

Local Wisdom-Based Character Education in the Sundanese Family Environment: A Study of the Cireundeu Indigenous Community in Cimahi City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the Sundanese local wisdom values instilled within the family environment, the role of families in character education, the process of character internalization through cultural activities, and the challenges faced in its implementation within the Cireundeu Indigenous Community of Cimahi City. The study employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. Research participants consisted of traditional leaders, parents, children/adolescents, and community leaders selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Data analysis employed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that character education within the Cireundeu Indigenous Community is implemented through the internalization of Sundanese local wisdom values such as *silih asih* (mutual affection), *silih asah* (mutual learning), *silih asuh* (mutual guidance), *sabilulungan* (mutual cooperation), courtesy, responsibility, simplicity, and gratitude. Families function as educators, role models, motivators, and supervisors in shaping children's character. The internalization of character values is strengthened through children's participation in cultural and social activities within the indigenous community. The resulting character traits include politeness, responsibility, social concern, independence, simplicity, and appreciation of local culture. Despite challenges posed by digital technology, social media, and cultural globalization, the Cireundeu community has successfully maintained its cultural values through the philosophy of *Ngindung ka Waktu, Mibapa ka Jaman*, which emphasizes adapting to changing times without losing cultural identity. This study concludes that character education based on Sundanese local wisdom within the family environment serves as an effective model for shaping the character of younger generations while preserving local cultural sustainability.

Keywords: Education Character, Sundanese Local Wisdom, Cireundeu Indigenous Community, Family Education

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INTRODUCTION

Character education is one of the strategic issues in human resource development because it plays a vital role in shaping individuals who possess integrity, responsibility, and strong social awareness. Within the context of national development, education functions not only as a means of knowledge transfer but also as a process of character formation that prepares younger generations to face the social, cultural, and technological challenges of the twenty-first century.

Through its Strengthening Character Education (Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter/PPK) policy, the Government of Indonesia emphasizes that character development should be carried out collaboratively through the family, school, and community as the three complementary centers of education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017).

Nevertheless, various social phenomena indicate a growing trend of character degradation among younger generations. The increasing prevalence of bullying, declining social concern, intolerance, misuse of digital media, and weakening respect for parents and teachers suggest that the internalization of character values has not been fully effective. This condition is further reinforced by the rapid development of digital technology, which has significantly transformed patterns of social interaction. On the one hand, technology provides broad access to information; on the other hand, it also has the potential to erode local cultural values that have traditionally served as the foundation for the character formation of younger generations (Lickona, 2019; Berkowitz & Bier, 2018).

From the perspective of community education, the family is the first and most influential educational environment in shaping children's character. It serves as the primary setting where children first encounter social norms, moral values, beliefs, and cultural traditions. Through habituation, role modeling, communication, and parental supervision, families shape children's attitudes, behaviors, and social identities from an early age. In essence, family education not only transfers knowledge but also internalizes life values that form the foundation of individual character development (Aziz, 2015). Therefore, the family constitutes the primary foundation for character formation before children engage with formal educational institutions and the broader community.

One approach considered effective in character education is the integration of local wisdom values. Local wisdom refers to a system of values that has evolved from a community's historical experiences and has been passed down across generations as guidance for social life. Numerous studies have demonstrated that character education grounded in local wisdom is highly relevant because it is rooted in the learners' own cultural context, making it easier to understand, accept, and internalize (Suyitno, 2020; Hidayatullah et al., 2022). Furthermore, local wisdom serves as a cultural safeguard against the negative impacts of globalization, which may gradually weaken national cultural identity.

The Sundanese community possesses a rich cultural heritage containing moral teachings and character values that remain highly relevant to contemporary society. Values such as *silih asih* (mutual love and compassion), *silih asah* (mutual learning and knowledge sharing), and *silih asuh* (mutual guidance and care) embody principles that emphasize social harmony, empathy, cooperation, and respect for others. These values form an essential component of Sundanese cultural identity and have considerable potential as a foundation for effective character education among younger generations. However, previous studies indicate that the understanding and practice of Sundanese cultural values among young people have gradually declined due to modernization and globalization. Many young individuals are no longer familiar with or actively practice these cultural values in their daily lives, resulting in a gradual shift in their cultural identity.

Amid these circumstances, indigenous communities play an important role as social institutions that continue to preserve and transmit local cultural values to future generations. One such community is the Cireundeu Indigenous Community, located in Leuwigajah Village, South Cimahi District, Cimahi City, West Java. The Cireundeu community is widely recognized for its strong commitment to preserving Sundanese cultural values through various aspects of daily life, particularly within the family environment. Cultural transmission occurs through parental role modeling, behavioral habituation, participation in customary activities, the use of the Sundanese language, and children's involvement in diverse socio-cultural activities within the community. Consequently, the family serves as the primary medium through which cultural values are transmitted and children's character is developed.

Previous studies have consistently shown that character education based on local wisdom makes a significant contribution to students' character development. Rohman and Suryana (2024) argue that the ethnopedagogical approach effectively revitalizes local cultural values

within school-based character education. Nurjanah et al. (2023) found that local wisdom-based education strengthens the cultural identity of Indonesia's younger generation. Likewise, Miranda et al. (2025) demonstrated that storytelling rooted in local wisdom effectively fosters children's empathy, responsibility, and social awareness.

However, most previous studies have focused primarily on the implementation of character education in formal schools and early childhood education settings. Research specifically examining the internalization of Sundanese local wisdom within the family environment of indigenous communities remains relatively limited. This is noteworthy because the family represents the first and most influential non-formal educational institution in children's character development. This limitation reveals a research gap that warrants further investigation through studies focusing on local wisdom-based character education within indigenous family settings.

Based on these considerations, this study offers a novel contribution by analyzing Sundanese local wisdom-based character education from the perspective of family education within an indigenous community. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize school settings, this research positions the family and the indigenous community as an integrated ecosystem of character education embedded in everyday life. Consequently, this study is expected to enrich the field of community education while proposing a conceptual model of culturally grounded character education that is relevant to the challenges of the digital era.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze Sundanese local wisdom-based character education within the family environment of the Cireundeu Indigenous Community in Cimahi City. Specifically, the study focuses on identifying the Sundanese local wisdom values transmitted within families, examining the strategies employed by parents to internalize these values, analyzing their impact on children's character development, and exploring the challenges encountered in preserving cultural values amid ongoing social change. The novelty of this research lies in its examination of Sundanese local wisdom-based character education from the perspective of family education within the context of an indigenous community. It is therefore expected to contribute theoretically to the development of community education scholarship while also providing practical insights for strengthening character education based on local cultural values.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of Sundanese local wisdom-based character education implemented within the family environment of the Cireundeu Indigenous Community in Cimahi City. This approach enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the meanings, values, experiences, and practices of character education transmitted through social interactions within families and the indigenous community. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research is used to explore and understand the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to a social phenomenon.

The case study method was adopted because the research focused on a specific case, namely the practice of Sundanese local wisdom-based character education within the family environment of the Cireundeu Indigenous Community. A case study enables researchers to investigate a phenomenon in depth within its real-life context, thereby providing a holistic understanding of the processes, values, and dynamics involved (Yin, 2018).

The study was conducted in Cireundeu Indigenous Village, located in Leuwigajah Village, South Cimahi District, Cimahi City, West Java, Indonesia. The research site was selected purposively because the Cireundeu community continues to preserve Sundanese cultural values and consistently transmits them to younger generations through family life and socio-cultural activities. Cireundeu Indigenous Village is recognized as one of the indigenous communities that has successfully maintained its local cultural identity amid modernization and globalization, making it an appropriate setting for investigating local wisdom-based character education.

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling, whereby informants were chosen based on their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the implementation of Sundanese local wisdom-based character education within the family. The participants consisted of indigenous leaders, parents, children or adolescents, and community leaders who possessed substantial knowledge of the transmission of Sundanese cultural values within the Cireundeu Indigenous Community.

Table 1. Research Participants

No.	Participant	Number
1	Indigenous leaders	2
2	Parents	6
3	Children/Adolescents	6
4	Community leaders	2
Total		16

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observation was conducted to directly examine family and community activities related to the transmission of Sundanese cultural values to children. In-depth interviews were conducted with all participants to gather information regarding the local wisdom values taught within families, strategies for value transmission, the character traits developed, and the challenges encountered in the character education process. Documentation was used to complement the observation and interview data through photographs of customary activities, community archives, field notes, and other relevant documents. The integration of these three data collection techniques provided comprehensive and mutually complementary data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

In qualitative research, the researcher served as the primary research instrument (human instrument), directly responsible for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the research data. The researcher was supported by interview guides, observation protocols, audio recording devices, a camera, and field notes to ensure systematic data collection (Sugiyono, 2023). The trustworthiness of the data was established through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from indigenous leaders, parents, children, and community leaders. Methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing data derived from observations, interviews, and documentation. Member checking was performed by returning the interview findings to participants for confirmation to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected their experiences and perspectives. These procedures enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The research was conducted from January to March 2026. Data collection proceeded in stages through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, after which open coding was conducted to identify key themes related to local wisdom values, character internalization strategies, the role of the family, and challenges in character education. The coded data were subsequently categorized and interpreted to identify thematic patterns describing the implementation of Sundanese local wisdom-based character education within the family environment of the Cireundeu Indigenous Community.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, and organizing the data according to the research objectives. The reduced data were then presented in the form of narratives, matrices, and thematic categories to facilitate the identification of relationships and emerging patterns. Finally, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified throughout the analytical process until valid findings regarding Sundanese local wisdom-based character

education within the family environment of the Cireundeu Indigenous Community were obtained.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that Sundanese local wisdom-based character education within the Cireundeu Indigenous Community is implemented through the synergy of the family, the indigenous community, and socio-cultural activities. The results suggest that character formation is not solely shaped through parent-child interactions but is also reinforced by a social environment that collectively preserves and transmits local cultural values. Based on the data analysis, four major themes emerged: (1) the internalization of Sundanese local wisdom values within the family, (2) the family's role as the primary agent of character education, (3) cultural activities as a medium for character internalization, and (4) the challenges of character education in the digital era.

Internalization of Sundanese Local Wisdom Values within the Family Environment of the Cireundeu Indigenous Community

The findings reveal that character education within Cireundeu families is implemented through the continuous intergenerational transmission of Sundanese local wisdom values. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis indicate that the most prominent values instilled in children include *silih asih* (mutual love and compassion), *silih asah* (mutual learning and knowledge sharing), *silih asuh* (mutual guidance and care), *sabilulungan* (mutual cooperation), respect for parents and elders, simplicity, responsibility, honesty, and gratitude. Field findings demonstrate that families do not teach these values through formal instruction or one-way communication. Instead, they are transmitted through daily habituation and lived experiences. Children are accustomed to helping with household chores, respecting parents and elders, communicating politely, and participating in community social activities. These practices illustrate that character education is embedded in concrete and contextual everyday experiences. As one indigenous elder explained: "In Cireundeu, children are taught *silih asih*, *silih asah*, and *silih asuh* from an early age. They should not only become knowledgeable but also develop respect and compassion for others." Observational data further revealed that the value of *silih asih* was reflected in children's spontaneous willingness to help peers and family members without being asked. *Silih asah* was manifested through traditions of sharing advice and knowledge across generations, while *silih asuh* was demonstrated through the community's collective responsibility for guiding and nurturing children within the indigenous village.

Table 2. Sundanese Local Wisdom Values Transmitted within the Family

Local Wisdom Value	Implementation in Daily Life	Character Developed
<i>Silih Asih</i>	Helping and respecting others	Empathy and social concern
<i>Silih Asah</i>	Sharing advice and knowledge	Wisdom and reflective thinking
<i>Silih Asuh</i>	Guiding and protecting others	Responsibility
<i>Sabilulungan</i>	Community mutual cooperation	Collaboration
<i>Tata Krama</i>	Respecting parents and elders	Courtesy and politeness
<i>Manuhun</i>	Practicing gratitude	Religiousness
<i>Tumarima</i>	Accepting circumstances with sincerity	Resilience

These findings are consistent with Thomas Lickona's concept of character education presented in *How to Raise Kind Kids* (2018), which argues that character formation cannot rely solely on the transmission of moral knowledge but must be cultivated through the consistent practice of moral behavior in everyday life. Values that are repeatedly practiced eventually become habits and ultimately shape individual character.

The present findings also reinforce those reported in *Children's Character Education through Local Wisdom-Based Stories in Indonesia*, which demonstrated that local wisdom values are highly effective in fostering children's character because they are closely connected to children's lived

experiences and social environments. The study found that the internalization of local cultural values enhances children's empathy, responsibility, and social awareness.

The Family as the Primary Agent of Character Education

The findings indicate that the family serves as the primary agent of children's character formation within the Cireundeu Indigenous Community. Parents function not only as educators but also as role models, supervisors, and motivators throughout the character education process. Most participants emphasized that children's behavior is influenced more by what they observe than by what they are told. Consequently, parents strive to model behaviors that reflect the cultural values they wish to pass on to their children. As one parent stated: "Children imitate what their parents do more than what their parents say." Observational findings showed that parents consistently demonstrated respect toward elders, maintained harmonious relationships with neighbors, participated in community mutual cooperation, and actively engaged in various cultural activities. These behaviors became the primary learning resources through which children acquired character values.

These findings are consistent with Berkowitz and Bier (2021), who argue that effective character education requires active family involvement because the family is the first social environment in which children develop values, norms, and life habits. Family-based character education exerts a stronger influence than education relying solely on schools because it is continuously practiced in everyday life. The findings also support Johansson et al. (2022), who reported that the quality of parent-child interactions is significantly associated with children's character development, particularly in terms of responsibility, empathy, and self-control.

Cultural Activities as a Medium for Character Internalization

The findings demonstrate that character education extends beyond the family environment and is reinforced through a variety of cultural activities organized by the indigenous community. Children actively participate in several community-based activities, including:

- community mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*);
- *angklung buncis* musical ensemble practice;
- traditional Sundanese performing arts;
- indigenous customary ceremonies;
- village deliberation meetings (*musyawarah kampung*);
- community traditional celebrations and cultural commemorations.

Participation in these cultural activities provides children with authentic opportunities to experience and practice cultural values directly within their social environment. Rather than merely learning about moral principles, children actively engage in behaviors that cultivate cooperation, responsibility, respect for elders, social solidarity, and a strong sense of cultural identity. These activities therefore function as experiential learning environments through which local wisdom values are naturally internalized and sustained across generations.





Figure 1. Cultural Activities of the Cireundeu Indigenous Community as a Medium for Character Education

Based on the observational findings, children's participation in cultural activities provides direct learning experiences regarding the importance of cooperation, responsibility, discipline, and social awareness. Children not only acquire knowledge about cultural values but also practice these values in real-life community settings. As one adolescent participant explained: "Since I was little, I have always participated in community mutual cooperation and customary ceremonies. It has become part of my life, and I feel responsible for my village."

These findings support a 2024 study published in *Heliyon*, which reported that an ethnopedagogical approach strengthens character education through the revitalization of local cultural values and active community involvement in educational processes. The study concluded that integrating local culture into education enhances both cultural awareness and students' character development. Similarly, Masrukhi and colleagues (2024) found that cultural activities grounded in local wisdom contribute significantly to strengthening the values of mutual cooperation, responsibility, and cultural identity among younger generations. Their findings suggest that local culture functions not only as a cultural heritage but also as an effective medium for character education. Furthermore, the present study demonstrates that cultural activities serve as social learning spaces where children experience experiential learning. Participation in community mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), village deliberation meetings (*musyawarah kampung*), and customary ceremonies not only introduces children to cultural values but also nurtures collective awareness, a sense of community belonging, and social responsibility. These findings indicate that the success of character education within the Cireundeu Indigenous Community is determined not only by the role of the family but also by the indigenous community as a supportive social learning environment that facilitates the continuous internalization of cultural values.

Children's Character Development through Local Wisdom-Based Education

Interview and observational findings reveal that Sundanese local wisdom-based character education fosters various positive character traits among children in the Cireundeu Indigenous Community.

Table 3. Character Traits Developed among Children

Character Trait	Indicators Identified
Courtesy	Using polite Sundanese language in daily communication

Responsibility	Assisting with household chores and participating in customary activities
Social Awareness	Actively participating in community mutual cooperation (<i>gotong royong</i>)
Independence	Completing personal responsibilities independently
Simplicity	Demonstrating a non-consumerist lifestyle
Cultural Pride	Taking pride in Sundanese cultural identity

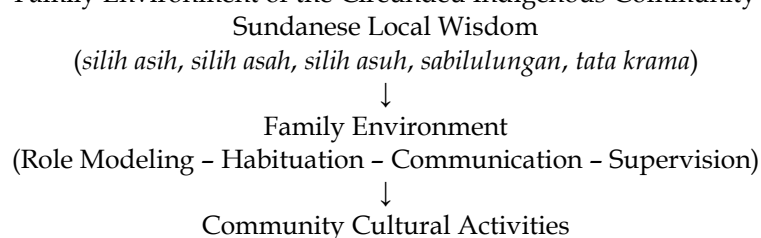
These findings indicate that the internalization of Sundanese local wisdom values influences not only children's social behavior but also contributes to the development of cultural identity and moral resilience. The resulting character traits emerge through the interaction between value habituation within the family and children's active participation in the socio-cultural life of the indigenous community. This demonstrates that character education rooted in local culture is capable of fostering a balanced development of cultural identity, social responsibility, and adaptability to social change. Observational findings further revealed that children maintain a strong emotional attachment to their local culture. Rather than perceiving their traditions as outdated, they regard them as an integral part of their personal identity and everyday life. These findings are consistent with previous studies on the integration of local wisdom into character education, which have shown that local culture strengthens cultural identity, enhances social responsibility, and promotes mutual respect within communities. From the perspective of community education, these findings suggest that character education is not solely the responsibility of families or schools but rather a collective responsibility shared by the entire community. Indigenous communities function as social learning environments where children gain authentic experiences in practicing moral and cultural values.

Challenges of Character Education in the Digital Era

Although local wisdom-based character education continues to function effectively, the study identified several challenges arising from the rapid development of digital technology, social media, and cultural globalization. As one parent explained: "Nowadays, the biggest challenge is smartphones. Children prefer watching videos to playing outside." Observational findings indicate that smartphones and social media have begun to influence children's patterns of social interaction. Time previously devoted to playing with peers or participating in community activities has increasingly been replaced by digital engagement. Nevertheless, the Cireundeu community does not reject modernization. Instead, they embrace the philosophy of *Ngindung ka Waktu, Mibapa ka Jaman*, which emphasizes adapting to changing times while preserving one's cultural identity. These findings are consistent with previous research on the integration of local wisdom into character education in the era of globalization, which argues that local culture serves as a moral safeguard for younger generations against the influences of global culture. Local wisdom functions as a source of values that preserves cultural identity while strengthening the social resilience of communities.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Sundanese local wisdom-based character education within the Cireundeu Indigenous Community represents an effective model of family- and community-based education for fostering the character of younger generations. The success of this model is supported by the synergy among families, the indigenous community, and local cultural traditions, which collectively create an educational environment conducive to children's character development while ensuring the sustainability of cultural identity amid the challenges of the digital era.

Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Sundanese Local Wisdom-Based Character Education within the Family Environment of the Cireundeu Indigenous Community



(Community Mutual Cooperation (*Gotong Royong*) – Village Deliberation (*Musyawarah*) –
Traditional Arts – Customary Traditions)



Character Internalization



Courtesy – Responsibility – Social Awareness – Independence – Simplicity – Cultural Pride

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Sundanese local wisdom-based character education within the family environment of the Cireundeu Indigenous Community in Cimahi City is implemented through a process of cultural value internalization that is integrated into everyday life. Values such as *silih asih* (mutual love and compassion), *silih asah* (mutual learning and knowledge sharing), *silih asuh* (mutual guidance and care), *sabilulungan* (mutual cooperation), *tata krama* (courtesy and etiquette), responsibility, simplicity, and gratitude are transmitted through parental role modeling, habituation, social interaction, and children's participation in various community cultural activities. This process positions the family as the primary setting for character formation while simultaneously serving as the principal medium for the intergenerational transmission of cultural values. The findings further indicate that children's character development is strengthened through the synergy between the family and the indigenous community, both of which collectively preserve and sustain local cultural values. This synergy creates a supportive educational environment that fosters positive character traits, including courtesy, responsibility, social awareness, independence, simplicity, and pride in local culture. These findings confirm that character education grounded in local wisdom remains highly relevant in addressing the challenges posed by social change and technological advancement in the digital era. The primary contribution of this study lies in advancing the perspective of family education within the discourse on local wisdom-based character education, particularly in the context of indigenous communities. The findings demonstrate that the family and the indigenous community should be understood as complementary educational ecosystems that collaboratively shape the character of younger generations. Nevertheless, this study is limited to the context of the Cireundeu Indigenous Community; therefore, its findings are context-specific and are not intended to be generalized to all indigenous communities or the broader Sundanese population. Future research is recommended to investigate other indigenous communities or to employ comparative and mixed-methods approaches in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of local wisdom-based character education across diverse social and cultural contexts.

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