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Building Students' Historical Awareness through Local History of Pue Lasadindi: A Descriptive Qualitative Study at SMAN 5 Palu

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A B S T R A C T

The research investigates how SMAN 5 Palu students build their historical knowledge through local history studies about Pue Lasadindi. The research is motivated by the low level of students' understanding and awareness of local history, which is often less emphasized in classroom learning. The researchers utilized qualitative descriptive research method to investigate how the implementation process affects student learning outcomes. The research team collected data through observation and interviews and documentation work which included the school principal and one history teacher and students from class X Merdeka. The results show that using local historical knowledge in history education together with interactive learning materials and Problem Based Learning methods increases student participation and makes learning easier for them. Students demonstrate improved historical awareness reflected in their ability to appreciate local heroes, understand historical values, and develop a sense of identity and nationalism. The teacher establishes essential learning activities which help students connect their historical knowledge to their everyday experiences. The study shows that local history helps students learn both cognitive and emotional skills, so historians should use it more systematically in their teaching to enhance students' historical understanding.

1. Introduction

History education plays an essential role in helping students understand past events while simultaneously developing their personal identity, national identity, and character. In the learning process, history should not only be taught as a collection of facts to be memorized, but also as a medium for understanding values, meanings, and their relevance to present and future life. Students are expected to not only acquire knowledge but also develop awareness of historical values that shape their

attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, history education must integrate both cognitive and affective aspects to ensure that students can interpret historical events and apply their meanings in real-life contexts. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on contextual and meaningful learning approaches in education. One of the approaches that has gained attention is the integration of local history into history learning, which allows students to engage more deeply with the subject matter. Local history makes learning more relevant because it connects historical content with students' everyday lives and cultural environments.

Local history enables students to learn about events within their own community, making history more meaningful and easier to understand. It helps students connect historical knowledge with real-life experiences while fostering a sense of belonging, identity, and character development. Previous studies show that local history serves as an effective educational tool for building historical understanding and individual identity (Syahputra et al., 2020). Research by Rahman and Prasetyo (2024) also indicates that students gain a better understanding of local history through materials related to regional figures, while Syahputra et al. (2020) emphasize its role in strengthening identity formation. In addition, integrating cultural perspectives into learning strengthens students' character and cultural awareness (Azzahra et al., 2025).

However, in practice, history learning in schools still tends to focus more on national history than local history. As a result, students often have limited knowledge about historical events that occurred in their own region. Many students are more familiar with national heroes than with local figures who contributed significantly to regional struggles. This condition creates a gap between students' historical knowledge and their cultural environment. When students do not understand their local history, they may find it difficult to connect historical concepts with their daily lives. Research indicates that limited contextual learning can reduce students' ability to relate knowledge to real-life situations and weaken their engagement in learning (Adriana et al., 2025). Therefore, the integration of local history into classroom learning becomes an important effort to address this issue and improve students' historical awareness.

In addition to the issue of content, the rapid development of the digital era has also influenced students' learning preferences and behaviors. Students today tend to prefer interactive learning approaches that involve active participation rather than passive learning through lectures. Monotonous teaching methods can lead to decreased student motivation and engagement in learning history. As a result, students may perceive history as a less interesting subject. To address this challenge, teachers are required to design innovative learning strategies that can make history learning more engaging and meaningful. Research shows that the use of interactive and technology-based learning strategies can significantly improve students' motivation and participation in the learning process (Islami et al., 2025). History learning in the current era needs to be innovative in order to increase students' interest and awareness, as well as to develop critical-analytical and creative thinking skills so that learning objectives can be achieved and students' character can be formed (Rahima Safitri H., 2019). Therefore, integrating media

and interactive methods into history education is essential in improving the quality of learning in the digital era.

Teachers play a crucial role in creating effective and meaningful learning environments. They are not only responsible for delivering content but also for facilitating students' learning experiences. Teachers need to connect historical material with students' real-life contexts to make learning more relevant. One example of local history that can be used as a learning resource is the struggle of Pue Lasadindi in Central Sulawesi. Pue Lasadindi is a local historical figure whose struggle reflects important values such as courage, leadership, and patriotism. These values are essential for students' character development. The research conducted by Handy (2021) demonstrates that history education plays a vital role in helping students develop their understanding of historical events and national identity. The research studies demonstrate that teaching local historical content to students enables educators to enhance their history instruction methods. The use of local history as a teaching tool in schools needs improvement according to research findings which show that teachers still struggle to use this resource for classroom instruction. In addition, research also indicates that contextual and value-based learning can strengthen students' character and understanding (Rizal et al., 2025).

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of using appropriate learning models in history education. Student-centered learning approaches, such as Problem Based Learning, provide opportunities for students to actively engage in the learning process. Through active participation, students are able to construct their own understanding and develop critical thinking skills. Research indicates that Problem Based Learning can enhance students' reasoning abilities and engagement in classroom activities (Purba et al., 2025). These findings suggest that combining appropriate learning models with local historical content can create more effective and meaningful learning experiences. Therefore, the integration of local history and innovative learning models is considered an important strategy in improving history education.

Another important aspect in educational research is the use of appropriate research methods to understand learning processes. Qualitative research describes and interprets social events that occur in real life because it delivers complete information that quantitative approaches cannot provide (Sugiyono, 2014). This approach allows researchers to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and interactions in the learning process in depth. In the context of history education, qualitative research is particularly useful for understanding how students develop historical awareness through learning activities. Therefore, qualitative methods are considered appropriate for examining the implementation of local history learning in schools.

Based on the problems and previous studies described above, this study aims to examine how local history, particularly the struggle of Pue Lasadindi, is used in history learning to build students' historical awareness at SMAN 5 Palu. This study focuses on analyzing how teachers implement local history learning and how students respond to the learning process. In addition, this study aims to explore how

learning strategies, such as Problem Based Learning and the use of instructional media, can enhance students' engagement and historical awareness. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of history education by providing insights into effective ways of integrating local history into classroom learning. Ultimately, local history is expected to function as a meaningful educational tool that not only improves students' historical understanding but also strengthens their identity, character, and cultural awareness in contemporary society.

2. Methodology

Research Approach

The researchers used qualitative research to conduct their study through a descriptive research approach. The researchers selected qualitative research because their collected data consisted mostly of verbal information and narration and visual elements instead of numerical data. The researcher uses this method to explain social phenomena by investigating their original social environments. The descriptive qualitative method aims to provide a clear and systematic picture of how teachers build students' historical awareness through local history learning. According to Sugiyono (2017), researchers use qualitative research as a naturalistic method because they study real-world settings while analyzing data through qualitative methods. Researchers use this method to study how Pue Lasadindi local history education helps students develop their historical awareness.

Research Subjects

The research took place at SMAN 5 Palu which is situated in Mantikulore District of Palu City. The researchers selected this site because the school has begun teaching local history through its history curriculum even though its execution remains incomplete. The study took place between December 2025 and February 2026 after researchers conducted their initial observation on May 8 2025. The research subjects included the school principal, a history teacher, and students of class X Merdeka. The researchers selected these participants because they participated in teaching local history about the Pue Lasadindi struggle which supplied essential information and extensive data needed for the research.

Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study consisted of observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and documentation tools. The observation guidelines were used to assess the school environment together with the learning activities and the application of local history as an educational resource. Interview guidelines were designed to collect detailed information from the principal, teacher, and students about their opinions on local history learning. The study used documentation, which included photos, teaching materials, and school records, to back up and confirm the information that researchers obtained through their observations and interviews.

Data Collection Techniques

Researchers used three primary methods to collect data which included observation, interviews, and documentation. The researchers conducted observations to observe teaching and learning activities while studying the integration of local history into classroom instruction. The researchers conducted interviews using two different methods, which included structured and unstructured interviews. The structured interviews used predetermined questions to investigate how local history content was integrated into educational programs, while the unstructured interviews permitted participants to answer questions in their own words. This combination enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive and detailed information. Documentation served to enhance data validity because it presents confirmation of past events and activities that happened (Sugiyono, 2014).

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis in this study followed three main steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The researchers conducted data reduction by selecting and simplifying essential data which helped them achieve their research targets. The presentation of data to the audience used descriptive methods which created better understanding and learning opportunities. The analysis revealed patterns and relationships which formed the basis for drawing conclusions. The systematic process guarantees that research findings represent accurate information about the studied phenomenon.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the use of local history, particularly the struggle of Pue Lasadindi, plays an important role in building students' historical awareness at SMAN 5 Palu. The findings are based on observations, interviews, and documentation involving the principal, history teacher, and students. The initial condition of students shows that most of them have limited knowledge of local history, where students are generally more familiar with national historical figures than local figures from their own region. This condition indicates that local history has not been optimally integrated into classroom learning, which consequently affects students' awareness and engagement in learning history. This occurs because learning that is not contextual makes it difficult for students to relate historical knowledge to their own environment, resulting in low personal relevance and awareness. These findings are consistent with previous studies in the Journal of Educational Sciences which emphasize that students' awareness and character development are closely influenced by meaningful and contextual learning experiences (Aprillia & Primahardani, 2025). This study also shows that history learning should not only focus on knowledge transfer but also on the development of students' identity and character. Through local history, students are able to connect historical knowledge with their own environment, making learning more meaningful and practical. This indicates that contextual learning functions as a bridge between knowledge and real-life experience, which is essential in

developing historical awareness. This is supported by student statements: "Before learning local history, I did not know much about fighters in Central Sulawesi. I only knew figures like Raja Tombolotutu and Datok Karamah." (Student Interview – Fatur).

This shows that students initially lacked awareness of local historical figures, which also affected their interest in learning history. This finding suggests that the absence of local context in learning materials can limit students' emotional connection to history. The importance of teaching local history is further emphasized by the history teacher: "Local history is very important to be taught to students because it can build their awareness. By learning about Pue Lasadindi, students can feel proud of their own region." (Interview with History Teacher, Mu'Minin). Similarly, the school principal also stated: "Learning local history is important so students know the events and figures in Central Sulawesi, not only national history from Java." (Interview with Principal).

These findings are supported by research in the Journal of Educational Sciences which shows that the use of historical figures in learning can strengthen students' sense of identity, cultural awareness, and character formation (Effendi et al., 2026). This explains that historical figures act as value carriers that allow students to internalize moral and cultural meanings, not merely historical facts.

During the learning process, the teacher applied Problem Based Learning (PBL) supported by media such as PowerPoint, videos, and images. Based on observations, students showed active participation during the lesson, as they were involved in discussions, asked questions, and responded to the material presented by the teacher. This happens because PBL positions students as active problem-solvers, which encourages deeper cognitive engagement and interaction. The implementation of PBL encourages students to construct their own understanding through problem-solving activities, which is essential in developing critical thinking and historical awareness.

This finding is in line with research in the Journal of Educational Sciences which highlights that student activeness is a key factor in meaningful learning, and learning models that promote participation significantly improve engagement and understanding (Meldayani et al., 2025). Handy (2021) states that history education which requires students to take active part in their learning helps learners develop both historical understanding and national identity. Thus, PBL not only improves participation but also strengthens the process of meaning-making in history learning. This confirms that active learning approaches such as PBL are essential in developing both cognitive and identity aspects of students. Before presenting the following documentation, it is important to show how media supports learning activities, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Teaching Materials used in Local History Learning

The use of visual media helps students to better understand historical events and makes the learning process more engaging. Students are not only listening but also actively observing and interpreting the material. This indicates that visual representation supports dual processing (verbal and visual), which enhances comprehension and retention of historical concepts. This is reinforced by the teacher's statement: "Before starting the lesson, I do ice breaking and use media such as PowerPoint and documentary videos so students can focus and understand the material clearly." (Interview with Teacher).

This finding is consistent with studies in the Journal of Educational Sciences which reveal that the use of interactive and technology-based media significantly enhances students' motivation and learning outcomes, especially in subjects that require visualization such as history (Murni et al., 2025). This is also supported by research which shows that local culture-based history learning supported by audiovisual media can enhance students' motivation, engagement, and historical thinking skills (Juraid, 2006). Therefore, media integration functions not only as a supporting tool but as a key component in creating meaningful and engaging learning experiences. Based on observations, students showed changes in behavior during the learning process, as they became more active, enthusiastic, and willing to participate in discussions. Students also expressed positive responses toward local history learning:

"Learning local history is very interesting because we learn about events in our own region." (Student Interview – Panji Satria).

This indicates that contextual learning makes history more meaningful for students, as they can directly relate the material to their own social and cultural background. This suggests that relevance is a critical factor in increasing student motivation and engagement. Such findings support the idea that meaningful learning occurs when students are actively involved and can connect knowledge with real-life contexts. Further evidence is shown through documentation of the interview process, as presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Interview with History Teacher

The documentation confirms that data collection was conducted directly and supports the validity of the findings. In addition, students demonstrated an increased level of historical awareness, which can be seen from their ability to explain historical events, understand values, and express pride in local history. “I feel proud of Pue Lasadindi because he was not only a fighter but also a religious leader.” (Student Interview – Nayla).

This finding is in line with studies in the Journal of Educational Sciences which emphasize that awareness in learning involves not only cognitive understanding but also emotional and identity-based dimensions (Hestiaty et al., 2025). This shows that historical awareness is formed through the integration of knowledge, emotion, and identity. Students also began to internalize important values such as leadership, courage, and struggle.

“From this material, we learned values such as leadership, courage, and justice.” (Student Interview – Diah). Another student stated:
“After learning this, I understand that there are also heroes from my own region.” (Student Interview – Ketut Ari).

These findings show that the use of local history contributes to character building, as students are able to extract moral values from historical figures and apply them in their daily lives. Previous research shows that local history functions as a method to transmit values which helps students build their attitudes (Rahman & Prasetyo, 2024). This supports previous findings in the Journal of Educational Sciences which indicate that value-based learning plays an important role in shaping students’ character and social awareness (Effendi et al., 2026). Therefore, local history learning not only transfers knowledge but also facilitates value internalization and character formation. Before presenting the next documentation, it is necessary to show student learning activities, which include observation and reflection processes carried out during the learning implementation as illustrated in Figure 3.

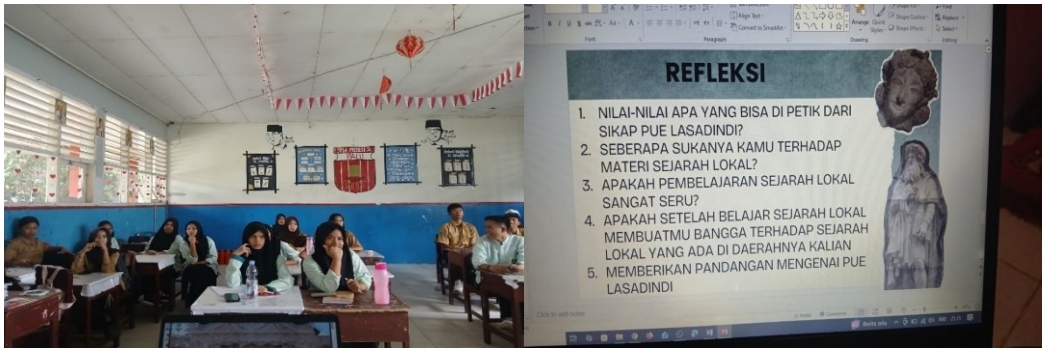

Figure 3. Student Observation and Reflection Activities

The observation results show that students became more active and reflective during the learning process. Based on triangulation of observation, interviews, and documentation, it can be concluded that the use of local history significantly contributes to the development of students' historical awareness. Students show increased interest, better understanding, and stronger emotional attachment to their local history. However, this study also identifies several challenges, such as limited learning resources and time constraints, which require teachers to be more creative and adaptive. This indicates that successful implementation depends not only on the learning model but also on institutional support and resource availability. Therefore, support from educational institutions and continuous innovation in teaching strategies are necessary to optimize the implementation of local history learning. The research method according to Sugiyono (2014) helps educational researchers understand teaching practices through qualitative research which reveals their complexities while providing ways to enhance teaching methods. These findings clearly answer the research objective, namely that the integration of local history, Problem Based Learning, and instructional media is effective in building students' historical awareness through contextual and meaningful learning. Furthermore, this study contributes to the field of history education by demonstrating that integrating local history with student-centered learning approaches can be applied in other educational contexts to enhance students' engagement, awareness, and character development. Overall, these findings confirm that integrating local history with interactive learning models is an effective approach to enhancing students' historical awareness, engagement, and character development.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of local history, particularly the struggle of Pue Lasadindi, plays a significant role in enhancing students' historical awareness at SMAN 5 Palu. The findings show that students initially had limited knowledge of local historical figures, which affected their engagement and understanding of history. However, through the implementation of contextual learning, supported by Problem Based Learning (PBL) and instructional media, students demonstrated increased participation, deeper understanding, and stronger emotional connection to historical content. This indicates that meaningful and

student-centered learning approaches are effective in bridging the gap between historical knowledge and students' real-life experiences.

Furthermore, the use of local history not only improves students' cognitive understanding but also contributes to the development of character values such as leadership, courage, and patriotism. Students were able to internalize these values and express a sense of pride in their local identity, showing that historical awareness involves both cognitive and affective dimensions. These findings confirm that integrating local history with interactive and contextual learning strategies is an effective approach to improving the quality of history education. This study also highlights that successful implementation depends on teachers' ability to design innovative learning strategies and utilize appropriate media. Therefore, it is recommended that history educators incorporate local historical content and student-centered learning models to create more meaningful learning experiences. In addition, future research is encouraged to explore the use of advanced digital media and broader local history contexts to further enhance students' engagement and historical awareness in diverse educational settings.

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