

The *Gusjigang* model for strengthening local wisdom-based character education in digital era

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze *Gusjigang* (*bagus* (superior), *ngaji* (religious science), and *dagang* (trade)) as a model of strengthening character education based on local wisdom in the digital era. This research methodology uses a systematic literature review with in-depth analysis. The results of this study show that the dimensions of *Gusjigang* can foster moral goodness, intellectual development, and entrepreneurial spirit. In this case, the younger generation can build a strong ethical foundation, utilize technology wisely, and contribute to the development of themselves and society. By combining *Gusjigang* values and digital technology, it can create a model of character education that is relevant, strengthens cultural identity, and can adapt to changing times without losing its roots and fundamental values.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Character education has become a major concern in developing young people who have moral integrity and strong values [1]–[4]. In pursuit of these objectives, the emergence of local wisdom-based character education signifies a promising avenue. This approach resonates strongly with the current educational landscape, offering a unique and culturally grounded framework to fortify and embellish the character development of students. By drawing upon the wisdom ingrained in local traditions and cultures, it endeavors to create a generation of young people who not only possess ethical depth but also a profound connection to their heritage. Ultimately, local wisdom-based character education holds the potential to empower students with the tools to navigate life's complexities while upholding their principles and contributing positively to society.

The model of strengthening character education based on local wisdom places local wisdom as the main foothold in integrating cultural values, traditions, and values of local communities into the education curriculum [5]–[8]. Siregar *et al.* [9] said that local wisdom represents the cultural heritage nurtured and refined throughout the years within a society. It serves as a mirror reflecting deeply ingrained values, accumulated knowledge, honed skills, and a distinctive perspective on life that is intrinsic to the community's identity. In this context, the model of strengthening character education based on local wisdom recognizes the importance of appreciating and utilizing local wisdom as a strong foundation in student character development [10], [11]. This model seeks to explore and integrate the values of local wisdom into daily learning, both inside and outside

the classroom. Thus, students not only learn universal values but also gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and moral values that exist in their community.

The philosophy of *Gusjigang* Sunan Kudus is based on the values of local wisdom adopted by the people around the Kudus region, Central Java, Indonesia. Sunan Kudus is known as one of the Walisongo who had a strong influence in spreading Islam and instilling moral values in the society of his time. Kudus has the slogan *Gusjigang* which stands for good morals, smart in reciting, and skilled in trading [12]–[18]. The Kudus regency government has taken a significant step forward in promoting character education by enacting regional regulation number 5 of 2021, which focuses on the enhancement of *Gusjigang* character education [19]. Rooted in the *gusjigang* philosophy, this initiative emphasizes the values of good practice, smart *ngaji* (religious science), and *wasis dagang* (wise trading). *Gusjigang* character education seeks to cultivate individuals with strong moral values, intelligence that leads to personal dignity, and astute trading abilities. This philosophy underscores the importance of integrating religiosity, nationalism, independence, mutual support, and integrity into the fabric of education, thus ensuring that the youth of Kudus Regency emerge as responsible, ethical, and well-rounded citizens who can positively contribute to both their local community and the nation as a whole.

One of the main advantages of the character education strengthening model based on local wisdom is its relevance to the local social and cultural context [20]–[26]. In a multicultural educational environment, this model allows students to appreciate and respect the cultural diversity that surrounds them [27]. By strengthening local wisdom, students can gain a greater insight into the culture and traditions of the local community [28], as well as develop a sense of pride in their own identity. By integrating the values of local wisdom, students are invited to learn about cooperation, mutual understanding, and respect for others. They are also taught to be responsible citizens and care for the environment and surrounding communities. Puspitasari *et al.* [29] collaboration between educational institutions, parents, and the community is the key to the success of the model of strengthening character education based on local wisdom. Through the active participation of all parties, this model can create a learning climate that supports the development of strong and ethical student character.

Overall, the character education reinforcement model based on local wisdom is an embodiment of holistic and student-centered education. This study emphasizes that it not only imparts knowledge but also fosters strong character development by incorporating the richness of local wisdom and culture into its curriculum. This approach provides students with not only academic excellence but also the moral and cultural foundations necessary to make meaningful contributions to their communities and society as a whole. In the end, this model seeks to produce well-rounded individuals who embody the values of integrity, compassion, and cultural awareness, ensuring a brighter future for our global community. The research question in this study is; i) What is the dimension of *Gusjigang* as a model of strengthening character education? and ii) What are the implications of *Gusjigang* as a model for strengthening character education based on local wisdom in the digital era?

2. METHOD

The research design used the systematic literature review (SLR) method [30]. The research began by identifying articles relevant to *Gusjigang* as a model for strengthening character education based on local wisdom through the ERIC, EBSCO, Lens.org, and Google Scholar databases. The SLR in this article refers to the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analysis (PRISMA) flow [31]. The four stages carried out by researchers are identification, screening, eligibility, and investigation [30]. As for the explanation of the stages of research, it is as follows:

2.1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for publication selection

At the inclusion and exclusion stage, the researcher made criteria to include articles in this study. Firstly, search for articles in the ERIC, EBSCO, Lens.org, and Google Scholar databases. Second, the articles were published in journals from 2014 to 2023. Third, the articles were searched based on the suitability of the research theme. After obtaining articles that match the research theme, the researcher conducts a screening to be analyzed in-depth and comprehensively.

2.2. Screening and feasibility assessment for data analysis

Article findings in the ERIC, EBSCO, Lens.Org, and Google Scholar databases are filtered as needed through Zotero's automatic tools. Relevant articles are included, and irrelevant articles are not used. Article filtering is adjusted to the title, abstract, and keywords. The same theme is discarded, after which selected articles are entered into the Mendeley application and saved in a research information system (RIS) format; the next step is to enter the VOSviewer application to map the initial network of these linkages. Strengthening relevant research arguments requires a preliminary analysis of the thematic associations of the articles used in this study through the VOSviewer application. This can be seen in Figure 1.

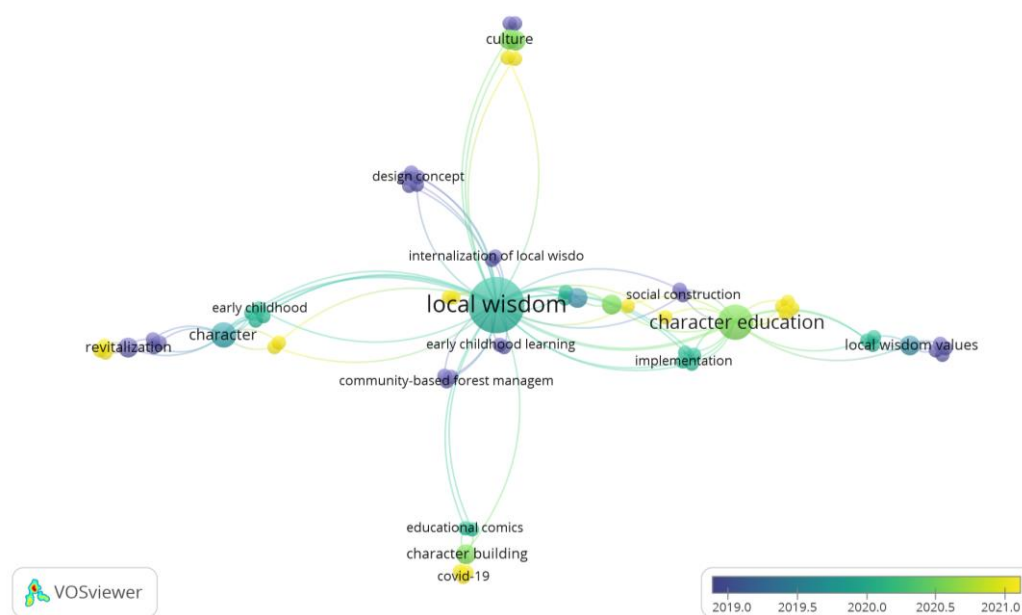


Figure 1. visualization results through VOSviewer about *Gusjigang* as a model for strengthening character education based on local wisdom in the digital era

Based on Figure 1, it can be explained that research on a local wisdom-based character education strengthening model called *Gusjigang* still has opportunities to be carried out in the digital era. In the rapidly developing digital era, it is necessary to strengthen character education by prioritizing local wisdom as a basic foundation for building the identity of the millennial generation. *Gusjigang* local wisdom is an alternative to building the character of students. Therefore, researchers will discuss this in-depth and comprehensively.

2.3. PRISMA flowchart

In the research process, the selection of articles is a critical step that involves a meticulous screening and feasibility assessment to ensure the data's quality and relevance. These selected articles are then subjected to a comprehensive examination, where the themes are read thoroughly from the title through to the conclusion. This diligent review process enables researchers to gain a holistic understanding of the content and context of each article. Subsequently, the collected data is subjected to rigorous analysis, aligning with the specific research questions posed at the outset of the study. The findings are then skillfully presented, providing valuable insights and answers that contribute to the broader body of research and knowledge in the respective field. This methodical approach ensures that the research is conducted with rigor and precision, resulting in meaningful and reliable outcomes. Details are inferred from the search process using the PRISMA flowchart, as shown in Figure 2.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the findings in Figure 2, it can be understood that according to the findings of the ERIC, EBSCO, Lens.Org, and Google Scholar databases, 170 articles that match the keywords "*Gusjigang*", "character education model", and "local wisdom". The same articles were discarded, and 61 articles with predetermined criteria were selected. Before presenting the qualitative results by the research questions, it is necessary to present the article's findings first. exposure based on the number of publications per year, as shown in Figure 3.

Based on the findings of these articles reveal that the researchers conducted a thorough and critical examination of the *Gusjigang* model, which seeks to strengthen character education by integrating local wisdom into the digital age. The findings likely include a comprehensive assessment of the model's effectiveness, relevance and adaptability in an era characterized by rapid technological advancement. Such a critical analysis is crucial to understanding the potential impact of this model on character education in a modern, digitally-driven society.

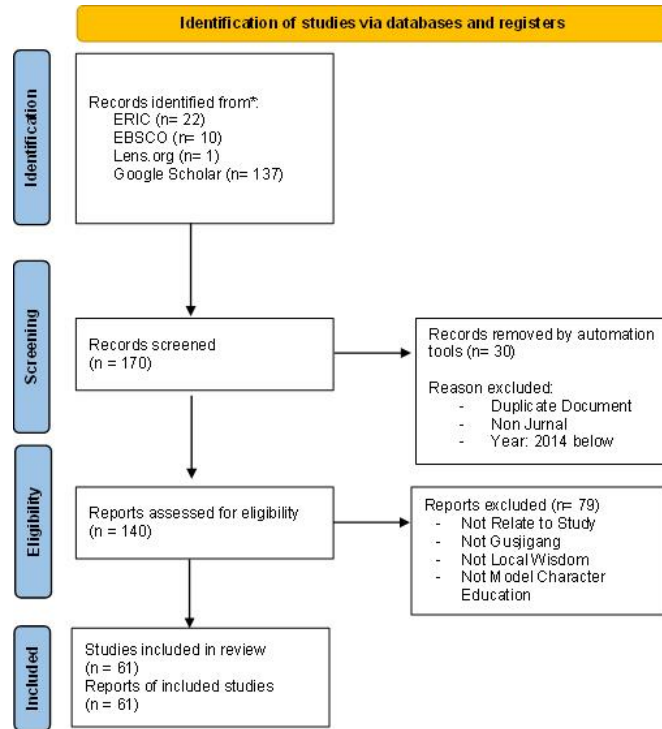


Figure 2. PRISMA's flow on *Gusjigang* as a model for strengthening character education based on local wisdom

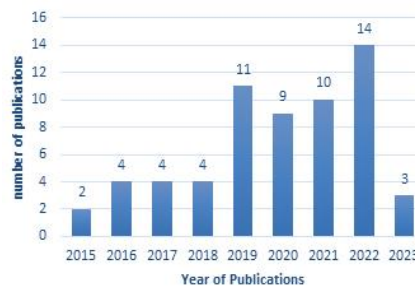


Figure 3. Summary of study search data

3.1. *Gusjigang*'s dimension as a model for strengthening character education

Kudus Regency located in Central Java province is a regency that is famous for its rich cultural heritage [32]. Beyond its cultural significance, Kudus is famous as a city of “*santri* (students)”, referring to *santri pondok pesantren* (Islamic boarding school students). This district also has unique local wisdom that is deeply embedded in the lives of its people. Kudus local wisdom is a product of the origin and historical development that revolves around the struggle for the spread of Islam in Java. This legacy is reflected in various aspects of life, including traditions, religious practices, social dynamics, technological advances, and artistic expression. Over time, Kudus has transformed into a thriving center of trade and industry, contributing to its identity as a regency associated with the characteristics of *Gusjigang* (*bagus* (superior), *ngaji* (religious science), and *dagang* (trade)) [33].

In addition, the Kudus community is famous for its compassion, *wicaksono* (toughness), *digdaya* (greatness), *andhap asor* (simplicity), and dedication to learning [33]. The teachings of Islam have greatly influenced people’s values and way of life, shaping their interaction with each other and their environment. Waluyo *et al.* [32] argues that Kudus Regency stands as a testament to the harmonious coexistence of cultural heritage, Islamic values, and modern progress, creating a distinctive blend that defines its dynamic identity. *Gusjigang* is a philosophy of life adopted by the Kudus community taught by Sunan Kudus, which includes the ideal of excellence in behavior, the pursuit of knowledge through religious studies, and the spirit of entrepreneurship. *Gusjigang*'s philosophy, an acronym representing “*bagus* (superior)”, “*ngaji* (religious

science)", and "*dagang* (trade)", fosters spirituality, intellectualism, and entrepreneurship. This philosophy, which has been passed down for more than 700 years, remains rooted in the daily lives of the Kudus people and becomes their social capital [34].

"*Bagus* (superior)" reflects the noble moral qualities that an individual must possess in his horizontal relationship with fellow human beings as well as his vertical relationship with Allah SWT. "*Gus*" from the *Gusjigang* element is one of the cultural elements that can be used as a source of knowledge. "*Gus*" as an element of *Gusjigang* also contains values, practices, and norms that are manifested in the form of language, and ideological symbols in institutions. The "*bagus*" dimension in *Gusjigang* is a form of cultivating noble virtues. "*Bagus*" goes beyond mere physical appearance or visible behavior; it encompasses one's character and morality. Through *Gusjigang*, individuals are taught to be good in all aspects of life [35], such as speaking politely [36], displaying humility [37], helping others [38], and upholding the values of justice [39]. The "*bagus*" dimension in *Gusjigang* is not only a marker of courtesy in interacting with others but also creates a strong foundation for ethical personal development [40], which can ultimately have a positive impact on society at large.

"*Ngaji* (religious science)" is not only limited to memorization of the Qur'an but encompasses a broader meaning of continuing to study and explore various dynamics of life from various perspectives. It involves the search for answers to all problems through alternative approaches and contributes to the expansion of knowledge and insight for all individuals. The "*ngaji*" dimension is a crucial aspect of education that emphasizes independence in the lives of students [41]. "*Ngaji*" does not just refer to the process of religious learning but also encompasses lifelong learning that encourages students to become self-reliant [42] and responsible individuals [43]. In this context, "*ngaji*" teaches students not only to passively receive knowledge but also urges them to actively seek, analyze, and comprehend information critically [44]. This results in individuals who can think independently [45], [46], make informed decisions [47]–[49], and act responsibly in various aspects of their lives [50], [51]. Thus, the "*ngaji*" dimension in education provides a strong foundation for personal development [40], fostering self-reliance [52], [53], and making a positive contribution to society [54].

"*Dagang* (trade)" is understood as an entrepreneurial spirit that every citizen of Kudus must have. It encourages individuals to creatively and innovatively seek sustainable sources of livelihood [55], ensuring the continuity of their existence [56]. *Gusjigang*'s philosophy highlights the importance of maintaining a strong moral foundation [57], pursuing knowledge [58], and cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset in society [59], [60]. In Kudus, "*dagang*" is not merely a means of making a living but a way of life that encourages individuals to explore opportunities, take calculated risks, and contribute to the economic growth of the community. This philosophy underscores the idea that entrepreneurship goes beyond profit-making; it embodies a commitment to ethical principles and the betterment of one's surroundings, fostering both personal [40] and societal prosperity [61].

The model for strengthening character values based on local wisdom is thoughtfully crafted with a foundation in the stages of management functions [24], [62]. This strategic approach begins with a comprehensive assessment of the community's unique local wisdom, drawing upon its rich cultural heritage [63]. By identifying the character values deeply rooted in this wisdom, the model sets clear and measurable objectives for character education that align with the community's needs. It organizes the necessary resources, including educational materials and teacher training, to effectively impart these values within the educational setting. The leadership component of the model emphasizes role modelling by educators and community engagement to bridge the gap between education and local wisdom. Regular monitoring and evaluation, along with feedback mechanisms, ensure that the program remains culturally relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of the community. Through these well-defined management functions, the model seeks to not only strengthen character values but also to celebrate and preserve the invaluable cultural heritage of the community.

In the implementation of *Gusjigang* values in strengthening character education in educational units there are twenty-two values, namely religion, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, innovation, independence, democratic, curiosity, national spirit, love of the country, respect for achievements, friendly/communicative, love of peace, love of reading, care for the environment, social care, responsibility, critical reasoning, a global celebrity, mutual assistance and filial piety to parents and teachers [19]. The implementation of strengthening *Gusjigang* character education can be done through formal, non-formal, and informal education. In formal education, measures such as curriculum development that includes moral values and *Gusjigang* character [64], teacher training to integrate character education [65], applying the problem-based learning (PBL) model to cultivating *Gusjigang* values in daily life [66], as well as intracurricular, curricular, and extracurricular activities that support character development [67], can be carried out. Non-formal education, such as leadership training [68] and community activities [69], can also provide opportunities for individuals to strengthen *Gusjigang* character outside the formal environment. Meanwhile, informal education involves social interaction [65] and daily experiences [70], which can be an important means of shaping *Gusjigang*'s character through the values practiced in everyday life.

Researchers found that with a holistic approach through these three educational pathways, strengthening *Gusjigang* character education can be realized as a whole. Through *Gusjigang* values, the Kudus

community strives to uphold and pass on these principles to future generations. This philosophy not only shaped their personal lives but also contributed to the social and economic development of the Kudus community as a whole. It serves as a guiding force, fostering a harmonious and progressive society that values morality, education, and entrepreneurship as essential elements for a meaningful and prosperous life. As Ihsan [18] suggests that *Gusjigang* which stands for good morals, smart in reciting, and skilled in trading.

3.2. Implications of *Gusjigang* as a model for strengthening character education based on local wisdom in the digital era

Gusjigang is an appropriate model to strengthen character education rooted in local wisdom in the midst of the digital era. In today's digital era, preserving and realizing the values of local wisdom is becoming increasingly important due to technological advances [71]. Character education rooted in the *Gusjigang* philosophy, which originated with Sunan Kudus, offers a strong framework for navigating the complexities of the digital landscape. The philosophy instils values such as kindness, discipline, perseverance, honesty and responsibility, which are critical to fostering a resilient character among the younger generation amidst digital challenges as noted by Sukadari *et al.* [72].

In the digital age, Luscombe and Duncan [73] said that while access to information has become easier, the proliferation of influence and content remains unregulated. Thus, character education rooted in local wisdom becomes crucial to provide the younger generation with a robust ethical grounding amidst the overwhelming digital landscape [74], [75]. The essence lies in the ability to discern between accurate and beneficial information from that which is not, and to exercise wisdom in utilizing technology [17], [34]. Additionally, embracing moral values and spirituality from the *Gusjigang* heritage of Sunan Kudus' local wisdom can aid individuals in preserving peace amidst the challenges of the digital era [76]. "Ngaji (religious science)" is not only limited to religious learning but also involves a deep understanding of various perspectives of science [10]. In an age of abundant information, young people need to be taught to continue learning, filter relevant information, and contribute to the improvement of their insights and knowledge. "Ngaji" in *Gusjigang* local wisdom teaches learners the values of self-regulated learning [77]. Asror [78] has argued that teachers help students to focus on learning, motivate themselves, and direct their attention to future career development.

Furthermore, the trade value in *Gusjigang* can stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation in the digital era [17], [79]. In a globally connected world, trading and entrepreneurial skills are essential [80]. Young people need to be taught to utilize digital technology as a means to develop creativity, innovate, and interact with the outside world in beneficial ways [81], [82]. By combining *Gusjigang's* values and utilizing digital technology as a means of education, we can create a character education model that is effective and relevant in the digital era. Through strengthening local wisdom, young people can strengthen their cultural identity, develop strong personalities, and be able to adapt to changing times without losing their roots and fundamental values.

4. CONCLUSION

Gusjigang, a character education model in Kudus Regency, Central Java, stands as a testament to the commitment of the local community to nurturing holistic development in its younger generations. Rooted in the rich tapestry of local wisdom, *Gusjigang* places a strong emphasis on moral goodness, intellectual development, and entrepreneurial spirit. This multifaceted approach equips students with not only a strong ethical foundation but also the skills and mindset required to navigate the modern world. With technology playing an ever-increasing role in our lives, *Gusjigang* ensures that young learners utilize it wisely, harnessing its potential for personal growth and societal betterment. By harmonizing *Gusjigang's* values with digital technology, this character education model becomes not only relevant but also adaptable to the evolving needs of the community. The fusion of tradition and innovation not only fosters innovation and creativity but also instils a sense of pride and purpose among the youth, empowering them to contribute meaningfully to society. *Gusjigang* serves as an inspiring example of how local wisdom can shape contemporary character education, offering a promising path towards a brighter future.

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