
What Role Do Legal and Policy Frameworks Play in Integrating Local Heroes' Wisdom into National Education?

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ABSTRACT

*This study explores the role of legal and policy frameworks in integrating local heroes' wisdom into national education systems, particularly in the context of Indonesia's efforts to reinforce national identity through local cultural values. In response to the challenges posed by globalization and transnational cultural flows, this paper advocates for a strategic approach that incorporates local heroes' wisdom into educational curricula, with a particular focus on regions like Central Java, which are rich in historical narratives of local resistance. Despite the cultural and historical significance of local heroes, their wisdom remains fragmented and underutilized within the national education framework. This research examines the interplay between legal structures and educational policies in facilitating the inclusion of local wisdom in national curricula, highlighting relevant Indonesian laws such as Undang-Undang No. 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional (National Education System Law), which emphasizes the need for education to reflect national culture, and Undang-Undang No. 5 Tahun 2017 tentang Pemajuan Kebudayaan (Cultural Advancement Law), which promotes the preservation and integration of local cultural heritage. By applying legal theory, such as the concept of *lex cultura*—the legal recognition and protection of cultural rights—this study examines how legal and policy frameworks can ensure the documentation, protection, and integration of local heroes' narratives into educational curricula. This study uses a combined normative and socio-legal approach to examine how legal frameworks support integrating local heroes' wisdom into national education. Through legal analysis and case studies in Central Java schools, it identifies gaps, evaluates implementation, and assesses how law can better preserve local knowledge and foster students' national identity. This paper contributes to legal scholarship by discussing the role of law in preserving local*

knowledge while addressing the challenges and effectiveness of its integration in building national identity among students.

Keywords: *Legal frameworks, policy integration, local heroes, education systems, cultural heritage.*

A. INTRODUCTION

The issue of instilling national values through history education remains a pressing concern amid the challenges of globalization, the disruption of information, and the weakening of collective memory among younger generations about their national history (Abdelhafid, 2024). In this context, one of the strategies frequently employed to address these challenges is the use of heroism narratives. These narratives not only convey exemplary values of struggle, bravery, sacrifice, and loyalty to the nation but also serve to shape a collective identity by connecting students emotionally with the past (Surya & Fikriya, 2021; Rodiyah, Laskarwati, Masyhar, & Waspiah, 2019). The valorization of local and national heroes plays a central role in bridging the historical and emotional gap between students and their nation's history, offering a sense of pride and national unity that transcends individual differences (Purwaningsih & Kanukisya, 2023; Danugroho, 2024). These hero narratives form the foundation of a shared understanding of what it means to belong to a nation, becoming an integral part of citizenship education.

In Indonesia, history education has long included the stories of national heroes such as Pattimura, Diponegoro, and Sukarno, figures who symbolize the anti-colonial struggle and the nation's fight for independence (Gungwu, 2005; Anderson & Djati, 2004). The *Kurikulum 2013* (2013 Curriculum) places these

figures at the heart of the history curriculum, emphasizing their bravery and determination in the face of colonial oppression. Previous studies indicate that hero narratives significantly impact student engagement and the formation of a collective national memory, creating an emotional connection to the past that fosters a sense of identity and belonging. Saefudin (2023) argues that integrating heroic values into history education enhances students' emotional connection to the subject matter and strengthens their sense of national identity. Moreover, Fathoni et al. (2021) highlight the effectiveness of digital media, such as interactive digital history textbooks, in engaging millennial students by presenting heroism narratives in a more dynamic and accessible way.

While the impact of hero narratives on fostering national identity has been widely recognized, the dominant focus has remained on national heroes, often presented in a singular, homogenized narrative (Parry, 2021; Mylonas & Tudor, 2023). This emphasis on national figures such as Sukarno and Diponegoro, though important, overlooks the rich tapestry of local heroes whose stories are equally significant but less widely known or represented. Studies from various countries highlight a similar trend, where the narrative of heroism is often framed within a national context, sidelining the contributions of local figures who have shaped regional identities. For example, in Malaysia, local heroes are categorized into nobility and commoners who contributed to the nation's sovereignty, yet these figures often receive less attention than national heroes in textbooks (Maaruf, 2022; Hayimasae, 2016). In Lithuania, heroism is portrayed within the context of cultural trauma following Soviet occupation, emphasizing national unity through collective memory (Davoliūtė, 2014), while in Russia, heroism is framed in terms

of strength and collective responsibility, with a focus on historical figures who played significant roles in maintaining national pride (Hashamova, 2007; Tsyrlina-Spady & Stoskopf, 2016). Similarly, in China, the heroic narrative is used to strengthen cultural self-confidence and patriotism among students (Li & Villanueva, 2003).

Despite these international examples, there remains a gap in the effective integration of local heroes' wisdom into national education systems (Dartini, et.al., 2025). This gap is particularly evident in Indonesia, where the national curriculum, while inclusive of well-known figures, often neglects the local heroes whose struggles and contributions were crucial in shaping regional and national history. Local heroes, such as those from rural areas or smaller regions like Central Java, whose stories are not as well-documented or celebrated in mainstream discourse, are typically excluded from educational materials (Novianti, 2022; Cooper, 1994). This creates a disconnect between students and their local historical context, limiting the opportunity for students to connect more personally with the values and struggles represented by figures from their own communities. The lack of emphasis on local heroes in the national curriculum also means that students may not fully understand the diverse ways in which heroism manifested throughout Indonesia's struggle for independence.

The absence of local heroes in national education not only narrows the scope of historical education but also impedes the development of a more inclusive national identity (Pramono, et.al., 2021). The dominant narrative, which prioritizes national heroes, risks marginalizing the rich diversity of experiences and struggles that are integral to Indonesia's history. As a result, students may feel

disconnected from the broader historical narrative, especially those who identify more closely with local heroes whose experiences resonate with their own. This lack of representation can lead to a diminished sense of belonging and a limited understanding of the multiplicity of histories that contribute to the nation's formation.

This paper aims to address these issues by exploring the role of legal and policy frameworks in facilitating the integration of local heroes' wisdom into Indonesia's national education system. While the *Undang-Undang No. 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional* (National Education System Law) mandates that education should reflect national culture and values, there is a lack of specific legal provisions or guidelines that actively promote the inclusion of local heroes in the curriculum (Sukasni & Efendy, 2017). This law sets the broad framework for education in Indonesia, stating that one of the purposes of education is to foster the development of national identity and character by embedding local and national cultural values. However, despite this broad mandate, there is no explicit focus on the integration of local hero narratives or regional histories within educational materials or teaching methods (Darmawan, et.al., 2024).

Moreover, the *Undang-Undang No. 5 Tahun 2017 tentang Pemajuan Kebudayaan* (Cultural Advancement Law) supports the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage but has had limited impact on the education sector (Setiyono, et.al., 2024). The law focuses primarily on the protection of intangible cultural heritage and the development of cultural industries but lacks detailed provisions on how to incorporate cultural knowledge, including that of local

heroes, into the formal education system. This legal gap contributes to the fragmented approach to integrating local histories in national curricula and the underrepresentation of local heroes in history education (Saputra, 2024).

In addition to these laws, the *Peraturan Pemerintah No. 19 Tahun 2005 tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan* (Government Regulation No. 19/2005 on National Education Standards) outlines the general principles of education, including content standards and competency standards. However, these regulations do not provide clear guidelines or support for the inclusion of regional historical narratives, such as those of local heroes. The focus remains largely on ensuring that national educational content is standardized, which may inadvertently marginalize regional and local perspectives. While the regulation emphasizes the need for education to reflect the values of the nation, it does not sufficiently address how to weave local hero narratives into mainstream teaching practices.

This legal and policy gap is compounded by practical challenges in the classroom. Teachers are often unaware of how to incorporate local hero stories into their lessons due to a lack of professional development programs and resources that highlight the importance of regional history. Additionally, textbooks, which form the core of teaching materials, continue to predominantly feature national heroes, leaving little room for local figures. As a result, there is a need for a more comprehensive policy that not only addresses these legal gaps but also provides teachers with the necessary training, materials, and guidelines to integrate local heroes into their curricula effectively.

To effectively integrate local heroes into the national education system, both legal and policy frameworks must evolve. A comprehensive legal mechanism is needed that ensures the protection, recognition, and integration of local heroes' narratives within the educational content. This could involve amendments to existing laws, such as the National Education System Law, to explicitly incorporate local heroes as a vital component of the curriculum. Additionally, there is a need for policies that require the development of teaching materials and resources that reflect the diversity of Indonesian history, ensuring that regional histories are not overlooked. Teacher training programs should also be updated to equip educators with the tools and knowledge needed to effectively teach about local heroes and their contributions to the nation.

By aligning legal frameworks with educational policies, Indonesia can create a more inclusive and culturally relevant history curriculum. Integrating local heroes into national education not only enriches students' understanding of their history but also fosters a more diverse and unified national identity. This paper argues that legal and policy reforms are crucial to overcoming the current gaps and promoting the integration of local heroes' wisdom into national education, ultimately strengthening the sense of citizenship, national pride, and unity among Indonesian students.

Furthermore, the landscape of education policy has shifted considerably in recent years, with growing attention on the roles of non-state actors—philanthropic organizations, private corporations, and international entities—in shaping educational reforms (Locatelli, 2019). The body of work on global education governance offers valuable insights into the changing nature of policy

networks, particularly the complex interplay between governments and other influential stakeholders. The *state of the art* in this field reflects an ongoing transformation, where the traditional state-centric model is increasingly challenged by multi-stakeholder governance.

Olmedo (2017) in *"Something old, not much new, and a lot borrowed: philanthropy, business, and the changing roles of government in global education policy networks,"* provides a comprehensive analysis of how philanthropy, business, and international organizations have shifted the role of national governments in educational policymaking. Olmedo critiques the traditional belief that *"good education requires strong central direction,"* noting that non-governmental actors—such as the Gates Foundation—have become central players in defining educational agendas globally. His analysis underscores the tension between the historical role of the state and the increasing involvement of external stakeholders in education policy, a theme that is echoed in other works such as Kogan's (2013) *Modern Educational Myths*, where the myth of strong central direction is similarly deconstructed.

Building upon this, studies such as Kumar, Screwvala, and Kompalli's (2024) *The Routledge Handbook of Global and Digital Governance* focus on how digital technologies and stakeholder engagement intersect in the post-COVID-19 era. This work highlights the growing role of digital platforms in shaping educational content, access, and delivery, further emphasizing the need to reconsider the role of state institutions in education policy. The authors discuss the role of businesses, tech giants, and international organizations in redefining education, while raising concerns about the commercialization and privatization of knowledge.

Moreover, Gan and Yang (2024) contribute to the discourse by examining how local autonomy influences curriculum design, particularly in China, with a focus on the integration of teaching resources under local governance. This highlights a broader global trend where local adaptations to educational policy are seen as essential for ensuring relevance and contextual sensitivity. Their findings align with the concept of local heroes' wisdom and how such knowledge can be meaningfully integrated into curricula to foster a stronger connection between students and their local communities.

A significant shift is also evident in Romania, where Maria and De Diezmas (2017) examine educational policies aimed at incorporating community engagement within school activities. Their research supports the idea that local knowledge, including historical narratives and community values, plays a critical role in shaping educational curricula that reflect local identities. Similarly, Kurniawan et al. (2024) discuss how Indonesian law and policy reform can mainstream human rights education, which in turn could be used to support the integration of local heroes' wisdom into national education. This research highlights the intersection of law, policy, and education and demonstrates how legal reforms can create the necessary frameworks for incorporating local narratives into national curricula.

Furthermore, studies like *Mainstreaming Law and Human Rights Education in Indonesia* (Kurniawan et al., 2024) show that legal reforms can drive educational change, demonstrating the potential of policy-driven frameworks to shape how local heroes and their wisdom are represented in educational materials. While their focus is primarily on human rights education, their work underscores

the necessity of a robust legal framework for implementing significant changes in the educational system. This is crucial for incorporating locally relevant content, like the wisdom of local heroes, into national education frameworks.

The work of Humphreys, Cashore, and Visseren-Hamakers (2017) on multi-stakeholder engagement and community rights further contributes to the broader discourse on collaborative governance. Although their study is focused on environmental governance, the multi-stakeholder approach they outline can be applied to education policy, emphasizing how collaboration between local communities, governments, and external actors can lead to more inclusive and equitable educational reforms.

The integration of digital technologies into education policy is also explored by Livingstone et al. (2024) in *The Googlization of the Classroom: Is the UK Effective in Protecting Children's Data and Rights?*. Their study delves into the ethical implications of digital education and the role of private actors in shaping educational content, highlighting how global educational practices are increasingly shaped by external market forces, with profound implications for students' rights and the quality of education they receive.

Taken together, this body of research provides a rich backdrop for exploring the integration of local heroes' wisdom into national education frameworks. While existing studies have focused on the roles of non-state actors, the decentralization of education policy, and the growing influence of digital platforms, few have explored the specific intersection of legal, policy, and educational frameworks to incorporate local knowledge and regional histories into national curricula. The current research aims to fill this gap by analyzing how legal and policy

frameworks can effectively integrate the wisdom of local heroes into national education, thereby strengthening national identity, cultural cohesion, and citizenship education in a globalized world.

Although existing studies address various aspects of education governance, stakeholder engagement, and the role of non-state actors, there is a notable gap in research on how local knowledge and historical narratives, particularly those of local heroes, can be systematically integrated into national education systems. The research by Olmedo, Kogan, Kumar, and others underscores the increasing privatization and external influence on education, yet few studies explore how local history can be included in national curricula to promote a more inclusive national identity. This gap is particularly pronounced in post-colonial and rapidly developing countries like Indonesia, where local heroes' contributions to national history are often overlooked in favor of national heroes that resonate at the national level. Thus, the current study's focus on the integration of local heroes' wisdom into national educational policies provides a timely and unique contribution to the broader discourse on education policy reform.

This study examines how legal and policy frameworks influence the integration of local heroes' wisdom into national education systems. While many countries emphasize culturally relevant curricula, there is often a disconnect between national standards and indigenous or community-based knowledge embodied by local heroes. Existing education policies may lack clear provisions, implementation strategies, or institutional support to incorporate such localized wisdom meaningfully. As a result, valuable cultural narratives, ethical teachings, and historical perspectives risk being marginalized or excluded from formal

education. The research problem centers on identifying gaps within legal and policy instruments that hinder this integration, as well as assessing how these frameworks can be reformed or strengthened to promote inclusivity and cultural relevance. It also explores the role of policymakers, educators, and communities in aligning national education goals with local heritage, ensuring that education systems reflect diverse identities while maintaining academic coherence and national unity. This research adopts a combined normative and socio-legal methodology to examine the role of legal and policy frameworks in integrating local heroes' wisdom into national education systems. The normative component focuses on analyzing primary legal materials, including the 2003 National Education System Law (UU No. 20/2003), the 2013 Curriculum (Kurikulum 2013), and other relevant regulations, alongside secondary sources such as academic literature and policy reports. Legal materials are collected through document and archival research and analyzed using qualitative legal interpretation to identify gaps, inconsistencies, and the extent to which existing frameworks accommodate local knowledge and historical narratives.

Complementing this, the socio-legal component employs a qualitative case study approach in selected secondary schools in Central Java. Data are collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, policymakers, and education experts, as well as student focus groups and surveys. Informants and respondents are selected purposively based on their involvement in curriculum implementation. The data are analyzed using thematic analysis to examine how legal and policy provisions are interpreted and applied in practice, as well as to identify challenges such as limited resources, inadequate teacher

training, and policy constraints in integrating local heroes' wisdom into the educational process.

B. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Analysis of the Normative and Policy Framework related to the Integration of Local Hero Wisdom in National Education

The concept of "*local heroes' wisdom*" refers to the life stories, values, and teachings of individuals from various regions or communities who have made significant contributions to society but are often overshadowed by national figures in mainstream historical narratives. These individuals, many of whom come from ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, or peripheral regions, embody a range of national ideals such as courage, sacrifice, unity, and justice. Local heroes provide a unique perspective on the struggles, sacrifices, and aspirations of local communities that can significantly enrich the collective memory of the nation. Unlike national heroes who typically represent the struggle for independence or central political leadership, local heroes often reflect the diversity of struggles, histories, and social movements across the archipelago, contributing to a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of national identity (Fogg, 2019; Brata, Rai & Seloka, 2021).

For instance, figures like Ki Ageng Serang, a Javanese resistance leader during the Dutch colonial period (Dari, Pramudawardhani & Andriyanto, 2021), or Raden Ajeng Kartini, a champion of women's rights from Java, embody values of resistance and social justice (Arifah & Novita, 2023), while Pattimura, a hero from the Maluku Islands, symbolizes patriotism and unity against foreign

oppression (Lauri, Purnomo & Wahyuni, 2022). Local heroes such as Tjut Nyak Dhien from Aceh, who fought against colonial forces (Soraya, Samingan & Roe, 2021), or Nyi Ageng Serang, who is celebrated for her role in anti-colonial movements in Central Java (Lasminah, 2007), also exemplify leadership, courage, and the nurturing of national unity despite geographical and cultural differences. These figures are emblematic of a decentralized vision of national identity, which embraces the multiplicity of histories within Indonesia's complex cultural fabric.

Their stories represent the broader ideals of national unity, as they portray the struggle for justice and freedom across different regions of the country. Local heroes' wisdom, therefore, holds transformative power by offering alternative narratives to students, enriching their understanding of Indonesia's national identity. In particular, the stories of these heroes teach about the values of sacrifice, loyalty, and social justice, illustrating how personal courage and collective action can foster a stronger sense of unity in a diverse society. Local heroes, therefore, can help bridge the historical and cultural gap between central authority and peripheral regions, presenting a more inclusive and representative history of the nation.

Furthermore, at this context, national education plays a central role in shaping citizens' understanding of their history, culture, and identity. It serves as a primary mechanism for transmitting shared values, ideals, and the collective memory of a nation. In the context of Indonesia, education is not only about imparting knowledge but also about nurturing citizenship values such as patriotism, respect for diversity, civic responsibility, and social cohesion. These values are crucial for building a national identity in a diverse and multi-ethnic society like Indonesia,

where unity in diversity (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika) is both a national slogan and a core value. Through the national curriculum, students learn not only about the country's political history and national heroes but also about the moral and ethical values that these historical figures embodied.

Education in Indonesia, as mandated by the 2003 National Education System Law (UU No. 20/2003), aims to produce individuals who are capable, creative, independent, and responsible citizens. The law explicitly outlines the goals of national education, which include fostering a deep understanding of national history, identity, and cultural heritage. According to Kurniawan (2024), national education functions as both a formal mechanism of socialization and as a cultural tool for instilling national ideals in future generations. By integrating the stories of local heroes into the curriculum, education can highlight the diversity of Indonesia's cultural landscape and reinforce the ideals of unity, patriotism, and civic duty among students.

The link between education and the cultivation of citizenship values is reinforced through curricular content that reflects both national and local histories. Pramono (2023) argues that educational materials, such as textbooks and classroom discussions, can act as a powerful tool in shaping students' understanding of national identity. The stories of local heroes, who embody values such as loyalty to the nation, resistance against injustice, and the pursuit of social justice, play an essential role in this process. In this context, the incorporation of local heroes' wisdom in the curriculum has the potential to create a more inclusive and holistic view of Indonesian citizenship, where students not only recognize the

sacrifices and contributions of national leaders but also understand the local struggles and histories that contribute to the national story.

As Fathoni et al. (2023) emphasize, education also plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes towards diversity. The Indonesian school system has the responsibility to cultivate respect for different ethnicities, religions, and cultural traditions, ensuring that all communities feel represented in the national narrative. By including local heroes from different regions and ethnic groups, education can challenge the dominance of a singular national narrative and foster a more pluralistic, inclusive understanding of what it means to be Indonesian. Moreover, the teaching of local heroes' wisdom can encourage students to engage critically with their own heritage and the broader national identity, fostering a deeper connection to their local roots while simultaneously contributing to the national fabric.

In the context of legal and policy in national education, Indonesia's educational landscape is primarily governed by Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System, which provides the legal foundation for the nation's educational structure. The law establishes that the primary goal of education in Indonesia is the creation of an educated, ethical, and democratic society. Article 3 of this law asserts that the purpose of education is to develop citizens who are faithful to God Almighty, possess noble character, and are intellectually capable. More importantly, the law emphasizes fostering respect for diversity, a value that aligns with Indonesia's state ideology, Pancasila. This foundational principle calls for the promotion of unity, social justice, and humanity—values that are deeply embedded in the stories of Indonesia's national and local heroes. While Law No.

20/2003 mandates the development of a curriculum that is reflective of the nation's values, it leaves the specifics of local integration, particularly regarding local heroes, somewhat ambiguous. This ambiguity often results in a fragmented application of the law, as various regions interpret and implement the curriculum in different ways, often with limited consideration for the role of local heroes in shaping national values.

A critical component of the national education framework under this law is the Kurikulum 2013 (2013 Curriculum), which is designed to promote not only academic competencies but also moral and ethical development aligned with national values. This curriculum seeks to instill the values of Pancasila and the Indonesian Constitution, urging students to develop empathy, tolerance, and a sense of responsibility towards the nation. However, the Kurikulum 2013 does not clearly mandate the incorporation of local heroes' stories, leaving their inclusion to local authorities or schools. While the curriculum encourages the integration of local culture and history, it does not provide a robust mechanism for systematically incorporating regional heroes into the teaching of national identity. Scholars such as Kurniawan, Pramono, and Yulianto (2024) argue that the vagueness in the law's language has led to inconsistent implementation, particularly in rural and remote areas where the emphasis on local heroes and regional histories could foster a deeper connection to the nation's broader historical narrative. Furthermore, while the Pancasila Curriculum seeks to unify national values, local heroes' inclusion could challenge the homogeneity of the national curriculum and raise questions about whose values are prioritized in shaping national identity.

Additionally, policies such as Civics Education (*Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan*) and Character Education (*Pendidikan Karakter*), embedded in the Kurikulum 2013, aim to cultivate values of patriotism, respect for diversity, and civic responsibility. While these policies are aligned with promoting national unity and identity, they remain relatively focused on national, rather than local, histories. This focus on national heroes from Java or Bali often marginalizes the contributions of local figures, particularly those from ethnic minorities or regions outside the central government's influence. As Olmedo (2017) argues, there is a tendency within educational systems globally to standardize curricula, sometimes at the expense of acknowledging diverse local identities and histories. This global trend is evident in Indonesia's curriculum, which often prioritizes a singular, national narrative over the multiplicity of local experiences and historical figures that could contribute to a more inclusive national identity. Scholars like Hassan (2016) have emphasized that local heroes embody essential qualities of justice, resilience, and social cohesion, which could complement national educational goals by illustrating that unity is not just a top-down imposition but also a grassroots phenomenon, rooted in local history and heroism.

While the national educational policy framework is centralized, Indonesia's regional autonomy, as outlined in Law No. 23/2014 on Regional Government, allows local governments significant discretion in adapting educational content to their regional contexts. According to Article 9 of the law, local governments are empowered to develop policies that reflect local culture, history, and identity. This legal provision has opened opportunities for local governments to incorporate regional heroes into educational curricula, aligning with the goals of promoting

regional pride and strengthening national unity. For instance, Aceh, a province with a distinct Islamic and cultural heritage, has incorporated the stories of local heroes such as Teungku Cik Ditiro into educational materials as part of a broader effort to highlight the region's historical significance in the national struggle for independence (Arifin, 2008). This localized integration has fostered a sense of pride among students, reinforcing the idea that national identity is not confined to the narratives of figures from central Java or Bali.

Similarly, Papua, a region rich in indigenous cultures, has actively integrated the stories of local heroes such as Frans Kaisiepo, a prominent figure in Papua's integration and nationalism to Indonesia. The integration of local heroes in educational curricula in regions like Papua plays a dual role: it preserves indigenous history and cultural identity while contributing to the broader national identity (Haryono, 1996). Gan and Yang (2024) argue that local autonomy in education allows for the diversification of historical narratives, which can potentially enhance national solidarity by recognizing the contributions of all groups to the nation's development. Yet, the challenge lies in ensuring that these regional adaptations align with the overarching educational goals of unity and social cohesion. Local governments often face difficulties in striking a balance between promoting regional pride and maintaining a cohesive national narrative, especially when regional heroes are viewed through a lens of resistance to national authority, as in the case of Aceh's long history of autonomy movements.

Moreover, the role of local government policies in shaping education is not without tension. The decentralization of education policies has sometimes led to disparities in the quality and content of education across the country. While some

regions are actively integrating local heroes into their curricula, others struggle to implement such reforms effectively due to resource constraints, political resistance, or a lack of coherent guidelines from the central government. Scholars like Kurniawan et al. (2024) point out that the lack of clear and consistent national guidelines on integrating local heroes into the curriculum leads to unequal educational outcomes across Indonesia's provinces. In regions like Bali, local educational policies often focus on the island's Hindu heritage and figures such as I Gusti Ngurah Rai, a local hero who fought against colonial rule. While this reinforces local pride and cultural identity, it also underscores the challenges of harmonizing regional educational policies with national unity goals, particularly in a pluralistic society where different regions have competing narratives about what constitutes "*national history*" (Pramartha & Parwati, 2023).

Furthermore, the Indonesian education system's overarching aim is to foster national unity, a goal articulated in both Law No. 20/2003 and the Pancasila Curriculum. These frameworks emphasize the importance of promoting national identity and unity while respecting Indonesia's cultural diversity. The central tenet of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) captures this dual goal of recognizing diversity while maintaining a cohesive national identity. Kurniawan (2024) underscores that the education system plays a crucial role in constructing national identity by cultivating students' sense of shared values and history. However, integrating local heroes into national education presents both an opportunity and a challenge in this regard. Local heroes contribute to the idea of unity by offering alternative, localized narratives that reflect the broader national struggle for independence and justice. Their inclusion in the curriculum can help

students develop a more nuanced understanding of Indonesia's national identity, grounded in the diverse histories of its various regions.

Local heroes embody key national ideals such as justice, sacrifice, and patriotism, but they also often represent the struggles and aspirations of specific ethnic or cultural groups. In this sense, local heroes can be seen as symbols of social justice, illustrating the collective efforts of diverse communities to overcome oppression and inequality. Pramono (2023) emphasizes that local heroes provide essential narratives that promote social cohesion by showing that the fight for freedom and justice was not exclusive to the central political elites but was a shared experience across Indonesia's many regions. Yet, as Olmedo (2017) cautions, local heroes can also challenge the dominant narratives that shape national education, particularly when their stories highlight regional conflicts or resistance movements that were not always aligned with the central government. For example, local heroes in Aceh or Papua may represent resistance to national authority, complicating their integration into the curriculum as symbols of unity. Therefore, a critical legal and educational challenge is how to present these heroes in a way that respects both regional narratives and the broader goal of national solidarity.

In addition, the tension between local pride and national unity in the education system is exacerbated by Indonesia's pluralistic society, where diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural groups coexist. As Pramono (2023) notes, Indonesia's legal framework emphasizes a strong national identity, but this emphasis can sometimes marginalize regional narratives. A central challenge for educators and policymakers is to balance the promotion of national unity with the

need to respect and celebrate local histories. This requires a delicate approach to curriculum development that ensures local heroes' stories enhance, rather than undermine, national unity. Kurniawan et al. (2024) argue that one way to achieve this balance is through a more inclusive curriculum that highlights both national and local histories, recognizing that local heroes are not in opposition to national identity but rather contribute to the richness of it. By acknowledging the diverse paths that led to the nation's independence and the shared values of justice, unity, and sacrifice, Indonesia can cultivate a more robust sense of belonging among its citizens, rooted in the collective memory of both national and local histories.

2. Strategies and Challenges in Implementing the Integration of Local Hero Wisdom in National Education

a. Curricular Integration of Local Heroes' Wisdom: Legal Challenges

The integration of local heroes' wisdom into national education curriculums in Indonesia has been fraught with complexities, particularly due to the tension between centralized educational policies and the need to recognize regional identities. At the core of this challenge is the fact that national curricula, such as the Kurikulum 2013, predominantly focus on a standardized narrative that centers on national figures like Sukarno, Diponegoro, and Hatta. The legal framework surrounding the curriculum, notably Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System, emphasizes the importance of fostering national unity and character development, yet it does not provide clear mandates for the inclusion of local historical figures. The absence of such directives creates a curriculum that, while

fostering national coherence, fails to integrate the diverse histories that constitute the fabric of Indonesia's identity.

From a theoretical standpoint, the framework proposed by Benedict Anderson (1983) on "imagined communities" is particularly relevant. Anderson argued that national identities are socially constructed and perpetuated through shared narratives, often embedded in education. In the Indonesian context, the emphasis on national heroes reflects an effort to construct a unified national identity, yet it inadvertently excludes the rich and diverse local histories that contribute to the national narrative (Goswami, 2020). The failure to include local heroes in the curriculum reflects the tensions between the homogenization of history for national unity and the pluralization of identity that would include diverse regional contributions. Fathoni et al. (2023) argue that a curriculum that includes both national and local heroes would create a more comprehensive and inclusive sense of Indonesian identity, wherein students would understand that their national identity is made stronger by regional diversity, rather than threatened by it.

Furthermore, scholars like Kurniawan et al. (2024) suggest that regional heroes play a crucial role in fostering local pride and historical continuity. In the case of regions like Aceh, Papua, and Bali, the inclusion of local heroes could help restore historical narratives that have often been overshadowed by the central government's historical construction. As these regions may have distinct histories, such as the struggle for autonomy or resistance against colonial rule, local heroes' stories can provide unique perspectives on the broader Indonesian struggle for independence. This aligns with Edward Said's (1978) concept of "orientalism",

where the narratives of marginalized groups are often omitted or misrepresented in dominant historical discourses (Hamdi, 2013; Said, 2023). In the context of Indonesia, local heroes' stories represent a means of correcting this historical imbalance, ensuring that pluralistic national histories are recognized and valued.

To further support integration, Kurniawan et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of collaborative governance between national and local authorities in curating the educational content. Local governments, with their intimate knowledge of regional history, should play a more active role in shaping the curriculum to ensure that local heroes are included. However, the challenge lies in creating a curriculum that effectively balances local narratives with national unity, an issue that could be addressed through bottom-up policy development, as suggested by Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative action. This theory posits that authentic political change can occur when local communities engage in dialogue and collaboration, which could lead to a more inclusive national education curriculum that does not marginalize regional histories.

To address the gaps in the curricular integration of local heroes' wisdom, the role of legal and policy frameworks is indispensable. In particular, Law No. 20/2003, which serves as the foundational legal instrument governing education in Indonesia, is central to the conversation on integrating local heroes into the curriculum. However, the law's broad provisions on character building and national unity leave substantial room for interpretation regarding the content of the curriculum. This has led to inconsistent application, where local education authorities exercise considerable discretion in determining which historical narratives to prioritize. While the law mandates the teaching of Pancasila, the state

ideology, it does not explicitly outline the inclusion of local heroes, resulting in the underrepresentation of regional figures in textbooks and educational content.

The absence of explicit mandates raises the question of whether legal reforms are necessary to ensure that local heroes are consistently integrated into the national education framework. Legal scholars such as Latif (2017) have argued that the rule of law is insufficient if it does not provide clear guidelines for curriculum development. As such, they propose that specific ministerial regulations or presidential decrees should be established to require schools to teach local heroes' stories alongside national narratives. A Presidential Decree could provide a top-down mandate, ensuring that local heroes from various regions, such as Teungku Cik Ditiro from Aceh or Timo Benu from Papua, are recognized in textbooks and other educational materials. Additionally, such a decree could provide specific funding to ensure the creation of textbooks and digital media that include both national and regional heroes.

In this context, Habermas's (1996) concept of legal pluralism becomes highly relevant. He suggests that in diverse societies, multiple legal systems exist simultaneously, and these systems must be harmonized to reflect the pluralistic nature of society. In Indonesia, this theory could support the idea of local educational systems exercising autonomy in how they integrate local heroes while adhering to a broader national legal framework. This balance of legal pluralism could help ensure that regional history is given the attention it deserves, without threatening the overarching unity of the state. As Olmedo (2017) points out, legal frameworks should not only mandate content but also facilitate the creation of

platforms for intergovernmental dialogue, enabling both local and central government bodies to work together in shaping educational curricula.

Moreover, the government could strengthen legal requirements for the teaching of cultural and historical education by incorporating the inclusion of local heroes as part of the National Curriculum Review process. The review should be an ongoing, collaborative process, where input from local communities, cultural institutions, and educational experts is taken into account. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture could issue regulations that mandate the inclusion of local heroes' wisdom within the national curriculum. These regulations could be accompanied by guidelines on how to incorporate these heroes' stories in a way that complements national identity while recognizing the uniqueness of regional histories. This would ensure that the teaching of local heroes is not an afterthought but a core part of educational planning.

Despite the potential benefits of integrating local heroes into the curriculum, significant challenges remain, primarily due to regional disparities and resistance from the central government. First, the decentralization of Indonesia's education system, as outlined in Law No. 23/2014 on Regional Autonomy, grants local governments substantial authority in designing educational curricula. While this allows regions to incorporate local histories and heroes into their teaching, it also leads to disparities in the depth and quality of local narratives across regions. Some local governments, particularly in more politically sensitive or resource-rich regions, may prioritize local heroes, while others may not have the political will or resources to do so.

The resistance from central government is another significant barrier. National education policies tend to prioritize unity and collective values, which often leads to the marginalization of regional autonomy in shaping educational content. Kogan's (2013) critique of centralized educational systems points out that a "strong central direction" is often seen as essential for maintaining national unity, especially in countries with diverse ethnic and cultural groups like Indonesia. This top-down approach, however, risks undermining the legitimacy of local identities and historical narratives, especially when the state's version of history excludes local heroes who may have had conflicting or opposing views to the national leadership. The central government's resistance to highlighting regional heroes reflects a broader concern about the potential for regional fragmentation, as discussed by Durkheim (1912) in his work on social solidarity, where he posits that an overemphasis on regional identity might threaten national cohesion.

Moreover, balancing local wisdom with national unity remains a delicate challenge. While local heroes' wisdom can enrich the national narrative, their inclusion must be handled carefully to avoid reinforcing regional divisions. The fear of fragmentation arises from the possibility that an increased emphasis on local identities could lead to separatist sentiments or even social unrest in some regions. However, Smith's (2009) work on ethno-symbolism offers an optimistic view, suggesting that regional heroes can be framed as part of a larger narrative of resistance, justice, and nation-building, rather than sources of division. By positioning local heroes within the broader context of national struggle, such as

the fight against colonialism or injustice, their inclusion can contribute to a more holistic understanding of Indonesian unity.

Therefore, the incorporation of local heroes into the national curriculum necessitates a nuanced approach that balances national unity with regional diversity. Although current legal and policy frameworks provide a basis for such integration, additional reforms and a more inclusive strategy for curriculum development are essential to ensure that the contributions of local heroes are acknowledged as a critical element of Indonesia's educational framework. By combining legal provisions, intergovernmental cooperation, and inclusive curriculum design, Indonesia has the potential to establish an education system that celebrates both national and regional identities.

3. Analysis on Benefits of Integrating Local Heroes' Wisdom into Education

a. Strengthening National Identity

Integrating the wisdom of local heroes into education can significantly contribute to strengthening national identity by fostering a sense of collective belonging that transcends regional differences. The role of local heroes in Indonesian history is pivotal in illustrating that the fight for independence and the nation's progress was not solely led by the central figures recognized in the national narrative, but was also heavily influenced by local struggles, resistance, and contributions. Teaching about these local figures can bridge the gap between different regional identities and the broader concept of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika", or unity in diversity, which is enshrined in the state ideology of Indonesia. Gellner (1983) contends that national identity is constructed through shared symbols,

language, and historical narratives that bind diverse communities into a single entity. By integrating local heroes into the educational curriculum, students from various ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds will see their own regional identities reflected in the national narrative, thereby fostering a deeper sense of belonging to the collective identity of the nation.

The inclusion of local heroes in education would not only reinforce the shared struggles of different Indonesian regions, but also allow for a more nuanced appreciation of Indonesia's historical pluralism. Figures such as Teuku Umar from Aceh, Timo Benu from Papua, and Cut Nyak Dien also from Aceh, exemplify the diverse contributions of Indonesia's regions in the fight against colonization, and their stories resonate with the concept of national unity. Smith (2009), in his theory of ethno-symbolism, suggests that national identities are often formed by collective memories of past struggles, and these can be enriched when regional heroes are integrated into national education systems. The focus on local heroes can offer students a more comprehensive understanding of the nation's history, one that values diverse narratives that are crucial to the unified identity of the state. Moreover, the stories of local heroes can instill a sense of shared national ideals, such as justice, sacrifice, and resilience, further cementing the national identity as a collective journey.

b. Promoting Diversity and Inclusion

Integrating local heroes' wisdom into the national curriculum can also serve as a vital tool in promoting diversity and inclusion in Indonesian education. Indonesia is an ethnically and culturally diverse nation, and any educational

system that does not fully recognize the pluralistic nature of Indonesian society risks marginalizing significant portions of its population. By teaching students about local heroes from different ethnicities, regions, and cultures, the education system can highlight the value of cultural diversity and foster respect for varying ethnic traditions, customs, and values. Banks (2010) emphasizes that inclusive education contributes to social cohesion by acknowledging the contributions of all cultural groups within a society, thereby preventing the alienation of minority groups. In the Indonesian context, this would involve the inclusion of figures from indigenous communities, ethnic minorities, and regions outside the central government's influence, ensuring that all students feel represented and valued in the education system.

Moreover, Pancasila, the state ideology that emphasizes unity in diversity, can be better actualized when local heroes' wisdom is integrated into the curriculum. Local heroes often embody the very ideals of tolerance, mutual respect, and cooperation, which are core values of Pancasila. For example, Sultan Hasanuddin of South Sulawesi is a figure who exemplifies the defense of Indonesia's sovereignty and the importance of peaceful coexistence within diverse communities. In this sense, learning about local heroes encourages students to see diversity as a strength, rather than a source of division. Murphy (2022) argues that by recognizing local heroes who embody regional traditions, the education system can strengthen the national commitment to democratic pluralism, where each culture is not only tolerated but celebrated. The integration of local heroes' stories can thus nurture an environment in which students respect diversity while also understanding that their nation is strong because of its multicultural heritage.

Local heroes provide powerful examples of ethno-cultural resilience and the importance of preserving regional traditions in the face of external pressures. Bhabha (1994) describes the concept of “hybridity” as the blending of different cultural identities to form a new and more inclusive social order. The wisdom of local heroes, who often embody this hybridity, can help students appreciate the rich intersections of indigenous culture and national identity. By teaching students about the regional struggles and contributions of local heroes, schools can help cultivate a more inclusive society that values both cultural heritage and national unity.

c. Fostering Civic Engagement

The wisdom of local heroes can also play an essential role in shaping students into active and responsible citizens. Local heroes are not just historical figures, but symbols of civic virtue, sacrifice, and community responsibility. In the Democratic Peace Theory advanced by scholars like Russett and O’Neal (2001), civic engagement is seen as crucial for the stability of democracies, where citizens actively participate in the governance process. By incorporating the stories of local heroes into education, students are introduced to individuals who fought for freedom, justice, and equality, values that are directly aligned with the development of a democratic citizenship. Habermas (1996) posits that education is central to cultivating a democratic public sphere, where citizens critically engage with their society’s issues. Local heroes’ narratives can serve as models for civic activism, teaching students the importance of participating in national development and social justice movements.

Moreover, local heroes' wisdom often highlights the importance of collective action in the pursuit of common good, which is essential for nation-building. In Indonesia's post-colonial era, the national struggle for independence involved not only national leaders but also countless individuals who, through local resistance movements, contributed to the national cause. Heroes like Sukarno, Hatta, and Diponegoro are well known for their national significance, but the lesser-known figures like Tjoet Nja' Dhien and Thomas Matulesy (Pattimura) serve as local beacons of resistance and civic responsibility. These local heroes teach students that national development is not only the responsibility of elected officials but of every citizen, regardless of region. Their struggles, often centered around local communities, highlight the importance of community engagement in nation-building and the development of democratic values.

The narrative of local heroes also empowers students to engage critically with the socio-political issues facing Indonesia today. Tocqueville (1835) in his work on *Democracy in America* asserts that an engaged citizenry is the foundation of a successful democracy. By examining the actions and decisions of local heroes, students can learn about active citizenship—one that is not only concerned with individual rights but also the collective welfare of the community. Furthermore, local heroes' stories can be connected to contemporary national challenges such as social inequality, environmental justice, and regional autonomy, encouraging students to see themselves as agents of change who are capable of contributing to the betterment of society. Foucault's (1975) as emphasized by Guedon (1977) on theory of power and knowledge can be applied here: by understanding the stories of local heroes, students gain critical knowledge about the ways in which

individuals and communities can exercise power within society, ultimately leading to greater civic responsibility.

Integrating the wisdom of local heroes into Indonesia's national education system presents a range of significant benefits, including the enhancement of national identity, the promotion of diversity and inclusion, and the encouragement of civic engagement. By embedding regional heroes into the curriculum, Indonesia can better reflect its multicultural heritage and the shared values that unify its citizens, while also fostering active participation in the process of nation-building. Such an approach would not only deepen historical understanding but also contribute to the development of a more engaged, responsible, and democratic citizenry, one that is better prepared to address the challenges of the future.

This concept of meaningful participation, particularly in the context of education, aligns closely with the framework outlined in the research on the formulation of internal regulations in higher education institutions in Indonesia, as emphasized by Sulaksono, et.al (2025) in which transparency, participatory decision-making, and legal harmonization in the creation of institutional regulations, are essential for achieving the SDGs, particularly Goal 16, which aims to build resilient institutions. Just as local heroes' inclusion in education fosters a more unified and participatory society, the meaningful participation model proposed for higher education institutions aims to ensure that diverse voices are heard, considered, and explained in the regulatory process. This model ensures that regulations reflect the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders, promoting a transparent and inclusive approach to policy development.

Moreover, the concept of protecting and fulfilling the educational rights of all children, as highlighted by Sadat and Permatasari (2023), further underscores the importance of an inclusive and equitable approach to education. Just as the research advocates for the protection of children's educational rights within correctional facilities, integrating the wisdom of local heroes into the curriculum serves as an extension of Indonesia's commitment to ensuring that all members of society, regardless of background, have access to an education that respects and values their unique contributions. Together, these efforts can contribute to a holistic and sustainable education system that nurtures a well-rounded, engaged, and informed citizenry in line with both national development goals and global sustainability objectives.

d. International Perspectives on Cultural Education Policy

In exploring how other countries incorporate local heroes' wisdom or cultural heritage into national education, it is valuable to consider comparative examples that have successfully integrated regional and cultural diversity into the national curriculum. For instance, South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), established post-apartheid, emphasized the importance of acknowledging both national and local histories in healing the wounds of the past. Through the TRC, the country acknowledged the varied racial, ethnic, and regional experiences that defined its complex history. In education, the Commission recommended the integration of local narratives—particularly those of marginalized communities—into the curriculum to allow for a fuller understanding of the apartheid system's impact. Similarly, South Africa's Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements

(CAPS) have made inclusive historical narratives a core part of their national education. The teaching of local heroes, such as Albertina Sisulu and Chris Hani, among others, has been integral in promoting the national reconciliation process, emphasizing the need to balance regional identities with the goal of fostering national unity.

In a different context, Northern Ireland implemented educational reconciliation programs in response to The Troubles, a period of sectarian conflict. These programs sought to bridge the divide between Catholic and Protestant communities by integrating local historical narratives, including the contributions of heroes and community leaders from both sides of the conflict. The Northern Ireland Curriculum has introduced policies that encourage students to engage with a diverse range of perspectives, recognizing the importance of local narratives for both healing past wounds and fostering a unified society. The Cross-Community Contact Scheme within schools actively promotes the sharing of local histories to mitigate tensions and improve social cohesion.

These examples highlight the international recognition of the importance of integrating local history, cultural heritage, and the contributions of regional heroes into national education. They offer valuable lessons for Indonesia in how to successfully balance regional diversity with national unity. Indonesia's challenge, similar to that of South Africa and Northern Ireland, lies in constructing an educational framework that allows for the recognition of local heroes' contributions while maintaining a cohesive national identity. What Indonesia could learn from these international cases is the critical role of inclusive education

policies that actively seek to incorporate local histories into national curricula without undermining national solidarity.

Furthermor, on the international stage, one of the most prominent frameworks guiding the integration of cultural heritage into education is that of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO's guidelines on cultural heritage and education stress the importance of preserving local traditions while promoting global citizenship. Specifically, UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) emphasizes the need for educational systems to foster an understanding of local cultural practices, traditions, and heroes as part of a broader human history. The convention urges nations to implement educational policies that not only protect cultural heritage but also incorporate it into national narratives. In line with this, UNESCO's Framework for Cultural Education suggests that students should be provided with opportunities to engage with both local and global histories, highlighting the critical role of local heroes and historical narratives in this educational process.

For Indonesia, aligning its educational policies with UNESCO's standards could provide a pathway toward integrating local heroes' wisdom into the national curriculum. The Indonesian government could draw upon UNESCO's framework by ensuring that regional history and local heroes are integrated into national curricular design, not merely as isolated subjects but as an integral part of the broader educational experience. This alignment would not only enhance the cultural literacy of students but also strengthen their understanding of Indonesia's rich and diverse historical legacy. UNESCO has highlighted the importance of

inclusive pedagogy—that is, teaching that acknowledges the experiences and contributions of all cultural groups within a society, and Indonesia’s local heroes embody these values.

Indonesia’s current National Education System Law (Law No. 20/2003) and the National Curriculum (Kurikulum 2013) could be enhanced by explicitly reflecting the principles found in UNESCO’s guidelines. While Indonesia’s curriculum already touches upon local heroes and national historical figures, a more robust framework—mandated by legislation or policy—could ensure a more systematic integration of diverse regional contributions, promoting a sense of shared heritage while simultaneously cultivating national unity. A more comprehensive approach to incorporating local heroes into educational frameworks would also help Indonesia fulfill its obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which mandates the right to education in a manner that respects cultural diversity and historical heritage.

By referencing UNESCO’s standards and the legal frameworks of other nations, Indonesia can further strengthen its educational system, fostering a deep sense of cultural awareness and national pride. Aligning its educational policies with international best practices would not only ensure the protection of local heritage but also contribute to a more inclusive and diverse education system. This approach, however, must be carefully managed to balance the needs for regional representation with national cohesion, ensuring that the wisdom of local heroes contributes to a unified national identity that embraces both regional diversity and national unity.

e. Policy Recommendations for Legal Reform

The first critical step in fostering the integration of local heroes' wisdom into Indonesia's education system lies in strengthening the legal mandates that shape educational curricula. Indonesia's National Education System Law (Law No. 20/2003), which governs the framework for education in Indonesia, is a key piece of legislation that aims to promote quality education, ensure equality, and foster national unity. However, while this law envisions the cultivation of a national identity and recognizes the importance of diversity, it does not specifically address the inclusion of local heroes in national educational curricula. Article 3 of Law No. 20/2003 states that the objective of national education is "to develop students' potentials so that they become human beings with faith and piety, noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, skillful, creative, independent, and democratic." It emphasizes the need for civic education that encourages the formation of moral character and national identity but does not detail specific methods or contents related to regional or local heroes. This gap presents an opportunity for reform, where the law could be amended to explicitly mandate the inclusion of local heroes' wisdom in national and regional curricula, reinforcing the pluralistic nature of Indonesia's identity.

The legal framework could be further enhanced by revising Article 37 of the law, which discusses the inclusion of national values in educational curricula. Article 37 (1) asserts that education should provide a comprehensive understanding of national values and culture, yet it primarily focuses on national-level figures and ideologies. An amendment to this article should include a

specific clause that mandates the inclusion of local heroes as part of civic education, contributing to the formation of a diverse and inclusive national identity. This could be achieved by adding a sub-section that explicitly states, “Regional historical figures and local heroes shall be integrated into the curricula at all educational levels to foster national unity and respect for cultural diversity.” This modification would allow the legal system to recognize the central role of local heroes in shaping the values of unity and sacrifice that are core to Indonesian identity.

To operationalize this reform, presidential decrees and ministerial regulations would be required to provide specific guidelines for curriculum development at both national and regional levels. By incorporating local heroes in this legal framework, the Pancasila Curriculum could be further enriched, integrating local wisdom alongside the core values of Pancasila, such as social justice and humanitarianism. As the scholars like Kymlicka (2001) argue in the context of multiculturalism, legal frameworks must ensure that the education system reflects the diversity of cultural backgrounds, while at the same time maintaining a unified national identity. The integration of local heroes’ wisdom could be a powerful tool to balance these potentially conflicting demands of unity and diversity.

Another pivotal aspect of this legal reform is the focus on teacher training and curriculum development. Law No. 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers is a crucial regulation in this context, as it governs the qualifications and professional standards of teachers. However, while this law emphasizes the competence and professionalism of educators, it does not specifically address the teaching of local heroes or the integration of multicultural history into the classroom. Article 6 of

this law states that teachers are required to possess competencies in both pedagogical and subject matter knowledge. However, there is a gap in explicitly requiring knowledge of local historical figures or regional heroes as part of the pedagogical framework for civic education. This limitation restricts teachers' ability to engage with diverse narratives and impart the richness of Indonesia's pluralistic history to students.

Article 10 Law No. 14/2005 requires teachers to have pedagogical and professional competence, which includes understanding cultural contexts and adapting learning materials. This enables teachers to incorporate the values and narratives of local heroes into subjects such as history, civics, and character education.

While Article 13 mandates ongoing training, which aligns with Kurikulum 2013's focus on thematic and character-based learning. Through professional development programs, teachers can acquire the skills to design lesson plans that embed local wisdom while meeting national learning standards. In line with this, Article 35 assigns schools a role in facilitating teacher competency, ensuring that curriculum implementation is supported institutionally. This legal provision creates a bridge between national education policies and the practical integration of local heroes' values, enabling the curriculum to reflect both national objectives and local cultural heritage.

From the perspective of responsive law and legal pluralism, the provisions in Law No. 14/2005 demonstrate how legal frameworks can function adaptively to accommodate social and cultural needs in education. Responsive law emphasizes that legal norms should not only be formal but also capable of responding to living

social practices, including local values embodied by community heroes. Legal pluralism highlights the importance of recognizing diverse systems of values within society; in this context, national education law must create space for local wisdom to prevent it from being marginalized by the formal curriculum. By emphasizing teachers' pedagogical competence, professional development, and institutional responsibilities as outlined in Articles 10, 13, and 35, this regulation establishes a legal mechanism to bridge national standards with local cultural values, enabling the integration of local heroes' wisdom into formal education in a legitimate and effective manner. To address this gap, the law should be amended to include multicultural education and the teaching of local heroes as part of teachers' professional competencies. A specific amendment could be introduced to Article 6, specifying that teachers must have proficiency in regional and national histories, including the stories of local heroes. This would not only empower teachers with the necessary knowledge to incorporate local heroes into their lessons but also enhance students' understanding of local contributions to national identity. Teachers would need to be trained in inclusive pedagogies that respect and highlight cultural diversity while promoting national unity. Training programs should be designed with input from local historians, cultural experts, and community leaders, ensuring that the knowledge imparted is accurate, respectful, and relevant to students' lives.

The development of curricular resources is equally important. Legal frameworks can support the creation of teaching materials that incorporate local heroes' wisdom, ensuring that students are not only familiar with national heroes like Sukarno or Diponegoro but also with heroes from diverse regions and ethnic

backgrounds. Textbooks, digital media, and interactive platforms should be created to provide students with a more comprehensive and inclusive education. The inclusion of local heroes in civics education should be presented in a manner that emphasizes their sacrifices, values, and contributions to nation-building.

In addition, ss Nancy Fraser (2009) argues in her theory of justice as recognition, education should provide equal recognition to all social groups, fostering dignity and respect for their identities, histories, and cultural expressions. From a legal perspective, this implies that education law and policy must move beyond formal equality toward substantive justice, ensuring that marginalized or locally rooted knowledge—such as the wisdom of local heroes—is not excluded from the national curriculum. Recognition, in this sense, is not merely symbolic but institutional, requiring legal frameworks to actively accommodate cultural diversity within educational content (Setiawan, et.al., 2023; Riyanto, et.al, 2025).

Integrating Fraser's perspective with broader theories of justice, such as those of John Rawls, highlights the importance of fairness in the distribution of educational resources and representation. While Rawls emphasizes distributive justice, Fraser complements this by stressing cultural recognition as an equally vital dimension of justice. In this context, the exclusion of local heroes' wisdom reflects a form of cultural injustice that legal and policy frameworks must address. Therefore, a responsive and pluralistic legal approach is necessary to ensure that education systems not only unify the nation but also equitably represent its diverse cultural identities.

In further context, the regional autonomy afforded to local governments by Law No. 23/2014 on Regional Government presents both an opportunity and a challenge for integrating local heroes into the educational framework. According to Article 2 of this law, local governments are given the power to manage their own education systems, provided they adhere to national educational standards and goals. This autonomy allows provinces and districts to shape their regional curricula and educational policies, enabling the integration of local heroes into the educational content tailored to specific regions. However, the challenge lies in ensuring consistency with the national educational framework, which prioritizes national unity while respecting regional identities.

Based a legal theory perspective, this tension between national standards and regional autonomy can be analyzed through legal pluralism and responsive law. Legal pluralism recognizes that multiple legal and social norms coexist, suggesting that regional governments have the legitimacy to incorporate local cultural and historical values, such as the wisdom of local heroes, into their curricula. Articles 5 and 8 of Law No. 23/2014, which define local government responsibilities in education and curriculum adaptation, provide a formal legal basis for this integration. At the same time, responsive law theory highlights the need for legal frameworks to adapt to social realities; in practice, this means that while national education law sets overarching goals, it should be flexible enough to accommodate the culturally specific knowledge and narratives that local communities value. Thus, the law creates a mechanism to balance uniform national objectives with regional cultural recognition, aligning legal mandates with social justice and educational relevance (Laskarwati & Rodiyah, 2020).

Legal reforms should encourage coordination between national and regional governments to ensure that local heroes are adequately represented in local curricula, while still maintaining alignment with national educational objectives. This could involve the creation of a centralized framework that sets guidelines for integrating regional content into the national curriculum, while still allowing for regional flexibility in terms of the specific figures or narratives emphasized. In this way, local heroes could be integrated into national narratives without undermining regional identities. Furthermore, the reform should also provide a clear legal mechanism for ensuring that local heroes are taught in a way that promotes unity and national cohesion, preventing the fragmentation of history into competing regional narratives.

Article 8 of Law No. 23/2014 gives local governments the authority to adjust curricula in line with regional values and local cultural heritage. To make this process more effective, the central government should develop a set of guidelines or standards for regional curricula that allow for the inclusion of local heroes while aligning with national educational standards. This would foster educational equity and inclusivity, ensuring that all students, regardless of their region, are exposed to both national and local histories. Additionally, the local government should be required to work with community leaders, local historians, and academics to identify regional heroes whose wisdom can contribute to the national education system.

Furthermore, legal reforms should provide a framework that encourages the collaboration of national and local authorities to ensure that local heroes' wisdom

is part of a broader narrative that unites Indonesia's diverse regions, ethnicities, and cultures while maintaining national coherence. Legal instruments, such as regional decrees or executive orders, can be put in place to ensure the consistent integration of local heroes in education, bridging the gap between regional autonomy and national unity.

C. CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the crucial role that legal and policy frameworks play in integrating local heroes' wisdom into Indonesia's national education system. Through a detailed analysis of the existing legislative structures, such as Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System, it is evident that while there is some recognition of local heroes in the curriculum, the integration remains inconsistent and largely region-dependent. The study highlights that legal reforms, particularly amendments to the National Education Law, could foster a more inclusive and representative approach to education, ensuring that the stories of local heroes from all regions of Indonesia are systematically included in school curricula. Local heroes, such as Teuku Umar, Cut Nyak Dien, and I Gusti Ngurah Rai, exemplify the values of sacrifice, resilience, and commitment to justice—qualities that are vital to nurturing a strong national identity.

The importance of balancing regional diversity with national unity emerged as a central theme in this study. While there is an increasing push for local autonomy in education, the challenge lies in ensuring that local narratives—often centered on regional heroes—are taught in a way that does not undermine the broader, unifying national history. It is essential that educational policies do not

prioritize regionalism to the point where they fracture the unity of Indonesia as a nation-state. Instead, there should be an intentional effort to include local heroes within the broader national framework of Pancasila, the guiding ideology of unity in diversity.

The role of education in shaping national identity and citizenship is undeniably critical. As the Indonesian educational system continues to evolve, there must be a concerted effort to instill not only knowledge of historical events but also a deep understanding of the diverse cultural heritage that constitutes the fabric of Indonesia. Local heroes, as embodiments of national values, have the potential to serve as powerful tools in this process. By teaching students about local heroes, Indonesia can foster a sense of pride and ownership in its national history, cultivating future generations of citizens who are not only patriotic but also deeply respectful of diversity and committed to the nation's democratic values.

As such, further legal and policy reforms are needed to ensure that the wisdom of local heroes is systematically integrated into the national education curriculum. This could involve amending existing laws, such as the National Education Law, to mandate the inclusion of local historical figures in both the civics education and history curricula. Additionally, the regional autonomy laws should be leveraged to allow local governments to develop customized educational resources that incorporate local heroes' wisdom while maintaining alignment with national educational goals. By doing so, Indonesia can create a more inclusive, cohesive, and resilient education system that celebrates both regional uniqueness and national unity. The integration of local heroes' wisdom

into education is not merely an academic exercise—it is a crucial step toward nation-building and the cultivation of an empowered citizenry equipped to contribute to Indonesia's future development.

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