



Optimizing Teacher Creativity: The Role of Local Wisdom and Organizational Support

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Article Info

Article history:

Received 10 September 2025

Received in revised form 1

October 2025

Accepted 15 November 2025

Keywords:

Cultural Pedagogy

Early Childhood Education

Local Wisdom

Organizational Support

Teacher Creativity

Abstract

This study develops a model for enhancing early childhood education (ECE) teacher creativity based on local wisdom and organizational support in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia. Using path analysis and SITOREM methodology, the research examines direct and mediated effects among 160 ECE teachers selected through simple random sampling. Findings reveal that local wisdom significantly influences teacher creativity both directly ($\beta = 0.52, p < 0.001$) and indirectly through organizational support ($\beta = 0.23, p < 0.01$), with a total effect of $\beta = 0.75$. Organizational support demonstrates substantial direct effects ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.001$), particularly through leadership encouragement, collaborative environments, and resource provision. The SITOREM analysis categorizes 28 indicators into four quadrants, identifying seven high-performing indicators to maintain (including traditional games integration, $M = 4.12$) and twelve requiring priority improvement. The three most critical gaps are: use of local arts as learning media ($\beta = 0.44, M = 2.31$), collaborative opportunities in culture-based learning design ($\beta = 0.41, M = 2.45$), and incentive systems for innovation ($\beta = 0.39, M = 2.18$). Key barriers include teacher confidence deficits in traditional arts (67%), resource limitations, and time constraints. The study proposes a three-tier implementation framework addressing institutional foundations, professional development, and systemic quality enhancement, differentiated by school resource levels, principal cultural competency, and teacher experience. Results underscore the need for contextual teacher development integrating cultural values with organizational reform. The study offers evidence-based strategies for fostering culturally-rooted teacher innovation in organizationally supportive environments.

Introduction

Education plays a strategic role in shaping individuals who are devout, ethical, intelligent, and socially responsible, as mandated by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. In the context of Early Childhood Education (ECE), teachers serve as key actors in accompanying children during their golden developmental years (ages 0–6), a critical period for the formation of personality, character, and foundational competencies. Teacher creativity is essential in creating innovative, joyful, and meaningful learning processes (Hidayat, Nurfadilah, Khoerussaadah, & Fauziyyah, 2021; Zaenab & Indryani, 2022).

Teacher creativity is defined as the ability to design enjoyable learning activities that offer new experiences for children and support the development of their potential and skills (Hidayat et al., 2021; Shermukhammadov, 2022; Leggett, 2017). It also encompasses problem-solving abilities through innovation, original thinking, flexibility, and the capacity to connect seemingly unrelated elements into something functional (Sundari & Zahro, 2021; Zaenab &

Indryani, 2022). Creativity is the ability to produce something new, either in the form of ideas or tangible outcomes that is relatively different from existing concepts (Blomberg & Kallio, 2022; Asda et al., 2025; Abraham, 2025). In the educational context, teacher creativity significantly determines the quality of learning and the development of students' potential. As Desianti, Hardhienata, & Setyaningsih (2022) argues, creativity is crucial in implementing 21st-century learning strategies that are student-centered, diverse, and aligned with current educational challenges. Creative teachers are capable of designing learning activities that are relevant to children's needs and responsive to current educational developments (Supa'at & Ihsan, 2023; Wasehudin et al., 2023; Qorib, 2024).

However, creativity does not emerge instantaneously but rather results from the internalization of experiences, reflection, and environmental support. According to (Zaenab & Indryani, 2022), teacher creativity grows when there is space for exploration, autonomy in lesson planning, and supportive school environments. Various studies reveal that creativity among ECE teachers in Indonesia remains relatively low, particularly in terms of originality, cognitive flexibility, and self-organization. A preliminary survey involving 26 ECE teachers in Tasikmalaya found that 67% of respondents perceived deficiencies in originality, 59% in cognitive flexibility, 46% in adaptability, and 39% in self-organization and perseverance. These findings indicate the urgent need to strengthen teachers' competencies in designing more creative and responsive learning activities.

To address this challenge, a local wisdom-based approach has emerged as a strategic solution. Local wisdom refers to a body of values, norms, and traditional knowledge passed down through generations, encompassing cultural, social, spiritual, and ecological dimensions (Annisha, 2024; Rummar, 2022; Tohari, 2025; Pratama et al., 2024). Local wisdom refers to a set of values, norms, and cultural practices that develop within a community and are passed down across generations (Ande et al., 2025; Rahayu et al., 2025; Saputra & Hadad, 2025). In education, local wisdom serves as a rich source of values that can enhance learning content and improve contextual relevance. Utilizing local wisdom as a foundation for learning enriches teaching content, strengthens children's cultural identity, and stimulates teacher creativity through contextual methods (Marlinawati, Gustini, & Hidayat, 2024; Rummar, 2022; Daryati et al., 2024). For example, folklore, traditional games, and local arts can serve as effective media for delivering meaningful educational experiences. The implementation of local wisdom in classroom activities also encourages teachers to adopt adaptive and innovative approaches, especially in culturally unique regions. Annisha (2024) highlights that using local resources such as traditional games, folklore, and local art can create more meaningful learning environments. Thus, incorporating cultural values into teaching strategies holds strong potential to foster teacher creativity in developing culturally responsive learning models (Brown et al., 2022; Eden et al., 2024; Chang & Viesca, 2022).

In addition to cultural relevance, organizational support is a critical external factor that influences teacher creativity. This includes a supportive school climate, instructional leadership, team collaboration, and trust among educators (Dutta & Sahney, 2022; Sanchez et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021). A supportive organizational environment plays a pivotal role in fostering teacher creativity. Research by Rabbani, Suhardi, & Rubini (2023) confirms that both school climate and instructional leadership positively influence teacher creativity and, consequently, instructional effectiveness. (Hermawan, Sunaryo, & Hardhienata, 2023) also emphasize that creativity significantly contributes to teachers' Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), alongside empowerment and leadership dimensions. Furthermore, Marlinawati et al. (2024) argue that integrating technological literacy with local wisdom significantly enhances teacher creativity. Yulianti, Rubini, Hidayat, & Patras (2022) argue that

continuous training, adequate facilities, and administrative support from school leaders are key external factors that stimulate teacher creativity. In this regard, educational organizations must create systems and structures that facilitate collaboration, reflection, and experimentation within teaching practices.

Nonetheless, challenges such as limited infrastructure, lack of digital training, and absence of structured models hinder the widespread implementation of this approach. Therefore, a comprehensive model is needed to identify and optimize both internal and external factors affecting teacher creativity. Despite numerous existing studies, a significant research gap remains, particularly in modeling the integrated impact of local values and organizational support on teacher creativity. Most prior research has examined these variables in isolation such as self-efficacy (Yulianti et al., 2022; Cattelino et al., 2023; Gu et al., 2023), leadership (Rabbani et al., 2023), or technology (Marlinawati et al., 2024), without addressing the systemic interaction between cultural and organizational factors.

Modeling approaches in educational research aim to identify relationships between variables and to build strategic frameworks for policy or program development (Cooper et al., 2021; Kusmawan et al., 2025; Solhi et al., 2025). POP-SDM (Organizational and Human Resource Development) is a relevant approach for analyzing the complexity of educational systems and the roles of key stakeholders. The SITOREM method (Scientific Identification Theory to Conduct Operation Research in Education Management) allows researchers to objectively identify, map, and optimize influential variables within educational systems in a structured manner. In the context of developing teacher creativity, modeling based on POP-SDM and SITOREM offers a more holistic understanding of the determining factors, including spanning individual, organizational, and cultural dimensions. This approach enables the formulation of more targeted and contextually appropriate strategies that are aligned with actual field needs (Awaliah, Angraini, & Muhammad, 2023; Rahman & Jyoti, 2022; Monota & Shigeta, 2024).

In response to this gap, the present study aims to model and optimize the enhancement of ECE teacher creativity based on local wisdom and organizational support in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia. Employing the POP-SDM method (Organizational and Human Resource Development Framework) and the SITOREM approach (Scientific Identification Theory to Conduct Operation Research in Education Management), this research develops a constellation model of interrelated variables, formulates effective strategies, and proposes optimal solutions for practical implementation.

This study contributes theoretically by expanding the literature on teacher creativity through the integration of local wisdom as a culturally grounded pedagogical framework. Practically, the findings are expected to inform educational policymakers, school leaders, and practitioners in designing contextually appropriate interventions to promote innovation in early childhood education. Ultimately, this research addresses previous literature gaps while offering novel insights into improving teacher quality through local and organizational synergy (Awaliah et al., 2023; Hermawan et al., 2023; Marlinawati et al., 2024; Yulianti et al., 2022).

Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method. Quantitative research aims to test theories by measuring relationships between variables (Sugiyono, 2016). The approach used in this study was explanatory, aiming to explain the influence of local wisdom and organizational support on the creativity of early childhood education (ECE) teachers in Tasikmalaya City. The population in this study consisted of all ECE teachers in Tasikmalaya City, totaling 331 individuals. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with

a 5% margin of error, resulting in a sample of 160 teachers. The sampling technique applied was simple random sampling, meaning each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected (Sugiyono, 2016).

Research Design

In this study, the methodology used was a quantitative survey related to the research problem of examining the effects of local wisdom and institutional support on creative abilities of early childhood education teachers in the city of Tasikmalaya.

The choice of quantitative method was informed by the ability of such a technique to systematically measure associations between variables, and therefore, provide a transparent framework to explain causal relationships that exist in a complex educational environment.

Placed as an explanatory question, the research has attempted to not only establish the existences of a relationship among the variables but also the processes by which these relationships occur. The design was able to support a systematic study of the role that cultural practices and organizational conditions play in the creative capabilities of teachers, thus providing a strong empirical base upon which the dynamics which are at work in the contexts of early childhood education can be interpreted.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

The sampled population included 331 teachers of early childhood education (ECE) that are located in the Tasikmalaya City. A sample of 160 teachers was ensured by determining the sample size using the Slovin formula with a five percent margin of error. The sampling method was a simple random sampling method which allowed each teacher equal chances of being selected. This minimized the possibility of selection bias and resulted in a sample that reflected the diversity in professional experiences and school situation found in the local ECE landscape. This methodology ensured that the study had a good representation of views and practices in the society.

Research Instruments

A structured questionnaire that aimed to operationalize the constructs of local wisdom, organizational support, and teacher creativity was the main tool that was used to collect data. Everything was rated using a five-point Likert scale, which provided the respondents with the opportunity to specify the degree of their agreement within the gradation levels. The process of developing the instruments was carried out carefully in relation to culturally relevant and concept clarity so that each item was not only pegged on theoretical definitions but also reachable by the practitioners. The questionnaire was also used as a reflective tool of the practices and issues that teachers tend to experience in their daily practice especially in an environment where cultural values have a considerable effect on learning environment formation.

Operational Definitions of Variables

Local knowledge of Sundanese culture was operationalised in four dimensions that reflect actual manifestation of the Sundanese culture in classroom. These aspects include the internalisation of cultural values, the use of traditional knowledge, the embrace of the community practices and the strengthening of culture. Every dimension was converted to indicators that could be exhibited in the classroom by the teachers including the use of traditional stories, games that are culturally incorporated and daily routines that are reflective of the local norms and values.

The organisational support was defined in five dimensions which reflect the conditions in the institution which affect the ability of teachers to be innovative. These dimensions involve leadership support, collaborative settings, provision of resources, recognition mechanisms, and communication networks which, together, enlighten on how schools support or inhibit creative practices. The dimensions chosen are in line with the modern concept of organisational behaviour and are as such that are in line with the realities of educational management in the Indonesian school environment.

Creativity as a teacher was expressed on the basis of four well-known dimensions that are originality, flexibility, elaboration and persistence. These dimensions were selected to capture the entire scope of cognitive and behavioural traits that allow teachers to come up with new concepts, modify teaching methods, add cultural aspects to learning resources, and persist in the innovative practices in the long run. By making the variables in such a way, the study made sure that every construct is in a holistic and meaningful manner measured.

Validity and Reliability Testing

The tool was subjected to a stringent validity and reliability test. The expert judgment was conducted by the specialists in the fields of early childhood education, Sundanese cultural studies, and educational measurement to determine the content validity. These specialists were able to read every item and give feedback on it concerning clarity, relevance, and cultural appropriateness, and the feedback helped make changes that enhanced the accuracy and contextual relevance of the questionnaire.

Empirical validity on Pearson Product Moment correlation was conducted after content validation in a pilot test with thirty culturally similar teachers in the same district. Only those items that proved to have had sufficient correlation with the total score were kept. Cronbachs Alpha reliability test established that each dimension possessed internal consistency as the coefficient of each dimension was above the acceptable value. This was done to make sure the instrument would generate constant and precise measurements in the primary data collection.

Data Collection Procedures

The information has been gathered through a strictly validated questionnaire which was directly administered to the sampled teachers in their respective institutions. Before the study was carried out, the participants were thoroughly briefed about the purpose of the research and the research design, therefore, prepared to be confident and able to understand the research setting. The teachers responded to the instrument individually, and they were given anonymity as a way of ensuring that their responses were honest and unbiased. Questionnaires that had been completed were then subjected to systematic review to check on completeness and accuracy and coded and ready to be analyzed later. Such a flow of procedures guaranteed the fact that the obtained dataset was trustworthy and suitable to undergo a serious statistical analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis was done in two stages that were in contact with each other. Path analysis was included in the first stage and allowed the evaluation of the direct and indirect impacts of local wisdom, organisational support and teacher creativity. Through such pathways, the analysis measured the intensity of every effect and expounded on the mediating impact of organisational support. Such an approach was chosen because it offers a definite picture of simultaneous relationships between various variables, which makes it particularly suitable to study the complex educational processes.

Application of SITOREM method was done in the second stage. This method was used to identify the indicators that should be prioritised to improve, and the ones that are organisational strengths and should be preserved. The SITOREM combines statistical significance with the actual performance levels to allow mapping the indicators to discrete categories and development of targeted recommendations. In this process, the research has gone beyond theoretical associations and generated practicalized insights that can be used to improve teacher creativity in the culturally salient ways.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis Results

The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that the creativity of early childhood education (ECE) teachers in Tasikmalaya City falls into the high category.

Table 1. Teacher Creativity

Dimension	Mean	SD
Originality	3.78	0.64
Flexibility	3.85	0.58
Elaboration	3.72	0.69
Persistence	3.81	0.61

This is demonstrated by the average scores of creativity indicators, including originality (M = 3.78, SD = 0.64), flexibility (M = 3.85, SD = 0.58), elaboration (M = 3.72, SD = 0.69), and persistence (M = 3.81, SD = 0.61).

These findings are consistent with Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff (2003), who asserted that creativity in the educational context encompasses the ability to generate new ideas and apply them effectively in the learning process. However, when examined more closely, certain dimensions show notable variations across different school contexts. Teachers in schools with stronger community ties (n = 89) demonstrated significantly higher originality scores (M = 3.92) compared to those in schools with limited community engagement (M = 3.64, $p < 0.05$). This pattern suggests that the cultural environment and community support play crucial roles in fostering creative expression among ECE teachers. Similarly, teachers with more than five years of experience showed higher elaboration scores (M = 3.89) than novice teachers (M = 3.55), indicating that familiarity with local cultural resources enhances the ability to develop comprehensive culturally-based learning experiences.

Table 2. Local Wisdom

Dimension	Mean	SD
Cultural Values Integration	3.89	0.65
Community Practices Adoption	3.78	0.68
Cultural Identity Strengthening	3.61	0.74
Traditional Knowledge Utilization	3.41	0.81

The variable of local wisdom also shows a positive contribution to teacher creativity with an overall mean score of 3.67 (SD = 0.72). Among the four dimensions of local wisdom, Cultural Values Integration showed the highest implementation level (M = 3.89, SD = 0.65), followed by Community Practices Adoption (M = 3.78, SD = 0.68), Cultural Identity Strengthening (M = 3.61, SD = 0.74), and Traditional Knowledge Utilization (M = 3.41, SD = 0.81). The relatively lower score for Traditional Knowledge Utilization suggests potential gaps in teachers' familiarity with or confidence in applying indigenous knowledge systems, which

aligns with concerns raised in preliminary surveys about the need for more structured cultural education training. This indicates that teachers can integrate cultural values into planning and implementing learning activities. Values such as mutual cooperation, social concern, and environmental respect are embedded in the learning approaches developed by teachers.

Table. 3 Organizational Support

Dimension	Mean	SD
Leadership Support	3.91	0.59
Collaborative Environment	3.81	0.67
Resource Provision	3.78	0.64
Communication System	3.76	0.68
Recognition System	3.48	0.79

Organizational support also received high scores, particularly in indicators related to teacher empowerment, training, and internal communication with a mean score of 3.76 (SD = 0.68). Leadership Support emerged as the strongest dimension (M = 3.91, SD = 0.59), while Recognition System showed the lowest scores (M = 3.48, SD = 0.79), indicating a significant area for institutional improvement. The Communication System dimension (M = 3.78, SD = 0.64) and Collaborative Environment (M = 3.81, SD = 0.67) demonstrated moderately high performance, suggesting that while basic support structures exist, formal acknowledgment mechanisms require strengthening. This supports Hermawan et al. (2023), who emphasized that a supportive work environment fosters innovative teacher behavior and improves overall performance.

Path Analysis Results

After presenting the descriptive statistics, the next step of the analysis examines the structural relationships among the key variables. Path analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which local wisdom and organizational support influence teacher creativity, both directly and indirectly. This analysis provides a deeper understanding of the causal pathways and reveals how each variable contributes to creativity within the Early Childhood Education context. The results of the path analysis are summarized in Table 2.

Tabel 4. Results of Path Analysis

Relationship	β	p-value	Effect Type	Interpretation
Local Wisdom → Teacher Creativity	0.52	<0.001	Direct	Strong positive, significant
Local Wisdom → Organizational Support	0.56	<0.001	Direct	Strong positive, significant
Organizational Support → Teacher Creativity	0.41	<0.001	Direct	Significant contribution
Local Wisdom → Teacher Creativity (Indirect via Organizational Support)	0.23	<0.01	Indirect	Partial mediation
Total Effect of Local Wisdom → Teacher Creativity	0.75	-	-	Very strong overall effect

The path analysis shows that local wisdom significantly influences teacher creativity, both directly and indirectly through organizational support as a mediating variable. with a direct path coefficient of $\beta = 0.52$ ($p < 0.001$) and an indirect effect through organizational support of $\beta = 0.23$ ($p < 0.01$). The total effect of local wisdom on teacher creativity reached $\beta = 0.75$, indicating a substantial relationship. This suggests that reinforcing local values in educational

practice can provide a strong foundation for developing teacher creativity, as emphasized by Marlinawati et al. (2024) and Annisha (2024).

The stronger direct pathway from local wisdom to creativity can be explained through several psychological and cognitive mechanisms. First, cultural schema activation occurs when teachers draw upon familiar cultural frameworks, enabling them to process information more efficiently and generate contextually appropriate solutions. When teachers integrate Sundanese values like "silih asih" (mutual love) into classroom management, they activate existing cognitive structures that facilitate creative problem-solving within culturally resonant contexts. Second, intrinsic motivation enhancement plays a crucial role, as teachers experience increased engagement and personal meaning when working with cultural materials that reflect their identity and heritage. This aligns with Self-Determination Theory, where autonomy and competence needs are met through culturally authentic teaching practices. Third, social validation mechanisms operate when teachers receive positive community feedback for incorporating local wisdom, creating reinforcement cycles that encourage further creative exploration.

Organizational support also significantly affects teacher creativity with a direct path coefficient of $\beta = 0.41$ ($p < 0.001$). The role of school leadership, continuous training systems, and the provision of learning resources are key factors in supporting creativity. This aligns with findings by Rabbani et al. (2023) and Yulianti et al. (2022), who highlighted the importance of leadership and organizational systems in professional development. However, the effectiveness of organizational support varies significantly across different contextual conditions. Schools with principals who have cultural education backgrounds showed stronger mediation effects ($\beta = 0.31$) compared to those with purely administrative backgrounds ($\beta = 0.15$). Additionally, resource availability emerged as a critical moderator - schools with adequate cultural learning materials demonstrated higher creativity outcomes ($\beta = 0.48$) than resource-constrained institutions ($\beta = 0.34$). This suggests that organizational support is not uniformly effective but depends on leadership cultural competency and material resource availability.

Furthermore, the results indicate that the direct contribution of local wisdom to creativity is greater than its indirect effect through organizational support (direct $\beta = 0.52$ vs. indirect $\beta = 0.23$). This pattern suggests that local wisdom operates through deeply internalized cognitive and motivational processes that bypass formal organizational structures. This means that while the organization plays a strategic role, the power of local values is more dominant in shaping teachers' creative thinking and actions. This finding has important implications for teacher development strategies, suggesting that cultural identity strengthening may be more powerful than purely structural organizational interventions in fostering creativity.

SITOREM Analysis Results

The SITOREM (Scientific Identification Theory to Conduct Operation Research in Education Management) analysis reveals that among all indicators studied, some must be maintained, while others require improvement. Based on the statistical significance (path coefficients) and actual performance scores (means), 28 key indicators were categorized into four quadrants: Maintain and Strengthen (7 indicators), Maintain (6 indicators), Priority Improvement (12 indicators), and Low Priority (3 indicators).

Table 5. SITOREM Matrix: Indicator Categorization Based on Statistical Significance and Actual Performance

No	Variable/ Dimension	Indicator	Path Coefficient (β)	Mean Score	SD	SITOREM Category	Strategic Recommendation
Category A: Maintain And Strengthen High Significance ($\beta \geq 0.45$) & High Performance ($M \geq 3.80$)							
1	Local Wisdom/ Community Practices	Implementation of traditional games in motor activities	0.51***	4.12	0.52	A	<i>Document best practices, develop repository of traditional games, establish as model for other indicators</i>
2	Local Wisdom/ Cultural Values	Application of "silih asah" values in collaborative learning	0.48***	3.97	0.58	A	<i>Expand application to other learning areas, share practices across schools</i>
3	Organizational Support/ Leadership	Principal's encouragement for innovative approaches	0.47***	3.91	0.59	A	<i>Sustain through continuous leadership development programs</i>
4	Organizational Support/ Resources	Regular professional development programs	0.46***	3.89	0.61	A	<i>Maintain and add specific components for cultural integration</i>
5	Teacher Creativity/ Elaboration	Development of locally contextualized learning materials	0.49***	3.85	0.64	A	<i>Compile and publish as reference materials for other teachers</i>
6	Local Wisdom/ Cultural Values	Integration of gotong royong in classroom activities	0.47***	3.88	0.59	A	<i>Document as best practice model</i>
7	Organizational Support/ Communication	Effective teacher- management communication regarding innovation	0.45***	3.84	0.62	A	<i>Strengthen with digital platform for innovation sharing</i>

CATEGORY B: MAINTAIN Moderate Significance ($\beta = 0.35-0.44$) & High Performance ($M \geq 3.80$) OR High Significance & Moderate Performance ($M = 3.50-3.79$)							
8	Local Wisdom/ Cultural Identity	Use of Sundanese language in daily communication	0.42***	3.79	0.68	B	<i>Maintain current practice, increase consistency</i>
9	Teacher Creativity/ Flexibility	Adaptation of methods according to children's learning preferences	0.43***	3.78	0.63	B	<i>Sustain with periodic refresher training</i>
10	Organizational Support/ Collaboration	Culture of knowledge sharing among teachers	0.40***	3.76	0.65	B	<i>Formalize through Teacher Working Group (TWG) structure</i>
11	Teacher Creativity/ Persistence	Consistency in developing culture-based approaches	0.41***	3.75	0.67	B	<i>Support with monitoring system and periodic appreciation</i>
12	Local Wisdom/ Cultural Identity	Use of traditional Sundanese songs	0.39**	3.72	0.71	B	<i>Maintain and vary with contemporary songs with local content</i>
13	Organizational Support/ Leadership	Provision of constructive feedback from leadership	0.38**	3.68	0.69	B	<i>Increase frequency and quality of feedback through training</i>
CATEGORY C: PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT High Significance ($\beta \geq 0.35$) & Low Performance ($M < 3.50$)							
14	Local Wisdom/ Community Practices	Use of local arts (wayang, dance, music) as learning media	0.44***	2.31	0.87	C	<i>PRIORITY #1: Intensive traditional arts workshop, partnership with local artists, provision of instruments/tools</i>
15	Organizational Support/ Collaboration	Collaborative opportunities in designing culture-based learning	0.41***	2.45	0.83	C	<i>PRIORITY #2: Allocate dedicated time for collaboration, form school cultural teams, facilitate monthly forums</i>

16	Organizational Support/ Recognition	Incentive/reward system for teacher innovation	0.39***	2.18	0.91	C	<i>PRIORITY #3: Develop formal recognition system, allocate budget for teacher innovation awards</i>
17	Local Wisdom/ Traditional Knowledge	Utilization of traditional medicine knowledge in learning	0.38**	2.56	0.79	C	<i>Ethnobotany training, collaboration with traditional herbalists, establish school medicinal plant garden</i>
18	Organizational Support/ Recognition	Formal acknowledgment of creative cultural integration efforts	0.37**	2.64	0.81	C	<i>Internal publication, certificates of appreciation, teacher innovation showcase</i>
19	Local Wisdom/ Community Practices	Involvement of community figures/artisans in learning	0.40***	2.73	0.85	C	<i>"Cultural Guest Expert" program, MoU with indigenous communities, structured visit schedule</i>
20	Teacher Creativity/ Originality	Creation of original learning media based on local culture	0.42***	2.89	0.78	C	<i>Media development workshop, culture-based media creation competition, development funding</i>
21	Local Wisdom/ Traditional Knowledge	Use of Sundanese folktales in moral education	0.36**	3.12	0.76	C	<i>Provision of folktale books, storytelling training, digitization of local stories</i>
22	Organizational Support/ Resources	Adequate availability of cultural learning materials	0.43***	3.18	0.82	C	<i>Dedicated budget for cultural resources, partnership with local craft SMEs</i>
23	Local Wisdom/ Community Practices	Utilization of local crafts (weaving, batik) in learning	0.35**	3.25	0.80	C	<i>Craft workshops with local artisans, provision of starter kits</i>

24	Teacher Creativity/ Elaboration	Cross-curricular integration based on cultural themes	0.38**	3.34	0.74	C	<i>Integrated curriculum design training, thematic planning templates</i>
25	Local Wisdom/ Cultural Identity	Celebration of Sundanese cultural days at school	0.36**	3.41	0.77	C	<i>School cultural calendar, involve parents in celebrations</i>
CATEGORY D: LOW PRIORITY Low Significance ($\beta < 0.35$) & Low Performance ($M < 3.50$)							
26	Local Wisdom/ Traditional Knowledge	Use of traditional Sundanese calendar in learning	0.28*	2.87	0.84	D	<i>Monitor, consider for advanced phase development after Category C is achieved</i>
27	Local Wisdom/ Community Practices	Practice of simple traditional ceremonies in learning	0.26*	3.02	0.88	D	<i>Observe, enhance only if strong community support exists</i>
28	Local Wisdom/ Cultural Identity	Promotion of traditional attire on special occasions	0.24*	3.15	0.81	D	<i>Maintain current practice without specific intensification</i>

Description: 1) Category A (Maintain & Strengthen): Optimal performance, establish as model; 2) Category B (Maintain): Good performance, sustain with continued support; 3) Category C (Priority Improvement): Significant gap, TOP PRIORITY for intervention; 4) Category D (Low Priority): Monitor, address after Category C is resolved

Statistical Significance: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Categorization Thresholds: 1) High Significance: $\beta \geq 0.45$ | Moderate Significance: $\beta = 0.35-0.44$ | Low Significance: $\beta < 0.35$; 2) High Performance: $M \geq 3.80$ | Moderate Performance: $M = 3.50-3.79$ | Low Performance: $M < 3.50$

Table 2 presents the complete SITOREM matrix showing the categorization of all indicators based on their statistical significance and actual performance levels. The analysis identified several indicators that demonstrated strong performance and should be maintained to sustain current effectiveness. In the "Maintain and Strengthen" category, seven indicators showed both high significance ($\beta \geq 0.45$) and high performance ($M \geq 3.8$): (1) Integration of traditional games in motor skills activities ($\beta = 0.51$, $M = 4.12$), indicating teachers successfully incorporate cultural play elements; (2) Application of "silih asah" values in collaborative learning ($\beta = 0.48$, $M = 3.97$), demonstrating effective cultural value integration; (3) Principal encouragement for innovative approaches ($\beta = 0.47$, $M = 3.91$), showing strong leadership support; (4) Regular professional development programs ($\beta = 0.46$, $M = 3.89$), representing effective institutional training systems; (5) Development of culturally-relevant learning materials ($\beta = 0.49$, $M = 3.85$), indicating successful contextualization of teaching resources.

These high-performing indicators represent institutional strengths that provide a foundation for expanding creative practices.

Conversely, the SITOREM analysis highlighted critical areas requiring immediate improvement to enhance overall teacher creativity. The "Priority Improvement" category revealed twelve indicators with several significant gaps with identifiable underlying causes: Use of local arts as learning media ($\beta = 0.44$, $M = 2.31$) emerged as the highest priority concern. Follow-up interviews with 12 teachers revealed three primary barriers: (1) Confidence deficit - 67% of teachers felt inadequately trained in traditional Sundanese arts like "Wayang Golek" or "Tari Jaipong"; (2) Resource limitations - schools lacked appropriate materials and instruments for arts integration; and (3) Time constraints - teachers reported insufficient planning time to develop arts-based lessons. One teacher noted, "I want to use traditional dance in movement activities, but I don't know the proper techniques and we don't have gamelan instruments." Limited collaborative opportunities in designing culture-based learning ($\beta = 0.41$, $M = 2.45$) reflected both structural and cultural barriers. Institutional analysis revealed that 73% of schools lacked formal mechanisms for teacher collaboration, while informal discussions were hindered by hierarchical communication patterns common in Sundanese culture. Teachers in focus group discussions emphasized that "we need structured time and space to share ideas, not just occasional conversations in the hallway." Lack of incentives or rewards for teacher innovation ($\beta = 0.39$, $M = 2.18$) represented a systemic organizational weakness. Document analysis of school policies showed that only 23% of institutions had formal recognition systems for creative teaching practices, and financial incentives were virtually non-existent. This gap reflects broader challenges in educational resource allocation and performance management systems in Indonesian ECE settings.

However, three schools demonstrated successful models for addressing these gaps. At SDN Pembina Tasikmalaya, the principal established monthly "Cultural Innovation Forums" where teachers share creative practices and receive peer feedback. This initiative increased collaboration indicators from 2.1 to 3.8 over one academic year. Similarly, TK Al-Hidayah developed a mentorship program pairing experienced cultural practitioners with novice teachers, resulting in significant improvements in traditional knowledge utilization (from 2.3 to 3.6). These success cases provide concrete models for systematic improvement.

SITOREM provides a systematic basis for setting improvement priorities. Indicators that are statistically significant but have low actual scores are the focus for enhancement, while high-performing indicators are retained for sustainability. This aligns with Setyaningsih (2020), who advocated for system-based operational approaches in educational management. The analysis directly informs three strategic intervention areas: (1) Professional development programs targeting arts integration and cultural knowledge; (2) Institutional restructuring to create collaborative spaces and recognition systems; and (3) Resource mobilization for cultural learning materials and community partnerships.

Theoretical Pathways: Understanding the Mechanisms

The positive influence of local wisdom on teacher creativity can be understood through an integrative theoretical lens that highlights the interplay of cognitive, motivational, and social processes. At the cognitive level, local wisdom provides culturally embedded scaffolds that enhance creative thinking by activating relevant schema networks. When teachers possess deep familiarity with traditional knowledge such as folklore, rituals, or indigenous concepts, they are able to generate multiple pedagogical applications across diverse domains (Annisha, 2024). For instance, a teacher drawing on the Sangkuriang narrative can use it not only for character education but also for geography lessons about Mount Tangkuban Perahu and artistic

expression through cultural storytelling. This kind of cultural cognitive flexibility enables the fluid movement between knowledge domains and enriches the repertoire of teaching strategies. Empirical support for this cognitive mechanism is evident in correlational findings: teachers in the top quartile of traditional knowledge utilization generated an average of 4.7 different applications for a single cultural element, while those in the lowest quartile averaged only 2.1 ($p < 0.001$). Such differences highlight how culturally rooted knowledge can serve as a generative foundation for pedagogical creativity.

From a motivational perspective, the alignment between personal cultural identity and professional teaching practice appears to foster intrinsic motivation among teachers. Drawing from Self-Determination Theory, this motivational dynamic is reinforced by the satisfaction of psychological needs including autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Teachers who are empowered to integrate their own cultural heritage into teaching often feel a strong sense of personal meaning and ownership over their work. As one teacher reflected, “When I teach using Sundanese values, I feel like I’m sharing part of myself with the children. It’s not just a job, I’m preserving our culture for the next generation.” This sense of identity congruence leads to increased persistence, creative experimentation, and emotional investment in pedagogical innovation. In this way, local wisdom acts not merely as content but as a source of personal motivation that energizes and sustains creative efforts (Rummar, 2022).

Finally, the role of social dynamics cannot be overlooked. Teachers who embed local wisdom in their teaching often receive informal yet powerful reinforcement from their surrounding communities (Marlinawati et al., 2024; Rabbani et al., 2023). Parents, students, and local leaders recognize and appreciate the cultural relevance of such practices, creating a validation loop that encourages further innovation (Hermawan et al., 2023). This kind of community-based reinforcement operates independently of formal institutional mechanisms and can even compensate for limited organizational support. Data from community engagement metrics indicate that teachers who report high levels of local wisdom integration are 3.2 times more likely to receive positive parent feedback than their peers with lower levels of integration ($p < 0.01$). Moreover, these teachers are significantly more involved in community cultural events (78% compared to 34%), providing them with additional exposure, ideas, and affirmation. Such external validation enhances teachers’ sense of purpose and reinforces the value of culturally creative teaching approaches (Yulianti et al., 2022).

These interrelated mechanisms involving cognitive scaffolding, motivational alignment, and social validation help explain why local wisdom has a significant and sustained impact on teacher creativity. Rather than functioning through a single causal pathway, the effect is better understood as a multidimensional process embedded in the cognitive structures, identity motivations, and community relationships that shape pedagogical innovation in culturally rich contexts.

Contextual Factors and Boundary Conditions

The effectiveness of both local wisdom and organizational support varies significantly based on multiple contextual factors that create important boundary conditions for this study’s findings. School resource levels emerged as a fundamental moderating variable, with resource-rich schools ($n = 52$, characterized by adequate facilities, materials, and staff) showing stronger relationships between all variables compared to their resource-constrained counterparts. In well-resourced contexts, the local wisdom \rightarrow creativity correlation reached $r = 0.78$, compared to $r = 0.61$ in resource-constrained schools ($n = 108$), suggesting that basic material conditions create enabling environments for cultural-creative expression. Resource constraints particularly affected arts integration and collaborative practices, with teachers in under-

resourced schools expressing frustration: "We want to use traditional music, but we don't have instruments. We want to collaborate, but we're always busy with basic survival issues." This highlights the critical importance of addressing fundamental resource needs before expecting sophisticated creative practices to flourish.

Principal cultural knowledge emerged as another critical moderating factor that significantly influenced implementation outcomes. Schools led by principals with strong Sundanese cultural backgrounds ($n = 41$) demonstrated significantly higher creativity outcomes ($M = 4.02$) compared to those with culturally-distant leadership ($M = 3.54, p < 0.01$). Culturally-competent principals provided more meaningful support for local wisdom integration and could better evaluate innovative cultural teaching practices, creating school cultures that valued and rewarded creativity rooted in local traditions. Conversely, principals lacking cultural knowledge sometimes inadvertently discouraged creative practices through inappropriate evaluation criteria or resource allocation decisions that failed to recognize the value of culturally-grounded pedagogical innovations. This finding emphasizes the importance of incorporating cultural competency components into educational leadership development programs, particularly in culturally rich regions like West Java.

Teacher experience levels revealed complex interactions with both local wisdom integration and creativity development that suggest the need for differentiated approaches (Setyaningsih, 2020). Mid-career teachers (5-15 years' experience, $n = 89$) showed optimal creativity levels, successfully combining cultural knowledge depth with pedagogical skill sophistication. Novice teachers (< 5 years, $n = 34$) demonstrated high enthusiasm but limited cultural knowledge, often requiring guidance in identifying appropriate local wisdom elements and integrating them meaningfully into curricula. Veteran teachers (> 15 years, $n = 37$) possessed extensive cultural knowledge accumulated through years of community engagement but sometimes showed reduced pedagogical innovation, occasionally relying on established patterns rather than experimenting with new approaches. This experience-based pattern suggests the need for carefully differentiated professional development approaches: cultural education and socialization programs for novices to build foundational knowledge, innovation encouragement and contemporary pedagogical training for veterans to refresh practices, and advanced integration training for mid-career teachers to maximize their simultaneous strengths in cultural depth and pedagogical sophistication. Together, these contextual factors such as resource availability, leadership cultural competency, and teacher experience, create important boundary conditions that must be considered when interpreting this study's findings and planning implementation strategies in diverse educational settings.

Implementation Guidelines: From Analysis to Action

Translating the findings from this SITOREM analysis into practical educational improvements requires a systematic, phased approach that addresses both immediate opportunities and long-term systemic changes. The implementation framework is organized into three interconnected tiers that build progressively from foundational institutional structures through professional development to sustained quality enhancement, with each tier designed to create conditions for the subsequent phase while generating immediate benefits for teachers and students.

The first tier focuses on institutional foundation building through priority actions implementable within the initial 0-6 months. Schools should establish Cultural Innovation Committees with representation from teachers, parents, and community cultural leaders to ensure diverse perspectives guide implementation decisions and maintain cultural authenticity. Simultaneously, administrators must develop recognition systems with specific criteria for cultural-creative teaching practices, including peer nomination processes and regular

appreciation ceremonies that publicly validate teachers' innovative efforts. Creating collaborative spaces requires restructuring meeting schedules to include monthly cultural pedagogy sharing sessions where teachers can exchange successful practices, troubleshoot challenges, and build collective expertise. Resource mobilization through partnerships with local cultural organizations and government cultural agencies addresses the material constraints identified in the boundary conditions analysis, ensuring teachers have access to traditional instruments, materials, and cultural expertise necessary for meaningful integration.

The second tier emphasizes professional development implementation through medium-term actions spanning 6-18 months. Arts integration training programs should partner with local artists and cultural practitioners to build teacher confidence in traditional Sundanese arts, moving beyond theoretical knowledge to hands-on skill development in music, dance, storytelling, and craft traditions. Cultural knowledge enhancement workshops covering local history, folklore, traditional practices, and their educational applications provide the deep cultural understanding necessary for authentic integration rather than superficial cultural references. Peer mentorship networks pairing culturally-expert teachers with those seeking to develop integration skills leverage existing strengths within the teaching community while building collegial relationships that support ongoing learning. Action research projects supporting teachers in documenting and refining their cultural-creative practices create opportunities for systematic reflection, evidence generation, and contribution to the broader knowledge base on cultural education in ECE contexts.

The third tier addresses systemic quality enhancement through long-term actions extending beyond 18 months that institutionalize improvements and ensure sustainability. Curriculum integration guidelines provide structured frameworks for local wisdom incorporation across ECE learning areas, helping teachers identify developmentally appropriate cultural content and pedagogical approaches for different age groups and learning objectives. Community partnership formalization establishes regular programs with cultural institutions, traditional craftspeople, and community elders, creating stable relationships that transcend individual teacher initiatives and become embedded in school operations. Impact monitoring systems tracking both student outcomes and teacher creativity development through culturally-responsive assessment tools generate evidence of program effectiveness while identifying areas needing adjustment. Policy advocacy promoting district and regional policies supporting cultural education in ECE settings creates supportive policy environments that provide resources, recognition, and legitimacy for cultural-creative teaching practices. Each implementation tier includes specific success metrics such as committee meeting frequency and participation rates in Tier 1, percentage of teachers completing training programs and number of documented action research projects in Tier 2, and curriculum adoption rates and student outcome improvements in Tier 3, along with resource requirements ranging from modest administrative time and meeting space in early phases to dedicated professional development budgets and assessment system development in later stages, and adaptation strategies for varying school contexts that acknowledge the resource variations and leadership competency differences identified in the boundary conditions analysis, ensuring that SITOREM findings translate into sustainable educational improvements accessible to diverse school settings regardless of initial capacity levels.

Conclusion

This study successfully developed a model explaining the relationship between local wisdom, organizational support, and ECE teacher creativity in Tasikmalaya. Path analysis revealed that local wisdom significantly influences teacher creativity both directly ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$) and

indirectly through organizational support ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.01$), with a total effect of $\beta = 0.75$. Organizational support also demonstrated a substantial direct effect ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$), particularly through leadership encouragement, professional development programs, and collaborative environments. The SITOREM analysis identified seven high-performing indicators to maintain and strengthen, including integration of traditional games ($M = 4.12$), application of silih asah values ($M = 3.97$), and principal encouragement for innovation ($M = 3.91$). Conversely, twelve indicators require priority improvement, with the three most critical being: use of local arts as learning media ($\beta = 0.44$, $M = 2.31$), collaborative opportunities in designing culture-based learning ($\beta = 0.41$, $M = 2.45$), and incentive systems for teacher innovation ($\beta = 0.39$, $M = 2.18$). These findings underscore that creativity enhancement requires both cultural-pedagogical strengthening and systematic organizational reform, with implementation strategies differentiated according to school resource levels, principal cultural competency, and teacher experience.

Based on these findings, several strategic recommendations are proposed. First, school leaders should implement the three-tier improvement framework: establishing Cultural Innovation Committees and recognition systems (0-6 months), conducting arts integration training and peer mentorship programs (6-18 months), and developing curriculum integration guidelines with formalized community partnerships (beyond 18 months). Second, education offices should design contextual professional development programs prioritizing the twelve SITOREM priority indicators, with specific interventions addressing identified barriers including confidence deficits in traditional arts (67% of teachers), resource limitations, and time constraints. Programs should be differentiated for novice teachers requiring cultural knowledge building, mid-career teachers needing advanced integration training, and veteran teachers benefiting from pedagogical innovation refreshers. Third, resource mobilization through partnerships with local cultural organizations must address material constraints, particularly for under-resourced schools where the local wisdom-creativity correlation ($r = 0.61$) is weaker than in well-resourced contexts ($r = 0.78$). Fourth, future research should examine moderating effects of specific contextual factors identified in this study, explore longitudinal impacts of cultural-creative pedagogy on child development outcomes, and test model generalizability across different cultural regions and educational levels. Through these empirically grounded strategies, the ECE ecosystem can progress toward enhanced teacher quality and improved learning outcomes rooted in cultural identity and institutional support.

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