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Revitalizing Local Education Policy to Strengthen Teacher and Student Competence in an Indonesian Primary School

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Abstract

This qualitative case study examines how local education policy can be revitalized to strengthen teacher and student competence at SDN Jambu 2 Burneh, Bangkalan, Indonesia. The study responds to policy distortion between national and local regulations, particularly in the use of teachers' effective working time, school calendar decisions, and the declining implementation of Madura language as local content. Data were generated through observation, in-depth interviews with school and policy actors, and document analysis. Interactive qualitative analysis was used to reduce, display, and verify the data through source and technique triangulation. The findings show that policy misalignment reduces instructional continuity, shifts teacher work toward administrative routines, interrupts student learning rhythm, and weakens the practical relevance of local-content learning.

The article proposes a school-centered revitalization model that positions the school not merely as a policy implementer but also as a policy information hub, feedback provider, and contextual decision-maker. This model integrates policy synchronization, teacher professional agency, instructional continuity, local-cultural revitalization, and collaborative governance. The study contributes to international discussions on decentralization, school-based management, and culturally responsive education by demonstrating how local policy coherence can improve educational quality in primary schools.

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Introduction

Education decentralization gives local governments an important role in translating national education priorities into policies that fit local needs. In practice, however, local policy may create implementation gaps when it is not synchronized with national regulations or with school-level realities. At the primary-school level, such gaps are not merely administrative; they influence teachers' effective working time, student learning continuity, curriculum implementation, and the quality of teacher-student interaction ^[1, 2].

SDN Jambu 2 Burneh, Bangkalan, provides an important case for understanding this issue. The school operates in a semi-rural community where local social and cultural dynamics shape educational practice. Two concerns are particularly visible. First, differences between local calendar decisions and the nationally regulated teacher workload create situations in which teachers must be present at school while students are not engaged in classroom learning. Second, the implementation of Madura language as local content has weakened because students increasingly use Indonesian in daily communication at school and at home.

These challenges point to the need for revitalizing local education policy. Revitalization in this study refers to a systematic effort to realign regulations, strengthen school participation, and reconnect policy implementation with students' learning needs and local cultural identity ^[3, 4]. Rather than positioning schools as passive recipients of policy, the study argues that schools should become policy information hubs that identify implementation problems, provide feedback to local authorities, and design contextual strategies to improve educational outcomes ^[5, 6].

The novelty of this article lies in its school-centered policy revitalization framework. Previous discussions of educational decentralization often emphasize government authority, managerial reform, or school compliance. This study shifts the focus to the school as an active actor that interprets, evaluates, and improves local education policy based on daily evidence from teachers and students. The study therefore asks: (1) How does local education policy misalignment affect teacher and student competence at SDN Jambu 2 Burneh? (2) How is the implementation of Madura language local content challenged in the school context? and (3) What revitalization model can support more responsive and culturally grounded policy implementation?

Literature Review

Decentralized education policy and school-based management

Decentralized education policy is intended to make educational governance more responsive to local contexts. In Indonesia, the principle of local authority in education is connected to the wider national commitment to improve access, relevance, and quality [7, 8]. However, decentralization may produce policy distortion when coordination among levels of government is weak. School-based management theory emphasizes that schools should be given sufficient authority to plan, implement, evaluate, and improve educational programs according to their own needs while remaining accountable to national standards [9, 10].

Teacher competence, instructional time, and student learning

Teacher competence is strengthened not only through professional development but also through meaningful instructional practice. When teachers' working time is dominated by administrative routines without adequate

student interaction, the pedagogical function of teaching becomes less effective. Student competence also depends on learning continuity [11, 12, 12]. Disrupted schedules, repeated learning pauses, and irregular classroom interaction may reduce motivation, weaken retention, and make curriculum targets more difficult to achieve [13]–[15].

Local-content curriculum and cultural sustainability

Local-content curriculum is a strategic instrument for preserving language, culture, and regional identity [16]. In the context of Bangkalan, Madura language is not simply a subject but also a cultural resource that links students to community values. The weakening of Madura language use among students suggests that local-content learning requires more than formal curriculum inclusion. It needs attractive pedagogy, family and community support, and school-level cultural routines that make the language meaningful in daily life.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative case-study design. The site was SDN Jambu 2 Burneh, Bangkalan Regency, East Java, Indonesia. The school was selected because it reflects a local policy implementation context in which teacher workload, school calendar practices, and local-content curriculum intersect with everyday learning conditions.

The participants involved school-level and policy-related actors, including the principal, teachers, students, and local education stakeholders. Data were collected through observation of school activities, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Documents included school calendars, teacher schedules, learning plans, curriculum documents, and local education policy materials. The design of the study is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Research design and data sources.

Component	Details
Design	Descriptive qualitative case study at SDN Jambu 2 Burneh, Bangkalan.
Participants	Principal, teachers, students, and local education stakeholders.
Data collection	Observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis of calendars, schedules, lesson plans, curriculum materials, and local policy documents.
Validation	Source and technique triangulation to compare observation, interview, and document evidence.
Analysis	Interactive qualitative analysis: data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification.

Data analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The researcher first selected data relevant to policy distortion, instructional effectiveness, teacher competence, student competence, and Madura language learning. The data were then organized into thematic displays and verified through triangulation. The analysis emphasized meaning, pattern, and relationship rather than statistical generalization.

Results

Policy distortion between central and local regulations

The first major finding is the presence of policy distortion between central and local regulations. The distortion was most visible in the management of teachers' effective working time and local calendar decisions. Teachers were required to fulfill administrative duties and be present at school, while students were sometimes absent due to local holiday arrangements. This created a mismatch between teacher presence and student learning activity. The school

therefore experienced inefficient use of instructional resources.

The impact was not limited to scheduling. Teachers had to revise lesson plans, postpone learning materials, and adjust evaluation activities. Although administrative work remained important, it could not fully replace teachers' core role as facilitators of classroom learning. Students also experienced fragmented learning rhythms, making it more difficult to maintain academic discipline and continuity.

Ineffective teacher-student interaction and learning continuity

The second finding concerns instructional effectiveness. Teacher-student interaction was reduced when learning schedules were interrupted. In an ideal learning environment, interaction enables feedback, motivation, clarification, formative assessment, and social-emotional support. When students were absent while teachers remained bound to administrative obligations, the educational relationship

became less productive. This condition weakened both teacher agency and student competence development. Teachers reported that materials had to be delivered in a compressed time frame after interruptions. This practice reduced the depth of learning because lessons became more

focused on completing curriculum targets than on ensuring understanding. The condition also made classroom assessment less optimal, as teachers had limited time to observe students' learning progress continuously.

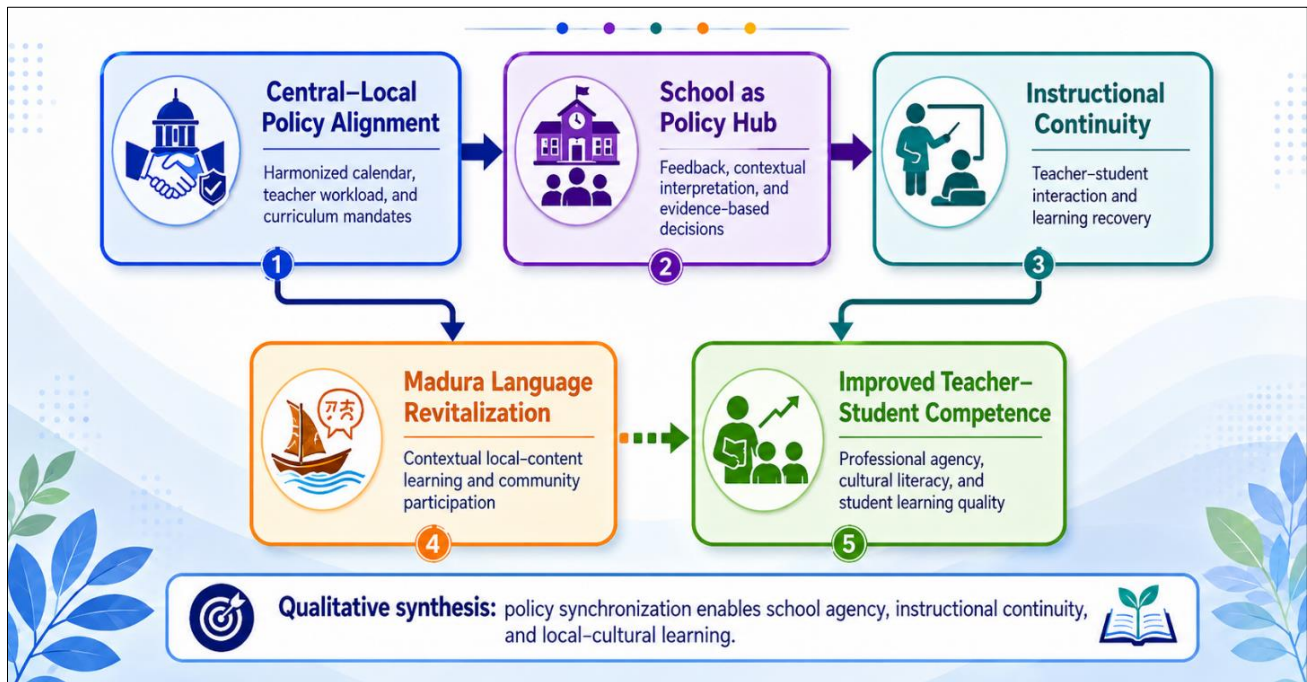


Fig 1: Conceptual framework of local education policy revitalization.

Declining implementation of Madura language local content

The third finding shows that the implementation of Madura language as local content has declined. Students increasingly use Indonesian as their dominant language in daily communication, both in school and at home. This shift reduces students' familiarity with Madura vocabulary, expressions, and cultural meanings. As a result, Madura language learning is often perceived as less relevant than other subjects.

The challenge is pedagogical as well as cultural. Conventional teaching methods and limited learning media make local-content learning less attractive to students. The findings suggest that local language revitalization requires interactive learning, cultural projects, storytelling, school-

based language routines, and collaboration with families and the community. Local-content curriculum should therefore be treated as a living cultural practice, not merely an administrative subject.

School as a policy information hub

The fourth finding reveals that the strategic role of the school in policy feedback remains underdeveloped. The school tends to implement local policy without sufficient space to participate in policy formulation or evaluation. Teachers and the principal are the actors who understand implementation barriers most directly, yet their feedback is not always systematically incorporated into local decision-making. This weakens policy responsiveness and reduces the possibility of contextual improvement.

Table 2: Thematic matrix of findings and implications.

Theme	Key finding and implication
Policy misalignment	Central-local calendar and workload differences reduce instructional efficiency; synchronization is required.
Administrative dominance	Teachers remain active but not always pedagogically engaged; administrative duties should support classroom learning.
Learning interruption	Lesson plans and assessment schedules are adjusted repeatedly; learning recovery time is needed.
Madura language decline	Students rarely use Madura in daily interaction; contextual and community-based learning should be strengthened.
Limited school voice	School feedback is not routinely used in policy evaluation; formal feedback forums are needed.

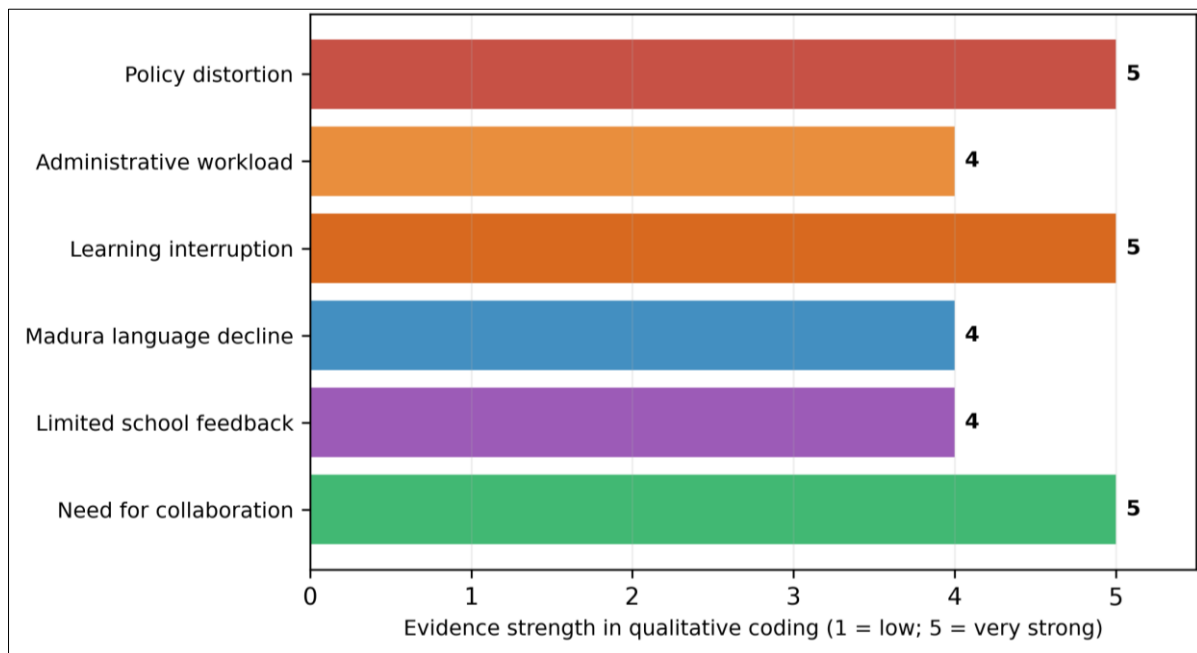


Fig 2: Thematic evidence map from qualitative data synthesis.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that local education policy revitalization should begin with policy coherence. Policy coherence means that local regulations, school calendars, teacher workload rules, and curriculum decisions should support the same educational goals. In the case of SDN Jambu 2 Burneh, misalignment created a practical gap: teachers fulfilled formal obligations, but students did not always receive continuous learning opportunities. This gap shows that policy success cannot be evaluated only through administrative compliance; it must also be evaluated through instructional effectiveness and student learning experiences [17, 18].

The findings also extend the discussion of school-based management. A school-based approach should not be limited to internal school management. It should include the school's capacity to send evidence-based feedback to local authorities. The principal and teachers are not only implementers; they are knowledge holders who understand whether a policy supports or disrupts learning. Therefore, local education governance should create formal mechanisms for schools to report implementation barriers, propose calendar adjustments, and recommend curriculum innovations. Another important implication concerns teacher competence.

Teacher professionalism is weakened when teachers spend significant time in non-instructional routines due to schedule misalignment. Competence develops through pedagogical practice, reflection, feedback, and sustained interaction with students. Local policy should therefore protect meaningful instructional time and ensure that administrative requirements remain supportive rather than dominant [19].

The study also shows that student competence is inseparable from cultural learning. Madura language local content has the potential to strengthen students' identity, communication skills, and cultural awareness. However, the declining use of Madura among students requires schools to redesign learning strategies. Project-based local language learning, cultural storytelling, classroom language days, digital vocabulary media, and parent-community involvement can make Madura language more attractive and meaningful.

Figure 1 and Table 2 together support a revitalization model consisting of five connected elements: policy synchronization, school feedback, instructional continuity, local-cultural revitalization, and improved competencies. The model is relevant beyond the case school because many decentralized education systems face similar tensions between formal policy, school implementation, and local cultural relevance.

Table 3: Proposed policy revitalization model for SDN Jambu 2 Burneh.

Strategic area	Recommended action and expected outcome
Policy synchronization	Review school calendar and teacher workload alignment before implementation to reduce policy distortion.
School feedback system	Create regular policy-feedback forums so local decisions are based on school evidence.
Teacher competence	Use non-teaching days for professional learning, lesson redesign, and peer reflection.
Student learning continuity	Plan recovery lessons and flexible assessment after interrupted schedules.
Madura language revitalization	Develop project-based, digital, and community-supported local-content learning.

Conclusion

This study concludes that revitalizing local education policy is essential for strengthening teacher and student competence at SDN Jambu 2 Burneh. Policy distortion between central and local regulations affects the use of teachers' effective working time, reduces instructional continuity, and weakens the quality of teacher-student interaction. The decline of

Madura language use among students also shows that local-content curriculum requires more innovative and culturally grounded implementation.

The article proposes a school-centered revitalization model that positions the school as a policy information hub, feedback provider, and contextual implementer. The model emphasizes policy synchronization, teacher professional

agency, learning continuity, local-cultural revitalization, and collaborative governance. For local governments, the findings highlight the need to involve schools more actively in policy formulation and evaluation. For schools, the findings encourage stronger internal reflection, teacher collaboration, and creative local-content learning. Future research may test this model across multiple schools and include broader participant groups to strengthen transferability.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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