



## Implementation of Local Wisdom-Based Physical Education Learning: A Qualitative Study in Elementary Schools in Golewa District

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe and analyze the implementation of local wisdom-based Physical Education learning in the authentic context of elementary schools in Golewa District through a qualitative collective case study approach. The study is grounded in the assumption that integrating local culture into physical education enhances student engagement and strengthens context-based physical literacy. The research involved nine elementary schools, nine Physical Education teachers, and nine principals selected purposively based on teaching experience (minimum two years) and the implementation of culture-based learning practices. Data were collected over three months through participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentation of teaching modules and lesson plans. Data analysis employed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, complemented by reflective thematic analysis to identify implementation patterns and influencing factors. The findings indicate that 100% of schools integrated traditional games into core learning activities, while 77.78% incorporated cultural values in reflection sessions. Student participation was categorized as high in 66.67% of observed classes, demonstrating increased engagement compared to conventional drill-based instruction. However, only 55.56% of schools systematically developed local wisdom-based teaching modules. Supporting factors included strong principal support and high student enthusiasm, whereas limited professional training and structured curriculum tools were identified as primary constraints. The study underscores the need for policy reinforcement, sustainable teacher professional development, and structured culture-based module development to institutionalize contextual Physical Education practices.

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### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

- Conception and design of the study;
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- Manuscript preparation;
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## INTRODUCTION

Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PESH) at the elementary level plays a strategic role in shaping students' holistic development, encompassing physical literacy, cognitive understanding, affective maturity, and social competence (Sudarsinah, 2022; Bailey et al., 2019). Contemporary educational paradigms emphasize that physical



education should not merely develop motor skills and physical fitness but also cultivate character values such as cooperation, responsibility, fairness, and respect (Dyson et al., 2020; Kirk, 2020). Within the Indonesian context, the Merdeka Curriculum reinforces contextual, student-centered learning that integrates local identity and cultural heritage as core components of educational practice (Wae et al., 2024).

However, empirical observations in many elementary schools indicate that PESH instruction often remains mechanistic, technique-oriented, and detached from students' sociocultural realities. Learning activities frequently replicate standardized drills without contextual adaptation, resulting in limited student engagement and reduced meaningful participation (Putri et al., 2024; Ridwan, 2023). In rural settings such as Golewa District, this disconnect becomes more pronounced, as rich local traditions and indigenous games are insufficiently integrated into formal learning structures. Consequently, opportunities to preserve local wisdom while enhancing pedagogical relevance are underutilized.

Theoretically, culturally responsive pedagogy argues that meaningful learning emerges when instruction resonates with learners' lived experiences (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2021). In physical education, contextualized learning grounded in local culture may enhance intrinsic motivation, sense of belonging, and identity construction (Ennis, 2017; Standal, 2019). Yet, practical implementation often encounters structural constraints, including limited teacher training, curriculum rigidity, and institutional priorities focused predominantly on measurable physical outcomes (Asri, 2025).

Thus, the central problem addressed in this study concerns how local wisdom-based PESH learning is implemented in authentic elementary school contexts, particularly in rural districts. Understanding this implementation is crucial not only for pedagogical refinement but also for strengthening the role of schools as cultural transmission agents in the era of educational transformation.

Recent scholarship increasingly highlights the importance of integrating local wisdom and traditional games into physical education. Empirical studies demonstrate that traditional game-based learning can improve students' motor competence, physical fitness, and engagement levels (Ningsih et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2023). Furthermore, culturally embedded games promote cooperation, empathy, and social interaction skills (Asri, 2025; Dyson et al., 2020).

In Southeast Asian contexts, research has shown that indigenous games function as vehicles for transmitting cultural norms and community values (Ridwan, 2023; Sugiarto, 2025). Such integration aligns with culturally sustaining pedagogy, which advocates maintaining cultural practices within formal education (Paris & Alim, 2017). Within Indonesia, local wisdom integration in the Merdeka Curriculum underscores contextual relevance, project-based learning, and character development rooted in regional identity (Wae et al., 2024).

Internationally, qualitative research in culturally diverse school settings indicates that culturally responsive physical education enhances student agency and participation (Flory & McCaughy, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2021). Studies in rural educational contexts

also suggest that leveraging community-based knowledge systems can increase learning authenticity (Penney et al., 2018).

Moreover, scholars argue that physical education should be reconceptualized as a socio-cultural practice rather than a purely biomechanical exercise (Kirk, 2020; Standal, 2019). This paradigm shift situates movement as culturally constructed and socially negotiated, reinforcing the relevance of integrating local wisdom.

In Indonesia, quantitative studies predominantly measure the effectiveness of traditional games on physical outcomes such as agility, coordination, or endurance (Ningsih et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2023). While findings confirm positive impacts, fewer investigations explore how teachers design lesson plans, adapt traditional games to curricular competencies, or navigate institutional constraints. Thus, the state of the art demonstrates growing recognition of culture-based physical education but reveals limited qualitative exploration of implementation processes, particularly within rural elementary school environments.

Despite increasing discourse on local wisdom integration, several gaps remain evident. First, most existing studies focus on outcome-based measurements rather than examining pedagogical processes. Quantitative experimental designs dominate the literature, emphasizing statistical gains in fitness or motor skills (Putri et al., 2023; Ridwan, 2023), while overlooking how cultural meaning is constructed in everyday classroom practice. Second, there is limited research adopting a collective case study approach to investigate multiple schools within a specific district. Comparative qualitative insights across several institutions could illuminate variations in teacher strategies, community engagement, and contextual adaptation (Fletcher et al., 2021). Third, few studies explicitly situate local wisdom-based PESH within the structural framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. Although policy documents advocate contextual learning (Wae et al., 2024), empirical evidence detailing how teachers operationalize these directives remains scarce. Fourth, rural educational contexts, such as Golewa District, are underrepresented in national and international scholarship. Research tends to focus on urban or semi-urban settings, potentially overlooking unique cultural dynamics, infrastructural limitations, and community participation patterns characteristic of rural schools (Penney et al., 2018).

Therefore, a qualitative investigation that examines planning strategies, implementation dynamics, teacher perceptions, student participation, and supporting or inhibiting factors is urgently needed. Such inquiry would contribute to bridging theoretical discourse on culturally responsive pedagogy with practical realities in elementary physical education settings.

Based on the identified gaps, this study aims to: (1) analyze the planning and implementation of local wisdom-based Physical Education, Sports, and Health learning in elementary schools in Golewa District; (2) examine how traditional games are pedagogically integrated into the curriculum; and (3) identify supporting and inhibiting factors influencing implementation. This research employs a qualitative collective case study approach to generate in-depth contextual insights. By engaging nine elementary

schools, the study provides comparative perspectives across institutional settings, thereby enriching empirical understanding beyond single-case analyses.

The novelty of this research lies in three dimensions. First, it shifts analytical emphasis from outcome measurement to implementation dynamics, highlighting pedagogical processes rather than solely physical performance indicators. Second, it situates local wisdom integration explicitly within the structural and philosophical framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, offering policy-relevant insights. Third, it foregrounds rural educational contexts as legitimate sites of innovation, challenging urban-centric bias in physical education research.

Theoretically, this study advances discourse on culturally responsive physical education by contextualizing global pedagogical theories within Indonesian rural realities. Practically, findings are expected to inform teacher professional development, curriculum design, and policy strategies aimed at strengthening culture-based learning in elementary schools. In sum, this study contributes to expanding scientific understanding of local wisdom-based PESH implementation and reinforces the strategic role of culturally grounded pedagogy in fostering meaningful, participatory, and identity-affirming physical education practices in elementary education.

## **METHODS**

This research employed a qualitative approach with a collective case study design. Epistemologically, this approach is grounded in a constructivist paradigm, which views social reality as a construction of meaning formed through social interactions and cultural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the context of this research, the implementation of local wisdom-based Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK) learning is understood as a pedagogical practice influenced by teacher experiences, school dynamics, and the cultural values of the local community. A qualitative approach is relevant because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the meaning, process, and dynamics of implementation, rather than simply measuring learning outcomes (Fletcher et al., 2021; Casey et al., 2021).

The collective case study design was chosen because the research involved nine public elementary schools in Golewa District. This design allows for cross-case comparisons to identify patterns of similarities and differences in implementation practices (Yin, 2018; Stake, 2013). In physical education research, this approach is effective for exploring culturally based, contextual pedagogical practices (Kirk, 2020; Penney et al., 2018).

The study subjects consisted of nine physical education teachers and nine school principals. A purposive sampling technique was used with the following criteria: (1) teachers had been active for at least two years, (2) schools had implemented the Independent Curriculum, and (3) traditional games were integrated into the learning process. This strategy aimed to obtain information-rich cases (Palinkas et al., 2015). This approach is consistent with the principles of qualitative research, which emphasize data

depth over statistical generalizations (Nowell et al., 2017). The theoretical framework of the study draws on Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2021) and contextual pedagogy in physical education (Standal, 2019; Sudirman & Mulyani, 2022). The integration of traditional games is positioned as a strategy for developing physical literacy while strengthening cultural identity (Sudarwo et al., 2023; Dyson et al., 2020). Using this framework, the analysis is not only descriptive but also evaluative of the practice's alignment with the principles of culture-based pedagogy.

Data collection was conducted over three months through: (1) participant observation, (2) in-depth semi-structured interviews, and (3) documentation studies. Observations focused on pedagogical interactions, the integration of traditional games, and student responses (Ennis, 2017). Interviews explored teachers' and principals' constructions of meaning related to the implementation of a culture-based curriculum (Flory & McCaughtry, 2018). The interview instrument was developed based on a culturally responsive pedagogy framework and validated through expert judgment. Documents analyzed included teaching modules, learning tools, and evaluation records.

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), encompassing data reduction, data presentation, and simultaneous conclusion drawing. To enhance the depth of analysis, reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) was applied, through open coding, axial coding, and thematic categorization. This strategy enabled the identification of patterns of meaning related to implementation strategies, forms of local wisdom integration, and supporting and inhibiting factors.

Data validity was maintained through trustworthiness criteria: credibility (triangulation of sources and techniques, member checking), transferability (detailed contextual descriptions), dependability (audit trail), and confirmability (researcher reflections and archival documentation of data) (Nowell et al., 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 2018). With systematic procedures and strong theoretical justification, this method meets the rigor standards of reputable qualitative research.

**Tabel 1.**

**Methodological Framework and Theoretical Foundation of the Research**

<b>Components</b>	<b>Implementation Description</b>	<b>Conceptual-Empirical Foundation (Last 10 Years)</b>
Approach	Qualitative - Constructivist	Creswell & Poth (2018); Merriam & Tisdell (2016)
Design	Collective Case Study (9 Elementary Schools)	Yin (2018); Casey et al. (2021)
Sampling	Purposive (teachers & principals)	Palinkas et al. (2015); Nowell et al. (2017)
Theoretical Framework	Culturally Responsive Teaching & Contextual PE	Gay (2018); Ladson-Billings (2021); Standal (2019)
Data Collection Techniques	Observation, Interviews, Documentation	Ennis (2017); Flory & McCaughtry (2018)
Data Analysis	Interactive Model & Thematic Analysis	Miles et al. (2014); Braun & Clarke (2021)
Validity	Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, Confirmability	Lincoln & Guba (2018); Nowell et al. (2017)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### Implementation of Local Wisdom-Based Learning in Elementary Schools

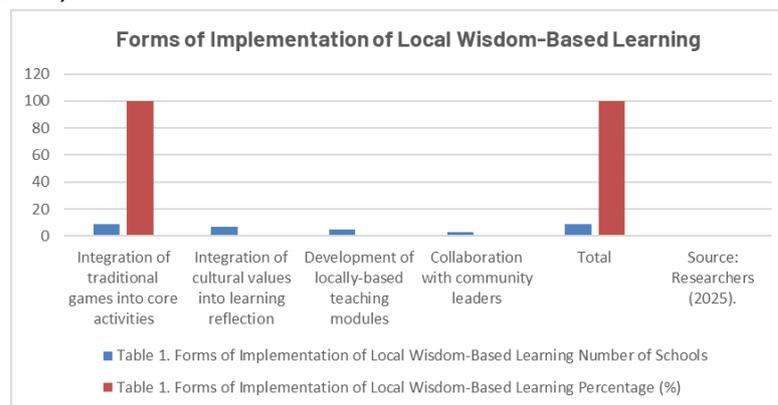
The results of this study indicate that the implementation of local wisdom-based physical education (PE) learning in nine elementary schools in Golewa District follows an integrative, adaptive, and contextual pattern. Conceptually, this finding aligns with the culturally responsive pedagogy approach, which emphasizes the relevance of students' cultural experiences in the learning process (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

Identified forms of implementation include: (1) the use of traditional games as a core learning medium, (2) strengthening local cultural values during reflection sessions, (3) developing locally-based teaching modules, and (4) collaborating with community leaders. These practices are consistent with the findings of Fletcher et al. (2021) and Standal (2019), which state that cultural integration in PE increases engagement and meaningful learning.

**Table 2.**  
Forms of Implementation of Local Wisdom-Based Learning

Forms of Implementation	Number of Schools	Percentage (%)
Integration of traditional games into core activities	9	100
Integration of cultural values into reflection	7	77.78
Development of locally-based teaching modules	5	55.56
Collaboration with community leaders	3	33.33
<b>Total Schools</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>

Data shows that all schools (100%) integrate traditional games into core activities, strengthening the argument that local games are an easily adopted pedagogical tool (Dyson et al., 2020). However, only 55.56% of schools have developed systematic teaching modules, indicating a structural gap in culture-based curriculum development (Penney et al., 2018).



**Diagram 1.**

Percentage of Implementation

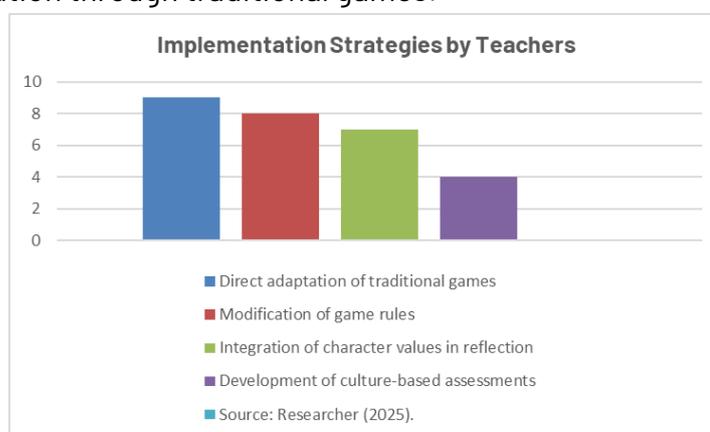
#### Teacher Strategies for Integrating Traditional Games

Interview analysis identified four primary teacher strategies: direct game adaptation, rule modification, character value integration, and the development of culturally based assessments. These strategies reflect the pedagogical flexibility emphasized by Kirk (2020) and Casey et al. (2021).

**Table 3.**  
 Implementation Strategies by Teachers

Strategy	Number of Teachers (n=9)
Direct adaptation of traditional games	9
Modification of game rules	8
Integration of character values in reflection	7
Development of culture-based assessments	4

The majority of teachers stated that traditional games increase students' intrinsic motivation. This supports Ennis's (2017) finding that social context-based activities strengthen student engagement. Observations showed increased active participation compared to conventional drill methods, aligning with Ningsih et al.'s (2024) study on increasing motivation through traditional games.



**Diagram 2.**  
 Teacher Implementation Strategy

### Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) identified supporting and inhibiting factors influencing implementation.

#### Supporting Factors

1. Principal support for innovation (in line with instructional leadership theory; Hallinger, 2020).
2. Availability of open spaces appropriate to the rural context (Penney et al., 2018).
3. Student enthusiasm for culturally based games (Fletcher et al., 2021).

#### Inhibiting Factors

1. Limited locally based modules and references.
2. Lack of teacher training on cultural pedagogy.
3. Limited planning time for the implementation of the Independent Curriculum (Wae et al., 2024).

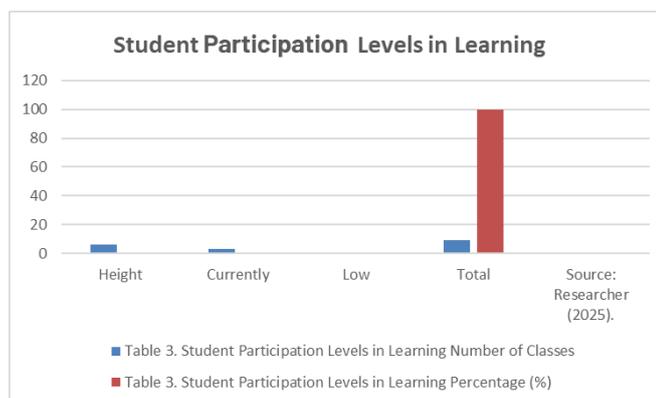
The principal's statement emphasized the need for structural guidelines, indicating a policy-practice gap.

### Impact on Student Participation and Physical Literacy

Observations show an increase in active participation and physical literacy indicators (Whitehead, 2019), such as self-confidence, collaboration, and understanding of meaningful movement.

**Table 4.**  
Student Participation Levels

Participation Category	Number of Classes	Percentage (%)
High	6	66.67
Moderate	3	33.33
Low	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>



**Diagram 3.**  
Level of Participation

These findings are consistent with those of Sudarwo et al. (2023), who stated that cultural integration strengthens students' identity and movement literacy. Implementation is not linear, but rather influenced by the interaction between teachers' pedagogical strategies and school structural support (Kirk, 2020).

The resulting conceptual model indicates that traditional games function as participatory triggers, mediating increased active participation and contributing to the strengthening of physical literacy and cultural identity. Therefore, this study expands the movement literacy approach by incorporating cultural contextual dimensions as reinforcing variables in elementary school physical education practices.

## Discussion

This discussion critically analyzes the implementation of local wisdom-based Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK) learning in Golewa District, as found in the research findings. Overall, the findings indicate that the integration of traditional games serves not only as a variation of physical activity but also as a concrete manifestation of culturally responsive pedagogy. These findings reinforce the ideas of Gay (2018) and Ladson-Billings (2021) that effective learning must be relevant to the cultural backgrounds of students. In the context of physical education, cultural relevance has been shown to increase student engagement and intrinsic motivation (Casey & Kirk, 2021; Culp et al., 2020).

The research data shows that 66.67% of classes were in the high participation category. Theoretically, this increase in participation can be explained through Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017), which states that intrinsic motivation develops when the needs for autonomy, competence, and social connectedness are met. Traditional games, familiar to students since childhood, provide a strong sense of

connectedness and enhance perceptions of competence because the rules are not entirely unfamiliar. Recent studies in physical education have shown that a culture-based approach significantly contributes to increased motivation and movement literacy (Ladwig et al., 2018; Dudley et al., 2020; Li et al., 2022). Thus, the findings of this study are consistent with international literature emphasizing the importance of socio-cultural context in movement learning.

Furthermore, the integration of traditional games broadens the dimensions of physical literacy. Whitehead (2019) emphasized that movement literacy encompasses not only motor skills but also motivation, self-confidence, and personal meaning towards physical activity. In this study, students demonstrated enthusiasm, cooperation, and expressions of joy during culture-based activities. This aligns with research by Schenker et al. (2019), Pringle et al. (2021), and Dowling et al. (2023), which suggests that culture-based physical education can strengthen social identity and community cohesion. Thus, the implementation in Golewa demonstrates that movement literacy in the Indonesian context needs to be understood within a cultural framework, not simply through a performative paradigm.

However, this study also found that only 55.56% of schools had systematically developed local wisdom-based teaching modules. This situation indicates a gap between teachers' innovative practices and the structural support of the curriculum. Biggs and Tang (2018), through the concept of constructive alignment, emphasize the importance of alignment between learning objectives, strategies, and assessments. Without systematic planning, cultural integration risks becoming an incidental activity with an unmeasurable impact on learning outcomes. From the perspective of Casey et al. (2022), non-institutionalized pedagogical innovation tends to rely on individual initiative and is difficult to sustain.

In terms of supporting factors, the findings regarding principal support and the availability of open spaces align with Bronfenbrenner's educational ecology theory (Tudge et al., 2016), which emphasizes the importance of systemic support in learning practices. Research by Griggs and Petrie (2018) and Ní Chróinín et al. (2021) showed that school leadership is positively correlated with pedagogical innovation among physical education teachers. The managerial support found in this study provides important capital for expanding culture-based policies in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

Conversely, limited teacher training and a lack of local module references indicate that professional competence remains a major challenge. Recent literature confirms that continuous professional development is a key determinant of the success of pedagogical innovation (Armour et al., 2017; Goodyear et al., 2019). Without systematic training, cultural integration has the potential to remain undocumented academically and lack strong curricular legitimacy. This finding suggests that implementation barriers are more structural and policy-based, rather than cultural resistance.

More broadly, this study's results also demonstrate the potential for implementation bias if traditional games are not aligned with learning outcomes. Some teachers still use activity-based approaches without planning authentic assessments. Ennis (2017) and Kirk (2019) emphasize that pedagogical innovation must remain within the framework of measurable learning objectives. Therefore, an integrative model is

needed that systematically combines cultural values, curriculum competencies, and authentic assessment.

The theoretical implications of this research lie in expanding the local wisdom-based physical education and health learning model within the context of the Independent Curriculum. Cultural integration has been shown to increase participation and learning relevance, but requires policy strengthening, development of teaching modules, and ongoing training to achieve institutionalization. These findings support the argument that local wisdom-based learning is not merely a contextual innovation, but a pedagogical strategy with theoretical and empirical legitimacy in developing elementary school students' motor literacy and character.

Strategically, this research has significant policy implications. The integration of local wisdom needs to be formalized in the development of teaching modules, the development of authentic assessments, and ongoing teacher professional development programs. Without the support of clear policies and curriculum structures, culture-based innovations have the potential to remain at the level of individual initiatives and be difficult to sustain. Therefore, strengthening regulations and teacher mentoring systems is a crucial agenda in the implementation of the culture-based Independent Curriculum.

Overall, this discussion confirms that the implementation of local wisdom-based physical education (PJOK) learning in Golewa District has conceptual legitimacy within the theories of culturally responsive pedagogy, intrinsic motivation, and movement literacy. Empirical findings demonstrate increased student participation and strengthened cultural identity, but also underscore the need for structural transformation for this innovation to develop systematically and sustainably. Thus, this research makes a significant contribution to the development of a culture-based physical education model at the elementary school level, particularly within the context of Indonesian education undergoing transformation through the Independent Curriculum.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the implementation of local wisdom-based Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK) learning in nine elementary schools in Golewa District occurs contextually through the integration of traditional games into core learning activities (100% of schools), the reinforcement of cultural values in reflection sessions (77.78%), and the development of locally-based teaching modules (55.56%). Observational data shows that 66.67% of classes are in the high participation category, with no classes in the low participation category, indicating increased student active engagement compared to conventional drill-based approaches. Empirically, the integration of traditional games contributes to increased student enthusiasm, cooperation, and self-confidence, while strengthening the affective and social dimensions of learning.

However, implementation is still at the adaptive stage and has not been fully institutionalized within a structured curriculum and assessment system, as evidenced by the limited availability of authentic culturally-based teaching modules and assessments. Theoretically, this study expands the discourse on culturally responsive pedagogy in the

context of PJOK in Indonesia by positioning local culture as a structural element in physical literacy development. Thus, these findings provide conceptual and practical contributions to strengthening culture-based contextual learning in elementary schools.

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