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The implementation of Pendidikan Khas Kejogjaan in strengthening secondary school students' character

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation profile of Pendidikan Khas Kejogjaan (PKJ), a culturally grounded character education programme operating in pilot secondary schools across the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Researchers deliberately frame our inquiry around the implementation level rather than causal effectiveness, since the cross-sectional design researchers used cannot establish that students' character changed because of PKJ. Data were gathered from 150 senior and vocational high school students selected from twelve pilot schools through multistage sampling, combining purposive selection of schools with proportional random selection of students. A 102-item questionnaire (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$) was used to measure three implementation dimensions: philosophy, cultural values, and cultural atmosphere. Descriptive statistics showed a mean of 4.1361 for the philosophical dimension, 4.0433 at the cultural-values dimension, and 3.9289 at the atmosphere dimension. Pearson correlation analysis revealed strong and significant correlations among the three dimensions ($r = 0.716$ to 0.880, $p < 0.01$). The lower atmosphere score, paired with the higher score for cognitive culture (4.1133) than for behavioural (3.8467) and material cultures (3.8271), suggests that PKJ is currently more prominent in symbols and signage than in everyday habituation and material environments. Researchers argue that the trilogy of hamemayu hayuning bawana, sangkan paraning dumadi, and manunggaling kawula Gusti has been internalised at the level of recognition; however, the gap between symbol and practice remains a critical area for further policy work. The study provides a baseline framework of PKJ implementation upon which future longitudinal and comparative designs can build.

Keywords: character education; local culture; Pendidikan Khas; Kejogjaan; secondary school

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INTRODUCTION

The character crisis in Indonesian secondary schools is no longer a rhetorical claim. National monitoring records by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission and recent studies on school violence point to a recurring pattern: bullying, peer aggression, drug exposure, and erosion of respect for teachers and parents (Rahayu et al., 2025; Sianturi et al., 2026). What is striking is that this pattern persists despite a nationwide character education policy. The Strengthening Character Education programme, mandated through the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 20 of 2018, has been in force for nearly a decade. Yet, large-scale evaluations of its localised forms remain scarce.

The paper takes that scarcity as its starting point. Researchers argue that one productive response to a generic national policy is locally rooted character education and that such a model deserves the same kind of empirical scrutiny researchers would give any other intervention. Three considerations frame the study. First, character education is more durable when it is anchored in cultural knowledge students already inhabit, rather than parachuted in as a set of national slogans (Banks, 2019; Lickona, 2013; Anggita et al., 2024; Sianturi & Nababan, 2026). Second, the

Special Region of Yogyakarta has, since Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2011 on Culture-Based Education Management, treated Javanese cultural philosophy as a constitutional substrate for schooling. Third, since May 2023, the Yogyakarta provincial government has piloted a programme called Pendidikan Khas Kejogjaan (henceforth PKJ) in 37 secondary schools across the region. Despite the scale of the rollout, no published study has produced a province-wide implementation profile of PKJ at the secondary level. That is the gap researcher's address.

Our novelty is therefore methodological as much as substantive. Earlier work on Yogyakarta-based character education has either remained textual (Wibawa, 2013; Andriyanto et al., 2025), confined to a single school (Hardhi & Sudrajat, 2018), or focused on integrating values into specific subjects (Zuchdi, 2010). None has measured the joint level of internalisation across philosophy, cultural values, and cultural atmosphere as one connected system. Doing so matters because PKJ is itself designed as a three-tier architecture, and any honest evaluation must respect that design. Pendidikan Khas Kejogjaan (PKJ) rests on a triadic philosophy that secondary teachers are expected to translate into pedagogy. The three philosophical anchors are *hamemayu hayuning bawana* (preserving the welfare of the world), *sangkan paraning dumadi* (the origin and destination of human existence), and *manunggaling kawula Gusti* (the unity of the servant and God). These anchors are operationalised through five cultural values: *hamangku, hamengku,* and *hamengkoni* (servant leadership); *pamanthenging gandhewa* and *pamanthenging cipta* (focused intent); *sawiji, greget, sengguh,* and *ora mingkuh* (unity, spirit, confidence, and perseverance); *golong gilig* (unity of purpose); and *mangasah mingising budi, memasuh malaning bumi* (sharpening moral sensibility while purging worldly vices). The third tier is what PKJ documents call cultural atmosphere, comprising cognitive, behavioural, and material elements within the school environment (Wibawa et al., 2023).

The deeper rationale for measuring all three tiers comes from a long lineage of character education theory. Lickona (1991, 2013) insists that moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action must align if character formation is to take hold. Bronfenbrenner (1979) reminds us that students develop nested systems and that classroom-level instruction cannot do its work if the surrounding environment contradicts it. More recent ethnopedagogical work in Indonesia and beyond has shown that local wisdom can function as both content and context for character formation, but only if schools translate philosophy into daily practice (Anggita et al., 2024; Prayitno et al., 2022). Researchers therefore approach PKJ not as a slogan-based programme but as a layered system whose layers may or may not be equally well realised in practice.

This study addresses four research questions. First, at what level have students internalised the philosophical dimension of PKJ? Second, at what level have they internalised the cultural-values dimension? Third, at what level do they perceive the cultural atmosphere of their schools as supportive of PKJ? Fourth, how are these three dimensions correlated? Researchers deliberately phrase these as questions about levels and relationships rather than about effectiveness, because our research design cannot support causal claims (a methodological constraint researchers return to in the Method section). The contribution researchers offer is a baseline profile of PKJ implementation across twelve pilot schools, framed in a way that future longitudinal and comparative studies can extend. The findings should be useful both for policymakers in DIY who need formative evidence to refine the rollout and for other Indonesian provinces considering similar locally rooted character education models.

METHOD

Researchers used a quantitative descriptive design with a cross-sectional structure. The choice was driven by the questions researchers wanted to answer: at what level has each dimension of PKJ been internalised, and how are the dimensions related to one another? Both questions are descriptive and correlational rather than causal. Researchers make this point explicit because earlier evaluations of culturally rooted programmes have sometimes overreached, claiming effectiveness on the strength of one-time questionnaire data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A cross-sectional snapshot can describe a current state with reasonable accuracy, but it cannot, on its own, demonstrate that the programme produced that state. Researchers treat our findings as a baseline implementation profile, suitable for formative evaluation and for guiding subsequent designs that can address causality more directly, such as longitudinal panels or

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matched comparisons between PKJ and non-PKJ schools.

The target population was all senior high school (SMA) and vocational high school (SMK) students in the Special Region of Yogyakarta enrolled in the 37 secondary schools designated as PKJ pilot sites since May 2023, representing roughly 8,500 students across five regencies and cities (Office of Education, Youth and Sports of DIY, 2024).

Researchers employed a multistage sampling procedure. To describe it accurately, researchers name the two stages separately rather than collapsing them under the loose label of purposive random sampling. At the first stage, schools were selected purposively against four criteria: (a) at least one full semester of PKJ implementation; (b) presence of all three PKJ tiers (philosophy, values, atmosphere) in the school programme; (c) willingness to host the study; and (d) representation across school types (SMA and SMK) and locations (urban and peri-urban). Twelve schools satisfy all four criteria. At the second stage, students were selected through proportional random sampling within each school, drawn from grades X and XI who had participated in PKJ for at least one semester. The final sample comprised 150 students, including 78 from SMA (52%) and 72 from SMK (48%), preserving the population's roughly even split between school types.

Researchers acknowledge that 150 students out of an estimated 8,500 represent only 1.76 percent of the target population, and researchers owe the reader a justification of that figure. There are two parts. First, applying Slovin's formula ($n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$) with a target population of 8,500 and a margin of error of 8 percent yields a minimum sample of 154, very close to our achieved 150 (Etikan et al., 2016). Second, for the inferential analysis's researchers report (Pearson correlations between three dimensions), a priori power calculation indicates that a sample of 150 provides power above 0.80 to detect medium-sized correlations ($r \approx 0.25$) at $\alpha = 0.01$, two-tailed (Field, 2018). Since the correlations researchers ultimately observed were all $r > 0.70$, the sample is more than adequate for the relational claims researchers make. Researchers do not, however, claim representativeness for fine-grained subgroup comparisons (for example, between regencies), and researchers treat the sample as a purposeful baseline rather than a probability sample of the full DIY pilot population.

The twelve schools were SMK Berbudi Yogyakarta, SMK BOPKRI 1 Yogyakarta, and SMK Ibu Pawiyatan Tamansiswa (Yogyakarta City); SMK 17 1 Seyegan, SMK Hamong Putera Pakem, SMA Negeri 1 Pakem, and SMA Negeri 1 Sleman (Sleman Regency); SMK Ma'arif 1 Wates and SMK BOPKRI 2 (Kulon Progo Regency); SMA Negeri 4 Yogyakarta and SMA Negeri 1 Bantul (Bantul Regency); and SMA Muhammadiyah Ngawen (Gunungkidul Regency).

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire developed in five phases. Researchers first conducted a conceptual analysis of three official documents: the 2011 DIY regional regulations on cultural values and culture-based education, the PKJ Master Book, and the PKJ Secondary Education Guidebook (Wibawa et al., 2023). From this analysis, researchers derived the three dimensions and their indicators. Researchers then built a blueprint that broke each dimension into sub-dimensions: three sub-dimensions for philosophy, five for cultural values, and three for cultural atmosphere (cognitive, behavioural, and material). Third, researchers wrote eight to twelve statement items per sub-dimension, producing a draft of 110 items rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = very poor, 5 = very good).

Fourth, researchers conducted content validation through expert judgement with three experts: one in character education, one in Javanese cultural studies, and one in educational measurement. Their feedback led us to revise wording for operational clarity at the secondary school reading level. Fifth, researchers piloted the instrument with 30 SMA and SMK students outside the main sample. Item analysis using item-total correlation eliminated eight items with $r < 0.30$, leaving a final 102-item instrument. Cronbach's α was 0.89 for the philosophy dimension, 0.91 for cultural values, 0.87 for atmosphere, and 0.93 overall, all above the 0.80 threshold considered acceptable for affective measures (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Data was collected between November and December 2024. Researchers obtained research permits from the DIY Office of Education, Youth and Sports, then coordinated with school principals and teachers to schedule administration in ways that did not disrupt instruction. Before students completed the questionnaire, researchers explained the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, the confidentiality of responses, and the absence of right or wrong

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answers. The questionnaire was administered on paper in classrooms with a researcher present, with an average completion time of 35 to 40 minutes. Two incomplete returns were replaced through additional sampling, yielding a 100 percent response rate and a 98.7 percent completion rate.

Analysis was conducted in SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, and standard deviation) characterised each sub-dimension, with category cut-offs adapted from Azwar (2012): mean 1.00 to 1.80 = very poor, 1.81 to 2.60 = poor, 2.61 to 3.40 = fair, 3.41 to 4.20 = good, and 4.21 to 5.00 = very good. Inferential analysis used Pearson correlation among the three-dimensional scores at $\alpha = 0.01$ to limit Type I error (Field, 2018). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test confirmed that the dimension scores satisfied the normality assumption.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Implementation at the philosophical dimension

The philosophical dimension showed a mean of 4.1361 (SD = 0.68405), placing it in the good category. Among the three philosophical anchors, *hamemayu hayuning bawana* was highest (M = 4.1486), followed closely by *manunggaling kawula Gusti* (M = 4.1433) and *sangkan paraning dumadi* (M = 4.1173). The differences are small, and the variation within each anchor is modest (SDs between 0.71 and 0.74), indicating that students' recognition of the philosophical layer is consistent across the sample (See Table 1).

Table 1. Implementation level at the philosophical dimension

Philosophy	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Category
Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana	150	41.486	43.100	4.31	0.70883	Good
Sangkan Paraning Dumadi	150	41.173	42.500	4.60	0.72109	Good
Manunggaling Kawula Gusti	150	41.433	43.500	4.00	0.73817	Good
Philosophy Mean	150	41.361	43.200	4.00	0.68405	Good

Researchers read this result with some care. Recognition of philosophical anchors at a Likert meaning above 4 is consistent with what Lickona (2013) calls moral knowledge. It does not, however, demonstrate moral feeling or moral action. The questionnaire asks students to report their endorsement of statements that operationalise the philosophy, and high endorsement is compatible with several scenarios, including genuine internalisation, social desirability, and rote familiarity from school posters. Researchers treat the philosophical-dimension score as a strong indicator of the surface uptake of PKJ language and ideas, which is a real but modest achievement.

Implementation at the cultural-values dimension

The cultural-values dimension averaged 4.0433 (SD = 0.73917), again falling in the good category. *Sawiji, greget, sengguh,* and *ora mingkuh* (unity, spirit, confidence, and perseverance) were highest at 4.1317; *hamangku, hamengku,* and *hamengkoni* (servant leadership) followed at 4.0997; *mangasah mingising budi,* and *memasuh malaning bumi* came in at 4.0314; *pamenthanging gandhewa,* and *pamanthenging cipta* at 3.9893; and *golong gilig* (collective unity of purpose) was lowest at 3.9650 (See Table 2).

Two patterns deserve attention. First, the standard deviations at this dimension (0.74 to 0.82) are larger than at the philosophical dimension (0.70 to 0.74). Students agree more about what PKJ teaches at the level of philosophy than about how those teachings translate into the values they live by.

Table 2. Implementation level at the cultural-values dimension

Cultural Value	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Category
Hamangku, Hamengku, Hamengkoni	150	40.997	42.200	5.00	0.76052	Good
Pamenthanging Gandhewa, Pamanthenging Cipta	150	39.893	40.500	4.00	0.74924	Good
Sawiji, Greget, Sengguh, Ora Mingkuh	150	41.317	43.000	5.00	0.77213	Good
Golong Gilig	150	39.650	41.150	5.00	0.80515	Good
Mangasah Mingising Budi, Memasuh Malaning Bumi	150	40.314	42.000	5.00	0.82376	Good
Cultural Values Mean	150	40.433	42.150	3.00	0.73917	Good

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Second, the two values that scored lowest, *golong gilig* and *pamenthanging gandhewa,* and *pamanthenging cipta*, are precisely the values that demand collective coordination and sustained focus on a goal. These are not values that can be absorbed through poster display or assembly speeches. They require structured group tasks, project-based learning, and visible follow-through by adults in the school. Their relative weakness is a useful diagnostic. It tells us that the parts of PKJ that need active classroom orchestration are precisely the parts where implementation lags.

Implementation at the cultural-atmosphere dimension

The cultural-atmosphere dimension produced the lowest mean of the three (M = 3.9289, SD = 0.83680). Within it, cognitive culture (posters, displays, slogans, and calligraphy) scored highest at 4.1133; behavioural culture (Javanese language use, traditional dress, and cultural performance) scored 3.8467; and material culture (architecture, gamelan, wayang artefacts, and ornaments) scored 3.8271. The standard deviations here are also the largest in the study, ranging from 0.84 to 0.99, indicating that students at different schools have markedly different experiences of the surrounding cultural environment (See Table 3).

Table 3. Implementation level at the cultural-atmosphere dimension

Cultural Atmosphere	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Category
Cognitive Culture	150	41.133	45.000	5.00	0.90329	Good
Behavioural Culture	150	38.467	40.000	5.00	0.99149	Good
Material Culture (Artefacts)	150	38.271	40.000	4.00	0.84576	Good
Atmosphere Mean	150	39.289	40.200	4.00	0.83680	Good

The pattern within the atmosphere dimension is the most consequential finding of the study, and it deserves a closer look than a single sentence about variability can give it. Cognitive culture, the cheapest tier to install (printed posters, painted slogans, calligraphic banners), is the strongest. Behavioural culture, which requires teachers and students to perform Javanese practices on a regular cadence, is weaker. Material culture, which requires sustained budgetary commitment to architectural elements and gamelan instruments, is weakest. The pattern is internally coherent: PKJ at the school level is currently strongest where it costs the least and where it requires the least sustained adult labour. This is not a critique of any school. It is a structural pattern that any policy with a tight implementation timeline tends to produce.

Researchers can therefore answer one of the questions a reviewer might ask of this kind of study: where is implementation weak? It is weak at the seams between symbol and habit, between displaying the philosophy and performing it. The high standard deviation in behavioural culture (SD = 0.99) suggests this is not uniform; some schools manage the behavioural tier well, others barely, and our sample is not large enough to disaggregate which schools fall on which side. Future qualitative work should focus on the schools at the upper and lower ends of this distribution to identify what enables some schools to move from cognitive display to behavioural habituation while others stall at signage.

Relationships among the three dimensions

Pearson correlations among the three dimensions were uniformly strong and statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.01$. The strongest correlation was between cultural values and cultural atmosphere ($r = 0.880$), followed by philosophy and cultural values ($r = 0.872$), and philosophy and cultural atmosphere ($r = 0.716$). Table 4 displays the correlation matrix.

Table 4. Correlations among PKJ implementation dimensions

Variable	Philosophy	Cultural Values	Cultural Atmosphere
Philosophy	1	0.872**	0.716**
Cultural Values	0.872**	1	0.880**
Cultural Atmosphere	0.716**	0.880**	1

Note. **p < 0.01 (two-tailed).

These correlations should be read carefully. They tell us that the three dimensions move together in students' reports. They do not tell us that one-dimension causes another. The strongest

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pairing, between cultural values and cultural atmosphere, is consistent with two different theoretical readings. The first is the moral ecology reading: schools that build a richer cultural environment foster stronger value adoption (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). The second is self-perception reading: students who already endorse PKJ values are more attentive to, and therefore more likely to perceive, cultural elements in their school environment. Our cross-sectional data cannot distinguish between these two. What it can do is identify the strongest mutual signal in the system, which sits at the intersection of values and atmosphere. That intersection is where future intervention work should concentrate.

The weaker correlation between philosophy and atmosphere ($r = 0.716$, still substantial) makes sense once researchers remember that philosophy is largely transmitted through teachers and texts, while the atmosphere is shaped by school-wide policies, calendars, and infrastructure. A student can absorb philosophical content from a single charismatic teacher without that absorption being matched by the broader cultural environment of the school. Lickona (2013) makes a similar point about the difference between the moral content of a curriculum and the moral atmosphere of an institution; they do not always move in lockstep.

Discussion

Reading PKJ through local cultural theory

Anchoring character education in local culture is itself an argument that needs articulation, not just description. Recent ethnopedagogical work in Indonesia provides a useful frame. Anggita et al. (2024), studying a Yogyakarta preschool, show that ethnopedagogy can revitalise local wisdom and reinforce a multicultural national identity, but only when teachers explicitly mediate between cultural artefacts and developmental tasks. Prayitno et al. (2022), analysing Indonesian-language textbooks, demonstrate that prophetic educational values and positive politeness can become pillars of character formation when they are embedded in classroom interaction rather than displayed as abstract slogans. A parallel argument emerges from Sundanese contexts. Wibawa and Awaliah (2023), examining the ngaras and siraman premarital rituals in Sundanese weddings, identify a coherent local-wisdom value system (Trisilas, Catur Jati Diri Insani, and Gapura Pancawaluya) that organises moral relationships with God, self, others, nature, and time. They argue that such ritual-based value systems carry pedagogical potential, but that potential is realised only when teachers translate symbolic content into instructional practice. The cross-cultural lesson is consistent: ethnopedagogy is not self-executing, whether in Java or in Sunda. Our data echoes this lesson. The strongest layer of PKJ in our sample is the symbolic one (cognitive culture), and the weaker layers are the ones that require active teacher mediation (behavioural and material culture).

There is also a leadership dimension to PKJ that is easy to miss. Prayitno et al. (2026), revitalising female heroic characters in Javanese folklore as a basis for progressive leadership education, identify cleverness, consistency, assertiveness, and emotional intelligence as central values for forming culturally rooted leaders. Several of these maps directly align with PKJ values: consistency aligns with *sawiji, greget, sengguh*, and *ora mingkuh*; assertiveness sits inside hamangku, hamengku, and hamengkoni when read as servant leadership rather than passive deference; and cleverness intersects with mangasah mingising budi. Reading PKJ alongside this folklore-based leadership work suggests that PKJ is not merely a values inventory; it is a school-level leadership formation project whose success depends on adults modelling those qualities, not just teaching them.

A complementary insight comes from Awaliahet al. (2024), who, applying critical discourse analysis to Sundanese cultural representations, argue that Indonesian local cultures tend to frame social roles through a logic of *balance* rather than dominance, with women functioning as anthropocentric balance keepers rather than as subordinates within a hierarchy. The argument matters for PKJ because *hamemayu hayuning bawana* operates on the same logic of preserved balance, and *manunggaling kawula Gusti* similarly works through a relational rather than a hierarchical model of order. Schools that read PKJ values through this anthropocentric balance frame, rather than through an imported hierarchical or individualistic frame, are more likely to model relational practices that students recognise as culturally authentic. The cross-ethnic resonance between Javanese and Sundanese ethnopedagogies on this point also strengthens the

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case that culturally rooted character education in Indonesia is not a parochial project but draws on a broader Indonesian intellectual tradition of balance-based social thought.

Mulder (1984) argued long ago that Javanese personality cannot be reduced to deference and gentleness and that its inner architecture relies on a tension between outer composure and inner moral discipline. PKJ depends on schools sustaining that tension productively. Where schools instead settle for the outer composure of cultural display without the inner discipline of habituation, the programme will read as well-decorated surfaces. The pattern in our atmosphere data is consistent with that risk.

Why the atmosphere dimension lags

It is worth pausing on this finding because it is the most policy-relevant in the study. Several plausible explanations deserve weighing.

The first is resource asymmetry. Posters and slogans are cheap. Architectural elements, gamelan instruments, and traditional dress for whole student cohorts are not. PKJ pilot schools differ widely in their facility budgets, and a programme implemented through a regional regulation without a dedicated facilities budget will reproduce existing resource inequalities (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

The second is teacher modelling consistency. Behavioural culture in the PKJ design includes Javanese language use on Kamis Pahing, traditional dress on designated days, and participation in cultural performance. These practices require teachers themselves to model them, week after week. Davidson et al. (2010) argue that consistent adult modelling is the single most reliable mechanism for character habituation. In schools where only some teachers participate, students read about the inconsistency as evidence that the practices are optional. The high standard deviation in behavioural culture in our data is consistent with such inconsistency.

The third is the gap between recognition and habituation, what researchers might call the symbol-to-practice gap. Students may know what *hamemayu hayuning bawana* means without ever having to enact it in a structured task. PKJ documents describe the philosophy in elegant Javanese cosmological terms, but they do not always specify what behavioural enactment counts as evidence of internalisation. Without that specification, schools default to display. Narvaez and Lapsley (2008) make a similar argument about character education programmes that emphasise moral knowledge at the expense of moral skill.

The fourth is the urban–peri-urban divide within DIY. Our sample includes schools from Yogyakarta City, Sleman, Kulon Progo, Bantul, and Gunungkidul. Urban schools tend to have stronger material infrastructure but weaker access to traditional cultural performance contexts that are still embedded in rural community life. Peri-urban and rural schools may have weaker physical facilities but stronger access to community-based cultural reproduction. Our sample is too small to disaggregate this convincingly, but the variability researchers observe in the atmosphere dimension is consistent with this kind of regional patterning. Researchers flag it as a hypothesis for the qualitative follow-up work that researchers believe should accompany this study.

What this study can and cannot claim

Our reviewer raised a question that deserves a direct answer: how can a cross-sectional descriptive study warrant any claim about a programme's effects? The honest answer is that it cannot warrant causal claims, and researchers do not make them. What this study warrants is a structured baseline picture of how the three PKJ tiers currently sit in the lives of secondary students in twelve pilot schools. That picture has three takeaways. First, recognition of the philosophical layer is robust and consistent. Second, internalisation of cultural values is good but more variable, with the values that demand collective coordination scoring lowest. Third, the cultural atmosphere is the weakest tier, and its weakness sits specifically in the gap between cognitive display and behavioural and material enactment.

These takeaways are formative, not summative. They identify where the programme currently lives and where it currently strains. They do not, and cannot, demonstrate that PKJ is causally responsible for any observed character development. To make that demonstration, future work needs at minimum a longitudinal panel design with at least two measurement points separated by a school year, ideally combined with comparison schools that have not implemented PKJ. Such a design would also allow disaggregation by school, by regency, and by school type,

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giving the kind of granular evidence that policymakers need to refine the programme.

Implications for policy and practice

Several practical implications follow from the findings, with the caveat that they are advisory rather than prescriptive. Researchers see three priorities.

The first priority is to close the symbol-to-practice gap by specifying behavioural indicators for each PKJ value. PKJ documents describe the philosophy beautifully but stop short of telling schools what enactment looks like in practice. A revised PKJ Master Book that includes worked examples (What do *hamangku, hamengku*, and *hamengkoni* look like in a vocational classroom on a Tuesday morning?) would give teachers something to model rather than only something to recite (Wibawa et al., 2023; Davidsonet al., 2010).

The second priority is teacher capacity-building. Zuchdi (2010) showed that integrating character into subject teaching outperforms standalone programmes. Teachers need both philosophical fluency and pedagogical craft to make this integration work. This is a sustained investment, not a single workshop. Hardhi and Sudrajat (2018) reach a similar conclusion in their case study of one Yogyakarta secondary school: habituation works only when teachers are visibly committed to the practices themselves.

The third priority is a small but targeted facilities investment in the schools where material culture is weakest. This is not a call for every school to install full gamelan ensembles. It is a call for at least one well-resourced cultural learning space per school, where students and teachers can perform PKJ values in concrete material settings. The strong correlation between values and atmosphere in our data ($r = 0.880$) suggests that material investment is not decorative; it is structural support for value internalisation.

Limitations and future research

Researchers have already noted the central limitation: a cross-sectional descriptive design cannot support causal claims, and our findings should be read as an implementation profile rather than a verdict on effectiveness. Three further limitations are worth naming. First, self-report questionnaires are vulnerable to social desirability bias, especially when the items map clearly onto institutionally endorsed values. Triangulation with classroom observation, teacher reports, and documentary evidence (school programme calendars and attendance at cultural activities) would strengthen any future evaluation. Second, our sample, while justified for the relational analyses researchers report, is too small for fine-grained subgroup analysis. A larger sample stratified by regency and by school type would enable more granular policy guidance. Third, researchers did not collect data on the resourcing context of each school (facilities budget, teacher PKJ training hours, and principal commitment indicators), which limits our ability to explain inter-school variation in the atmosphere score. Future work should treat the school as the unit of analysis alongside the student.

The most useful next study would be a multi-year longitudinal panel of students entering PKJ pilot schools, with a matched comparison sample from non-pilot schools, accompanied by qualitative case studies of the three or four schools that score highest and lowest on the atmosphere dimension. That combination would tell us not just how PKJ currently looks but what makes it work where it works.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to describe how Pendidikan Khas Kejogjaan is currently implemented across twelve pilot secondary schools in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, framed in three dimensions: philosophical anchors, cultural values, and cultural atmosphere. The philosophical dimension showed the strongest and most consistent internalisation ($M = 4.1361$), the cultural-values dimension was good but more variable ($M = 4.0433$), and the cultural-atmosphere dimension was the weakest of the three ($M = 3.9289$). The three dimensions were strongly intercorrelated ($r = 0.716$ to 0.880, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that PKJ functions as an interconnected system in students' experience.

The most consequential pattern within the data is the gap within the cultural-atmosphere dimension itself. Cognitive culture (posters, slogans, displays) is well established, but behavioural culture (everyday Javanese practice) and material culture (artefacts and infrastructure) lag. PKJ,

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in its current pilot form, is strongest where it requires the least sustained adult labour and weakest where it requires that labour most. Researchers read this as a structural feature of any large-scale character education rollout under a tight timeline, not as a failure of any particular school.

Researchers therefore close with three claims that the data warrant and one that they do not. The data warrant the claim that PKJ has achieved meaningful uptake at the level of philosophical recognition and cultural-value endorsement. The data warrant the claim that the cultural-atmosphere tier needs targeted policy attention to move beyond signage into habituation and material support. The data warrant the claim that further evaluation should be longitudinal and comparative, not cross-sectional. The data do not warrant the claim that PKJ has caused observed character traits in students, and researchers deliberately avoid that claim. PKJ is a promising and intellectually coherent programme. Whether it is a successful one will require the kind of design that this study has helped to make possible by mapping the baseline.

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