

Local Wisdom in Literacy: A Needs Analysis for Developing Culturally Relevant Reading Materials in Primary Schools

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Article Info	Abstract
Article history: Received: February 18, 2026 Accepted: April 23, 2026 Published: April 30, 2026 Keywords: Culturally responsive pedagogy Literacy development Primary education Reading materials This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. © 2026 Vidya Karya	The development of literacy in primary schools is a global priority; however, reading materials often fail to reflect local cultural contexts. In South Kalimantan, low literacy competence is influenced by the limited availability of contextualized teaching materials. This study aimed to analyze teachers' and students' needs for reading materials based on local wisdom in public primary schools in Banjar Regency. A mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires administered to 317 students in Grades IV, V, and VI, while qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews with 23 Grade V classroom teachers. The findings reveal that although government-issued textbooks are frequently used, the representation of local wisdom is extremely limited, with only 6.6% of students reporting exposure to such content. Students expressed a strong preference for visually rich, colorful books featuring folktales from their own region. Meanwhile, teachers reported difficulties in independently developing teaching materials and emphasized the urgent need for references that systematically integrate cultural values into reading instruction. It is concluded that a significant gap exists between the availability of reading materials and the actual needs in classroom practice. The development of culturally responsive reading materials is therefore essential not only to enhance students' learning motivation but also to support the preservation of local cultural identity. This research offers a novelty approach by systematically integrating local wisdom values into Indonesian language reading materials, resulting in effective and culturally relevant learning resources for elementary school students. The practical implication of this research is the need for contextual, local wisdom-based reading materials to provide teachers with practical guidance and to maintain local culture in education.
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INTRODUCTION

The development of literacy at the primary education level is a global priority, as literacy forms the foundation for lifelong learning, social participation, and individual empowerment (Hanemann & Robinson, 2022). Literacy encompasses reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, which enable learners to access knowledge, engage actively in society, and develop their full potential (Harsiati et al., 2023; Mousena, 2020; Wilkinson & Silliman, 2000). However, conventional reading materials frequently fail to reflect learners' cultural contexts, particularly in regions with rich local traditions. In response to this challenge, culturally relevant pedagogy has gained prominence as an approach that integrates learners' cultural backgrounds into instructional design, thereby making learning more meaningful and effective (Akintayo et al., 2024; Gay, 2010; Guberina, 2023).

In South Kalimantan, students' literacy competence remains relatively low. This condition is influenced by several factors, including the limited availability of teaching materials that support critical literacy development (Jumadi, 2020). Although the Indonesian language curriculum mandates the development of critical, creative, and communicative competencies across oral and written modes (Kemdikbudristek, 2024), classroom practices often emphasize structural comprehension rather than higher-order thinking skills. Moreover, critical literacy is not explicitly allocated instructional time, nor is it consistently embedded in assessment practices, resulting in limited opportunities for students to develop critical reading abilities (Hamidah et al., 2025).

Teaching materials play a crucial role in addressing these challenges. Effective instructional materials depend not only on their quality and relevance but also on teacher readiness and student preparedness. Teachers are central agents in designing, implementing, and evaluating learning activities (Heryahya et al., 2022; Rahayu et al., 2024; Rofi'ah et al., 2024). Well-prepared teachers who design clear objectives, learning trajectories, and appropriate materials can significantly optimize learning outcomes (Tarihoran, 2019). At the same time, students require materials that are relevant to their experiences, cognitively accessible, and engaging. High-quality teaching materials, whether in the form of texts, books, visual media, or digital resources, can enhance motivation, comprehension, and active participation (Chisunum & Nwadiokwu, 2024; Tomlinson, 2011).

Local wisdom offers a rich and authentic resource for developing contextualized reading materials in Indonesian language learning. Local wisdom encompasses traditions, folklore, legends, proverbs, and cultural values passed down through generations (Irlina & Djamalie, 2024; Sibarani, 2015; Wahyu, 2020). These cultural elements can be integrated into various text types, including narrative, descriptive, expository, procedural, and persuasive texts. The incorporation of local wisdom can enhance students' reading interest, facilitate comprehension by connecting new knowledge to familiar contexts, and foster cultural identity and values (Fitrianto & Farisi, 2025; Luka, 2019; Sakti et al., 2024). Despite its potential, systematic research focusing on the specific needs of teachers and students regarding locally based Indonesian language reading materials in primary schools remains limited.

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that teaching materials grounded in local wisdom improve learning interest, cultural literacy, contextual understanding, and student engagement (Asrianti et al., 2024; Oematan & Fallo, 2025; Rochmawati et al., 2024; Sarmadan et al., 2024). However, this research's findings focus on describing benefits without conducting a systematic needs analysis for teachers and students. Previous research also hasn't specifically linked local culture-based teaching materials to literacy outcomes and cultural integration in the curriculum. These findings underscore the importance of conducting a needs analysis to bridge the gap between existing teaching materials and the actual needs of teachers and students. A preliminary needs analysis is therefore essential to inform the development of culturally responsive Indonesian language reading materials

that enhance literacy while preserving cultural heritage. By emphasizing authentic and culturally based learning experiences, this research makes a direct contribution to achieving the goals of the Independent Curriculum.

This study is grounded in three interrelated theoretical perspectives: Indonesian language learning at the primary level, local wisdom-based language learning, and needs analysis in instructional material development. Under the Merdeka Curriculum, Indonesian language instruction is positioned as an independent subject employing a project-based learning approach, granting teachers autonomy in selecting materials aligned with students' needs and interests while aiming to develop cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains (Kemendikbudristek, 2022, 2024; Suryaman, 2010). Local wisdom-based language learning emphasizes the integration of cultural values and authentic local contexts into instructional materials, enhancing linguistic competence, cultural awareness, and character development, with teachers playing a critical role in fostering reflection and sociocultural engagement (Abusyairi, 2013; Chaer et al., 2021; Freire, 1998; Soler & Jorda, 2007). Finally, needs analysis provides the methodological foundation for instructional material development by systematically identifying gaps between existing learning conditions and desired outcomes through empirical data collection, ensuring that teaching materials are contextually relevant and pedagogically effective (Harahap & Albina, 2025; Richards, 2001).

Given these conditions, the urgency of this research lies in addressing the significant gap between the availability of culturally relevant reading materials and the real needs of classroom practice. Without systematic integration of local wisdom, students risk losing opportunities to connect their learning with cultural identity, while teachers lack practical guidance for contextualized instruction.

Based on the issues outlined above, this study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore primary school teachers' and students' perspectives on the Indonesian language reading materials currently used in classrooms, particularly in terms of their effectiveness, relevance, and attractiveness.
2. To identify the specific needs of teachers and students regarding Indonesian language reading materials, including preferred text types, formats (print or digital), visual design, and instructional strategies that support effective teaching and learning.
3. To examine how local wisdom can be integrated into Indonesian language reading materials to produce instructional resources that are academically meaningful, culturally relevant, and responsive to students' learning contexts.

The findings of this study are expected to serve as an empirical foundation for developing Indonesian language reading materials that enhance literacy skills while fostering cultural understanding and appreciation among primary school students. This research offers novelty through the systematic integration of local wisdom values into the development of Indonesian language reading materials based on actual needs, to create learning resources that are not only pedagogically effective but also have deep cultural relevance for elementary school students.

METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods design (Creswell & David, 2018) to examine the need for reading instructional materials grounded in local wisdom. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 317 students in Grades 4–6 from seven public primary schools in Banjar Regency. The selection of 317 students from seven schools was carried out to ensure representation of upper elementary school grades who already have more mature reading skills, thus being relevant to the research objectives. Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with 23 Grade 5 classroom teachers from the same schools. A total of 23 teachers were selected because

they were considered to best understand the need for contextual reading materials based on direct experience in the classroom.

The instruments comprised closed-ended student questionnaires and semi-structured teacher interview protocols, which were designed to elicit data on participants' preferences, experiences, and expectations regarding contextual Indonesian language instructional materials incorporating local wisdom. The instrument was tested for validity and reliability before use. Validity test results showed that most questionnaire items had item-total correlations above 0.30, making it suitable for measuring students' needs for local wisdom-based teaching materials. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha yielded values in the range of 0.70–0.80, confirming that the instrument has good internal consistency. The research methodology is shown in Figure 1.

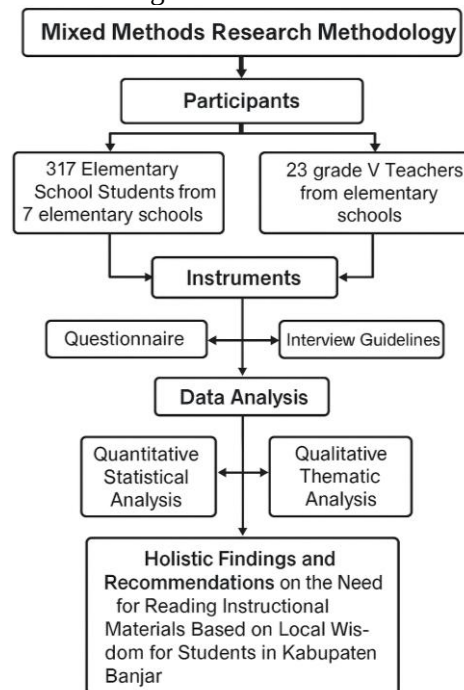


Figure 1 Research methodology

This study applied descriptive and inferential statistical approaches to analyze the closed-ended questionnaire data collected from 317 students in Grades 5 and 6 across seven primary schools in Banjar Regency. The primary objective of this analysis was to identify students' preferences, perceptions, and needs regarding reading instructional materials based on local wisdom. Descriptive statistics were employed to provide an overall overview of the distribution of students' responses to each questionnaire item, using frequency and percentage techniques. These techniques were used to calculate the number and proportion of students selecting each response option for each item.

Meanwhile, qualitative data were analyzed thematically by identifying recurring patterns and categories in teachers' responses through a systematic coding process of the interview transcripts. The findings from both analytical approaches were then integrated to complement one another: the qualitative findings provided context and explanatory depth for the quantitative results, thereby yielding a more comprehensive understanding of the actual needs underpinning the development of culturally and pedagogically relevant reading instructional materials.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the survey conducted among primary school students indicate that Indonesian language textbooks remain the primary learning resource, with a high level of usage and generally positive perceptions regarding their attractiveness and the ease with which their content can be understood. However, the incorporation of local wisdom, particularly local folklore, within these textbooks remains limited. Students expressed a strong interest in stories originating from their own regions. They also showed a preference for books that are illustrated, colorful, and interactive, as well as for learning tasks that are visual and contextual in nature.

Conversely, findings from the preliminary study involving teachers reveal that most teachers are not yet accustomed to developing their own instructional materials, especially those grounded in local wisdom. Lesson planning tends to rely heavily on available textbooks and online media such as YouTube, with minimal development of contextual content that reflects students' cultural backgrounds. Teachers also reported difficulties in designing student-centered learning activities and indicated a lack of reference materials that systematically integrate local cultural values into Indonesian language instruction.

Results of Students' Needs Analysis

The student survey questionnaire was categorized into three main aspects: (1) the use and perceptions of Indonesian language textbooks, (2) preferences regarding the form and format of books, and (3) interest in and exposure to folklore. These three aspects comprised 13 assessment criteria, namely: (1) frequency of Indonesian language textbook use; (2) level of interest in the content of Indonesian language textbooks; (3) perceived ease of understanding the material presented in the textbooks; (4) perceptions of the extent to which Indonesian language textbooks assist in understanding learning materials; (5) frequency of inclusion of local stories in Indonesian language textbooks; (6) preferences for the form of textbooks containing stories; (7) preferences for visually appealing textbook formats; (8) preferences regarding types of exercises included in textbooks; (9) frequency of reading storybooks; (10) preferred types of stories; (11) folklore titles previously read by students; (12) sources from which students obtain stories; and (13) level of interest in Indonesian language textbooks that feature folklore from their own local regions. Classification of student needs is listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Classifications of students' needs

No.	Items	Indicators assessed	Aspect (s)
1.	1–4	Frequency of use, attractiveness, ease of comprehension, and effectiveness of the textbook	Use and Perceptions of Indonesian Language Textbooks
2.	5	Availability of local stories in textbooks	Interest in and exposure to folklore
3.	6–8	Preferences for book format, media format, and preferred types of exercises	Preferences for Book Form and Format
4.	9–10	Reading frequency and preferred types of stories	Interest in and Exposure to Folklore
5.	11–12	Folklore previously read and sources of the stories	Folklore previously read and sources of the stories
6.	13	Interest in textbooks containing local folklore	Folklore previously read and sources of the stories

Based on the survey results, the frequency of Indonesian language textbook use among students shows that 40.4% reported using the textbook often, while 26.8% indicated that they always use it. In total, 67.2% (213 students) rely on the textbook as the primary

reference in Indonesian language learning. This finding is supported by students' perceptions that the textbooks currently in use are engaging and easy to use. Moreover, students believe that the textbooks help them understand the learning material more effectively. These findings indicate that Indonesian language textbooks possess high pedagogical relevance in terms of both content and presentation.

With regard to preferences for book form and format, 58% (184 students) stated that they favor textbooks that are visually appealing, illustrated, and colorful. Although a wide variety of attractive and interactive digital books are currently available, students expressed a stronger preference for standard-sized printed textbooks. Within these textbooks, 43.7% (138 students) preferred evaluation items in the form of multiple-choice questions accompanied by images, while 22.8% (72 students) favored puzzle-based questions. These findings suggest that students are more engaged with evaluation tasks that are visual, interactive, and enjoyable, rather than conventional text-only questions. Indonesian textbook preferences are shown in Figure 2.

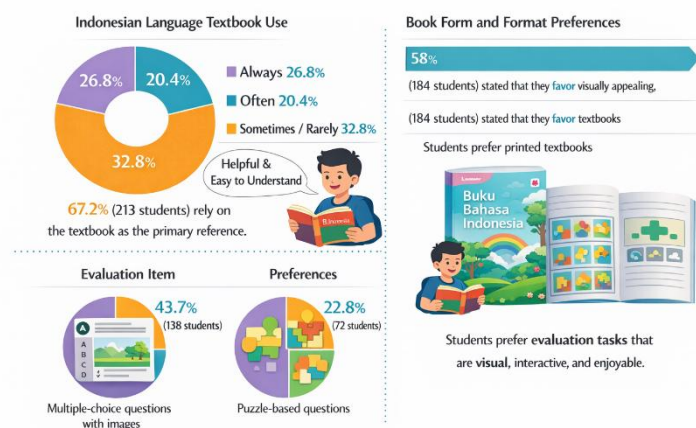


Figure 2 Indonesian textbook preferences

Despite the general indication that the Indonesian language textbooks currently used by students adequately support learning needs, the availability of contextual content remains very limited. Only 21 students (6.6%) reported that their textbooks include folklore from their own local regions. This constitutes a significant finding, highlighting the minimal representation of local wisdom in Indonesian language textbooks. In terms of familiarity with folklore, students' knowledge is predominantly limited to animal stories, such as tales of monkeys and turtles, rather than region-specific folklore. From the perspective of meaningful learning, instructional materials should be contextual and support the formation of students' cultural identities. Accordingly, students require instructional materials that are not only visually appealing but also reflective of local culture so that learning becomes more meaningful, relevant, and aligned with the vision of education grounded in local wisdom.

Results of Teachers' Needs Analysis

Based on the interview findings and preliminary study involving 23 primary school teachers, many teachers were found to experience difficulties in designing student-centered lesson plans. The instructional materials used in classrooms tend to rely heavily on readily available textbooks, supplemented by video-based media from platforms such as YouTube. Teachers are generally not accustomed to developing their own instructional materials, particularly those grounded in local wisdom. An analysis of teachers' needs for local wisdom-based learning materials is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Teachers' needs analysis for local wisdom-based instructional materials

No.	Items assessed	Findings	Implication (s)
1.	Understanding of Learning Outcomes (LO) and Teaching Modules	Some teachers have already understood the learning outcomes (LO) and translated them into teaching modules, while others are still in the process of developing this understanding.	Instructional materials need to be aligned with the Learning Outcomes (LO) of the <i>Merdeka</i> Curriculum and provide examples of the integration of local wisdom.
2.	Challenges in Teaching Language and Literature	Teachers experience difficulties in teaching poetry, <i>pantun</i> , descriptive paragraphs, S-V-A sentence structures, and other abstract language concepts.	Instructional materials should provide concrete examples grounded in local culture to facilitate students' understanding of the content.
3.	Problems in Instruction	Students frequently make errors in spelling conventions, word spacing, and capitalization; they have limited vocabulary and lack reading fluency.	Instructional materials should strengthen basic language skills through contextualized exercises derived from folklore or local texts.
4.	Relevance of Textbooks	Textbooks are considered relevant but insufficiently comprehensive; therefore, teachers supplement them with resources from the internet and YouTube.	There is a need for textbooks that explicitly incorporate local content to reduce reliance on external resources.
5.	Integration of Local Wisdom	Some teachers have not yet incorporated local wisdom into their instruction, while others have begun to do so through Banjar folklore, traditional games, and procedural texts such as preparing <i>soto Banjar (local cuisine)</i>	Instructional materials should systematically incorporate local wisdom content to facilitate teachers' integration in classroom practice.
6.	Teachers' Efforts to Address Instructional Challenges	Teachers provide guided writing instruction, conduct reading practice, and use supplementary media such as videos, images, and internet resources.	Instructional materials should be complemented with visual media, illustrated texts, and interactive exercises.

Based on Table 2, several important findings can be identified in this study. Although teachers reported having a clear understanding of the learning outcomes, they indicated a strong need for instructional materials that are aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. Instructional materials grounded in local wisdom can provide authentic representations of regional culture, such as folklore, traditional games, and local customs, thereby supporting more contextualized and meaningful learning experiences.

In Indonesian language instruction, teachers frequently encounter difficulties when teaching literary content, such as poetry, *pantun*, and oral reading activities. These challenges stem from students' lack of self-confidence, limited reading fluency, and difficulties in expressing ideas. In addition, language topics such as descriptive paragraphs, paragraph types, and sentence construction using the Subject Predicate Object Adverbial (SPOK) structure are perceived as challenging because they require higher-order thinking skills. Further problems commonly identified include students' errors in spelling, word spacing, capitalization, and limited vocabulary mastery. Accordingly, teachers require

instructional materials that strengthen fundamental language skills within meaningful local contexts, such as writing exercises based on Banjar folklore or procedural texts related to the preparation of traditional foods.

Developing locally grounded instructional materials independently is not considered a duty by teachers. The majority of teachers perceive the existing textbooks as generally relevant to instructional needs. Nevertheless, teachers expressed the need for textbooks that are richer in local content so that they do not have to rely excessively on external sources. The currently available textbooks are regarded as incomplete and lacking sufficient contextual material. As a result, teachers tend to depend heavily on existing textbooks, and their experience in integrating local wisdom as contextual instructional content remains limited. Only a small number of teachers reported having attempted to integrate local wisdom into instruction, such as reading Banjar folklore, linking procedural texts to the preparation of soto Banjar, or practicing traditional Banjar games. Classroom observations revealed instances where teachers mentioned examples related to traditional Banjar cakes; however, these explanations were not sufficiently elaborated to effectively instill positive character values in students.

Gaps in Availability of the Expected Instructional Materials

The findings indicate a clear gap between the Indonesian language instructional materials currently available and the needs of both students and teachers. Students require textbooks that are not only visually engaging but also incorporate folklore from their own local contexts. However, the representation of local wisdom in existing textbooks remains very limited, with only 6.6% of students reporting that they encountered regional stories in their textbooks. In addition, teachers perceive the instructional content as insufficient and lacking contextual depth, despite the alignment between the stated learning outcomes and the textbooks in use. Consequently, teachers tend to rely more heavily on alternative learning resources, such as YouTube and online references. This gap highlights that the available instructional materials have not yet fully supported meaningful learning grounded in local wisdom. Mapping the relationship between learning material gaps and local wisdom potential is shown in Figure 3.

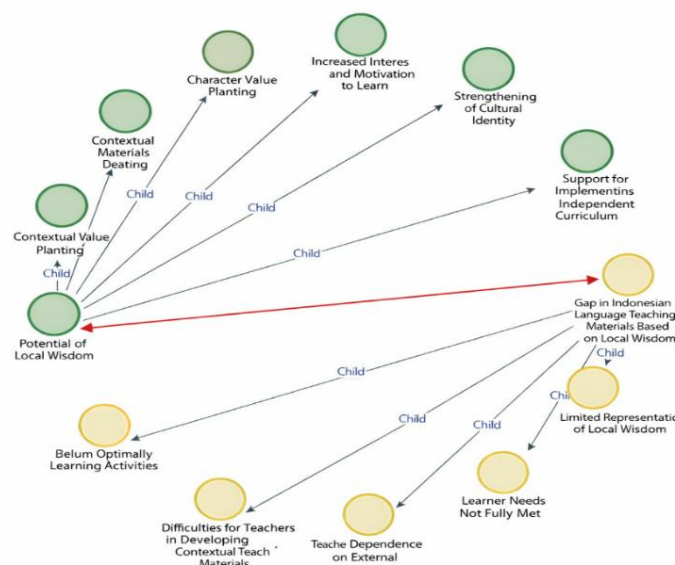


Figure 3 Mapping the relationship between instructional material gaps and the potential of local wisdom

The Potential of Local Wisdom

Local wisdom holds substantial potential for integration into Indonesian language instructional materials. Banjar folklore, traditional games, local culinary heritage such as soto Banjar and traditional cakes, as well as oral traditions, constitute rich learning resources. This potential not only strengthens students' language skills through descriptive, procedural, and narrative texts but also fosters positive character values, including cooperation, honesty, and cultural appreciation. By incorporating local wisdom, Indonesian language learning can become more contextualized and relevant while contributing to the development of students' cultural identity. Moreover, the integration of local wisdom aligns with the vision of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes experiential learning grounded in authentic contexts and the surrounding environment.

This study aimed to explore the needs of primary school teachers and students regarding Indonesian language reading materials grounded in local wisdom in South Kalimantan. The findings reveal a clear mismatch between the instructional materials currently available in classrooms and the pedagogical, cultural, and motivational needs of learners and teachers. Although government-issued Indonesian language textbooks are widely used and generally perceived as accessible and engaging, their limited integration of local wisdom highlights a critical gap that undermines the principles of meaningful and culturally responsive literacy education.

One of the most salient findings is the heavy reliance on standardized textbooks, with more than two-thirds of students reporting frequent or constant use of these materials. This confirms earlier assertions that textbooks remain the dominant instructional resource in Indonesian primary education, particularly under centralized curriculum structures (Kemendikbudristek, 2024). From a pedagogical perspective, this reliance is not inherently problematic, as students perceive the textbooks as attractive and easy to understand. However, the problem lies in the content orientation of these materials. Only 6.6% of students reported encountering folklore from their own region, indicating that local cultural representation is largely absent from mainstream textbooks. The significance of these findings lies in their implications for the formation of students' cultural literacy: when local content is scarce, students miss out on opportunities to connect learning to their own cultural identities and experiences. This finding aligns (Gray, 2013) critique that commercial or centralized teaching materials often privilege generalized content at the expense of local relevance. Thus, even though textbooks are considered interesting and easy to understand, the lack of integration of local wisdom raises the risk of disconnection between formal education and the cultural context of society, especially the students themselves.

The lack of local wisdom integration has important implications for literacy development. Literacy is not merely a technical skill but a socially situated practice shaped by learners' cultural experiences (Freire, 1998). The limited exposure to culturally familiar texts restricts students' opportunities to connect reading activities with their lived realities. As (Gay, 2010) argues that culturally responsive pedagogy enhances comprehension and engagement by validating learners' cultural identities within instructional content. The present findings reinforce this argument, as students expressed strong interest in textbooks that include folklore from their own regions, suggesting that cultural familiarity functions as a motivational driver in reading engagement.

Students' preference for visually rich, colorful, and illustrated books further underscores the importance of affective and cognitive engagement in literacy learning. These preferences resonate with (Tomlinson, 2011) assertion that effective instructional materials should stimulate learners' curiosity and emotional involvement. Visual elements and interactive exercises, such as image-based multiple-choice questions and puzzles, support multimodal learning and help scaffold comprehension, particularly for young learners. Recent studies on local wisdom-based materials similarly report that illustrated folklore

texts significantly enhance students' reading motivation and cultural literacy (Asrianti et al., 2024; Rochmawati et al., 2024). Therefore, the students' expressed preferences are not merely aesthetic but pedagogically meaningful.

From the teachers' perspective, the findings reveal structural and professional challenges in material development. Although some teachers demonstrate an understanding of learning outcomes under the Merdeka Curriculum, many struggle to translate these outcomes into student-centered teaching modules. This finding corroborates earlier research indicating that teacher readiness remains a major challenge in curriculum implementation, particularly in designing contextual and differentiated learning materials (Heryahya et al., 2022; Rahayu et al., 2024). The tendency to rely on textbooks and supplementary online resources such as YouTube reflects both time constraints and a lack of systematic references for integrating local wisdom into Indonesian language instruction.

Importantly, teachers do not reject the idea of local wisdom-based instruction; rather, they lack concrete models and resources. Some teachers reported sporadic attempts to incorporate Banjar folklore, traditional games, or procedural texts related to local cuisine. However, these efforts were largely incidental and not systematically embedded in lesson planning or assessment. This finding echoes Richards' (2001) view that teachers require structured, needs-based materials to bridge the gap between curricular ideals and classroom practice. Without such support, local wisdom remains an optional add-on rather than an integral component of literacy instruction.

The difficulties teachers face in teaching abstract language concepts such as poetry, pantun, sentence structure, and descriptive writing further highlight the pedagogical potential of local wisdom. Abstract linguistic concepts become more accessible when grounded in familiar cultural contexts. For instance, descriptive paragraphs based on local landscapes or procedural texts describing the preparation of Soto Banjar can provide concrete referents that support comprehension and vocabulary development. Regarding this, (Sibarani, 2015; Wahyu, 2020) emphasizes that local traditions and oral narratives function as rich linguistic resources that naturally integrate language form, meaning, and cultural values. The findings of this study reinforce this perspective, suggesting that local wisdom can function as both content and context for language learning.

The gap identified between available instructional materials and classroom needs reflects a broader issue in literacy education: the disconnect between standardized curriculum materials and localized learning realities. While the Merdeka Curriculum provides flexibility and encourages contextual learning, its successful implementation depends heavily on the availability of supportive instructional resources. As Jumadi (2020) notes, critical literacy development requires materials that encourage reflection, interpretation, and engagement with social realities. The limited presence of local wisdom in textbooks constrains opportunities for students to develop these competencies. Furthermore, the findings highlight the role of instructional materials in character education. Local folklore and traditions often embed moral values such as cooperation, honesty, and respect for the environment. Integrating these narratives into reading materials supports the development of the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasizes character formation alongside academic achievement. Studies by Sarmadan et al. (2024) and Oematan and Fallo (2025) demonstrate that local wisdom-based materials contribute not only to literacy skills but also to students' cultural identity and moral development. The present study provides empirical support for these claims within the context of South Kalimantan.

In terms of instructional material development, the findings confirm the centrality of needs analysis as a foundational step. By systematically examining students' preferences and teachers' challenges, this study aligns with Richards' (2001) and Harahap and Albina's (2025) assertion that effective materials must be empirically grounded. The data reveal that both students and teachers are receptive to local wisdom-based materials, provided that

these materials are visually engaging, curriculum-aligned, and pedagogically practical. This convergence of needs strengthens the argument for developing culturally responsive reading textbooks as a strategic intervention in literacy education.

Overall, the integration of local wisdom into Indonesian language reading materials is not merely a cultural initiative but a pedagogical necessity. The findings validate existing theories of culturally responsive teaching and local wisdom-based learning while extending them through empirical evidence from primary schools in South Kalimantan. From a theoretical perspective, this study confirms that cultural relevance is a key factor in building meaningful literacy and strengthening student identity. Practically, the results point to the development of more contextual teaching materials: supporting literacy competencies, facilitating teacher practice, which has previously been limited to centralized textbooks, and contributing to the preservation of local cultural heritage through formal education. Thus, this study provides both a theoretical foundation and practical recommendations for developing curricula and reading materials that are more responsive to the needs of students and the community.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several suggestions are proposed to guide future practice, research, and policy related to the development of Indonesian language reading materials grounded in local wisdom at the primary education level. First, for instructional material developers and textbook authors, it is strongly suggested that future Indonesian language textbooks systematically integrate local wisdom as a core component rather than as supplementary or incidental content. Local folktales, traditional games, oral traditions, and local culinary practices—particularly those originating from South Kalimantan—should be embedded across various text types, such as narrative, descriptive, procedural, and expository texts. Such integration should not only focus on cultural representation but also align explicitly with learning outcomes, language skills development, and character education goals under the Merdeka Curriculum. Visual design should also be prioritized, as students demonstrated a strong preference for colorful, illustrated, and visually engaging materials accompanied by interactive and contextual exercises.

Second, for teachers and schools, professional development programs are recommended to strengthen teachers' capacity to design, adapt, and implement local-wisdom-based instructional materials. Training workshops can focus on practical strategies for transforming local cultural resources into meaningful reading texts, learning activities, and assessment tasks. Providing teachers with concrete examples, ready-to-use templates, and model lesson plans would help reduce dependence on external resources such as online videos and generalized textbooks. Schools are also encouraged to foster collaborative material development among teachers through lesson study or professional learning communities, allowing shared reflection and innovation in culturally responsive teaching practices.

Third, for educational institutions and local governments, collaboration with cultural stakeholders is highly recommended. Partnerships with local historians, cultural practitioners, storytellers, and community leaders can help ensure the authenticity, accuracy, and relevance of cultural content included in instructional materials. Such collaboration can also contribute to preserving local heritage while positioning schools as active agents in sustaining cultural identity. Institutional support in the form of funding, policy endorsement, and resource allocation is essential to enable the systematic development and dissemination of locally grounded reading materials.

Finally, for future researchers, further studies are suggested to move beyond needs analysis toward the design, development, and evaluation of local wisdom-based reading materials. Experimental or design-based research could examine the effectiveness of such materials in improving students' literacy skills, motivation, critical reading abilities, and character development. Longitudinal studies may also explore how sustained exposure to

culturally responsive materials influences students' cultural identity and learning outcomes over time. These future efforts would strengthen the empirical foundation for culturally grounded literacy education in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms a fundamental gap between the availability of centralized Indonesian language teaching materials and the actual needs of teachers and students in elementary schools. Theoretically, this study strengthens the framework of culturally responsive teaching by demonstrating that the integration of local wisdom is not merely an add-on but a crucial element in building meaningful literacy and students' cultural identity. Practically, these findings provide direction for the development of more contextual teaching materials that can support literacy competencies, facilitate teacher practices that have previously been limited to external sources, and contribute to the preservation of local culture through formal education. A limitation of this study lies in the limited scope of respondents, which was limited to teachers and students in Banjar Regency, so generalizations to other regions should be made with caution. Nevertheless, this study still provides a theoretical foundation and relevant practical recommendations for the development of curricula and reading materials that are more responsive to local cultural contexts.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this research.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

All authors in this study have their respective roles and responsibilities. JH developed the research concept, designed the research instruments, collected data, analyzed the data, and drafted the main manuscript. J and MR conducted a theoretical analysis and reviewed relevant literature. FM contributed to editing the manuscript. RN contributed to the methodology and data interpretation. AK contributed to data processing and translation.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author declares that no AI assistance was used during the preparation of this article. The research stages, from planning and data collection to data analysis and writing and editing, were carried out solely by the author.

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