work climate. The first function is related to efforts to achieve organizational goals. Principals set goals to be achieved and work with people to achieve them. The second function shows that the principal is present as the person who makes decisions on actions to be taken, provides direction, and mobilizes and motivates people. The third function is that the principal is the barometer for creating a conducive working climate through communication style and relationship building with people both inside and outside the school.

The presence of leadership provides calmness, comfort, and confidence for staff to work together to achieve goals. Leadership here is represented by a leader who is trusted to lead them towards progress, make decisions and solve problems, determine direction, take initiative, and be willing to take risks (Komariah and Kurniady, 2022). Leadership is faced with a number of human relationships, many of which are formed in groups. There are various groups to deal with, and it is not uncommon for disputes to arise between them. Leaders must act as peacemakers and create a climate that allows them to work with healthy dynamics.

Successful leaders are those who manage others well and adhere to a strict set of personal values. These values define who a leader is and who they are in this role and have a real impact. A good leader is one who is able to build values and norms together with their members. Sakti, F., & Martha, A. (2023) state that leading with values and ethics means leading an organization with sincerity.

Important values exist in organizations as a reference for all members of the organization to move towards achieving their goals (Susilo & Akbar, 2020). Values are defined as beliefs related to behavior based on their importance according to the degree of need. Schwartz (1994), quoted by Sakti, F., & Martha, A. (2023), states that values are: (1) a belief, (2) related to a certain behavior or ultimate goal, (3) transcending specific situations, (4) guide the selection or evaluation of behavior, individuals, and events, and (5) are arranged according to their degree of importance.

Thus, values are the basic principles that guide everyone in their lives. The process of value formation occurs when interactions between people take place, where values in daily functions become guidelines for people's behavior and direct people to behave. When an organization does not have values that serve as guidelines for its members, the organization will not be able to function properly and will lose sight of what it is actually trying to achieve.

Beliefs are the most powerful factor influencing a person's motivation and behavior (Hoy, Wayne, K. and Cecil G. Miskel. 2008). Leadership is not a field free from beliefs, but is actually imbued with the types of beliefs that are usually associated with religion (Baglione, S., & Zimmener, T., 2007). Hamilton, F., & Bean, C. J. (2005) define leadership as a relationship of influence that reveals the values and beliefs of leaders and followers. Leadership development targets interpersonal and relational development. The concept of social context as a dynamic interaction process between leaders, followers, and situations is emphasized in leadership development. It can be concluded that the beliefs present in the leadership context will influence the implementation of leadership development programs.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This study examines the integrated curriculum of local character education on the values and beliefs of school principals. This means examining the behavioral phenomena that occur in schools. The behavior that is apparent in schools cannot be studied through numbers but requires intensive observation to obtain the meaning of that behavior. Therefore, it is more appropriate to use a qualitative approach to study this behavioral phenomenon. This study uses a phenomenological qualitative approach with a multi-case study type of research.

The Presence of Researchers

Bogdan and Bikken (2007) state that as the main instrument, the researcher himself conducts observations, collects data, visits subjects or informants, and compiles the necessary documents. The researcher also acts as the planner, implementer, data collector, analyst, data interpreter, and reporter of the research results. The presence of the researcher is essential until the data obtained is saturated (redundant).

In qualitative research, the researcher acts as a key instrument in the implementation of the research. As an instrument, the researcher can reveal meaning, adapt to circumstances, collect data, and interact with the values that exist in the research setting. That is why, in this study, the researcher was physically present in the field to capture what was actually happening in the three research settings. The researcher's involvement makes it easier to provide illustrations in interpreting the meaning contained in each symptom and/or phenomenon that occurs during the interview and observation activities.

Setting

Bogdan and Bikken (2007) state that as the main instrument, the researcher himself conducts the observation. This research was conducted in two research locations, namely the Pembina Inti Banjarmasin State Kindergarten and the Sayang Ibu Character-Based Nature Kindergarten.

Data Sources

The data sources in this study were school principals, teachers, parents, children, and relevant education officials. In addition, other data sources include work practices or performance demonstrated by principals and teachers during observations, as well as important documents relevant to this study. Principals are key informants in this study because they are very appropriate and strategic as they play a role not only as coordinators of all school activities and school managers, but also as initiators of various innovations in schools. Principals even serve as models in developing schools to become high- achieving schools. Teachers, as other key informants in this study, are very strategic in obtaining data on implementation strategies in the integrated local character education curriculum. Parents are used as an additional source of supporting information in order to explore various information about the school, the school's image, their satisfaction with the formation and local character education carried out by the school, and their involvement in supporting the school for the advancement of the school, more specifically for local character education in schools. Then there is the Educational Office, which is tasked with and obliged to provide guidance to kindergartens in its area of responsibility. Therefore, they always interact with school principals and teachers in the process of guiding various activities, including program development, program innovation, and learning at school.

Data Collection Technique

The data collection techniques used must be appropriate and relevant to the characteristics of the data and the data sources to be collected. In this study, the data collection techniques used were interviews, observations, and document studies, supplemented by small group discussions.

Data Validity Check

In qualitative research, the validity of findings is very important. The validity of findings can be examined using several criteria. Referring to Moleong (2007), four criteria are used to examine data validity, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis in this study uses several steps of interactive data analysis as developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014:10), namely: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Cross-case data analysis was conducted in order to compare and combine the findings obtained from each case.
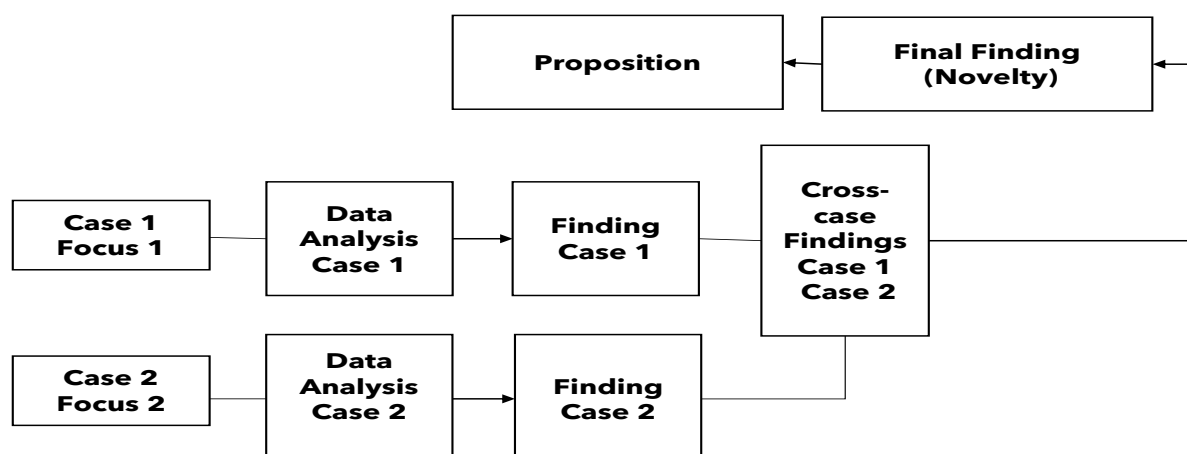

Figure 1. Cross-case date analysis

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on the results of data collection through interviews, observations, documentation, and small group discussions on the preliminary findings of the first and second cases, it can be concluded that the cross-case analysis of case 1 and case 2 is as shown in the table below:

Table 1. Cross-case analysis of case 1 and case 2

Research Focus	Preliminary Research Findings for Case 1	Preliminary Findings for Case 2	Cross-case findings Case 1 and Case 2
Principals' values and beliefs in the integrated curriculum of local character education local character	1. Working based on sincerity and common goals 2. Working with full commitment, responsibility, and consistency (waja sampai kaputing) 3. Working with the motto "haram manyarah" (never give up until the end and be independent) 4. Setting a good example (role model) for others and adaptive 5. Being mother/parent and even a friend at work who always protects and cares for all members of the school community 6. Having an awareness that achievements are made together as a team 7. A sense of ownership to achieve the desired goals 8. Preparing a long-term strategy for the goal	1. Commitment, humility, 2. perseverance, adaptability, 3. politeness, and respect for cultural diversity 4. Developing abilities, potential, and skills (the value of refinement) 5. Fostering a sense of care and compassion, safety, comfort, and familiarity in the school environment (the value of nurturing) 6. Guiding, nurturing, and providing full motivation and support (Nurturing value) 7. A sense of belonging to the school as a shared responsibility of the team 8. Serving as a role model for all members of the school community 9. Quickly adapt to developments in the times, technology, and education policy 10. Building 11. communication with a spirit of family and cooperatio	1. The value of working based on sincerity 2. Baiman Value 3. Bauntung Value 4. Batuah Value 5. Waja sampai kaputing (never give up) 6. Gawi sabumi (mutual cooperation) 7. Asah Value 8. Asih Value 9. Asuh Value 10. Forward-looking 11. Inspirational 12. Adaptive to change 13. Sense of Belonging 14. Sense of family

Based on the analysis of cases 1 and 2 above, it can be observed in depth that cases 1 and 2 have similarities in meaning in terms of the values and beliefs of the principal in the integrated local character education curriculum. There are several different terms used, but they have the same meaning when viewed theoretically. This can be seen in the first case, which uses the term waja sampai kaputing to mean being committed to work, consistent, and responsible in completing a task. In the second case, values such as high commitment are used, which are included in the local character value of waja sampai kaputing.

Basically, the values developed in each case have the same meaning when implemented in the curriculum and learning, even though the terms used are different. In other findings, the first and second cases have the same meaning, although the terms used are different in the first case with a maternal attitude and in the second case with the values of asah, asih, and asuh (Ki Hajar Dewantara). Then, in the first case, the motto is "never give up until the end," while in the second case, the term "persistent" is used. Then, the findings in the first case are about forming a team to have a sense of togetherness and in the second case, the value of kinship at work. Both case findings have the same meaning, only the terms used are different. And in other findings in the first and second cases, both have the same meaning of being a role model or example for others and a sense of belonging to achieve goals.

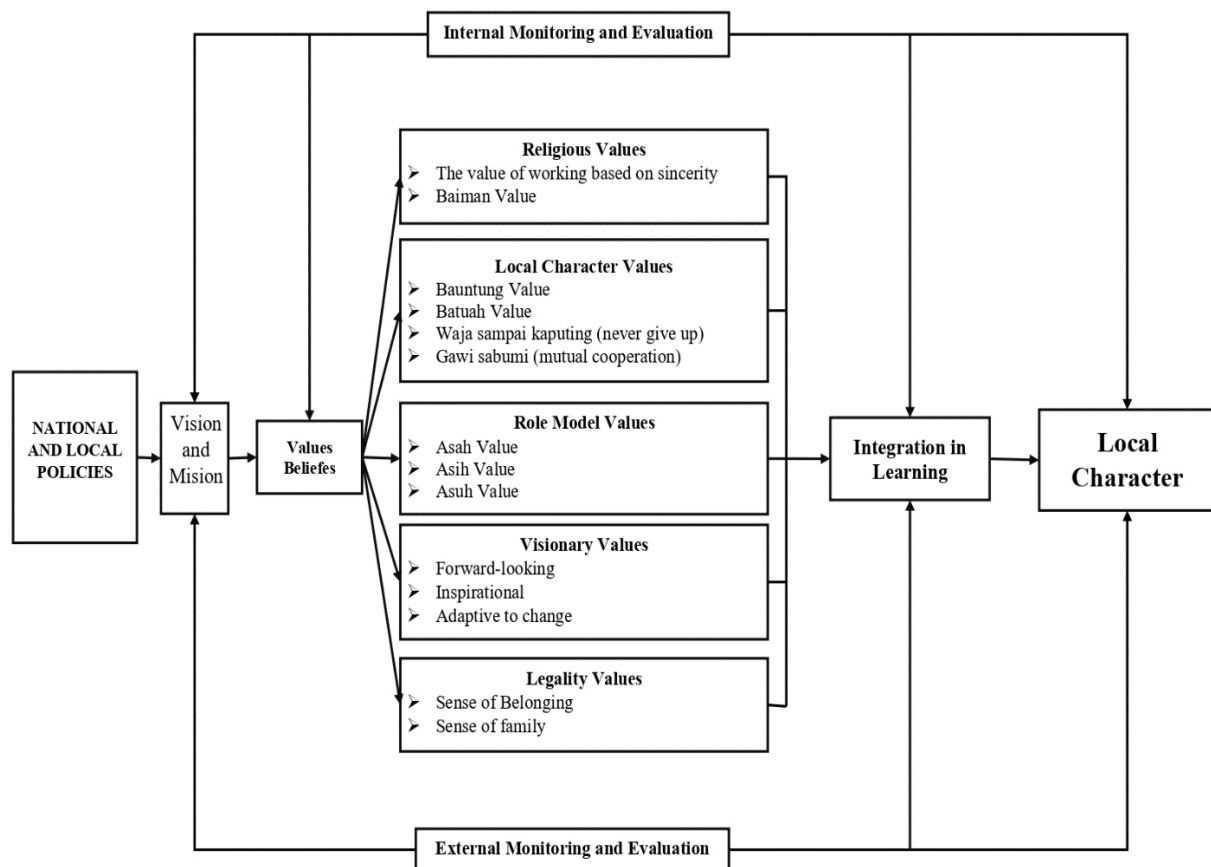The findings of this research model can be seen in the figure.

Figure 1. Finding Model

DISCUSSION

This study found that the values and beliefs of school principals in the integrated local character education curriculum include: Religious Values (the value of working sincerely; the value of faith); Local Character Values (the value of bauntung; the value of batuah; Waja sampai kaputing, namely commitment, consistency, and responsibility; Haram manyarah, namely never giving up and being independent; Gawi sabumi or mutual cooperation); Exemplary Values (Values of asah, asih, and asuh); and Collegiality Values (Sense of belonging; and Sense of kinship).

This is in line with research findings that found that local culture plays an important role in the development of early childhood curriculum (Yang, W., & Li, H, 2022). Ferdiawan, E., & Putra, W. E. (2013) stated that strengthening children's basic character requires instilling values based on local cultural education because regional cultural values are very strong and dominant in shaping a person's character. Prayitno, H. J., Nasucha, Y., Huda, M., Ratih, K., Rohmadi, M., Boeriswati, E., & Thambu, N. (2022) state that strengthening local character education is an important pillar. In line with Was, C. A., Woltz, D. J., & Drew, C. (2006), who stated that there needs to be a learning approach to character education.

This study found that with local character values, children will not be uprooted from their cultural roots when they grow up. This is in line with findings that state the importance of local character education for the development of children's social competencies and its effective role in developing affective skills (Cheung, C. K., & Lee, T. Y., 2010; Sukadari, Prihonob, E.W, Singh, Charanjit Kaur Swaran, Syahruzah, J.K, Mingchang Wu., 2020). Then there are the findings of Ye, S., An, H., & Xu, X. (2020), which show that local character education has succeeded in capturing local domain characteristics in overcoming problems.

Wahyuningsih, S., Dewi, N. K., & Hafidah, R. (2019) The among system (asah, asih, asuh) can be a solution in instilling character. Pratiwi, E., Purnami, A. S., & Mulyono, R. (2023) School principals must have good and correct strategies in accordance with the 3A (Asah, Asih, Asuh) approach to become motivators and facilitators who support all teachers and students in achieving school goals.

Then Sarbaini (2021) argued that the character values of baiman, bauntung, and batuah, or what is known as Taluba (baiman, bauntung, batuah), are the developmental goals that Banjar parents hope for their children. Prasetia, M. E., & Haryadi, R. (2020) found that the development model was developed by incorporating the

cultural values and local wisdom of the Banjar tribe into the development model so that it could better meet the needs and expectations of the Banjar tribe, who wanted their children to have the characteristics of baiman, batuah, and bauntung. Gisya, G., Mubarak, M., & Komalasari, S. (2020) found that there is a significant influence between sincerity and teacher professionalism.

Hasanah, N., & Laily, N. (2020) prioritize the value of sincerity at work. In addition, these values are very important for children. The findings of Birhan, W., Shiferaw, G., Amsalu, A., Tamiru, M., & Tiruye, H. (2021) found that parents and teachers are good role models for children. Another thing that is no less important than the values described above is the sense of belonging (self- belongingness). The findings of this study are also in line with the previous findings of Nurmiyanti, L., & Candra, B. Y., (2019), who found that fostering a sense of belonging to an institution can improve the process and quality of early childhood education management.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analyzed data obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis, this study identifies a comprehensive set of values and beliefs held by school principals in implementing an integrated local character education curriculum.   This study recommends that principals utilizeincerity in work and faith, forming the moral foundation that guides leadership decisions and actions. Local character values reflect deep-rooted cultural principles such as bauntung and batuah, alongside community-centric maxims like Waja sampai kaputing, symbolizing commitment, consistency, and responsibility; Haram manyarah, representing perseverance and independence; and Gawi sabumi, underscoring mutual cooperation. These culturally embedded values provide a distinct context that shapes the character education framework within the schools.

In addition to these, principals demonstrate Exemplary Values epitomised by the values of asah (nurturing intellect), asih (expressing compassion), and asuh (providing guidance), which influence not only their leadership style but also the modeling of behaviors expected from students and staff.

Furthermore, Collegiality Values such as a profound sense of belonging and kinship foster a collaborative and supportive school environment. These values collectively construct a cohesive educational ecosystem that encourages moral development and community engagement, essential for the success of the integrated local character curriculum.

The implications of these findings highlight the critical role of principals as both cultural custodians and transformational leaders who embody and promote these values through their daily practices. By internalizing and operationalizing this comprehensive values framework, school leaders can effectively guide curriculum integration and foster a school culture that nurtures character development. This study recommends that principals utilize this values-based approach as a foundation for their personal professional growth and as a strategic tool for enhancing the implementation and sustainability of local character education within early childhood education settings.

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