

Evaluating the KENARA Program as a Cultural Identity Policy: A Case Study of Gayo Cultural Preservation at SMP IT Cendekia Takengon

Ida Nusraini¹, Mesiono^{2*}, and Nurussakinah Daulay³

¹⁻³ Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, Indonesia

Abstract

The KENARA Program was initiated as a school-based cultural identity policy to preserve Gayo cultural values among students amid the growing influence of globalization, digital media, and declining intergenerational cultural transmission. This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the KENARA Program at SMP IT Cendekia Takengon, Central Aceh, by examining its context, input, process, and product dimensions. This research employed a qualitative evaluative design guided by the CIPP evaluation model. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and document analysis involving the principal and teachers who were directly engaged in the program. The data were analyzed through data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification, while credibility was strengthened through source and technique triangulation. The findings show that, in the context dimension, KENARA has a strong cultural rationale because it responds to the weakening transmission of Gayo language, values, arts, and identity among students. In the input dimension, the program is constrained by limited teacher competence, the absence of standardized modules, inadequate facilities, insufficient funding, and weak structured stakeholder support. In the process dimension, the program has been implemented through cultural habituation, traditional arts, language use, and school-based cultural activities, but its integration into classroom learning remains uneven and its evaluation instruments are not yet standardized. In the product dimension, KENARA has contributed to students' cultural knowledge, confidence, pride, and participation, although their deeper understanding of Gayo cultural philosophy remains limited. The study implies that cultural identity policies in schools require standardized curriculum guidelines, teacher training, measurable evaluation indicators, and sustained collaboration among schools, families, customary institutions, and local government.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 2 February 2026

Revised : 28 Maret 2026

Accepted : 28 April 2026

KEYWORDS

CIPP Evaluation; Cultural Identity; Gayo Culture; KENARA Program; Local Wisdom

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license.



CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

* **Mesiono**, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, Indonesia. Email: mesiono@uinsu.ac.id

Introduction

Education is not merely an institutional mechanism for transferring knowledge, but also a strategic cultural space through which collective memory, local identity, moral values, and social belonging are transmitted across generations. In culturally diverse societies, schools are expected to mediate between global competencies and local rootedness by enabling students to engage with modern knowledge without being detached from their cultural heritage (Abdul-Jabbar, 2026; Mansilla & Wilson, 2020). This argument is consistent with culturally responsive and culturally sustaining perspectives, which emphasize that meaningful education should recognize students' cultural backgrounds, use local knowledge as a pedagogical resource, and strengthen learners' sense of identity, participation, and belonging (Caingcoy, 2023; D'Andrea Martínez et al., 2023; Ramli et al., 2025). Recent studies further show that the integration of local culture into school curricula can

enhance student engagement, character formation, cultural pride, and contextual understanding because learning becomes more relevant to students' lived experiences and community realities (Rahmawati, 2025; Rasidi et al., 2025; Sakti et al., 2024).

In the Indonesian educational context, local wisdom-based education has become increasingly important amid the pressures of globalization, digital culture, and the declining use of local languages and traditions among younger generations. Local cultural values are not only symbolic heritage, but also social resources that contain ethical principles, communal responsibility, environmental awareness, and identity formation. Studies on local wisdom-based education in Indonesia indicate that the integration of indigenous knowledge, traditional arts, local narratives, and community practices into learning can support character education and strengthen students' connection to their cultural environment (Ramli et al., 2025; Sadri & Wisnu Bayu Temaja, 2025; Sakti et al., 2024). However, the implementation of culture-based education often faces structural and pedagogical challenges, including limited teacher competence, the absence of standardized learning materials, weak policy support, insufficient facilities, and inadequate evaluation instruments (Baharuddin & Burhan, 2025; Hicham et al., 2025; Sengsoulintha, 2025).

The Gayo community in Central Aceh represents one of Indonesia's distinctive cultural groups whose identity is expressed through language, traditional arts, social norms, oral traditions, and symbolic cultural practices. Gayo local wisdom includes cultural expressions such as the Gayo language, *sumang* as a moral-social norm, *didong* as an aesthetic and educational performance, and various forms of customary knowledge embedded in community life (Akbar, 2015; Hartati & Ramdiana, 2026; Zulkarnain et al., 2019). These cultural resources have strong educational potential because they can be transformed into learning content, character formation practices, and school-based cultural habituation. Nevertheless, the transmission of Gayo cultural values among students is increasingly challenged by the dominance of digital media, popular culture, reduced use of local language in family environments, and the perception that local culture is less relevant than global or foreign cultural forms (Börjesson et al., 2016; Kadir & Rosmini, 2025; Lee et al., 2025).

In response to these challenges, the Gayo Cultural Identity Creation Program, known as KENARA, was initiated by the Department of Education and Culture of Central Aceh Regency as a policy effort to preserve Gayo cultural identity through school-based habituation and cultural learning. At SMP IT Cendekia Takengon, KENARA is implemented through activities such as the use of the Gayo language, Gayo cultural attributes, traditional arts, cultural festivals, local culinary introduction, and the involvement of artists or cultural figures in school activities. Conceptually, this program is important because it positions the school as an institutional agent of cultural preservation and character development. It also reflects the idea that cultural identity policy should not remain at the level of ceremonial celebration, but should be translated into curriculum planning, teacher capacity building, learning resources, community collaboration, and measurable student outcomes (Kaplan & Owings, 2013; Rasidi et al., 2025; Shabalala, 2025).

Evaluating KENARA requires a comprehensive framework that can examine not only whether the program produces visible cultural activities, but also whether its context, resources, implementation process, and outcomes are aligned with its policy objectives. The CIPP evaluation model is relevant for this purpose because it provides a systematic structure for assessing context, input, process, and product in educational programs. Context evaluation helps identify the cultural needs and policy rationale underlying the program; input evaluation assesses the adequacy of

teachers, materials, facilities, funding, and partnerships; process evaluation examines how the program is implemented in school practices; and product evaluation assesses its outcomes for students' knowledge, attitudes, skills, identity, and character (Sankaran & Saad, 2022; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Toosi et al., 2021). In culture-based policy evaluation, this model is particularly useful because it allows researchers to move beyond output-oriented assessment and examine how cultural values are institutionalized, negotiated, and sustained within the school ecosystem (Curtis et al., 2021; Setyanto et al., 2019; Shonfeld et al., 2021).

Previous studies have examined culture-based education, local wisdom curriculum, culturally responsive pedagogy, and educational program evaluation in various settings. These studies generally affirm that local culture can enrich learning, strengthen character education, and improve students' cultural awareness (Irsyadiah et al., 2024; Putra Darma et al., 2025; Sakti et al., 2024). Other studies on Gayo local wisdom have discussed curriculum management, local teaching materials, and the educational role of traditional arts such as *didong* (Andriyanti et al., 2024; Jamilah et al., 2024; Rahardi, 2019). However, several gaps remain. First, many studies on local wisdom-based education focus on curriculum integration or learning material development, while fewer examine local culture programs as educational policy instruments requiring systematic evaluation. Second, studies on Gayo culture tend to emphasize cultural preservation, local content, or traditional art, but have not sufficiently evaluated how a school-based cultural identity policy is implemented through the interconnected dimensions of context, input, process, and product. Third, existing evaluations of educational programs often remain administrative and technocratic, whereas the evaluation of a cultural identity policy needs to capture how local values are understood, practiced, resisted, and internalized by school actors.

Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in evaluating the KENARA Program not simply as a school cultural activity, but as a cultural identity policy that attempts to institutionalize Gayo cultural preservation within formal education. Unlike previous studies that mainly examine local culture as curriculum content or pedagogical material, this study positions KENARA as a policy-based cultural preservation program whose effectiveness depends on the alignment between policy rationale, institutional readiness, implementation practices, and student identity outcomes. This study aims to evaluate the KENARA Program at SMP IT Cendekia Takengon, Central Aceh, using the CIPP model by analyzing its context, input, process, and product dimensions. Through this evaluation, the study is expected to provide theoretical insight into culture-based educational policy evaluation and practical recommendations for strengthening sustainable, participatory, and measurable models of Gayo cultural preservation in schools.

Method

This study employed a qualitative evaluative design to examine the implementation of the Gayo Cultural Identity Creation Program (KENARA) at SMP IT Cendekia Takengon, Central Aceh Regency. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to understand the program not merely as an administrative policy, but as a school-based cultural identity practice involving institutional meanings, implementation dynamics, actor experiences, and contextual challenges (Aherne, 2001; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lu & Shih, 1997; Weyant, 2022). The evaluative orientation of the study was guided by the CIPP model, which consists of context, input, process, and product evaluation. The context dimension was used to identify the cultural, institutional, and policy rationale underlying the implementation of KENARA; the input dimension examined the availability

and adequacy of human resources, learning materials, facilities, funding, and institutional support; the process dimension investigated how the program was implemented in school activities and learning practices; and the product dimension assessed the perceived outcomes of the program in relation to students' cultural knowledge, cultural skills, confidence, pride, and character formation.

The research was conducted at SMP IT Cendekia Takengon, located on Jalan Pertamina–Kebet, Kampung Kebet, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency, Aceh Province. This site was selected purposively because the school has implemented the KENARA program as part of its effort to integrate formal education with Gayo local wisdom and cultural preservation. The fieldwork was carried out over a five-month period, from September 11, 2025, to April 2, 2026, covering the stages of preliminary observation, research preparation, field data collection, document review, data analysis, and verification of findings. The participants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the KENARA program (Ames et al., 2019; Campbell et al., 2020). They included the principal and teachers from different subject areas who were considered capable of providing relevant information regarding the program's objectives, resources, implementation strategies, constraints, and outcomes.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and document analysis (Kim et al., 2026; Koderi et al., 2023; Kruck & Schneiker, 2017; Sufian et al., 2024; Sugiyono, 2021). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information from the principal and teachers regarding the background of the program, the readiness of the school, the integration of Gayo cultural values into learning activities, implementation challenges, and perceived program outcomes (Muspawi et al., 2025; Sahlin, 2025). Direct observation was used to examine the actual implementation of KENARA-related activities in the school environment, including cultural habituation, classroom practices, the use of Gayo cultural symbols, and students' participation in cultural activities. Document analysis was conducted to complement and verify the interview and observation data by examining relevant school documents, program schedules, activity reports, photographs, and other institutional records related to the implementation of KENARA. These three techniques were used in an integrated manner to obtain a richer and more credible understanding of the program.

The data analysis followed an interactive qualitative procedure consisting of data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification (Bingham, 2023; Dahal, 2025). First, data from interviews, observations, and documents were organized and selected based on their relevance to the four evaluation components of the CIPP model. Second, the condensed data were classified into thematic categories, including program rationale, resource readiness, learning implementation, institutional support, obstacles, student responses, and program outcomes. Third, the data were displayed in narrative and matrix forms to facilitate comparison across informants, data sources, and evaluation dimensions. Finally, conclusions were drawn through repeated interpretation and verification by comparing interview findings with observational evidence and documentary data. The credibility of the findings was strengthened through source triangulation and technique triangulation (Dahal, 2025; Moon, 2019; Thurmond, 2001). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the principal and teachers, while technique triangulation was carried out by comparing interview data with observation results and relevant documents. Through this procedure, the study sought to ensure that the findings were not based on

a single perspective, but reflected a more comprehensive and accountable evaluation of the KENARA program.

Result and Discussion

Result

The findings of this study are presented based on the CIPP evaluation framework, consisting of context, input, process, and product evaluation. This structure was used to examine the implementation of the Gayo Cultural Identity Creation Program (KENARA) at SMP IT Cendekia Takengon in a systematic manner. The results were obtained from interviews with the principal and teachers, supported by observation and document analysis. Overall, the findings show that KENARA has strong cultural relevance and has contributed to strengthening students' cultural awareness, pride, and participation. However, the program still faces substantial challenges related to policy integration, teacher competence, standardized teaching materials, facilities, time allocation, community involvement, and evaluation instruments.

Table 1. Summary of Interview Findings on the Implementation of the KENARA Program

No.	Informant	Summary of Interview Findings	Evaluation Implication
1	Principal	The KENARA program was initiated due to concerns about the decline of Gayo cultural values among students. The program aims to strengthen students' cultural identity through the integration of formal education and local culture. However, its implementation is constrained by incomplete curriculum documents, limited facilities, insufficient funding, weak parental involvement, and the influence of globalization and social media.	The program has a strong contextual rationale but requires stronger institutional support and clearer policy instruments.
2	Tahsin Teacher	The program is considered important for preserving Gayo culture among younger generations. However, socialization and learning methods remain less than optimal. The major challenges are students' dependence on gadgets, social media exposure, weak cultural support at home, and limited classroom space.	The program requires stronger pedagogical strategies and greater family involvement.
3	Science Teacher	The program is relevant to Gayo students because their local identity is closely related to nature and culture. However, teachers have not received sufficient technical guidance on integrating Gayo culture into science learning. Limited laboratory facilities and classroom space also hinder implementation.	Cross-curricular integration remains weak and requires teacher training.
4	Indonesian Language Teacher	The program helps students maintain their Gayo cultural identity, but there are no written guidelines or adequate learning facilities. A major challenge is the perception that local	The program needs standardized learning guidelines and cultural reorientation among stakeholders.

No.	Informant	Summary of Interview Findings	Evaluation Implication
		culture is less important than foreign languages or modern culture.	
5	Guidance and Counseling Teacher	The program is useful for developing students' identity and self-confidence. However, psychological and cultural counseling aspects have not been systematically addressed. Peer pressure and students' embarrassment toward Gayo culture remain significant challenges.	Cultural identity formation should be integrated with student counseling and character development.
6	Social Studies Teacher	The program is highly relevant to Social Studies because it relates to history, cultural diversity, and social identity. However, its integration into the syllabus has not been systematic. Government support and learning facilities remain limited.	The program requires stronger curriculum mapping and policy support.
7	Science Teacher	The program has potential to highlight local wisdom related to the environment and natural conservation. However, implementation is still dominated by performing arts and has not sufficiently addressed environmental science.	The cultural scope of the program needs to be expanded beyond arts-based activities.
8	English Teacher	The program is important to prevent students from losing their local identity amid foreign cultural influences. However, teachers have not been actively involved in program planning, and training support remains limited.	Teacher participation in planning and professional development should be improved.
9	Mathematics Teacher	The program aims to build students' cultural identity, but it is difficult to connect Gayo culture with mathematics content. Online games and social media are major challenges. Cultural activities may also affect students' concentration due to fatigue.	Interdisciplinary learning design needs to be developed carefully to avoid academic imbalance.
10	Social Studies Teacher	The program is important for introducing students to their cultural roots before they engage with other cultures. However, it has not yet been fully internalized in students' daily lives. Limited facilities and changing social mindsets remain major obstacles.	Cultural habituation needs to be strengthened beyond ceremonial activities.
11	Mathematics Teacher	The program aims to foster students' love of Gayo culture, but the indicators of program success remain unclear. Integration with mathematics learning is still weak, and limited community support affects program optimization.	Clear indicators and measurable evaluation tools are needed.

Context Evaluation: Cultural Urgency and Policy Rationale

The context evaluation indicates that the KENARA program emerged from the school's concern about the gradual decline of Gayo cultural values among younger generations. The principal and teachers perceived that students' familiarity with Gayo language, arts, customs, and cultural symbols has been weakened by globalization, digital media, popular culture, and declining cultural transmission in families. In this regard, KENARA is not merely an extracurricular or ceremonial program, but a cultural identity policy designed to reconnect students with their local roots. The program seeks to bridge formal education and Gayo local wisdom by encouraging students to use the Gayo language, wear Gayo cultural attributes, participate in traditional arts, and engage with local cultural practices.

However, the findings also show that the contextual foundation of the program has not been fully translated into a strong institutional framework. Although the program is considered culturally urgent, its objectives have not been equally understood by all teachers. Some teachers view KENARA as a cultural preservation initiative, while others perceive it as an additional school activity that is difficult to integrate into their subject areas. This uneven understanding reveals a gap between the policy rationale and the internalization of the program among school actors. Therefore, while the program is contextually relevant, it still requires clearer policy socialization, stronger alignment with the school vision, and more explicit indicators of success.

Input Evaluation: Human Resources, Learning Materials, Facilities, and Institutional Support

The input evaluation reveals that the implementation of KENARA is constrained by several fundamental limitations. First, the school has a limited number of teachers with sufficient competence in Gayo culture. The program is mostly implemented based on teachers' personal interest, commitment, and voluntary initiatives rather than systematic professional preparation. This condition affects the consistency and depth of cultural learning across subjects and classes. Teachers from science, mathematics, English, Indonesian language, Social Studies, and guidance and counseling generally support the program, but many of them still experience difficulty in connecting Gayo cultural content with their respective subject areas.

Second, the school does not yet have standardized teaching modules, handbooks, or instructional guidelines for the KENARA program. As a result, teachers develop learning materials independently by using internet sources, personal experience, informal knowledge, or interviews with cultural figures. Although this practice reflects teacher creativity, it also creates inconsistency in content quality, learning depth, and evaluation standards. Third, the availability of facilities remains limited. The school does not have a special room for cultural arts practice, traditional musical instruments are limited, multimedia facilities are insufficient, and there is no cultural library that can support students' independent learning. Fourth, institutional support from external stakeholders, including local government, parents, and customary institutions, has not been fully structured. Support is generally moral and incidental rather than programmatic, financial, and sustainable.

Process Evaluation: Implementation, Learning Strategies, and Evaluation Practices

The process evaluation shows that KENARA has been implemented through various school-based cultural activities, including Gayo language practice, traditional dances such as Saman, traditional performance arts such as Didong, the use of Gayo cultural symbols, and students' participation in cultural festivals. The involvement of local artists, cultural figures, and community members provides

students with direct exposure to Gayo cultural practices. These activities create experiential learning opportunities and allow students to engage with culture not only as knowledge, but also as practice.

Nevertheless, the implementation process remains uneven and less systematic. The integration of Gayo cultural values into classroom learning is still limited and depends heavily on each teacher's initiative. Teachers in Social Studies and Indonesian language find it easier to integrate Gayo culture because their subjects are closely related to history, language, narrative, and social identity. In contrast, teachers of science, mathematics, and English experience more difficulty because they have not received specific training or curriculum examples for culture-based interdisciplinary learning. Furthermore, classroom limitations and the absence of dedicated practice spaces affect the quality of practical cultural activities. Program evaluation is also conducted without standardized instruments, making it difficult to measure students' cultural knowledge, attitudes, skills, pride, confidence, and character development objectively. The absence of classroom action research or reflective teacher inquiry further limits the school's ability to improve the program based on systematic evidence.

Product Evaluation: Student Outcomes and Program Achievements

The product evaluation indicates that KENARA has generated several positive outcomes. Students have begun to show greater awareness of Gayo culture, increased confidence in performing cultural arts, and stronger pride in using Gayo cultural attributes. Some students are able to perform Saman and Didong, recognize Gayo cultural symbols, produce simple cultural works, and participate in district-level cultural competitions. These outcomes suggest that the program has contributed to strengthening cultural visibility and student participation in cultural preservation.

However, the program's outcomes remain limited in several respects. Students' understanding of the philosophical meanings behind Gayo cultural practices is still relatively shallow. Many students can perform cultural expressions, but they have not yet fully understood the moral, historical, and symbolic values embedded in them. The program has also produced achievements mainly at the district level and has not yet reached broader levels of recognition. In addition, parents' responses are mixed. Some parents appreciate the program because it helps their children understand local culture and develop self-confidence, while others express concern that cultural activities may reduce students' focus on academic subjects. These findings indicate that the program has produced meaningful initial outcomes, but its sustainability requires stronger curriculum integration, clearer evaluation indicators, balanced academic planning, and broader community support.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the KENARA Program at SMP IT Cendekia Takengon has strong contextual relevance because it responds directly to the weakening transmission of Gayo cultural values among students. The program emerged from concerns about the declining use of the Gayo language, reduced familiarity with traditional arts, and the increasing influence of digital media, popular culture, and globalized lifestyles on students' cultural identity. This finding is consistent with the perspective of culturally responsive teaching, which emphasizes that students' cultural backgrounds should not be treated as peripheral to education, but as essential resources for meaningful learning, identity formation, and academic participation (Shih, 2024). It also supports the concept of culturally sustaining pedagogy, which argues that schools should not merely recognize cultural diversity, but actively sustain students' linguistic, cultural, and community identities in

formal education (Paris, 2021). In this regard, KENARA is not only a cultural activity, but a school-based cultural identity policy that attempts to preserve Gayo values through educational practice.

The context evaluation shows that KENARA is driven by a strong cultural urgency, yet this urgency has not been fully translated into a clear institutional framework. The school recognizes the importance of preserving Gayo culture through formal education, but teachers' understanding of the program remains uneven and its objectives have not been operationalized into measurable indicators. This finding is in line with Stufflebeam and Zhang's CIPP evaluation model, which emphasizes that context evaluation should identify program needs, problems, and opportunities before implementation is strengthened through systematic input, process, and product evaluation (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Toosi et al. (2021) also confirms that CIPP is widely used in curriculum and educational evaluation because it helps evaluators understand not only outcomes, but also the historical, structural, and procedural dimensions of program implementation. Therefore, the main issue in KENARA is not the absence of cultural relevance, but the lack of policy translation from cultural vision into operational planning, curriculum design, and evaluation standards.

The input findings reveal that KENARA is constrained by limited teacher competence in Gayo culture, the absence of standardized modules, inadequate facilities, limited funding, and insufficient training. These findings are similar to Husaini & Hidayat (2019) study on Gayo local wisdom-based curriculum management in Pesantren Semayoen Nusantara, which found that Gayo cultural values such as *didong*, *sumang*, *melengkan*, and the Gayo language can be integrated into education, but their implementation requires planning, teacher involvement, parental support, and structured evaluation. The difference is that in Husaini and Hidayat's study, local wisdom was already embedded in pesantren-based cultural and religious activities, whereas in KENARA, the program is still struggling to become an integrated school policy. This comparison shows that cultural preservation programs require more than symbolic commitment; they require a stable curriculum structure, trained human resources, and consistent institutional support.

The absence of standardized teaching materials in KENARA also corresponds with Mardhatillah et al. (2019) study, which developed English teaching materials based on Gayo local wisdom for elementary school students in Central Aceh. Astuti found that the limited availability of local culture-based teaching materials was a key problem in integrating Gayo culture into classroom learning. This finding strengthens the present study because teachers at SMP IT Cendekia Takengon also reported that they had to prepare materials independently from personal experience, internet sources, or informal conversations with cultural figures. However, while Astuti's study focused on developing a specific subject-based teaching product, the present study goes further by showing that the absence of standardized modules affects the whole policy cycle of KENARA, including instructional consistency, teacher readiness, student assessment, and program sustainability.

The process evaluation shows that KENARA has been implemented through cultural habituation, such as the use of the Gayo language, Gayo cultural attributes, traditional arts, local cultural symbols, and students' participation in cultural festivals. However, the program remains more visible in ceremonial and performance-based activities than in systematic classroom learning. This finding is consistent with Sunkar et al. (2021) study on *didong* as a medium of educational communication in the Gayo indigenous community, which emphasizes that traditional arts have strong educational potential but are increasingly challenged by modernization and changing communication patterns among young people. The present study confirms this argument by showing

that students can perform cultural expressions such as Saman and Didong, but their understanding of the philosophical, ethical, and historical meanings behind these traditions remains limited. Thus, KENARA has succeeded in strengthening cultural visibility, but it still needs to deepen cultural internalization.

The difficulty experienced by science and mathematics teachers in integrating Gayo culture into their subjects also reflects a broader challenge in culture-based interdisciplinary learning. Yustinaningrum et al. (2018) showed that Gayo local wisdom has potential for mathematics education through ethnomathematical exploration, including traditional measurement practices, symbolic motifs, and Islamic character values embedded in Gayo culture. This comparison indicates that the difficulty faced by KENARA teachers is not caused by the incompatibility between Gayo culture and non-humanities subjects, but by the absence of pedagogical models, teacher training, and curriculum mapping. Therefore, the integration of KENARA into science and mathematics should be developed through interdisciplinary lesson designs that connect Gayo cultural symbols, environmental knowledge, local crafts, architecture, measurement, patterns, and ecological practices with subject-specific competencies.

The findings of this study are also comparable with Indrawansyah et al. (2023) evaluation of the Lampung culture preservation program through the Kaganga application. Their study found that a culture preservation program could run relatively well, but several evaluation criteria were not optimally implemented. This is similar to KENARA, where the program has generated positive cultural participation but still lacks standardized instruments, technical guidelines, and comprehensive evaluation. The difference lies in the implementation medium: Kaganga uses a digital application to preserve language and script, whereas KENARA relies more on school habituation and direct cultural practice. This comparison suggests that culture preservation programs should combine symbolic, experiential, and digital approaches so that local culture can remain relevant to students' contemporary learning habits.

The challenges found in KENARA also support Bashori & Mitha Ardini (2021) study on the local content curriculum of Minangkabau language and literature in Pariaman. Their study found that the implementation of local content policy was not fully optimal because of limited learning tools, conventional methods, and weak curriculum realization. This is highly relevant to the present study because KENARA also faces weaknesses in technical guidance, learning modules, evaluation tools, and curriculum integration. However, this study provides a more specific contribution by examining a cultural identity program through the CIPP model rather than only describing local content curriculum implementation. In other words, this study does not merely ask whether local culture is taught, but evaluates how cultural policy is justified, resourced, implemented, and reflected in student outcomes.

The findings further align with Aristya et al. (2026) evaluation of local culture integration in Islamic Religious Education using the CIPP model. Their study emphasized that the success of local culture integration depends on contextual relevance, input readiness, learning implementation, and product achievement. This is similar to the KENARA case, where cultural values are strongly relevant to students' identity, but implementation is hindered by limited resources, teacher readiness, and evaluation instruments. The distinction is that Mania and Rasyid focused on local culture integration within PAI learning, whereas the present study evaluates KENARA as a broader school-based cultural identity policy involving multiple subjects, school culture, extracurricular activities, and stakeholder

collaboration. This broader scope makes the present study more policy-oriented and institutionally complex.

At the international level, the findings are consistent with Wijayanti et al. (2025), who examined local wisdom-based history education and found that cultural identity can be strengthened when local values are meaningfully incorporated into history learning and supported by educational policy. This reinforces the finding that KENARA cannot rely only on cultural performances or school events; it must be connected to structured learning experiences that help students understand the historical, social, and moral meanings of Gayo identity. Similarly, Rasidi et al. (2025) argues that local wisdom-based education requires policy analysis, curriculum development, teacher training, and collaboration with local communities. These studies support the implication that KENARA should be redesigned as an integrated cultural learning ecosystem involving curriculum, school culture, family support, customary institutions, and local government.

The product evaluation shows that KENARA has improved students' cultural knowledge, confidence, pride, and participation in cultural activities, but the outcomes remain limited because students' philosophical understanding of Gayo culture is still shallow and achievements are mostly at the district level. This finding is consistent with studies on local wisdom-based education, which show that local culture can strengthen students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains when implemented through meaningful learning activities rather than merely ceremonial exposure (Sadri & Wisnu Bayu Temaja, 2025; Wahyudi et al., 2025). However, the present study also reveals a critical limitation of culture-based programs: cultural performance does not automatically produce cultural consciousness. Students may be able to perform dances, wear traditional attributes, or use cultural symbols, but without reflective pedagogy, they may not internalize the values of responsibility, respect, cooperation, ecological awareness, and cultural continuity embedded in Gayo traditions.

The novelty of this study lies in its repositioning of KENARA as a cultural identity policy rather than merely a school cultural activity or local content program. Previous studies have generally discussed local wisdom as teaching material, extracurricular content, traditional art preservation, or curriculum integration. This study advances the discussion by evaluating how a cultural preservation policy operates through the interconnected dimensions of context, input, process, and product. The findings reveal a value-driven policy pattern in which KENARA continues to be implemented because of cultural urgency and collective concern, even though its structural readiness remains limited. This contributes to educational policy studies by showing that local values can function as a strong moral driver of implementation, but policy sustainability still depends on technical guidelines, curriculum alignment, teacher capacity, facilities, evaluation instruments, and collaborative governance.

This study implies that culture-based educational policy should be understood not only as curriculum content, but also as a process of identity formation, institutional negotiation, and cultural sustainability. Theoretically, the use of the CIPP model expands cultural program evaluation by linking cultural needs, resource readiness, implementation quality, and student outcomes within a single analytical framework. Practically, SMP IT Cendekia Takengon, the Department of Education and Culture of Central Aceh, and customary institutions need to strengthen KENARA through standardized Gayo culture modules, teacher training, cultural learning rubrics, interdisciplinary lesson plans, adequate facilities, and formal partnerships with artists, cultural leaders, parents, and local communities. At the policy level, KENARA requires stable funding, technical guidelines, monitoring mechanisms, teacher professional development, and measurable indicators of success.

Its success should not only be assessed through festival participation or traditional art performance, but also through students' understanding of cultural meanings, use of the Gayo language, appreciation of local values, respectful behavior, cultural identity confidence, and willingness to participate in cultural preservation. Therefore, KENARA should be integrated into classroom learning, school culture, extracurricular activities, and character education as a sustained cultural learning ecosystem supported by cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and character-based evaluation indicators.

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted in a single school, so the findings cannot be generalized to all schools implementing Gayo culture-based programs in Central Aceh. Second, the data relied mainly on the perspectives of the principal and teachers, while students, parents, cultural leaders, and local government representatives were not explored in equal depth. Third, the study used a qualitative evaluative design, so it did not quantitatively measure the impact of KENARA on students' cultural literacy, character development, academic achievement, or long-term identity formation. Fourth, the evaluation focused on the current implementation of the program and did not examine longitudinal changes in students' cultural attitudes over time. Future research should involve multiple schools, include broader stakeholder perspectives, develop valid instruments for measuring cultural identity outcomes, and apply mixed-method or longitudinal designs to assess the long-term effectiveness of KENARA as a cultural preservation policy.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the KENARA Program at SMP IT Cendekia Takengon is a culturally significant school-based policy that responds to the urgent need to preserve Gayo cultural identity among younger generations. Using the CIPP evaluation framework, the findings show that the program has a strong contextual foundation because it addresses the declining transmission of Gayo language, values, arts, and cultural practices in students' daily lives. However, in terms of input, the program is still constrained by limited teacher competence in Gayo culture, the absence of standardized teaching modules, inadequate facilities, insufficient funding, and limited structured support from parents, customary institutions, and local government. In the process dimension, KENARA has been implemented through cultural habituation, traditional arts, language use, and school-based cultural activities, but its integration into classroom learning remains uneven and evaluation instruments are not yet standardized. In the product dimension, the program has contributed to students' cultural knowledge, confidence, pride, participation, and initial character formation, although their understanding of the philosophical meanings of Gayo culture remains limited and program achievements are still mostly local. Therefore, the main implication of this study is that KENARA should be strengthened through standardized curriculum guidelines, teacher training, interdisciplinary learning design, adequate facilities, measurable evaluation indicators, and sustained collaboration among schools, families, cultural leaders, and local government. Future research is recommended to involve multiple schools, include students' and parents' perspectives, and apply mixed-method or longitudinal designs to measure the long-term impact of cultural identity policies on students' cultural literacy, character development, and academic engagement.

References

Abdul-Jabbar, W. K. (2026). Sustaining Qatari heritage as intercultural competencies: Towards a global citizenship education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 24(2), 421–433.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2023.2248460>

- Aherne, D. (2001). Understanding student stress: A qualitative approach. *The Irish Journal of Psychology*, 22(3–4), 176–187. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03033910.2001.10558278>
- Akbar, E. (2015). Pendidikan Islami dalam nilai-nilai kearifan lokal Didong. *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 15(1), 43. <https://doi.org/10.21154/al-tahrir.v15i1.176>
- Ames, H., Glenton, C., & Lewin, S. (2019). Purposive sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: A worked example from a synthesis on parental perceptions of vaccination communication. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 19(1), 26. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0665-4>
- Andriyanti, M., Suwandayani, B. I., & Amelia, D. J. (2024). The power of integrity of local wisdom in basic education: Sustainable development. *Journal of Learning Improvement and Lesson Study*, 4(2), 10–23. <https://doi.org/10.24036/jlils.v4i2.110>
- Aristya, S., Zurqoni, & Khojir. (2026). The CIPP model for curriculum evaluation in Islamic education. *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education*, 10(1), 52–66. <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v10i1.228>
- Baharuddin, & Burhan. (2025). Urban and rural teacher perspectives on Indonesian educational reform: Challenges and policy implications. *Cogent Education*, 12(1), 2497142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2497142>
- Bashori, & Ardini, A. M. (2021). Kebijakan kurikulum muatan lokal bahasa dan sastra Minangkabau di SD/SMP Kota Pariaman sebagai upaya pelestarian budaya. *Jurnal Hikmah*, 10(1), 91–105.
- Bingham, A. J. (2023). From data management to actionable findings: A five-phase process of qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22, 16094069231183620. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231183620>
- Börjesson, M., Broady, D., Le Roux, B., Lidegran, I., & Palme, M. (2016). Cultural capital in the elite subfield of Swedish higher education. *Poetics*, 56, 15–34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2016.02.004>
- Caingcoy, M. (2023). Culturally responsive pedagogy. *Diversitas Journal*, 8(4), 3203–3212. <https://doi.org/10.48017/dj.v8i4.2780>
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: Complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Curtis, H. L., Gabriel, L. C., Sahakian, M., & Cattacin, S. (2021). Practice-based program evaluation in higher education for sustainability: A student participatory approach. *Sustainability*, 13(19), 10816. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su131910816>
- D'Andrea Martínez, P., Peoples, L. Q., & Martin, J. (2023). Becoming culturally responsive: Equitable and inequitable translations of CRE theory into teaching practice. *The Urban Review*, 55(4), 476–504. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-023-00658-5>
- Dahal, N. (2025). Qualitative data analysis: Reflections, procedures, and some points for consideration. *Frontiers in Research Metrics and Analytics*, 10, 1669578. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frma.2025.1669578>
- Hartati, T., & Ramdiana, R. (2026). The Sining ritual tradition in the Gayo community of Central Aceh as a form of revitalization of educational values and local wisdom. *Journal of General Education and Humanities*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i2.1216>
- Hicham, K., AlQbailat, N. M., Ismail, I. A., Qpilat, N. M., Al-Khawaldeh, N. N., Al-Shboul, O. K., & Masrar, F. Z. (2025). Interculturalizing ELT: Culture-based classes to enhance language skills and intercultural communicative competence dimensions. *Ampersand*, 14, 100221. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2025.100221>
- Husaini, H., & Hidayat, H. (2019). Manajemen kurikulum pendidikan dayah berbasis kearifan lokal masyarakat Gayo di Pesantren Semayoen Nusantara Kabupaten Bener. *Idarah: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kependidikan*, 3(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.47766/idadrah.v3i1.167>
- Indrawansyah, H., Caturiani, S. I., & Karmilasari, V. (2023). Evaluasi program pelestarian budaya Lampung: Bahasa dan aksara: Studi penilaian aplikasi Kaganga di Kota Bandar Lampung. *Administrativa: Jurnal Birokrasi, Kebijakan dan Pelayanan Publik*, 5(1), 33–41. <https://doi.org/10.23960/administrativa.v5i1.134>
- Irsyadiah, N., Sulaeman, M., Marlina, Y., & Siregar, M. (2024). Strengthening local culture-based character

- education. *EDUTEC: Journal of Education and Technology*, 7(3).
<https://doi.org/10.29062/edu.v7i3.849>
- Jamilah, Jayadi, K., Yatim, H., Sahnir, N., Djirong, A., & Abduh, A. (2024). The integration of local cultural arts in the context of teaching materials on the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. *Journal of Education Research and Evaluation*, 8(2), 404–413. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jere.v8i2.78359>
- Kadir, H., & Rosmini, R. (2025). Annabba as cultural pedagogy: Exploring local wisdom values in Bugis-Makassar wedding traditions. *Journal of Local Wisdom in Education*, 1(1), 33–47. <https://doi.org/10.26618/3ep9va76>
- Kaplan, L. S., & Owings, W. A. (2013). Developing professional capacity for shared influence. In *Culture re-boot: Reinvigorating school culture to improve student outcomes* (pp. 103–136). Corwin Press. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452277974.n4>
- Kim, H.-O., Lee, I., & Lee, B.-S. (2026). Nursing students' perception of health in South Korea: A qualitative content analysis. *BMJ Open*, 16(1), e112722. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2025-112722>
- Koderi, Sufian, M., & Erlina. (2023). Developing Lampung local wisdom film of Arabic communication skills for Madrasah Tsanawiyah students. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 13(12), 2004–2013. <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijiet.2023.13.12.2015>
- Kruck, A., & Schneiker, A. (2017). *Researching non-state actors in international security*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315669830>
- Lee, H., Jacoby, N., Hennequin, R., & Moussallam, M. (2025). Mechanisms of cultural diversity in urban populations. *Nature Communications*, 16(1), 5192. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-025-60538-2>
- Lu, L., & Shih, J. B. (1997). Sources of happiness: A qualitative approach. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 137(2), 181–187. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224549709595429>
- Mansilla, V. B., & Wilson, D. (2020). What is global competence, and what might it look like in Chinese schools? *Journal of Research in International Education*, 19(1), 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240920914089>
- Mardhatillah, Mardhatillah, Verawati, Eviyanti, E., Pramuniati, I., & Ramadhani, F. (2019). Teaching materials based on local wisdom to create meaningful learning in Aceh Province. In *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies (ICSSIS 2018)*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icssis-18.2019.20>
- Moon, M. D. (2019). Triangulation: A method to increase validity, reliability, and legitimation in clinical research. *Journal of Emergency Nursing*, 45(1), 103–105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jen.2018.11.004>
- Muspawi, M., Daryono, D., & Nasution, I. (2025). School principals' perceptions of continuous teacher professional development: A grounded theory study. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-01-2025-0007>
- Paris, D. (2021). Culturally sustaining pedagogies and our futures. *The Educational Forum*, 85(4), 364–376. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2021.1957634>
- Putra Darma, V., Maesaroh, S., & Ria Citra, A. (2025). Integrating local culture into the English language teaching and learning process. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat dan Riset Pendidikan*, 4(2), 11009–11014. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jerkin.v4i2.3536>
- Rahardi, R. K. (2019). Pragmatic perspective on phatic functions and language dignity. *International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology*, 8(5C), 261–269. <https://doi.org/10.35940/ijeat.E1039.0585C19>
- Rahmawati, I. (2025). Integrating local cultural values in character education: An integrative literature review within the Indonesian educational context. *Perfect Education Fairy*, 3(4), 145–155. <https://doi.org/10.56442/pef.v3i4.1261>
- Ramli, R., Razali, R., Gadeng, A. N., Diana, N., & Hariadi, J. (2025). Integrating local knowledge into higher education: A qualitative study of curriculum innovation in Aceh, Indonesia. *Education Sciences*, 15(9), 1214. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15091214>
- Rasidi, R., Istiningsih, G., Masithoh, R. F., & Rosyidi, M. I. (2025). Education based on local wisdom: An alternative model for the integration of cultural values in the school curriculum in Indonesia. *International Journal of Contemporary Studies in Education*, 4(2), 114–135. <https://doi.org/10.56855/ijcse.v4i2.1521>
- Sadri, N. W., & Temaja, I. G. B. W. B. (2025). Local wisdom-based education in Indonesian school. *The Eastasouth Journal of Learning and Educations*, 3(3), 226–236.

<https://doi.org/10.58812/esle.v3i03.762>

- Sahlin, S. (2025). Professional development of school principals: How do experienced school leaders make sense of their professional learning? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 53(2), 380–397. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432231168235>
- Sakti, S. A., Endraswara, S., & Rohman, A. (2024). Revitalizing local wisdom within character education through ethnopedagogy approach: A case study on a preschool in Yogyakarta. *Heliyon*, 10(10), e31370. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e31370>
- Sankaran, S., & Saad, N. (2022). Evaluating the Bachelor of Education program based on the Context, Input, Process, and Product model. *Frontiers in Education*, 7, 924374. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2022.924374>
- Sengsoulintha, K. (2025). Teacher educators' challenges: Focusing on teacher training colleges in Laos. *Frontiers in Education*, 10, 1614060. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2025.1614060>
- Setyanto, E., A. M., & Soefijanto, T. A. (2019). Evaluation of culture-based education policy implementation and management at high school. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 7(11), 633–641. <https://doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/10051>
- Shabalala, N. P. (2025). Decolonising environmental education in Africa through the early integration of indigenous knowledge systems guided by Zibanjwa Zisemaphuphu. *Discover Sustainability*, 6(1), 892. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-025-01822-5>
- Shih, Y.-H. (2024). Culturally responsive curriculum: A systematic overview. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology*, 8(6), 6917–6925. <https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v8i6.3493>
- Shonfeld, M., Cotnam-Kappel, M., Judge, M., Ng, C. Y., Ntebutse, J. G., Williamson-Leadley, S., & Yildiz, M. N. (2021). Learning in digital environments: A model for cross-cultural alignment. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 69(4), 2151–2170. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-021-09967-6>
- Stufflebeam, D. L., & Zhang, G. (2017). *The CIPP evaluation model: How to evaluate for improvement and accountability*. Guilford Press.
- Sufian, M., Erlina, & Octariani, S. (2024). Gendered parenting and language achievement: A comparative study of children from single-mother and single-father families in Arabic language learning. *Women, Education, and Social Welfare*, 1(2), 110–120. <https://doi.org/10.70211/wesw.v1i2.296>
- Sugiyono. (2021). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Sunkar, A., Hidayati, S., Hartoyo, A. P., & Al-Gayoni, Y. U. (2021). Ethnobotanical knowledge and vitality of Gayo ethnolinguistic in Jabodetabek, Indonesia. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 771(1), 012007. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/771/1/012007>
- Thurmond, V. A. (2001). The point of triangulation. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33(3), 253–258. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1547-5069.2001.00253.x>
- Toosi, M., Modarres, M., Amini, M., & Geranmayeh, M. (2021). Context, Input, Process, and Product evaluation model in medical education: A systematic review. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 10(1). https://doi.org/10.4103/jehp.jehp_1115_20
- Wahyudi, I., Herwin, Wuryandani, W., & Utami, C. T. (2025). Integrating local wisdom in elementary school to strengthen cultural identity in the digital era. *Jurnal Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, 4, 359–369. <https://doi.org/10.46843/jpm.v4i2.458>
- Weyant, E. (2022). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, 5th edition. *Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries*, 19(1–2), 54–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15424065.2022.2046231>
- Wijayanti, Y., Wartyo, Wasino, Djono, & Esa, M. S. (2025). History learning based on local wisdom Sanghyang Sikskandang Karesian. *Paramita*, 35(1), 167–179. <https://doi.org/10.15294/paramita.v35i1.9033>
- Yustinaningrum, B., Nurliana, & Rahmadhani, E. (2018). The ethnomathematics: Exploration of Gayo tribe local wisdom related to mathematics education. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1088, 012061. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1088/1/012061>
- Zulkarnain, Z., Al Hidayat, A., & Akbar, E. (2019). Sumang: Norm of Gayo community within the framework of Islamic education. *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 19(1), 53–69. <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v19i1.1550>