



CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING LEARNING MODEL FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN PADANGSIDIMPUAN CITY

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Abstract

Developing students' social character is a global educational priority, particularly in culturally diverse contexts. However, PISA 2018 findings indicate that Indonesian students demonstrate low cultural appreciation and social awareness. This issue is also evident at the local level, including in Padangsidempuan, where elementary students show limited environmental responsibility and social engagement. Despite the relevance of culturally responsive teaching (CRT), existing models often lack systematic integration of local cultural values. This study addresses this gap by developing a CRT model based on *poda na lima* to strengthen students' social character. This research employed an educational design research approach using the Plomp model, involving preliminary investigation, design, realization, testing, evaluation, and revision. The study involved 106 fourth-grade students and included limited and field trials. Data were collected through expert validation, questionnaires, observations, and tests, and analyzed descriptively. The results show that the model is highly valid (89.88%), practical (student responses increased from 74.75% to 86.42%; teacher responses from 79.14% to 89.37%), and effective, with students' social character improving from 78.33% to 86.66% and learning outcomes from 77 to 86.6. This study contributes theoretically to culturally responsive pedagogy, practically by providing a structured learning model, and at the policy level by supporting the integration of local wisdom in character education.

Keywords: *Culturally Responsive Teaching*, Pancasila and Civic Education, Poda Na Lima, Social Character.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's extensive ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity constitutes a fundamental component of its national identity and serves as a strategic resource for fostering social cohesion. Within the educational context, this diversity should function not merely as content to be acknowledged, but as a pedagogical foundation for cultivating Pancasila values and responsible citizenship (Lubis et al., 2025). However, in practice, instructional processes in many elementary schools remain insufficiently connected to students' sociocultural backgrounds, resulting in learning experiences that are often decontextualized and less effective in fostering students' social character.

This issue becomes increasingly significant when examined from both global and local perspectives. At the global level, findings from PISA 2018 indicate that Indonesian students demonstrate relatively low levels of cultural appreciation and social awareness (OECD, 2020). This condition reflects a broader educational challenge in which students' cultural identity and social responsibility are not yet optimally developed. At the local level, preliminary observations conducted in elementary schools in Padangsidempuan reveal parallel concerns. Students tend to exhibit low environmental awareness and social responsibility, as indicated by their limited initiative in maintaining classroom cleanliness without explicit teacher instruction. The alignment between global findings and local classroom realities underscores a systemic issue and highlights the urgency of developing instructional approaches that integrate academic learning with culturally grounded character formation.

In response to these challenges, Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) offers a relevant pedagogical framework by emphasizing the integration of students' cultural backgrounds into the learning process, thereby enhancing the meaningfulness and engagement of learning (Gay, 2000). Culture-based learning enables students to connect academic knowledge with their lived experiences, which contributes to the development of cultural identity, social awareness, and active participation (Aikenhead, 2000). However, despite its theoretical relevance, the implementation of CRT in practice often remains general and lacks deep contextualization with specific local cultural values. As noted by Lim et al. (2019), culturally responsive pedagogy frequently faces limitations in its practical application, particularly in terms of integrating indigenous cultural knowledge into structured learning models.

Within the sociocultural context of Padangsidempuan, the local wisdom of *poda na lima* represents a highly relevant and contextually grounded value system. Rooted in the cultural traditions of the Angkola community, *poda na lima* emphasizes five dimensions of cleanliness: cleanliness of the heart, body, clothing, house, and environment (Hamidah et al., 2025). These dimensions extend beyond physical hygiene to encompass moral integrity and social responsibility, aligning closely with core Pancasila values such as cooperation, discipline, responsibility, and social harmony. Importantly, these values directly correspond to the

behavioral issues identified in preliminary observations, particularly those related to environmental awareness and social conduct among students. Therefore, compared to other forms of local wisdom, *poda na lima* offers a more concrete, observable, and habit-oriented framework that is particularly suitable for strengthening students' social character in elementary education.

Previous studies have demonstrated that the integration of local cultural values into learning can enhance students' character development and awareness of national identity (Fitriani et al., 2024). However, most of these studies tend to focus on partial or descriptive integration of culture without developing a systematically structured instructional model. Furthermore, existing learning models often lack explicit mechanisms that link cultural values with measurable outcomes in students' social character. This indicates a clear research gap, namely the limited availability of comprehensive and validated learning models that integrate CRT principles with specific indigenous cultural values such as *poda na lima*. Addressing this gap is essential to strengthen both the theoretical foundation and practical implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy in elementary education.

The present study is grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which posits that cognitive and social development are fundamentally shaped by social interaction and cultural context. From this perspective, cultural values function as mediating tools that influence how students construct knowledge and develop behavior. In this study, *poda na lima* is conceptualized as a cultural mediating tool that guides students' social interactions and character formation. The integration of these values within the CRT framework enables students to engage in meaningful learning experiences that simultaneously foster cognitive development and social character.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to develop a culturally responsive learning model for Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) by integrating *poda na lima* values to strengthen elementary students' social character. Specifically, this study seeks to examine the validity, practicality, and effectiveness of the developed CRT model in supporting culturally grounded character education in elementary school contexts.

METHODS

This study employed a research and development (R&D) design using the Plomp development model, which consists of the following phases: preliminary investigation, design, realization, testing, evaluation, and revision. This approach was selected to systematically develop and validate a culturally responsive learning model, particularly in response to the limited capacity of teachers to design and implement contextually appropriate instructional models in PPKn.

The research was conducted in three public elementary schools in Padangsidempuan,

namely SD Negeri 200402, SD Negeri 200405, and SD Negeri 200407. These schools were purposively selected based on their classification as relatively remote areas. In this study, the term “remote area” refers to several contextual indicators, including limited accessibility to educational resources, distance from the city center, inadequate learning facilities, and minimal exposure to innovative pedagogical practices. These conditions often result in conventional teacher-centered instruction and limited integration of contextual or culturally responsive learning approaches. Therefore, these settings were considered appropriate for examining the urgency and relevance of developing a culturally grounded instructional model.

The sample consisted of 106 fourth-grade students, selected using a purposive sampling technique to ensure that participants were representative of the research context and aligned with the objectives of the study. A panel of 10 experts was involved in the validation process to assess the quality of the developed CRT learning model and its supporting instructional tools. To enhance the credibility and academic rigor of the validation process, the expert team was composed based on relevant fields of expertise. Specifically, the panel included: (1) experts in PPKn to evaluate content relevance and alignment with curriculum standards; (2) experts in culturally responsive pedagogy and instructional design to assess the appropriateness of the CRT framework; (3) experts in Angkola local culture to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of *poda na lima* value integration; and (4) experts in educational evaluation and measurement to examine the validity and reliability of the research instruments. This multidisciplinary composition ensured that the developed model was reviewed from pedagogical, cultural, and methodological perspectives.

Data were collected through questionnaires, observations, and tests. Questionnaire data were obtained from expert validation sheets assessing the CRT model support system, including the model book, lesson plans (RPP), teacher’s book (BG), student’s book (BS), and student worksheets (LKS). Observation data were gathered to evaluate students’ social character during the learning process, focusing on indicators such as cleanliness behavior (*poda na lima*), responsibility, equality, trustworthiness, and integrity. Test data were used to measure students’ cognitive learning outcomes related to the topic of ethnic, cultural, and social diversity within the framework of national unity. All collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques to determine the validity, practicality, and effectiveness of the developed learning model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preliminary Investigation

The preliminary investigation stage aimed to identify problems in the implementation of PPKn learning and to explore the potential integration of cultural values into classroom

instruction. Observations were conducted in grade IV classrooms at three public elementary schools in Padangsidempuan: SD Negeri 200402, SD Negeri 200405, and SD Negeri 200407.

The results revealed several instructional limitations. Learning activities were largely teacher-centered, with teachers relying on direct instruction and textbook-based explanations. Students primarily listened to lectures, took notes, and completed routine assignments. Opportunities for group discussion, collaborative work, and contextual problem solving were limited. Consequently, students' participation in knowledge construction and social interaction during learning was relatively low.

Another important issue identified was the limited integration of cultural perspectives into the learning process. Teachers rarely connected the learning material with students' cultural backgrounds or everyday experiences. Cultural values that could support character development, such as *poda na lima*, had not been systematically integrated into the curriculum. As a result, the learning process did not fully support the development of students' social character or cultural awareness.

These findings indicate the need for an instructional approach that connects learning with students' sociocultural contexts while encouraging active participation. Therefore, a CRT learning model integrating the cultural values of *poda na lima* was proposed to enhance both academic understanding and social character development.

Design

The design stage focused on developing the structure of the CRT learning model, supporting learning tools, and research instruments. The development process was guided by philosophical, psychological, sociological, and practical considerations to ensure that the model addressed both cognitive and social aspects of learning.

The CRT model was structured into five sequential stages: Self-identification, Cultural understanding, Collaboration, Action, and Critical reflections. The Self-identification stage encourages students to explore their cultural identities. Students share information about their family traditions, languages, and customs, while teachers facilitate this activity using visual media such as maps, pictures, and videos. Through this process, students begin to recognize cultural diversity within the classroom and relate it to the cultural values of *poda na lima*.

The Cultural understanding stage focuses on developing students' awareness of cultural diversity. Teachers introduce examples of cultural practices through stories, songs, and visual materials. Students analyze similarities and differences between cultural practices and compare them with the values embedded in *poda na lima*, particularly those related to physical and moral cleanliness.

In the Collaboration stage, students work in heterogeneous groups to share knowledge and complete collaborative tasks. One of the main activities involves creating a cultural diversity map that illustrates cleanliness traditions from different regions in Indonesia. This stage encourages cooperation, mutual respect, and intercultural understanding.

The Action stage emphasizes the practical application of cultural values. Students implement the principles of *poda na lima* through everyday practices such as maintaining personal cleanliness, keeping their environment clean, and demonstrating respectful behavior toward others. Finally, the Critical reflections stage allows students to evaluate their learning experiences and reflect on how the values learned can influence their attitudes and behavior in daily life. In addition to the learning model, several supporting learning tools were developed, including RPP, BG, BS, LKS, and a CRT learning model guidebook.



Figure 1. CRT Learning Model Support System

The supporting instructional tools developed in this study including the lesson plan (RPP), CRT model book, teacher's book, student's book, and student worksheets (LKS) function as an integrated system to operationalize the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) model in PPKn. The RPP provides a structured guide for implementing CRT stages in classroom practice, while the CRT model book serves as a conceptual reference outlining the theoretical foundation and procedural framework of the model. The teacher's book supports educators in facilitating culturally responsive learning by offering instructional strategies and guidance, whereas the student's book contextualizes learning materials based on students' sociocultural backgrounds. Meanwhile, the LKS promotes active engagement through collaborative and reflective activities aligned with *poda na lima* values. Collectively, these tools ensure that the CRT model is not only theoretically grounded but also practically applicable,

enabling teachers to systematically integrate cultural values into learning and effectively strengthen students' social character.

Realization

During the realization stage, the initial prototype of the CRT learning model and its supporting materials was produced. This prototype consisted of the CRT model book, structured RPP, BG, BS, and LKS designed to facilitate the implementation of CRT stages.

The RPP were designed to organize classroom activities according to the CRT learning phases, ensuring that each stage was implemented systematically. The teacher guide provided detailed instructions on how to facilitate culturally responsive learning activities and encourage students' participation.

Meanwhile, the BS presented contextual learning materials related to ethnic and cultural diversity in Indonesia, including the cultural values of *poda na lima*. The LKS were designed to support collaborative activities, critical thinking, and reflective learning. At this stage, the prototype served as the initial instructional product (prototype 1) that would be evaluated through validation and classroom trials.

Testing

The testing stage involved validating the CRT learning model and implementing it in classroom trials. Expert validation was conducted to assess the quality of the model book and its supporting learning tools. The results showed significant improvement between validation stages. Initially, the CRT learning model book received a validity score of 61.62%, categorized as less valid. After revisions based on expert feedback, the score increased to 89.88%, indicating that the model met the criteria for high validity.

Similarly, the supporting learning tools RPP, BG, BS, and LKS were evaluated by experts and showed improvements from valid to very valid categories. These results indicate that the instructional materials were appropriate for classroom implementation. Following the validation process, the model was tested through two classroom trials involving students from the three participating schools.

Evaluation

The evaluation stage aimed to assess the effectiveness and practicality of the developed CRT learning model integrated with *poda na lima* values. Quantitative findings indicate a consistent improvement across implementation cycles. Students' social character scores increased from 78.33% in the first trial to 86.66% in the second trial. Similarly, students' cognitive learning outcomes improved from an average score of 77 to 86.6. The implementation of the learning model also demonstrated a high level of feasibility, with an implementation score of 82.2%, while the effectiveness of the supporting instructional tools reached 84.15%.

In addition to these quantitative results, qualitative observations revealed significant

behavioral changes during the Action and Critical Reflection stages. During the Action stage, students were actively engaged in practicing the five values of *poda na lima* through concrete activities such as organizing classroom cleaning schedules, maintaining personal hygiene, arranging learning spaces collaboratively, and reminding peers to uphold cleanliness norms. These activities fostered a shift from teacher-dependent behavior toward self-initiated responsibility. For instance, students who initially ignored classroom cleanliness began to voluntarily participate in maintaining their environment without external prompts.

Furthermore, during collaborative tasks, students demonstrated improved social interactions characterized by mutual respect and shared responsibility. They not only completed group assignments but also negotiated roles, supported peers who faced difficulties, and collectively ensured that tasks were completed in an orderly and responsible manner. This indicates that the implementation of *poda na lima* values extended beyond physical cleanliness into the development of social awareness and cooperation.

The Critical Reflection stage further reinforced these behavioral changes. Students were encouraged to reflect on their experiences in applying *poda na lima* values in both classroom and daily life contexts. Reflection activities revealed that students became more aware of the relationship between personal behavior and collective well-being. For example, students expressed an understanding that maintaining environmental cleanliness contributes to comfort, mutual respect, and harmonious interaction within the classroom. This reflective process played a crucial role in transforming habitual actions into internalized values, thereby strengthening students' social character in a sustainable manner.

Revision

The revision stage was conducted after the first trial to improve aspects of the learning model and its supporting materials. Feedback from experts, teachers, and students was used to refine instructional strategies, learning activities, and evaluation instruments. After revisions were implemented, the second trial demonstrated improved levels of effectiveness and practicality. The final results indicate that the CRT learning model integrated with *poda na lima* values successfully enhances students' understanding of cultural diversity while strengthening their social character. Overall, the study confirms that the developed model meets the criteria of validity, practicality, and effectiveness, making it suitable for implementation in PPKn learning at the elementary school level.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the CRT learning model integrated with *poda na lima* values is not only quantitatively effective but also qualitatively transformative in shaping students' social character. The observed behavioral changes confirm that culturally grounded learning facilitates deeper internalization of values compared to conventional instructional approaches.

A more detailed analysis reveals a strong conceptual alignment between the five dimensions of *poda na lima* and the measured aspects of social character. First, *cleanliness of the heart* (paias rohamu) contributes to the development of integrity and trustworthiness. Through reflective activities, students learned to regulate emotions, respect others' perspectives, and act honestly in group interactions. Second, *cleanliness of the body* (paias pamatangmu) reinforces discipline and personal responsibility, as students consistently practiced self-care and adhered to agreed classroom norms. Third, *cleanliness of clothing* (paias parabitonmu) supports the development of self-respect and equality, as students became more aware of presenting themselves appropriately without discriminating against peers' backgrounds. Fourth, *cleanliness of the house* (paias bagasmu) fosters responsibility and cooperation, which were reflected in students' ability to collaboratively manage shared classroom spaces. Finally, *cleanliness of the environment* (paias pakaranganmu) strengthens social awareness and collective responsibility, as students actively participated in maintaining a clean and conducive learning environment.

This explicit linkage demonstrates that *poda na lima* functions not only as cultural knowledge but also as a structured moral framework that directly supports the development of measurable social character dimensions. Compared to conventional learning, which often delivers character education in abstract terms, the integration of *poda na lima* provides concrete behavioral references that are easily understood and practiced by students.

These findings are consistent with the principles of culturally responsive teaching, which emphasize the importance of connecting learning with students' lived experiences (Gay, 2000; Aikenhead, 2000). When cultural values are embedded within instructional processes, students are more likely to engage meaningfully and internalize the intended values. This study also supports Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which posits that learning is mediated by cultural tools and social interaction. In this context, *poda na lima* serves as a cultural mediating tool that guides students' behavior and social interactions, enabling the construction of socially meaningful knowledge.

Freely structured learning can develop students' soft skills, including environmental awareness, creativity, responsibility, and diligence (Feraco et al., 2023). Students can act as agents of environmental change, practice *poda na lima* values, and share experiences in environmental management (Arief et al., 2022). Considering students' backgrounds and needs emotional, social, linguistic, or economic helps tailor support and enhance learning (Liagkoura et al., 2023).

In terms of novelty, this study offers a significant contribution to the development of culturally responsive pedagogy by integrating *poda na lima* values into a systematically structured CRT learning model. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on general cultural integration (Fitriani et al., 2024) or isolated character education practices, this research provides a comprehensive instructional framework that explicitly links cultural values, learning activities, and character outcomes. Furthermore, while examples from other contexts, such as character

education practices in schools like Westside Elementary in Georgia (in McElmeel, 2002), emphasize general values such as cleanliness and responsibility, they do not incorporate culturally specific value systems that are deeply rooted in students' identities.

This study shows that the CRT learning model can enhance elementary students' social character. Similar findings by Azizan et al. (2025) at MIN 1 Padangsidempuan reported significant improvements in citizenship scores and student engagement. Teaching Pancasila values and preparing students for social life are closely linked (Khusna et al., 2022). PPKn aims to develop responsible students who understand societal issues, find solutions, and foster Indonesian unity by applying national cultural values and historical lessons.

Nationalist character involves prioritizing public over personal interests, showing devotion, concern, and upholding socio-cultural values, reflected in respect for culture, willingness to sacrifice, skill excellence, love for the country, environmental care, law obedience, self-discipline, and tolerance (Sanjaya et al., 2021). Learning based on local wisdom helps students understand regional customs, culture, values, and norms (Nurfurqon et al., 2023).

One of the mandatory attitudes that students must possess is social attitude. Social attitude is the tendency to act positively or negatively in specific social situations. Students' character will develop through experience and a continuous learning process. Good student character is characterized by values and ethics. Good character improves the quality of education in schools, and through good character formation, students receive a complete, comprehensive, and balanced education that meets standards (Sanjayanti et al., 2022).

The teaching and learning process, and the environment, refer to the school. The environment plays a crucial role in ensuring an effective teaching and learning process. Schools equipped with a variety of resources can support the teaching and learning process and deliver quality education. Students' academic achievement should ideally be the main goal of learning activities.

When the learning process is complete, assessment activities are continued using quizzes and homework to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding. Therefore, teachers have a very important influence in determining PPKn learning patterns in schools. Fernández- Berrocal and Pacheco (in Huynh et al., 2023) once said that elementary school teachers function as emotional role models for students. The role of teachers as key agents of change and providers of high-quality pedagogical processes that ensure the transfer of educational experiences. Teachers are expected to be role models for students, who acquire competencies that they will later apply (Pavitola et al., 2021).

Constructivist theory emphasizes that students interpret information through experiences they can observe and explore (Santhalia et al., 2020), and active learning builds knowledge gradually (Mercat, 2022). Elementary students benefit from participating in charitable and humanitarian activities, which foster empathy, patriotism, gratitude, altruism, and positive

behavior Loi (2021). Such experiences also enhance students' readiness to face real- world challenges (Yuliaty et al., 2020).

In contrast, the integration of Angkola local wisdom in this study demonstrates a more contextualized and meaningful approach to character education. By embedding *poda na lima* within the CRT framework, this model effectively bridges the gap between formal curriculum content and students' sociocultural realities. This contextual alignment not only enhances students' engagement but also ensures that character values are internalized as part of their daily practices rather than merely understood as abstract concepts.

Overall, the findings highlight that the CRT learning model based on *poda na lima* is both pedagogically effective and culturally relevant. It provides a practical and theoretically grounded approach to strengthening students' social character while preserving local cultural wisdom. Therefore, this model has strong potential to be adapted and implemented in other educational contexts, particularly in regions with rich cultural diversity.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to develop and validate a culturally responsive teaching (CRT) model integrated with *poda na lima* values to strengthen elementary students' social character in PPKn. The findings provide clear answers to the research questions. First, the developed model is empirically valid, as indicated by high expert validation results, demonstrating that its conceptual framework, instructional design, and cultural integration are theoretically sound. Second, the model is practically feasible, as reflected in positive responses from both teachers and students, indicating that it can be implemented effectively in real classroom settings. Third, the model is proven to be effective in improving students' social character, as evidenced by significant increases in social character scores and observable behavioral changes, particularly in responsibility, cooperation, and environmental awareness.

Beyond these findings, this study shows that the integration of *poda na lima* values within the CRT framework enables students to internalize social character through concrete, culturally meaningful practices. This confirms that culturally grounded learning not only enhances academic outcomes but also fosters sustainable character development.

However, this study has several limitations. The sample was limited to 106 students from three elementary schools in a specific local context, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the use of a descriptive statistical approach limits deeper causal analysis of the model's impact. The relatively short duration of the implementation also restricts the ability to examine long-term effects on students' character development.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. From a practical perspective, teachers are encouraged to integrate local cultural values into instructional design to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of learning. From a policy perspective, educational stakeholders

should consider incorporating local wisdom-based approaches, such as *poda na lima*, into curriculum development and teacher training programs to strengthen character education. Future research is recommended to test this model in broader contexts, across different regions, grade levels, and subjects, as well as to employ more rigorous analytical methods to examine long-term impacts.

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