

# Ethical Empowerment: Integrating Malay Local Wisdom with VCT to Fortify Students' Moral Character in History Learning

Bunari<sup>1</sup>, Asyul Fikri<sup>2</sup>, Nurhijrah Binti Zakaria<sup>3</sup>, Ramadhani Lausi Mkumbachi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia; bunari@lecturer.unri.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia; asyul.fikri@lecturer.co.id

<sup>3</sup> Kampus Dato' Razali Ismail, Kuala Nerus, Trengganu, Malaysia; nurhijrah@ipgm.edu.my

<sup>4</sup> Stella Maris Mtwara University College, United Republic of Tanzania; rmkumbachi@geography.du.ac.in

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## ABSTRACT

As juvenile delinquency rates rise in Indonesia, addressing the underlying moral degradation among adolescents becomes crucial. This study investigates the integration of Tanjak Melayu's local wisdom with Value Clarification Technique (VCT) in history education as a strategy for moral character enhancement in students. Using a qualitative ethnographic approach, data was collected through observation, interviews, document reviews, and validity tests, with data analysis performed via triangulation. The study identifies key values of Tanjak Melayu—dignity, politeness, and attractiveness—that can be effectively incorporated into history lessons using VCT. This integration shows a positive impact on student's moral character, providing not only knowledge but also facilitating practical learning tasks. The incorporation of Tanjak Melayu values into educational settings via VCT not only preserves cultural heritage but also actively promotes moral virtues among students. The findings suggest that VCT can be a dynamic tool in moral education, enhancing student engagement and ethical development. This study underscores the potential of culturally integrated education technologies in addressing adolescent behavioral issues. By embedding local cultural values into the curriculum, educational institutions can play a pivotal role in shaping the moral landscape of the next generation. This approach offers a scalable model for similar interventions across diverse educational contexts, aiming to curb juvenile delinquency through enhanced character education. The successful integration of Tanjak Melayu values into history education via VCT demonstrates a viable path towards improving the moral character of students, suggesting that similar cultural and technological adaptations in educational curricula could be beneficial on a broader scale.

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## Corresponding Author:

Bunari

Universitas Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia; bunari@lecturer.unri.ac.id

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As an attempt to improve cognitive and psychomotor abilities, the 2013 curriculum emphasizes the development of a student's character (Anshori, 2021). All teachers in all school disciplines are

responsible for the growth and development of students' character (Sultan, 2021). Various efforts have been made to develop noble character and character. Integrating character values into the existing curriculum or creating a different curriculum outside of compulsory school subjects is carried out to improve students' moral character. Students with morals and character are the primary goal of implementing national education (Aryana, 2021). Based on the explanation above, it is concluded that the enhancement of cognitive and psychomotor abilities and the cultivation of students' character are a shared responsibility among teachers across disciplines, through the integration of character values within the curriculum, aiming to develop students with good morals, in line with the core objective of national education.

However, the Indonesian people have recently been faced with various problems of moral degradation, especially teenagers, student brawls, illegal racing, drug cases, bullying, and sexual harassment, which are often encountered in daily news (Solihin et al., 2020). Moreover, multiple newspapers discovered that teenagers in Tanjung Ugat Subdistrict, Tanjungpinang City, Riau Islands, were judged to have committed blasphemy by kicking and throwing Al-Qur'an in the mosque. In addition, it was found that a junior high school student in Kuantan Singingi, Riau, set a school on fire after not heeding the teacher's advice not to eat in class. In the school environment, many students show disrespectful behavior towards teachers, speak loudly, are outside of school during class hours, and fall asleep in class. Some of the examples above show how low the moral values of students are. Therefore, integrated steps are needed to avoid juvenile delinquency and strengthen students' moral character.

Moral values become something that is believed to be accurate and serves as a guide for how people should act and behave in society (Gabriel, 2020). Society has rules of behavior that differ from place to place, are based on local customs, and do not conflict with religious teachings. Local customs and cultures that contain the values and norms of social life are called local wisdom. Local wisdom is a cultural heritage of local communities with moral ideals that can be used as guidelines for social behavior (Uge et al., 2019). Each region has different local wisdom. Tanjak Melayu is a pearl of local wisdom that has values that can be guided and become a guide for the Malay community. Tanjak Melayu is a head covering made of cloth and used by Malay men. Tanjak has an essential meaning in the life of the Malay community because it contains values that can be used as a way of life for the Malay community, such as dignity, politeness, and beauty.

Integrating local wisdom values into learning, such as the Malay tanjak value, is expected to help students develop positive characters (Murti, 2020). With the proper methods and approaches, teachers can integrate the values of local wisdom into all subjects. History is one of the disciplines that are very helpful in integrating the values of local wisdom (Salbella & Kumalasari, 2020). This is because history is a subject taught from elementary school to high schools and colleges to form moral and humanistic individuals. Studying the past allows students to acquire character values that can be used as guidelines for living now and in the future, rather than just knowing the date and location of the incident (Eustace et al., 2012). Therefore, history education must be structured with the correct methods and approaches to help students improve their character.

Historical education plays an essential role in developing a dignified national character and culture, as well as the development of Indonesian people who have a sense of national identity and love for the homeland (Agus et al., 2020; I Kadek Yudiana, 2020). However, history in schools is often taught using a traditional approach that only focuses on students' cognitive development (Grant, 2018). As a result, it is not surprising that many students have solid cognitive abilities but poor behavioral habits. Therefore, we need a teaching method that can disseminate moral values. Value Clarification Technique (VCT) is one of the learning approaches that can be used to internalize moral character values. VCT is a teaching approach that can assist students in identifying and determining good grades for a problem (Dewantoro & Sartono, 2019; Silvia et al., 2021). This approach will help students understand and find values in more detail. VCT is designed to teach and enhance students' ability to analyze and judge general values, which can then be applied to how they act and behave in society (Nurfurqon et al., 2022). VCT has advantages for effective learning in that it can: 1) grow and instill

values and morals in students in real life, 2) provide learning experiences from various lives, and 3) counteract, negate, intervene, and integrate various moral values in life.

According to Wiradewi et al. (2020), the VCT approach can help students improve their ability to (i) choose, decide, communicate, express ideas, beliefs, values, and feelings; (ii) empathize with other people's feelings and see other people's point of view; (iii) solving problems; and (iv) take a stand in making decisions, internalizing, and acting following the values chosen and believed. Based on the abovementioned problems, this study aims to improve students' morals by integrating tanjak Malay values into history learning through the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) approach. Hence, the primary inquiry of this study revolves around determining whether incorporating Tanjak Malay values into history education using the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) can elevate students' moral standards?

The research offers several advantages, such as deepening students' comprehension of Tanjak Malay's moral values and cultural elements, reinforcing critical thinking and empathy capacities, and assisting students in honing problem-solving skills and making prudent decisions. Moreover, it provides insights into how effective the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) approach is in enhancing student morals and incorporating local cultural values into educational frameworks.

## 2. METHODS

This study on integrating the values of Tanjak Melayu's local wisdom into history learning to improve the moral character of these students uses a qualitative methodology with an ethnographic approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, document review, and data validity testing. Several locations that facilitate collecting data were used for this study's observations, such as LAM Pekanbaru City, Bandar Serai MTQ-Pekanbaru, Dekranasda Gallery, and a location where blood crafts are made. Nine informants with a variety of backgrounds were interviewed. The selection of respondents is contingent upon their level of skill and experience related to the study's issue. For instance, the selection of the Tanjak community's founders and Tanjak Melayu craftspeople was based on their extensive understanding of Tanjak Melayu culture and crafts. Table 1 displays the interview respondents' presentations.

**Table 1.** Interview Respondents

No	Respondent	Institution
1	Mi	Pekanbaru City LAM traditional leaders
2	Jw	Pekanbaru City LAM traditional leaders
3	Hm	Pekanbaru City LAM traditional leaders
4	Zk	Pekanbaru City LAM traditional leaders
5	Sms	Founder of the Tanjak community and Malay Tanjak craftsmen
6	Mam	Founder of the Tanjak community and Malay Tanjak craftsmen
7	Ryz	Malay Tanjak craftsmen
8	Er	Head of Riau Culture Department, Head of Arts and Culture, Pekanbaru City Culture and Tourism Office
9	Mr	Management of the Riau Regional National Crafts Council

Data analysis was carried out through a triangulation step for interpretive meaning as an answer to solving research difficulties. The use of ethnographic techniques in this study was chosen because this research aims to define and explain the values of Tanjak Melayu, which will then be reconstructed and integrated with history learning.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. *Tanjak Melayu local wisdom*

Tanjak Melayu is one of the local wisdoms of the people of Pekanbaru, Riau. Tanjak Melayu refers to the covering cloth worn by Malay men. The word Tanjak is an abbreviation of the word ground that is stepped on. Tanjak has an essential meaning in the life of the Malay community. Tanjak is often referred to as tengkuluk or headdress for Malay men. Tanjak is classified into several types based on the motif on the fabric, such as Tanjak split *mumbang*, Tanjak cliff crumbling, Tanjak elephant mungkur, Tanjak wattle chicken, and others. Tanjak gives a message that the wearer believes that this Malay area is the homeland of the Malays. Thus, Tanjak should not be considered only as a headdress or fashion but shows a great level of honor and dignity for the wearer.

Tanjak is worn on the head as a symbol of someone moral, ethical, and civilized. Usually, on Tanjak, a star moon brooch is worn as a compliment. The star moon brooch has the meaning of a Muslim who understands Islam and the Qur'an. In essence, Tanjak is a male attribute associated with the palace and heroism and used in various Malay traditional events. The use of this Tanjak cannot be done at will, specific rules must be obeyed, including being made of triangular fabric that is folded in three (Arman, 2019).

Tanjak has several parts, including Tread, Bengkong, Knot, and Karangan or Solekan. Each part has its meaning in life. The first fold of the fabric on the Tanjak is called Tread, while the next fold is called Bengkong. More details can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Tapak (Left), Bengkong (Right)

Furthermore, the left and right ends of the fabric will be put together and form a knot. Men and women symbolize the left and right ends, so the knot, the union of the ends of the cloth, is interpreted as a marriage bond between a man and a woman. The essay symbolizes a result of the marriage bond. Tanjak also has a garland or sole, which is located at the very top of the Tanhak. Each type of Tanjak has a different composition or solekan. More details can be seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Simpul (Left), Solekan (Right)

The word Tanjak comes from the slogans of Alif, Ba, and Ta, which are still upheld and have become the noble values of the Malay community to this day. The results of an interview with one of the Tanjak Melayu community in Pekanbaru City (MA) stated that:

*"'alif' stands for religion, particularly Islam, emphasizing Malays' religious affinities. 'Ba' represents the country and is shown as a keris, highlighting the significance of national identity to Malays. Last but not least, 'ta' denotes Tanjak, which is the earth under one's feet".*

According to interviews, Malays believe in the notion of "Alif, Ba, Ta". The concept has symbols and meanings, such as Alif, which is symbolized by religion and is interpreted as Islam, Ba which is symbolized by a keris and defined as a nation, namely the Malays; and Ta which is symbolized by Tanjak which means stepping on the ground, and anyone who uses Tanjak acknowledges that the land he stepped on was Malay land and respected every Malay culture. Similarly, a traditional stakeholder, namely the Pekanbaru City Malay Customary Institution conveyed,

*"Tanjak was taken from Islamic values; Tanjak was since following the example of the Prophet Muhammad then continued by the sultans, then he used the sultans to practice it in the palace. So from the start, the Sultan and the palace guards used Tanjak. Therefore, a Sultan should not speak casually because Tanjak symbolizes the authority of self-respect." (HM)*

Based on the results of interviews, it is known that the use of Tanjak by the Malay community is influenced by or follows the style of dress of the Prophet SAW, including the turban. The turban is included in the sunnah category, and the Malay community is identical to Islam in general. Seeing Islam not only as a religion of choice blessed by God but also as a way of life. Islam is the main guideline for Malays daily because of the mixture of Islam and Malay people's thinking. Therefore, the Malay community considers that if you use a head tie, you will get a sunnah reward from using the head tie. So, in the use of Tanjak, one is not allowed to speak carelessly and always maintain an attitude because Tanjak symbolizes the authority and self-respect of those who use it.

### 3.2. *The values of local wisdom Tanjak Malay*

Malay climbers have moral values that can be used as guidelines in social life including marwah values, politeness values, and the value of beauty.

#### 3.2.1 *Marwah Value*

*Marwah* is related to the values of goodness, self-glory, or self-honor in a person, group, or nation. Without *Marwah*, a person or a nation is considered to have no self-esteem, no glory, and no longer respected. This is following the results of the interview with ZL stated:

*"Nijak Ni is used in the head, which is the top of the human body. For the Malays, the head is noble because it is the center of human reason. That is why the climb has a marwah, that is the name of the identity or characteristic of fantasy. That is why climbing must also see certain conditions that are not used and know the places. If you use the marwah, it will disappear. "*

Based on the interview results, the authors describe that Malay climbs have a marwah value because, for Malay people, climbing is used at the top of the human body, namely the head. There is a brain as the center of reason and human thinking that indicates glory. According to a quote from the book Abdul Latif Abu Bakar, "The head is the largest and best part of the body," Mohd. Nefi Imran said

there was a connection with Malay philosophy (here lies the brain that concentrates the mind). As a result, Tanjak has a specific important meaning for Malays. Because the value of Marwah in the climb is bound to the Malay country Marwah, individuals who use climbs must adjust to the conditions and not use the climb in any area because it is necessary to maintain the Marwah or self-honor and the nation so that the culture does not disappear. So that when using *tanjak*, then the user must follow the teachings of Islam, have courtesy, and maintain the honor of themselves, the community, and the people.

### 3.2.2 Politeness value

The value of politeness contained in Malay climbs is reflected in the way the use of the climb must follow the adab in dressing Muslims. At certain events or activities, the direction of the node on the climb must be adjusted to the level of one's position in society. This is done as a symbol of respect for older people. Other politeness values in Malay climbs can also be seen when someone uses climbing, so he must remember that both behaving and speaking must follow the norms and customs of courtesy. So, they must maintain attitudes and words towards others. Based on the values above, it can be concluded that Malay climbs contain the values of politeness and politeness for the Malay community. So, for Malay people, using climbs can shape them into human beings who are noble, polite, and polite, respect and respect others, and can maintain their self-respect, family, community, and nation.

### 3.2.3 Value of beauty

Tanjak is made and formed not only as a head cover, but each climb has a unique name and a variety of shapes and of course, has meaning. Each type of climb has a different form or solekan, from the difference in the essay can determine the name of the type of climb. The fabric used as a climb has a different pattern with its meaning in each pattern. For example, clove flowers have the meaning of affection. Mangosteen has the meaning of courtesy, and so forth. Then in terms of color, it also has different meanings for the Malay community. The green color symbolizes fertility and prosperity, the red color symbolizes courage and loyalty, the yellow color symbolizes greatness, power, sauce, and Marwah of glory, the white color symbolizes sanctity and scholarship, and the black color symbolizes might, responsibility, and honesty (Nur, 2005). So from that, Malay people are full of symbols and meanings in their lives. Based on the explanation above, it was concluded that tanjak has the values of beauty for the Malay community. Every pattern and color of cloth symbolizes the values of moral character that can be used as a guide to behave and behave in the lives of the Malay community.

### 3.3. *Integration of the values of local wisdom Malay in learning history through the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) approach*

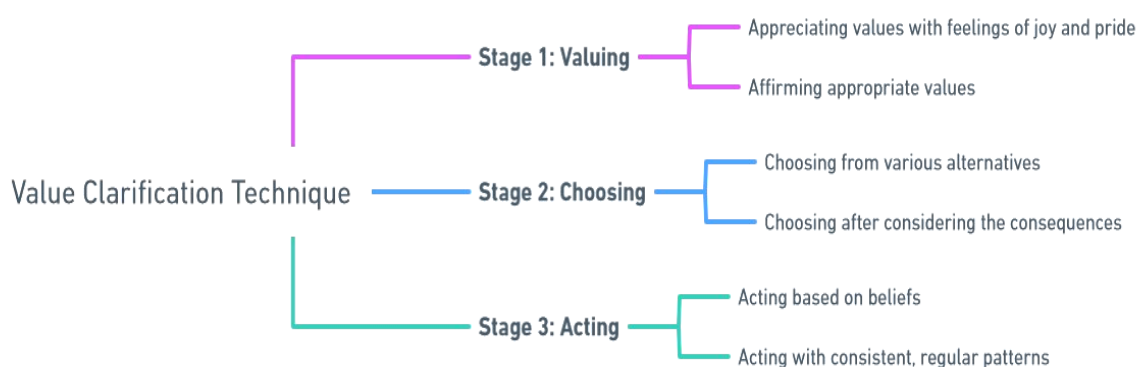
Character development must be carried out holistically and continuously throughout education, including in homes, schools, and the community (Haris, 2017). Educators are responsible for forming, developing, and improving students' character by creating a conducive learning atmosphere and transferring information to transform students. Educators must apply various ways and strategies to shape good moral characters in students, create superior students, and compete in this era of globalization (Primayana, 2020). Context-based learning close to the participant's environment will make it easier for students to accept and absorb learning material.

Local wisdom is one of the local cultures that have moral values that can be used as a guide to community life. The values of local wisdom can be integrated into learning to form DIDK participants with morals and characters following applicable norms. The values of the local wisdom of Malayjak Malay can be distributed to students in various ways, both directly and indirectly. Directly, it can be done by integrating the values of Malay climbs into the national education curriculum or making a separate curriculum to internalize the values of local wisdom. Indirectly, it can be done by conveying the values contained in the local wisdom of Malayjak in the learning process. However, appropriate learning strategies and approaches are needed so that these values can arrive and be internalized by

students. One approach teachers can use in distributing the values of local wisdom in Malayjak in learning is the Value Clarification Technique (VCT).

Value Clarification Technique (VCT) is a valuable approach to forming a moral attitude through critical thinking training towards a problem faced by students in daily life (Awiria & Nadiroh, 2019). Through the VCT learning approach, students choose and determine what values will be used from the many existing values so they can make the right decisions (Pratama et al., 2017). Based on examining existing values, the VCT approach can direct students to achieve and decide on values according to the conditions they face. Students are assisted in memorizing the selected values and finding, analyzing, taking responsibility, and developing values in their own lives. Through the VCT approach, students are expected to be able to have a strong foundation in making a decision that has an impact on the internalization of the values that are believed (Dewantoro & Sartono, 2019). The VCT approach is expected to be able to develop self-introspection skills for students. So, the internalization of Malay's values through the VCT approach is expected to shape strong character in students.

The VCT approach has several stages in its implementation. The VCT stage is described in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Stages Value Clarification Technique (VCT)

Based on Figure 1, there are three stages in distributing the values of the local wisdom of Malay Tanjak through the VCT approach. The first stage is respect, and every student must appreciate all the values in the local wisdom of Malay. Appreciate, appreciate, and believe that all values contained in the local wisdom of the Malayjak Malay can be used as a guideline for social life. In the second stage of choosing, each student must choose the values of the local wisdom of the Malayjak Tanjak to be applied in social life following the problems and challenges of the times being faced. The selection of this value is based on the considerations and conditions encountered. The right values can shape students into better human beings who can address every problem.

Furthermore, in the third stage of acting, the values of local wisdom of Malay climbing do not have a meaning if it is not applied in social life in the form of concrete action. The value of *marwah*, the value of politeness, and the value of beauty must be reflected in real life. Every Malay society must be able to reflect these values in their daily actions. How to dress that can cover the genitals and uphold Islamic teachings, courtesy in talking with polite words with others, respecting older people, maintaining self-respect, family, community, and nation must be reflected in attitudes and deeds daily. Every teenager can distance themselves from juvenile delinquency, such as brawls, drinking, drugs, and so on, and maintaining the beauty of the natural surroundings is a form of application of local wisdom values in Malay in everyday life. If the values are only known but not applied significantly in everyday life, then there is no meaning for the formation of the character of the Malay community, especially students. It is expected that through the VCT approach, the values of local wisdom can be well internalized by students to form a moral character that follows applicable norms.

Dewanto & Sartono (2019) asserted that utilizing the VCT paradigm is beneficial in developing elementary school students' patriotic conceptions and attitudes. The results of his research show that there is a significant difference in the level of students' understanding of the attitude of patriotism in the posttest between the experimental group using VCT and the control group, where the difference lies in the level of students' understanding. Students' understanding of the attitude of love for the country in the experimental class was better than in the control class. The same thing is also shown by Wijayanti (2013) and Ariani and Wahyudi (2021) that VCT can improve student character such as the importance of worship, tolerance, caring, resilience, compassion, democracy, and responsibility for both individual and group tasks. Research by Silviani et al. (2018) also supports the results of this study that the VCT approach succeeded in improving students' religious, nationalist, and gotong-royong characters. Based on the results of the above research, it is concluded that the VCT approach is effective in shaping positive moral character for students. Thus, it is very appropriate when the VCT approach is chosen to internalize the values of Tanjak Melayu in students through history learning.

Dewanto & Sartono (2019) asserted that utilizing the VCT paradigm is useful in developing elementary school students' conceptions and patriotic attitudes. The results of his research showed a significant difference in the level of student understanding of the attitude of the love of the motherland in the post-test between the experimental group using VCT and the control group, where the difference lies in the level of student understanding. Students' understanding of the attitude of the love of the motherland in the experimental class is better than in the control class. The same thing was also shown by Wijayanti (2013) and Ariani and Wahyudi (2021) that VCT improved students' character, such as the importance of worship, tolerance, caring, toughness, love, democracy, and responsibilities for both individual and group tasks. Silviani et al. (2018) also support the results of this study that the VCT approach has succeeded in increasing students' religious character, nationalism, and cooperation. Based on the research results above, it was concluded that the VCT approach was effective in shaping positive moral characters for students. So, it is very appropriate when the VCT approach was chosen to internalize the values of Malay to students through learning history.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Adolescent moral degradation, especially at school age, raises teenagers' high level of crime. Various juvenile delinquency behaviors increased in Indonesian society. Good character coaching must be carried out at school, at home, and in the community to prevent the increasing spread and enhance the crimes committed by adolescents. Learning in a context close to students will make it easier for them to understand the material presented. Integrating local wisdom values in the learning process is one solution to foster students' character. Tanjak Malay is one of the local wisdoms with a variety of moral values that students in their lives can internalize. The results showed that the integration of the values of local Malay wisdom was effectively carried out through the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) approach. This is because VCT guides students to real actions in life, not only providing cognitive knowledge. So, through the VCT approach, it is expected that students' moral character can change for the better. Drawing from the aforementioned findings, it is suggested that future studies broaden the area of integrating local wisdom values, incorporating not only Tanjak Melayu but also other pertinent local knowledge within the context of students. In addition, it's critical to include a range of relevant stakeholders in student character development initiatives, including parents, teachers, and community members. Furthermore, future studies may examine the applicability of the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) method in other learning situations and evaluate it further. Therefore, it is hoped that more study will shed light on how best to incorporate local wisdom values into the teaching and learning process in order to help students develop their moral character.

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