



## Character Education Based on Local Wisdom: A Study of the Sasak Tribe Community in Lombok

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the forms of character education based on the local wisdom of the Sasak community and their role in character formation in everyday life. The research used a qualitative, ethnographic design and was conducted in Sade Village, Rembitan, and Segenter, all of which are Sasak customary communities. The data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and were then analyzed using an interactive model. Data validity was examined through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. The study's results show that character education in the Sasak community is internalized through four main domains. First, religious values, manifested through Quran recitation activities, village religious gatherings, and the tradition of ngaji menaq, serve as the foundation for character formation derived from the local wisdom of the Sasak community. Second, local wisdom instills values of prudence, honesty, and moral responsibility. Third, the practice of *gotong royong* (*besiru*, *begawe*, *mandek bale*) strengthens prosocial character, which is perceived as good character in social relations. Fourth, *Tuan Guru* and traditional leaders play a central role in character education through role modeling, advice, and the transmission of *adat-pamali* values integrated with Islamic sharia. The research findings affirm that character education in the Sasak community occurs through concrete, continuous cultural processes. Overall, this study shows that Sasak local wisdom makes a strategic contribution to the development of religious, ethical, and prosocial character aligned with its principles on the island of Lombok.

**Keywords:** local wisdom, character education, Sasak culture

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### INTRODUCTION

Character education is one of the important pillars of human resource development, particularly in the era of globalization, characterized by the rapid flow of information, the penetration of foreign cultures, and changes in societal lifestyles. In Indonesia, the strengthening of character education has become a national priority agenda as stipulated in the Strengthening of Character Education (*Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter*; PPK) through Indonesian Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017, which emphasizes religious, nationalist, independent, *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), and integrity values as the foundation for shaping the character of the nation's younger generation [1]. Nevertheless, implementing character education requires a contextual approach that aligns with local culture; thus, these values can be accepted, practiced, and passed down organically from one generation to the next.

Local wisdom is a highly promising source of values for strengthening character education because it emerges from collective societal experiences, is tested over time, and lives in everyday cultural practices. Local wisdom not only reflects cultural identity but also serves as a moral, social, and spiritual guide in shaping community behavior [2]. In the context of Lombok society, the Sasak community has several values and traditions that have long served as life guidelines, such as *pewaesan* (ethics and politeness), *besiru* (mutual cooperation), *merariq* (marriage custom), *selametan* (socio-spiritual ritual), and *begibung* (togetherness). These values essentially reflect the collective understanding of the Sasak community regarding a harmonious, ethical, and civilized way of life [3].

The Sasak community consists of diverse backgrounds and is predominantly Muslim, and local wisdom has long served as a medium for the internalization of Islamic values in social behavior, including social interactions, customs, and religious

rituals. Thus, the study of character education based on the local wisdom of the Sasak community becomes relevant, both academically and practically, to understand how traditional values can contribute to character formation grounded in Islamic teachings and universal human values.

Several previous studies indicate that local wisdom plays a strategic role in character education; however, still few studies that specifically examine how the Sasak community integrates its cultural values into everyday character education practices. Most studies remain focused on particular traditions, cultural analyses, or social practices, rather than addressing character education as an integral aspect [4]. Therefore, this research is important for addressing this gap by exploring in depth how values, traditions, and norms within Sasak culture serve as sources of character education relevant to modern society's needs.

This study aims to analyze the forms of character education based on the local wisdom of the Sasak community, as well as how these values shape civilized and moral behavior through the teachings and advice of local wisdom in everyday life. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of locally culture-based character education models in Indonesia, while simultaneously strengthening efforts to preserve local wisdom as a cultural heritage with educational value.

## RESEARCH METHODS

### 1. Type and Research Approach

This study used a qualitative approach with an ethnographic research design to explore in depth the practices of character education based on local wisdom within the Sasak community. The ethnographic approach allows researchers to understand a community's patterns of behavior, values, language, and cultural practices by directly participating in its everyday activities. As explained by Creswell [6], ethnography aims to describe and interpret the cultural patterns of a group; meanwhile, ethnography helps researchers capture the meanings of actions and social interactions from the perspective of the community being studied [7].

### 2. Research Location

This study was conducted in several Sasak tribe customary villages on the island of Lombok: Sade Village and Rembitan Village in Central Lombok, and Segenter Village in North Lombok. These locations were selected purposively based on the consideration that all three villages continue to preserve customary traditions and cultural practices that embody character education values. The selection of these locations aims to provide a comprehensive contextual depiction of the implementation of local wisdom as the basis of character education within the Sasak community.

### 3. Research Subjects and Informants

The research subjects included members of the Sasak customary community who are directly involved in preserving and transmitting local

cultural values. The research informants were selected through purposive sampling based on individuals with in-depth knowledge of customs, moral values, and traditions related to character education. These informants included traditional leaders, religious leaders (*Tuan Guru*), parents, teachers or local educators, and youth actively involved in customary activities. This selection aligns with Sugiyono's [8] view that purposive sampling is used because the selected informants are considered to have the most comprehensive understanding of the required information.

### 4. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Participant observation was used to directly observe character education practices in cultural activities, including traditional ceremonies, *gotong royong*, and everyday social interactions, following the stages of descriptive, focused, and selective observation as proposed by [7]. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore informants' experiences, interpretations, and perspectives on local wisdom values embedded in the life of the Sasak community; these interviews were flexible and adjusted to field dynamics. Meanwhile, the documentation technique was used to collect visual and textual data, including photographs of customary activities, field notes, village archives, and customary manuscripts relevant to character education.

### 5. Research Instruments

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher, who served as a human instrument, as the researcher was directly involved in designing, collecting, interpreting, and analyzing qualitative data. The researcher also adapted to field conditions to capture accurate and meaningful information. In addition, supporting instruments, such as observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and field notes, were used to support the data collection process. This aligns with [9], which states that the researcher is the key instrument in qualitative research.

### 6. Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using an interactive analysis model that includes three main stages [10]. First, data condensation was carried out by selecting, simplifying, and organizing the data to focus on the values and practices of character education. Second, data display was conducted by organizing narrative descriptions, tables, and thematic categories to interpret the Sasak cultural patterns systematically. Third, conclusion drawing or verification was conducted by interpreting the data and linking community cultural practices with emerging concepts of character education.

### 7. Data Trustworthiness

Data trustworthiness was examined through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was

conducted by comparing information obtained from traditional leaders, religious leaders, parents, teachers, and youth. Technique triangulation was carried out by contrasting data from observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure consistency. Meanwhile, member checking was conducted by seeking confirmation from informants regarding the preliminary research findings to ensure their alignment with actual field conditions. According to [11], these techniques are important for enhancing the credibility of findings in qualitative research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Internalization of Religious Values in Character Education

Ethnographic observation results indicate that religious values constitute the primary foundation for character formation within the Sasak community. These values are practiced through religious activities integrated into everyday life, such as Quran recitation activities, village religious gatherings, and the tradition of *ngaji menaq* (night recitation) guided by *Tuan Guru*. These activities are not merely processes of religious learning but also serve as a means of character formation, including discipline, politeness, and responsibility. Informants from the parent group revealed that character education begins at home through habits such as consuming food believed to be *halalan toyyiban*, maintaining purity of heart and speech, and instilling a fear of committing improper actions in both social and economic contexts.

The research findings indicate that religious values serve as the primary foundation of the Sasak community's wisdom. This aligns with the view that character education in religious communities occurs through habituation, role modeling, and the internalization of values from an early age [12]. Traditions such as *ngaji menaq* and communal activities with *Tuan Guru* represent forms of intergenerational cultural transmission. From an ethnographic perspective, this pattern illustrates how local wisdom in shaping good character is taught within Sasak traditions on the island of Lombok, emphasizing the integration of belief and action in everyday life [13]. Thus, the internalization of religious values in the Sasak community provides a solid foundation for the formation of a clean, honest, and morally compliant character, while also demonstrating that religion-based character education remains relevant in strengthening the community's cultural and spiritual identity.

### 2. The Role of Local Wisdom in Shaping Disciplined and Compliant Character Patterns

The research findings indicate that local wisdom plays an important role in shaping individual character patterns that are disciplined, compliant with norms, and that uphold harmonious social life. The values of local wisdom transmitted intergenerationally, such as customary rules, taboos,

traditions of *gotong royong*, and social sanction systems, serve as behavioral guidelines that direct individuals to act in an orderly, responsible, and respectful manner in accordance with the community's prevailing rules. The internalization of these values occurs through socialization within the family and the community, so that discipline and compliance are not perceived as external coercion but rather as moral awareness inherent in the individual.

This study aligns with Koentjaraningrat's findings, who states that cultural value systems function as a reference framework for social behavior, including shaping compliance with norms and the order of collective life. A study by Maknun and Annisa [12] also emphasizes that local wisdom embodies strong values of character education, such as discipline, responsibility, solidarity, and respect for customary rules. These values have been proven to shape individuals who are compliant and possess high self-control, as customary sanctions are not only material but also moral and social. The results of this study support the findings of [13], which emphasize that education based on local culture is effective in building learners' ethical and socially oriented character [14].

In the context of community life, local wisdom serves as a mechanism for conflict prevention, as individuals are taught to prioritize collective interests, maintain harmony, and resolve problems through deliberation. This is also reinforced by the study of Mulianah [15], which shows that local symbols, rituals, and traditions play an important role in creating social order and community cohesion. Thus, the results of this study indicate that local wisdom is not merely a cultural heritage, but an effective social instrument in shaping individuals who are disciplined, compliant with norms, and able to live harmoniously within diversity. The integration of local wisdom values into social life and formal education becomes an important strategy for strengthening sustainable character formation amid the challenges of modernization and globalization.

### 3. Gotong Royong as a Means of Shaping Social Relations of Hard Work and Sincere Work

*Gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) is one form of local wisdom that plays a strategic role in shaping harmonious social relations and instilling the values of hard work and sincere work in community life. Through the practice of *gotong royong*, individuals are trained to work together voluntarily without expecting personal gain, thereby making the value of sincerity part of society's collective awareness. In addition, active involvement in collective work requires discipline, responsibility, and earnestness, which reflect a strong work ethic. A study by Sudrajat et al. [16] states that *gotong royong* functions as a social institution that strengthens solidarity and a sense of social responsibility among community members. In line with this, Rozi and Yenuri [17] emphasize that

*gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) as a form of local wisdom plays an important role in character formation, particularly in fostering attitudes of care, sincerity, and commitment to collective interests. Furthermore, Sahira's study [13], through the concept of social capital, explains that collective activities based on shared values, such as *gotong royong*, can increase social trust and strengthen

social networks, which ultimately create a harmonious, productive society with high social resilience. Thus, *gotong royong* functions not only as a mechanism for collective work, but also as a means of character development and the strengthening of sustainable social relations. Learning together with tourists about the local wisdom of the Sasak community is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Learning Together with Tourists

The practice of *gotong royong* in Sasak culture represents the values of *gotong royong* in the social dimension, namely sincerity, honesty, and responsibility toward others. Theoretically, these values fall within the prosocial character domain, which refers to the tendency to perform moral actions that benefit others [16]. The habit of working together in activities such as *begawe* or *besiru* serves as an informal way for the community to learn that individuals should behave honestly, cohesively, and fairly. *Gotong royong* is the core of the Indonesian social system, embodying collective moral values [17]. The research findings reinforce this notion, showing that the Sasak community perceives honesty as an act of worship.

#### 4. Informal Education System Based on *Tuan Guru* and Traditional Leaders

A critical finding of this study is the strong role of *Tuan Guru* (religious leaders) and traditional leaders in transmitting character values to the younger generation. Informal education is carried out through sermons, Quranic guidance, and moral role modeling in everyday life. The roles of *Tuan Guru* and traditional leaders are influential in cultivating good and courteous character. In educational anthropology, this is referred to as community-based education, namely, education that takes place within a local social system through authoritative figures [18]. *Tuan Guru* serves as a source of moral and spiritual legitimacy, while traditional leaders preserve cultural norms such as *pamali*. Their collaboration forms a distinctive educational pattern, namely the integration of religious values and customary norms (*adat bersendikan syariat*). This principle is consistent with the findings of Iswatiningsih [19], which state that effective character education must be relevant to

local culture so that the values instilled are more easily accepted by the community.

#### 5. Implementation of Local Wisdom in Shaping Honest and Mutually Respectful Character in Social Life

The implementation of local wisdom in social life plays an important role in shaping honest character and mutual respect among community members. The value of honesty is generally internalized through customary norms, ancestral advice, and unwritten rules that regulate social behavior, such as the obligation to speak truthfully, the prohibition against infringing on others' rights, and social sanctions for violating these norms. In many local communities in Indonesia, honesty is not only understood as an individual moral value but also as the foundation of social harmony. Therefore, cultural value systems function as behavioral guidelines that internalize honesty and social responsibility from an early age [20].

In addition to honesty, attitudes of mutual respect are formed through customary practices such as deliberation, the use of polite language, proper etiquette toward elders, and respect for differences in social roles. These practices train individuals to exercise self-control, respect the opinions of others, and maintain harmonious social relationships. Study [16] shows that local wisdom passed down intergenerationally plays an effective role in building mutual respect, because its values are practiced concretely in everyday life. Similar findings were also reported by [20], which emphasizes that education based on local culture can shape learners' personalities to be honest, tolerant, and possess high social ethics. Thus, the implementation of local wisdom not only preserves culture but also serves as an effective social instrument in building a community characterized

by integrity and a strong commitment to the values of respect for life. These findings are consistent with Islamic business ethics, which emphasize the values of *amanah* (trustworthiness) and *sidq* (honesty) [20]. Traders who avoid fraudulent practices and weavers who work on the principles of honesty show that these values are upheld by the Sasak

community [21]. In the Sasak society, these norms are integrated with religious values; thus, economic activities become part of character education. Discussions with tourists at the *musalla* regarding local wisdom for shaping an honest, mutually respectful character are shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Discussion on Sasak Cultural Local Wisdom

#### 6. Harmony between Customary Law and Religion as the Main Component of Character Education

Ethnographic findings indicate harmony between religious teachings and Sasak customary law (*adat bersendikan syariat*). Customary practices such as *roah* (communal thanksgiving ritual), *maulid adat* (customary celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday), and *ngurisang* (traditional hair-cutting ritual for children) contain ritual elements that integrate religious norms and cultural values. In these various rituals, the community not only shows loyalty to customary traditions but also positions religious teachings as a reinforcement of moral values and positive character formation. This condition allows character education to proceed

naturally and sustainably through lived experiences, rather than through formal instruction [19]. The harmony between custom and religion becomes a key factor in the sustainability of practices within the Sasak community. The alignment between customary law and religion (*adat bersendikan syariat, syariat bersendikan Kitabullah*) constitutes an important finding of this study. This harmony indicates that the identity of the Sasak community is shaped through the integration of cultural values and spiritual values. In cultural sustainability theory, traditions that are aligned with religious values tend to endure and be transmitted across generations [21], [22].



**Figure 3.** Takbiran Festival Activities

Rituals such as *roah*, *maulid adat*, the *takbiran* festival (collective chanting of *takbir* to celebrate Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha), and *ngurisang* illustrate how the Sasak community integrates Islamic teachings with long-established customary structures. This integration reinforces the understanding that good attitudes and moral conduct are part of personal identity rather than external obligations.

Theoretically, this condition indicates that character education is most effective when moral values become part of the cultural meaning system [22].

#### CONCLUSION

This study shows that character education based on the local wisdom of the Sasak community has a strategic role in shaping a civilized, polite, and

responsible lifestyle in a holistic manner, encompassing religious, social, and ethical aspects. Religious values instilled through Quran recitation traditions, the role of *Tuan Guru*, and everyday religious practices serve as the primary foundation for the internalization of character traits such as discipline, honesty, and responsibility. The research findings also show that character education does not occur only within the formal domain but is strongly integrated into the community's socio-cultural system through the role modeling of traditional and religious leaders and through community interactions. The practices of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and customary ceremonies play an important role in instilling the values of honesty, justice, responsibility, and moderation. Thus, Sasak local wisdom not only reflects cultural identity but also serves as an effective source of character education, strengthening polite and responsible behavior and building a moral, integrity-driven, harmonious community. Overall, this study confirms that the integration of religious values with local traditions constitutes a character education model that is relevant to the context of modern society.

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