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From Indigenous Wisdom to National Identity: Integrating Dayak Cultural Values into Civic Education in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

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Abstract

Abstrack: This study aims to analyze (1) students' national identity profiles and (2) their understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom. A quantitative approach with a descriptive research design was employed. The participants were 462 senior high school students in Palangka Raya City, Indonesia. Data were collected using a 20-item national identity scale based on Dayak philosophy and local wisdom, measured on a four-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed descriptively using frequencies, percentages, and mean scores for each indicator and dimension. The findings indicate that students' national identity was positive, with a mean score of 3.55 out of 4. This reflects a strong sense of pride in being Indonesian, acceptance of ethnic and cultural diversity, and commitment to togetherness in national life. Students' understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom was also positive, with a mean score of 3.49 out of 4. Students recognized that Huma Betang, Belom Bahadat, and Handep Hapakat embody not only local cultural values but also universal principles relevant to national identity, including togetherness, respect for differences, unity, deliberation, mutual cooperation, responsibility, and social and environmental concern. The overall mean score was 3.50 out of 4, indicating the strategic role of Dayak local wisdom as a source of values for strengthening students' national identity. The findings highlight the importance of integrating local wisdom into education to develop a culturally rooted yet inclusive national identity that reflects Indonesia's diversity.

Introduction

National identity is an important construct in the formation of citizens who possess a sense of belonging to the nation, an awareness of diversity, and a commitment to national values. In the context of education, national identity is not merely associated with students' knowledge of national symbols, history, and values; it is also reflected in how students perceive themselves as members of a diverse national community. Schools constitute a strategic social space in this process because students interact with individuals from different cultural, religious, linguistic, and social backgrounds. Therefore, strengthening national identity should not be positioned merely as a process of transmitting civic knowledge, but rather as a process of meaning-making that enables students to connect national values with social and cultural experiences that are closely related to their everyday lives.

In Indonesian multicultural society, strengthening national identity presents both challenges and opportunities. Cultural diversity can serve as social capital for developing an inclusive national identity, but it may also create social distance when national values are conveyed abstractly and are not connected to students' cultural experiences. Accordingly, education aimed at strengthening national identity needs to recognize local wisdom as an integral part of students' lived experiences and as a source of value formation. Such an approach enables values such as tolerance, togetherness, responsibility, mutual cooperation, deliberation, respect for differences, and social concern to be understood through concrete cultural contexts.

A growing body of research has demonstrated the potential of local wisdom in character education and civic education. Integrating local wisdom into learning can help students understand moral and social values through culturally contextualized experiences. For example, Japar et al., (2022) demonstrated that local-wisdom-based multicultural learning can support the development of cooperation, responsibility, and appreciation of diversity in civic education. Other studies have similarly shown that local cultural values can serve as a foundation for student character development and the strengthening of national values (Firmansyah et al., 2023; Harlina et al., 2024; Pageh et al., 2025; Utami et al., 2025; Werang et al., 2025; Yani et al., 2025). These findings indicate that local wisdom is relevant not only as cultural heritage to be preserved but also as a pedagogical resource for connecting students' cultural experiences with civic values.

In the context of Central Kalimantan, the philosophy of *Huma Betang* represents a form of Dayak local wisdom that has strong relevance to the strengthening of national identity. Huma *Betang* reflects communal life in diversity by emphasizing coexistence, equality, respect for others, togetherness, and social responsibility. These values are reflected in several Dayak cultural principles, including *Belom Bahadat*, which emphasizes civilized and ethical living; Handep, which embodies mutual assistance and cooperation; and *Hapakat*, which emphasizes deliberation, consensus, and collective decision-making. These values strongly converge with the principles of Indonesian national life, particularly tolerance, unity, mutual cooperation, deliberation, justice, and respect for diversity.

Studies of *Huma Betang* have demonstrated its potential for educational development. Karliani & Triyani, (2021), for instance, found that Huma Betang values can be incorporated into general education curricula to strengthen students' peaceful attitudes. Other studies have indicated that the internalization of Huma Betang values can serve as an approach to character development and the prevention of intolerant and radical attitudes Solikin, (2024). More recent research has also demonstrated that Huma Betang can be integrated into civic education to develop national character through the values of togetherness, honesty, equality, and tolerance (Karliani & Triyani, 2021). Thus, *Huma Betang* occupies a strategic position as a bridge between local cultural identity and national values.

Nevertheless, the state of the art reveals several limitations in the existing literature. First, most studies on local wisdom in education have focused on how cultural values are integrated into learning, character development, or curriculum design. Although such studies have provided evidence of the pedagogical value of local wisdom, relatively little attention has been given to how students themselves understand the relationship between national identity and the local wisdom embedded in their cultural environment. This dimension is important because the internalization of identity is determined not only by the presence of values in the curriculum but also by students' ability to construct meaning from those values and relate them to their everyday lives.

Second, studies of students' national identity in Indonesia have generally examined national identity within broader frameworks of civic education, multiculturalism, or character education. (Herdiana et al., 2021; Preusche & Göbel, 2021; Zembylas, 2022), for example, demonstrated that students' national

identity can be examined through cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Meanwhile, Gharaei et al., (2024) highlighted the importance of the school environment and sense of belonging in the development of national identity among minority students. These findings indicate that national identity is a construct that develops through social experiences and educational environments. However, the relationship between national identity and specific local cultural values has received comparatively limited empirical attention.

Third, in the context of Central Kalimantan, research on *Huma Betang* has expanded across character education, civic education, religious education, and school culture development. However, studies that specifically examine students' national identity profiles alongside their understanding of the relationship between national identity and the values of Huma Betang, Belom Bahadat, Handep, and Hapakat remain limited. Furthermore, quantitative research that systematically describes students' perceptions and understanding within this particular context is still relatively scarce. This situation indicates an important research opportunity to provide empirical evidence from the perspective of students as the primary subjects of education.

Addressing these gaps, this study offers a novel perspective by positioning Dayak local wisdom not merely as cultural content that should be preserved, but as an interpretive lens for understanding students' national identity. The study simultaneously examines two dimensions: (1) students' national identity profiles and (2) students' understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom. This approach is significant because it allows national identity to be understood as a construct that can develop from local cultural experiences rather than as an identity that exists independently from students' cultural identities.

Conceptually, this study is grounded in the assumption that national identity and local cultural identity should not necessarily be positioned as competing or opposing forms of identity. Rather, local wisdom can constitute an important social and cultural foundation for the development of an inclusive national identity. The value of Huma Betang, which emphasizes living together amid diversity; Belom Bahadat, which emphasizes ethical and dignified living; Handep, which emphasizes mutual assistance; and Hapakat, which emphasizes deliberation and consensus, can provide concrete experiences through which students understand unity, mutual cooperation, tolerance, responsibility, and respect for differences as integral dimensions of national life.

This position is also consistent with emerging scholarship in education that emphasizes the importance of connecting civic education with local cultural contexts. The integration of local culture into higher and basic education is considered capable of strengthening students' understanding of national identity by providing opportunities to connect national values with the social and cultural realities surrounding them Redjeki et al., (2025). In the Indonesian educational context, a local-wisdom-based approach is increasingly relevant to efforts to develop students who possess a strong national orientation while simultaneously appreciating cultural diversity.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to (1) describe students' national identity profiles and (2) analyze students' understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom, particularly the philosophies of Huma Betang, Belom Bahadat, Handep, and Hapakat. Employing a descriptive quantitative approach, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence of how local cultural values can be understood as part of students' experiences in developing national identity. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of civic education that is more contextual, inclusive, and culturally responsive, particularly in regions characterized by rich local cultural diversity such as Central Kalimantan.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design. This design was selected because the study aimed to obtain an empirical description of students' national identity profiles and their understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom. The study was not intended to examine causal relationships or administer any particular treatment to the respondents. Rather, it sought to describe patterns in students' responses based on data obtained through a national identity scale.

The study focused on two main aspects. First, the students' national identity profile, which reflects their sense of pride in being part of the Indonesian nation, their attachment to Indonesia, and their acceptance of cultural diversity as an integral part of national identity. Second, students' understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom, particularly the values embedded in the philosophies of Huma Betang, Belom Bahadat, Handep, and Hapakat. Through this design, the study provides an empirical account of how local cultural values are understood and positioned within the framework of students' national life.

Research Respondents

The respondents consisted of 462 senior high school students who completed the research instrument online. Based on the collected data, the respondents were primarily drawn from several public senior high schools in Palangka Raya City, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, with the majority being Grade 10 students. The respondent demographic information collected included grade level, school, and gender.

The use of 462 responses as the unit of analysis was based on the complete set of available responses that met the requirements for the study's analysis. Thus, the study used 462 students as research respondents rather than estimating the characteristics of the broader student population. Accordingly, the generalizability of the findings is limited to the characteristics of the respondents and the research context examined in this study.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using the Student National Identity Evaluation Scale Based on Dayak Philosophy and Local Wisdom, consisting of 20 statements. The instrument was developed to capture students' attitudes and understanding of national identity within the context of cultural diversity and Dayak local wisdom.

Substantively, the instrument items comprised two groups of indicators. The first five items were used to describe students' national identity, particularly their pride in being part of the Indonesian nation, appreciation of cultural diversity, recognition of Dayak culture as part of Indonesia's cultural heritage, and attachment to Indonesia. The following fifteen items focused on students' understanding and application of values connecting national identity with Huma Betang philosophy and Dayak cultural values, including living together amid diversity, respect for differences, Belom Bahadat, deliberation or Hapakat, cooperation, Handep, responsibility, social concern, and the common good.

These indicators were formulated based on the premise that national identity in a multicultural society is demonstrated not only through a sense of pride in the nation but also through the ability to accept diversity, develop positive social relationships, cooperate with others, resolve differences through deliberation, and contribute to the common good.

Scale and Scoring Procedure

Each statement was assessed using a five-category response scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. For quantitative analysis, the response categories were converted into numerical scores ranging from 0 to 4, as follows:

Response	Score
Strongly Agree	4
Agree	3
Undecided	2
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0

All items in the instrument were positively worded; therefore, higher scores indicated stronger national identity and a stronger understanding of Dayak local wisdom values.

The dataset contained several responses in which respondents selected more than one category, such as "Strongly Agree, Agree." To preserve the information provided by respondents without arbitrarily assigning their responses to a single category, combined responses were scored using the mean value

of the selected categories. For example, the response “Strongly Agree, Agree” was assigned a score of 3,5. This procedure allowed all responses to be consistently incorporated into the numerical analysis.

The score for each respondent was subsequently calculated based on the scores obtained for each item. In addition to the overall score, the analysis was conducted for the two indicator groups: the first five items representing students’ national identity and the subsequent fifteen items representing their understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through an online questionnaire. Respondents were asked to provide a response to each statement based on their circumstances, understanding, and attitudinal tendencies. The collected data were subsequently tabulated and checked before analysis.

The data-processing stages consisted of: (1) checking data completeness, (2) identifying and coding responses, (3) converting response categories into numerical scores, (4) calculating scores for each item, (5) calculating scores for each indicator group, and (6) calculating the overall mean score.

Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The analysis focused primarily on the mean scores to determine the tendencies of students’ responses to each item and indicator group.

The mean score for each item was calculated using the following formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{X_i}{N}$$

where:

$\bar{X}$ = Mean score;

X_i = Total score obtained from all respondents; and

N = Number of respondents.

The mean scores were then used to describe the tendency of students’ responses to each indicator and to compare the two main dimensions of the study: (1) students’ national identity and (2) students’ understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom.

The mean scores were then used to describe the tendencies in students’ national identity and understanding. Since the score range was between 0 and 4, mean scores approaching 4 indicated a

stronger tendency to agree with statements representing national identity and Dayak local wisdom values.

The analysis also involved comparing the mean scores across items to identify the indicators with the strongest and weakest response tendencies. This analysis was used to determine the aspects that were relatively more prominent as well as those that still required further strengthening in the development of students' national identity.

Based on the data analysis of 462 respondents, the overall mean score across the 20 items was approximately 3.50 out of a maximum score of 4. The mean score of the five items representing the national identity dimension was approximately 3.55, whereas the mean score of the fifteen items representing students' understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom was approximately 3.49. These values served as the basis for presenting the research findings and discussing the tendencies in students' national identity and their understanding of the values embodied in Huma Betang, Belom Bahadat, Handep, and Hapakat.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles in educational research by ensuring that respondent data were used solely for academic purposes. The analysis focused on respondents' responses to the research instrument rather than on individual evaluations of students. Personal identifying information was not used in the substantive analysis, and the research findings were presented in aggregated form to describe group-level tendencies.

Results and Discussion

3.1 Research Findings

This study involved 462 students as respondents. Data were collected using a national identity instrument based on Dayak philosophy and local wisdom, consisting of 20 statements. Each item employed five response categories that were converted into scores ranging from 0 to 4: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Undecided = 2, Disagree = 1, and Strongly Disagree = 0. Higher mean scores indicated a stronger tendency among students to agree with statements representing national identity and their understanding of Dayak local wisdom values.

Overall, the analysis showed that the mean response across the 20 statements was 3.50 out of a maximum score of 4.00. This finding indicates a high level of positive response to the indicators of national identity and local wisdom values measured in the study.

To provide a more specific description, the analysis was organized into two aspects: students' national identity and their understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom.

Table 1. **Mean Scores of National Identity and Understanding of Dayak Local Wisdom**

Table 1
Mean Scores of National Identity and Understanding of Dayak Local Wisdom

Aspect Analyzed	Number of Items	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Students' national identity	5	**3,55**	High
Understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom	15	**3,49**	High
Overall instrument	20	**3,50**	High

The mean score of 3,55 for the first five items indicates that students' national identity tended to be relatively strong. Meanwhile, the 15 items measuring students' understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom yielded a mean score of 3,49. The difference between the two aspects was relatively small, at approximately 0.06 points, suggesting that national identity and students' understanding of local cultural values demonstrated relatively consistent response tendencies in the dataset.

A more detailed analysis showed that the item with the highest mean score concerned respect for peers with different ethnicities, religions, cultures, languages, or customs, with a mean score of approximately 3,68. In contrast, the item with the lowest mean score concerned the willingness to prioritize common or group interests over personal interests, with a mean score of approximately 3,33.

Thus, appreciation of diversity represented the strongest tendency in students' responses, whereas the orientation toward placing collective interests above personal interests represented a relatively weaker aspect, although it still demonstrated a positive tendency.

3.2 Students' National Identity Profile

The findings indicate that students' national identity was relatively strong, with a mean score of 3,55 out of 4,00. This result suggests that the respondents generally demonstrated a positive sense of attachment to the Indonesian nation and a tendency to perceive diversity as an integral component of shared national life. Rather than reflecting national identity solely as an abstract sense of national belonging, the findings point to an identity orientation that is also expressed through students' attitudes toward cultural and social differences.

One of the most prominent findings was the high score for respect toward peers from different ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and customary backgrounds, which reached a mean of 3,68. This was the highest-scoring item across the instrument and represents an important strength in the students' national identity profile. In a pluralistic society such as Indonesia, this finding is particularly significant because national identity cannot be constructed solely through shared national symbols, historical

experiences, or cultural similarities. It also depends on the capacity of citizens to recognize differences and regard diverse groups as legitimate members of the same national community.

From a conceptual perspective, these findings suggest that students' national identity tends to have an inclusive character. Local and national identities are not necessarily experienced as competing forms of belonging. Instead, students may construct their sense of national identity by incorporating cultural diversity into their understanding of Indonesian citizenship. This interpretation is consistent with research emphasizing the importance of social environments and a sense of belonging in the development of national identification. (Gharaei et al., 2024), for example, demonstrated through a longitudinal study of adolescents from minority groups that school environments and students' sense of belonging are closely associated with the development of national identification.

The present findings extend this perspective by demonstrating the relevance of diversity experiences within the Indonesian multicultural context. Students' relatively high appreciation of differences may indicate that everyday interaction within culturally diverse environments provides opportunities for the formation of a national identity that is not exclusionary. In this sense, being Indonesian does not require students to distance themselves from their local cultural identities. Rather, local cultural identities can coexist with and contribute to a broader sense of national belonging.

This interpretation is particularly relevant to civic education. In a multicultural democracy, national identity needs to be understood not as cultural uniformity but as a shared civic framework that enables citizens with different backgrounds to live together. Accordingly, appreciation of diversity should be viewed not merely as an interpersonal attitude but as an important civic disposition that supports social cohesion, democratic coexistence, and inclusive citizenship.

3.3 Students' Understanding of the Relationship between National Identity and Dayak Local Wisdom

In addition to measuring national identity, this study examined students' understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom. The 15 items representing this dimension obtained a mean score of 3,49 out of 4.00, indicating a strong tendency among students to recognize Dayak local wisdom as relevant to national life.

The relatively small difference between the national identity dimension (3,55) and the local wisdom dimension (3,49) is noteworthy. The difference of only 0,06 points suggests that students' national identity and their understanding of local cultural values demonstrate relatively consistent response patterns. This finding provides an important empirical indication that local cultural knowledge does not necessarily occupy a peripheral position in students' understanding of national identity. Instead, local wisdom may function as a meaningful cultural context through which national values are interpreted and experienced.

The significance of this finding lies in the possibility of repositioning local wisdom from being merely an object of cultural preservation to becoming a source of civic meaning and national identity formation.

The values identified in the instrument including togetherness, respect for differences, cooperation, deliberation, responsibility, social concern, and commitment to the common good are not exclusively local values. They also correspond to broader principles of democratic citizenship and Indonesian national life.

Within the Dayak cultural context, these values are particularly visible in the philosophy of Huma Betang. Huma Betang represents communal life within a diverse social environment and emphasizes togetherness, equality, tolerance, mutual respect, and harmonious coexistence. These principles provide a culturally grounded framework through which students can understand abstract concepts such as unity, diversity, solidarity, and social responsibility.

The relationship between Huma Betang and civic education has also been emphasized in previous research. (Nastiti & Putri, 2026), for instance, highlighted the relevance of Huma Betang values to civic education and national character development, particularly through values such as togetherness, honesty, equality, and tolerance. The present findings complement this literature by providing quantitative evidence of students' positive understanding of the connection between local cultural values and national identity.

This finding also supports the argument advanced by Rianto et al., (2025) that local wisdom can serve as a bridge between character education and national identity. In the context of Kalimantan, the integration of local cultural values allows national principles to be interpreted through experiences that are closer to students' social and cultural realities. Consequently, local wisdom can function not only as cultural content but also as a pedagogical and interpretive resource for civic identity formation.

3.4 Appreciation of Diversity as a Major Strength

Among all indicators, appreciation of diversity emerged as the strongest dimension, particularly through students' respect for peers with different ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and customary backgrounds. The mean score of 3,68 suggests that the ability to acknowledge and respect differences represents a significant strength in the respondents' national identity.

This finding has important theoretical implications. It suggests that national identity among these students is not primarily constructed through the pursuit of cultural homogeneity. Instead, it may be developing through an understanding that different cultural identities can coexist within a shared national framework. Such an orientation reflects an inclusive conception of national identity, in which diversity is not regarded as a threat to national unity but as part of the social reality that constitutes the nation.

This interpretation is strongly connected to the philosophy of *Huma Betang*. As a representation of communal life, Huma Betang emphasizes the ability of people with different backgrounds to inhabit the same social space while maintaining harmony, equality, and mutual respect. The cultural logic

embedded in Huma Betang therefore provides a local frame of reference for understanding the broader civic principle of living together in diversity.

The convergence between students' high appreciation of diversity and the values embedded in Huma Betang is particularly important for civic education. It indicates that local cultural experiences may provide students with a concrete experiential basis for understanding national principles that might otherwise remain abstract. Rather than teaching tolerance solely as a normative concept, educators can connect it with students' own cultural narratives, social practices, and community experiences.

Thus, the present study suggests that local and national identities should not be conceptualized as mutually exclusive. Students do not need to abandon their Dayak cultural identity in order to develop a strong Indonesian national identity. On the contrary, local cultural experiences may provide an important foundation for developing a national identity characterized by tolerance, inclusiveness, and respect for diversity.

In this respect, the findings contribute to the growing literature on multicultural citizenship education by highlighting the potential of indigenous and local knowledge as a cultural pathway to inclusive national identity. The contribution is not simply the incorporation of local cultural content into the curriculum, but the use of local values as a framework through which students can interpret and enact national citizenship.

3.5 The Common Good as an Area for Further Strengthening

Despite the generally positive findings, the item concerning students' willingness to prioritize common interests over personal interests obtained the lowest mean score, at approximately 3,33. Although this score still indicates a positive and relatively strong tendency toward agreement, its lower position compared with other indicators reveals an important difference in the strength of students' dispositions.

The finding suggests that students may find it easier to express cognitive and affective acceptance of diversity than to translate national values into dispositions that require personal adjustment or sacrifice for collective interests. In other words, recognizing and respecting differences may be relatively well established, whereas consistently prioritizing the common good requires a stronger behavioral orientation toward responsibility, solidarity, cooperation, and civic participation.

This distinction is important from the perspective of civic education. National identity should not be reduced to knowledge about the nation or emotional attachment to national symbols. A meaningful national identity also needs to be manifested through civic dispositions and practices, including willingness to cooperate, accept shared responsibility, participate in collective decision-making, and contribute to the common good.

The relatively lower score should therefore not be interpreted as evidence of weak national identity among the respondents. Rather, it identifies an area for pedagogical strengthening. The findings suggest

that civic education needs to move beyond declarative learning toward learning experiences in which students actually practice collective responsibility and cooperation.

Within the Dayak cultural framework, this aspect can be connected particularly to the value of Handep, which represents mutual assistance, reciprocity, and cooperation in communal life. Handep places social solidarity and collective responsibility within the everyday practices of the community. In this sense, Handep provides a culturally meaningful resource for developing students' orientation toward the common good.

The pedagogical implication is that local wisdom should not merely be presented through explanations, texts, or cultural symbols. Its values need to be transformed into authentic learning experiences. Collaborative projects, community-based activities, social action, group problem-solving, mutual cooperation, and collective decision-making can provide opportunities for students to experience the meaning of Handep and related values directly.

Taken together, the findings across Sections 3,2–3,5 reveal a meaningful pattern. Students demonstrated a relatively strong national identity (M = 3,55) and a similarly strong understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom (M = 3,49). The strongest individual tendency was appreciation of diversity (M ≈ 3,68), while prioritizing collective interests over personal interests represented the comparatively weaker dimension (M ≈ 3,33). This pattern indicates that students have developed a strong foundation for inclusive national identity, but that this foundation still needs to be translated more consistently into collective and participatory civic practices.

More broadly, the findings support a conceptual pathway in which Dayak indigenous knowledge provides culturally grounded meanings for national identity formation. Huma Betang offers a framework of communal coexistence and equality; Belom Bahadat provides an ethical orientation toward civilized and respectful conduct; Handep emphasizes reciprocity and mutual assistance; and Hapakat/Hapakat Basara highlights deliberation and collective decision-making. When these values are connected to civic education, they can provide students with culturally meaningful ways of understanding tolerance, solidarity, responsibility, democratic participation, and the common good.

Therefore, the central contribution of this study is not simply to demonstrate that students have positive attitudes toward national identity or local wisdom. More importantly, the findings indicate that local cultural values can function as an interpretive bridge between students' lived cultural experiences and the broader normative framework of Indonesian national identity. This perspective challenges an approach in which local wisdom is treated merely as cultural heritage and instead positions it as a potential resource for developing inclusive, culturally rooted, and participatory citizenship.

For civic education, this has a direct pedagogical implication: strengthening national identity may be more meaningful when national values are connected to cultural experiences that students recognize as their own. Such an approach enables students to understand that diversity, togetherness, mutual assistance, deliberation, and collective responsibility are not only abstract national ideals but are also

embedded in the cultural practices and knowledge of local communities. In the Dayak context, the integration of Huma Betang, Belom Bahadat, Handep, and Hapakat therefore offers a promising pathway for developing a form of national identity that is simultaneously locally grounded, nationally oriented, and inclusive of Indonesia's multicultural character

3.6 Huma Betang as a Bridge between Local and National Identity

One important contribution of this study is its demonstration that Dayak local wisdom can be understood as a **conceptual bridge between cultural identity and national identity**. The findings show that the mean score for students' understanding of indicators linking national identity with local wisdom reached **3,49**, only slightly lower than the mean score for national identity itself (**3,55**).

The proximity of these two scores provides an indication that the local values incorporated into the instrument were not perceived as being in conflict with national identity. Rather, students tended to understand local cultural values within the broader framework of national life and shared citizenship. This finding is important because it challenges an implicit assumption that strengthening local cultural identity necessarily produces a narrower or more exclusive form of belonging. In the present context, local cultural identification appears to coexist with a broader orientation toward Indonesian national identity.

This perspective is consistent with studies that position local culture as a foundation for strengthening national identity. (Hall, 1993; Wulandari et al., 2025; Zabadi et al., 2025) argue that local culture can function not merely as inherited tradition but also as a source of values and character that strengthens national consciousness.

More broadly, research on local wisdom in Indonesia indicates that cultural values can provide a foundation for nationalism education when they are connected to community social life and students' lived experiences. Wulandari et al., (2025), for example, demonstrate that local wisdom can serve as a foundation for nationalism education through the social and cultural practices of local communities.

The findings of the present study therefore strengthen the argument that education for national identity may become more meaningful when nationalism is not presented solely as an abstract concept but is connected to cultural practices and values that are embedded in students' everyday environments. In this regard, **Huma Betang provides a culturally grounded context through which students can interpret national unity, diversity, solidarity, and social responsibility**.

Importantly, the role of Huma Betang should not be understood as replacing national identity with local identity. Rather, it can provide a cultural pathway through which students develop an understanding of how local belonging and national belonging can coexist. Such a perspective is particularly relevant to Indonesia, where national identity is constructed within a highly diverse social and cultural landscape.

3.7 Synthesis of Findings

Taken together, the findings reveal three main patterns. First, **students demonstrated a relatively strong national identity**, as reflected in the mean score of **3,55**. Second, **students' understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom was also relatively strong**, with a mean score of **3,49**. Third, meaningful variation existed across individual indicators, with appreciation of diversity emerging as the strongest aspect and willingness to prioritize common interests over personal interests representing the comparatively weaker aspect.

This pattern suggests that strengthening national identity through local wisdom should not be directed toward the construction of a homogeneous identity. Instead, it should support the development of a national identity that is **inclusive, dialogical, and rooted in students' cultural experiences**. In this framework, Huma Betang can function as a cultural context that helps students understand that national unity does not require the elimination of cultural differences.

The findings also extend previous research on Huma Betang. Earlier studies have predominantly examined the implementation of Huma Betang values in learning, character education, and civic education. More recent research has begun to develop approaches for measuring and mapping Huma Betang-related character among secondary school students in Palangka Raya. The present study takes this discussion a step further by examining **national identity and students' understanding of Dayak local wisdom within a shared analytical framework**.

This integrated perspective is important because it shifts attention from asking whether local wisdom can be incorporated into education toward examining **how local cultural values may provide meaning for the development of national identity**. The findings therefore support the proposition that local wisdom can strengthen national identity without diminishing the significance of local cultural identity.

In the context of Central Kalimantan, **Huma Betang, Belom Bahadat, Handep, and Hapakat** can be positioned as interconnected sources of civic values. Together, they provide culturally meaningful references for understanding unity, tolerance, mutual assistance, deliberation, collective responsibility, and concern for others. These values can help translate broad principles of Indonesian citizenship into experiences that are closer to students' social and cultural realities.

Accordingly, the study contributes to the literature by conceptualizing Dayak local wisdom not simply as **cultural heritage to be preserved**, but as a **civic and pedagogical resource for constructing an inclusive national identity**. This perspective is particularly relevant for multicultural education because it recognizes that national cohesion may be strengthened when students are able to connect national values with cultural knowledge and practices that are meaningful within their own communities.

3.8 Educational Implications

The findings have several implications for the development of civic education and character education in schools.

First, learning about national identity should provide greater space for **local cultural contexts**. Concepts such as unity, diversity, tolerance, mutual cooperation, and social responsibility are likely to become more meaningful when they are connected to social practices and cultural values that students recognize from their own communities. Rather than treating local wisdom as an additional cultural topic, teachers can use it as a contextual framework for interpreting broader civic concepts.

Second, Huma Betang values can be developed not merely as cultural knowledge but as a **basis for lived learning experiences**. For example, the value of *Handep* can be translated into collaborative projects and mutual-help activities; *Hapakat* can be practiced through classroom deliberation and collective decision-making; *Belom Bahadat* can be connected with ethical interpersonal conduct; and the communal principles represented by *Huma Betang* can serve as a foundation for school activities that promote respect and coexistence across differences.

Third, the findings indicate the need to strengthen the **behavioral dimension of national identity**. Students' high level of acceptance of diversity provides an important foundation, but this orientation needs to be accompanied by opportunities to cooperate, assume collective responsibility, participate in decision-making, and contribute to the common good. In this sense, national identity should not remain at the level of attitudes and understanding but should develop into **observable civic practices**.

These implications suggest that civic education should move from a predominantly transmission-oriented approach toward learning experiences that enable students to **interpret, negotiate, and enact civic values**. Local wisdom can support this transformation because it provides culturally familiar narratives and practices through which abstract national principles can be experienced in concrete situations.

For the development of culturally responsive civic education, the findings further suggest that local wisdom should be incorporated systematically into curriculum design, learning activities, assessment, and school culture. Such integration can help create learning environments in which students simultaneously develop cultural rootedness, national belonging, and openness toward diversity.

3.9 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings.

First, the study employed a **descriptive research design**; therefore, the findings cannot be used to establish causal relationships between local wisdom and national identity. The observed positive response patterns indicate tendencies within the respondent group but do not demonstrate that exposure to Dayak local wisdom directly causes stronger national identity.

Second, the data were collected using a **self-report instrument**. Consequently, the responses may have been influenced by students' perceptions, interpretations of the statements, or social desirability in reporting attitudes toward diversity, national identity, and culturally valued behaviors.

Third, the study employed a 20-item instrument comprising two broad groups of indicators. Although this instrument provided a useful descriptive picture, future studies should develop a more comprehensive measurement framework and conduct more rigorous testing of **construct validity, reliability, and dimensionality**. Confirmatory factor analysis or other appropriate psychometric procedures could be employed to determine whether the proposed dimensions adequately represent the underlying constructs.

Future research could also employ a **mixed-methods design** that combines quantitative surveys with interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, or ethnographic inquiry. Such an approach would make it possible to explore the meanings students attach to *Huma Betang, Belom Bahadat, Handep Hapakat* and to understand why particular indicators receive stronger or weaker responses.

Longitudinal and quasi-experimental studies would provide further opportunities to examine whether systematic integration of Dayak local wisdom into civic education can contribute to changes in students' national identity, civic dispositions, and participatory behaviors over time. Such studies would also enable researchers to move beyond descriptive associations toward stronger evidence concerning the educational contribution of local wisdom-based learning.

Table 2. **Descriptive Statistics of the 20-Item National Identity Scale Based on Dayak Local Wisdom**

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of the 20-Item National Identity Scale Based on Dayak Local Wisdom

No.	Item/Indicator (Brief Description)	N	Mean	SD	Minimum–Maximum
1	Pride in being part of a diverse Indonesian nation, including Dayak culture	462	3.679	0.473	2–4
2	Pride in Dayak values of togetherness and mutual cooperation as part of Indonesia's cultural heritage	462	3.607	0.495	2–4
3	Huma Betang as cultural heritage teaching togetherness within the nation	462	3.529	0.564	0–4
4	Attachment to Indonesia through diverse cultures living side by side	462	3.470	0.553	2–4
5	Attachment to Indonesia through cultural diversity and coexistence	462	3.481	0.554	0–4
6	Understanding Huma Betang as a way of living together amid differences	462	3.573	0.509	2–4
7	Respect for peers from different ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and customary backgrounds	462	**3.684**	0.488	1–4
8	Applying Belom Bahadat in attitudes, speech, and behavior	462	3.447	0.578	2–4
9	Viewing diversity as a valuable asset that should be protected	462	3.537	0.593	1–4
10	Resolving differences of opinion while respecting all parties	462	3.500	0.539	2–4
11	Understanding Huma Betang as a value of coexistence, unity, and respect for others	462	3.515	0.532	2–4
12	Prioritizing common interests over personal interests	462	**3.332**	0.636	0–4
13	Resolving differences through Hapakat/deliberation	462	3.482	0.627	0–4
14	Viewing Huma Betang togetherness as strengthening national unity	462	3.462	0.564	0–4
15	Willingness to cooperate with others regardless of background	462	3.437	0.563	1–4
16	Applying Handep Hapakat by helping others	462	3.491	0.528	2–4
17	Participating in activities beneficial to the school, community, or environment	462	3.445	0.572	0–4

No.	Item/Indicator (Brief Description)	N	Mean	SD	Minimum–Maximum
18	Understanding Handep Hapakat as mutual assistance and consensus-building	462	3.452	0.532	1–4
19	Fulfilling responsibilities as a contribution to communal life	462	3.466	0.534	2–4
20	Maintaining positive relationships with others and the environment as an expression of Belom Bahadat	462	3.494	0.510	2–4

Note

Responses were scored from 0 to 4, with higher scores indicating stronger agreement with the statements representing national identity and Dayak local wisdom values.

Table 3. **Descriptive Ranking of the 20 Items**

Table 3
Descriptive Ranking of the 20 Items

Rank	Item	Mean	SD	Minimum–Maximum	Category
1	7	**3.684**	0.488	1–4	High
2	1	**3.679**	0.473	2–4	High
3	2	**3.607**	0.495	2–4	High
4	6	**3.573**	0.509	2–4	High
5	9	**3.537**	0.593	1–4	High
6	3	**3.529**	0.564	0–4	High
7	11	**3.515**	0.532	2–4	High
8	10	**3.500**	0.539	2–4	High
9	20	**3.494**	0.510	2–4	High
10	16	**3.491**	0.528	2–4	High
11	13	**3.482**	0.627	0–4	High
12	5	**3.481**	0.554	0–4	High
13	4	**3.470**	0.553	2–4	High
14	19	**3.466**	0.534	2–4	High
15	14	**3.462**	0.564	0–4	High
16	18	**3.452**	0.532	1–4	High
17	8	**3.447**	0.578	2–4	High
18	17	**3.445**	0.572	0–4	High
19	15	**3.437**	0.563	1–4	High
20	12	**3.332**	0.636	0–4	High

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that students' national identity was at a high level, with a mean score of **3,55 on a 0–4 scale**, while students' understanding of the relationship between national identity and Dayak local wisdom was also high, with a mean score of **3.49**. Overall, the mean score across the 20 items reached **3,50**, indicating a strong tendency among students to accept and internalize national values as connected to their local cultural experiences.

At the item level, the most prominent aspect was **respect for peers from different ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and customary backgrounds** (M = 3,684). This finding indicates that appreciation of diversity represents one of the strongest manifestations of students' national identity. In contrast, the lowest score was found for students' willingness to **prioritize common interests over personal interests** (M = 3,332). This finding suggests that although a sense of togetherness has developed relatively well, the willingness to subordinate individual interests to collective interests still requires further strengthening through educational practice.

Substantively, the findings indicate that the philosophy of **Huma Betang**, the value of **Belom Bahadat**, and the spirit of **Handep/Hapakat** are relevant as cultural contexts for strengthening students' national identity. Values of togetherness, respect for differences, deliberation, mutual cooperation, responsibility, and concern for others can serve as a bridge between students' local cultural experiences and the values underlying Indonesian national life. Thus, local wisdom should not be viewed merely as cultural heritage that needs to be preserved, but can also be positioned as a **pedagogical resource for developing an inclusive and contextually grounded national identity**.

The findings imply that civic education and character education in schools need to provide more systematic opportunities for integrating local wisdom into students' learning experiences. Huma Betang-based learning can be developed through collaborative activities, deliberation, social projects, mutual cooperation, and collective problem-solving, allowing local values to move beyond cognitive understanding and become embedded in students' civic habits and practices. Future research could extend this line of inquiry by examining the **validity and reliability of the instrument**, employing inferential analyses, and applying longitudinal or experimental designs to investigate the extent to which local-wisdom-based learning contributes to the development of students' national identity.

Declarations

Funding Declaration

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Ethics Aproval

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles for research involving human participants and the applicable ethical regulations of Universitas Palangka Raya, Indonesia. Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Palangka Raya, Indonesia under Ethics Approval No. [5598/UN24.3/DT/2026],

dated [10-08-2026]. Permission to conduct the study was also obtained from the participating senior high schools in Palangka Raya, Indonesia.

Because the study involved senior high school students, including participants who were under 18 years of age, written informed consent was obtained from their parents or legal guardians prior to data collection. In addition, student assent was obtained from all participating students. Before providing consent or assent, participants and their parents or legal guardians were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the confidentiality of the information collected, and the right to decline or withdraw from the study at any time without academic or other consequences.

All research procedures involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the approved research protocol and applicable institutional ethical guidelines and regulations.

Informed consent

Written informed consent was obtained from the parents or legal guardians of all participants who were minors. Student assent was also obtained from the participating students before their involvement in the study. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study without penalty. No personally identifiable information was reported in the manuscript, and the research findings are presented in aggregate form to protect the identities of individual participants and participating schools.

Confidentiality and data protection

Participant confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. The questionnaire did not require participants to provide personally identifying information. All research data were coded and securely stored, with access restricted to authorised members of the research team. The data were used solely for research and scholarly publication purposes.

Author Contribution

Author ContributionsSK: Conceptualization, research design, methodology, instrument development, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and writing the original manuscript.DI: Data collection, investigation, data curation, and contribution to the manuscript review.WI: Methodological support, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and critical revision of the manuscript.AI: Investigation, data collection, interpretation of findings, and critical review of the manuscript.AS: Literature review, interpretation of findings, and critical revision of the manuscript.FR: Supervision, validation of the research process, critical revision of the manuscript, and final approval of the version to be submitted.All authors contributed to the discussion of the results, critically reviewed the manuscript, approved the final version, and agreed to be accountable for the work.

Data Availability

The research data has been uploaded to the Google Drive database available at the following URL: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1x4SFk4BkjJxGzjjbcRQYUdeXmjwJnmvQ/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115178428568097291447&rtpof=true&sd=true

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