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## Sasak Cultural Values to Improve Character of Islamic Primary School Students

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18326/mudarrisa.v18i1.4826>

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### ABSTRACT

**Article history:**

Received:

July 27, 2025

Revised:

June 5, 2026

Accepted:

June 13, 2026

**Objectives:** This research investigates internalization strategies, types of values, supporting factors, inhibiting factors, and the impact of Sasak cultural values to improve character of Islamic primary school students in Mataram, Indonesia.

**Method:** A qualitative phenomenological approach was adopted and conducted at Sekolah Dasar (Islamic primary school) 'Aisiyah 1 Mataram, in Mataram City, Indonesia. Participants consisted of upper-grade students, classroom teachers, the school principal, and local traditional leaders selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña.

**Results:** The findings indicate that the internalization of Sasak cultural values occurs through structured morning activities, the integration of local folklore, teacher role modeling, and participation in community-based activities. Sasak cultural values for character education include *besiru* (cooperation), *bekelangan* (empathy and social concern), *pelungguh* (ethical conduct), *isin* (moral restraint and self-awareness), and *jari diri* (positive personal behavior). Internalization of these values is supported by strong school leadership, a conducive school environment, the active involvement of traditional community leaders, and parental engagement. Conversely, limited learning time and a lack of teacher understanding hinder the internalization process. Ultimately, Sasak cultural values contribute to the development of students' respectfulness, discipline, courtesy, responsibility, cooperation, self-regulation, and social sensitivity.

**Theoretical Contribution:** This research contributes to the discourse on teaching the values of *ta'āwun* (mutual assistance) and *haya'* (politeness) through culturally rooted Islamic education.

**Implication:** These findings imply the importance of integrating local cultural values into character education within Islamic primary schools.

**Keywords:**

Sasak Cultural Values; Character Education; Social Attitudes; Islamic Primary School; Cultural Integration in Education

## INTRODUCTION

Character education has been increasingly acknowledged as a critical dimension of contemporary education, playing a pivotal role in cultivating students' moral character, social responsibility, and civic engagement through the deliberate integration of values-based learning within educational settings (Aqodiah et al., 2023; Hanafiah et al., 2024; Hasanah, 2021; Mensah et al., 2025; Yusoff et al., 2022). Character education seeks to promote universal moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy, while simultaneously strengthening students' personal integrity and their capacity to resist negative influences (Bates, 2019; Hasanah, 2021; Spohrer, 2024). In the face of increasingly complex globalization challenges, it is crucial for primary education to instill character values aligned with local socio-cultural contexts as the foundation for national identity formation (Fostersti et al., 2024; Wang & Moonsuwan, 2024).

In contemporary educational settings, primary school students encounter increasingly complex social challenges resulting from rapid technological developments. Excessive use of digital technology and social media platforms can lead to a decline in empathy and reduced interpersonal communication skills among students. These trends raise significant concerns regarding students' social and emotional development, highlighting the need for educational interventions that foster social awareness, empathy, and collaborative skills within the learning environment (Boorman et al., 2019; Dong et al., 2022; Waller & Hyde, 2018). Without intentional character education, students may struggle to develop social awareness and moral sensitivity. Therefore, culturally grounded character education is increasingly viewed as a strategic response to counterbalance the social risks posed by globalization while reinforcing students' moral identity from an early age.

Rooted in the socio-cultural life of the indigenous community on Lombok Island, Sasak culture represents a distinctive form of local wisdom characterized by strong communal ties, deeply embedded Islamic traditions, and moral values transmitted through customary practices, oral traditions, and social rituals (Mulianah, 2024; Mazhabia & Yunus, 2026). These cultural elements shape the social behavior and identity of the community across generations. Within this

context, Sasak culture reflects a value system that emphasizes harmony, collective responsibility, and moral discipline. Such values are continuously practiced in daily life, making them relevant as a foundation for character formation in educational settings (Mulianah, 2024; Muliadi et al., 2024; Nashuddin, 2020).

In the context of primary education, Sasak cultural values such as religiosity, cooperation (*besiru*), and respect for elders or social solidarity (*bekelangan*) play an important role in supporting character education. These values contribute to strengthening students' cultural identity and fostering positive social attitudes in their daily interactions within the school environment (Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Kumar et al., 2018; Nishina et al., 2019). The integration of such values into the learning process allows students not only to acquire cognitive knowledge but also to develop meaningful and contextually grounded social skills that are relevant to their real-life experiences.

Previous research has highlighted the importance of integrating local culture into education to enhance students' character development, particularly in fostering empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility (Darong et al., 2021; Lähdesmäki et al., 2022; Podschuweit & Bernholt, 2018). However, these studies tend to focus on general cultural frameworks and often overlook specific indigenous value systems within particular socio-religious contexts. In contrast, this research focuses on the Sasak community, where local wisdom is closely intertwined with Islamic teachings and daily communal practices. This research contributes by demonstrating how Sasak cultural values can be integrated as a lived and habitual practice in the school environment, thereby offering a more contextually grounded model of character education.

In West Nusa Tenggara (Nusa Tenggara Barat/NTB), particularly on Lombok Island, Sasak cultural values constitute a fundamental component of community life and represent a valuable resource for character education. Indigenous values such as *besiru* (mutual cooperation) and *bekelangan* (social solidarity and communal support) embody principles that foster positive social relationships, collective responsibility, and community cohesion (Rismawati & Al-Pansori, 2025; Maharani & Habibullah, 2023). The integration of Sasak culture into the learning process has been shown to

be effective in shaping students' positive social attitudes (Aswasulasikin et al., 2022). Additionally, local content can strengthen students' understanding of social values that are relevant to their daily lives (Ahmar & Azzajjad, 2025; Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Ting et al., 2021; Zidny et al., 2020).

Within Islamic educational contexts, local cultural values serve as significant contextual mechanisms for fostering the internalization of *akhlaq al-karimah* (noble character). The dynamic interaction between culture and religion creates a complementary framework through which moral principles are transmitted, reinforced, and sustained (Buchanan et al., 2022; Chiang et al., 2024; Hadianto et al., 2022; Lerner & Gillespie, 2024; Maulidi et al., 2024). This interaction enables students to experience moral values as lived practices. In Islamic primary schools, the integration of Sasak cultural values provides meaningful pathways for practising Islamic principles in daily life. Through activities such as cooperation, respect, and responsibility, students internalize moral values more effectively. This approach connects formal instruction with real-life experiences and supports the development of students' moral character.

The implementation of local culture-based learning strategies shows a significant influence on strengthening students' social attitudes. A thematic approach that highlights local cultural narratives in social studies learning provides a reflective space for students to understand the importance of togetherness and mutual respect (Burgos-Videla et al., 2025; Fitrianto & Farisi, 2025; Stevenson, 2019). Integrating local culture into character education practices has a positive impact on reducing aggressive behavior among students (Adiyono et al., 2024; Fung, 2019). Furthermore, students who learn through a local culture-based approach demonstrate higher levels of social appreciation and responsibility compared to those who do not receive a similar approach (Aqodiah et al., 2023; Ibrahim & Sundawa, 2023; Litaay et al., 2025).

In addition to the influence of culture on social attitudes, the roles of teachers and the curriculum are central in supporting the integration of local values into character education (Astini et al., 2023; Hasanah, 2021; Ritonga, 2022). Teachers play an important role in translating cultural values into contextual and engaging

learning activities (Aqodiah et al., 2023; Li, 2018). An adaptive curriculum that is aligned with students' cultural contexts can encourage their active participation in social activities (Gong et al., 2021; Hasanah, 2021). Furthermore, support from schools and communities is essential for developing local culture-based programs as a means of strengthening students' involvement in positive social practices (Astini et al., 2023; Filho et al., 2019).

Character education in primary schools requires an approach that not only transmits values normatively but also enables students to experience and practice these values in authentic social situations. Character formation is most effective when values are internalized through lived experiences, consistent modeling, and meaningful social engagement (Bajovic & Rizzo, 2021; Curren & Ryan, 2020; Pike et al., 2021). In this context, local cultural practices provide concrete moral frameworks embedded in students' daily lives. When character education is disconnected from students' cultural realities, moral learning risks becoming superficial. Therefore, integrating local cultural values into school activities is essential to ensure contextual and meaningful character development.

Despite extensive research on culture-based character education, many studies still focus primarily on conceptual integration or curriculum design (Abdurahman et al., 2026; Aldi & Khairanis, 2025; Murcahyanto & Mohzana, 2023; Wahyuni et al., 2025; Salmia et al., 2025). Limited attention has been given to how local cultural values are internalized through daily school routines, teacher exemplarity, and social interactions (Ismail et al., 2025; Mushawir et al., 2025). In addition, empirical studies that specifically explore Islamic primary schools as sites of culturally responsive character education remain limited. This disparity indicates a gap between theoretical frameworks and actual classroom practices. As a result, the implementation of culturally based character education is not always optimal. Therefore, this research is needed to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

A synthesis of previous studies indicates that the integration of local cultural values plays a substantial role in fostering students' social attitudes and character development. Values such as mutual cooperation, politeness, and tolerance become more meaningful and impactful when embedded within well-designed educational

practices. Their internalization is further strengthened when learning experiences are closely connected to students' socio-cultural realities and everyday lives. Unfortunately, existing learning approaches often lack contextual relevance, limiting their effectiveness in promoting meaningful character formation. This gap highlights the need for a context-based developmental approach capable of providing a more structured, culturally responsive, and applicable framework for character education within diverse educational settings.

The novelty of this research lies in its contextual examination of the integration of Sasak cultural values within an Islamic elementary school setting, specifically at Sekolah Dasar (SD) 'Aisyiyah 1 Mataram. While previous studies have generally explored the relationship between local culture and character education, limited attention has been given to the internalization of Sasak cultural values as a strategy for strengthening students' social attitudes. This research aims to investigate the strategies employed by SD 'Aisyiyah 1 Mataram to internalize Sasak cultural values, identify the specific cultural values promoted within the school environment, and examine the factors that facilitate or hinder their implementation. Through integrating local cultural values into educational practices, students are expected to develop social awareness, responsibility, and ethical behavior. This research contributes to the development of culturally responsive education and Islamic character education.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This research employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of teachers and students in the integration of Sasak local cultural values into character education at SD 'Aisyiyah 1 Mataram. A phenomenological design was selected to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' subjective perceptions, interpretations, and experiences regarding the incorporation of cultural values within educational practices. This approach enabled the researchers to examine how Sasak cultural values were internalized and manifested in students' social attitudes through reflective, contextualized, and

meaningful learning experiences (Cuthbertson et al., 2020; Dodgson, 2023). Compared to a general case study, this approach more effectively explains how values such as cooperation, empathy, and etiquette are internalized in daily school practices, thereby strengthening the understanding of culture-based character education in a natural educational context (Gravett, 2019).

### Procedure

The research followed a qualitative phenomenological design, beginning with problem identification and a focused literature review (Sundler et al., 2019). Research credibility was ensured through triangulation and member checking (Ahmed, 2024). The research procedures are summarised in a flowchart (Figure 1) to enhance clarity and replicability.

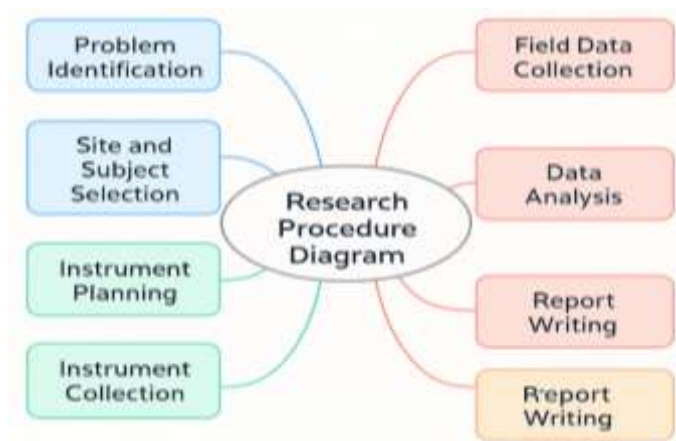


Figure 1. Research Procedure

Figure 1 illustrates the research procedure employed in this research. The process began with problem identification, followed by site and participant selection. The next stage involved instrument preparation and data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. The collected data were then analyzed systematically to obtain the research findings. Finally, the research concluded with report writing.

### Participants

This research was conducted at SD 'Aisyiyah 1 Mataram, located in Mataram City, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The school was purposively selected due to its strong commitment to integrating Islamic teachings and indigenous Sasak cultural

values into character education and everyday school practices. The participants comprised upper elementary students (Grades IV–VI), classroom teachers, the school principal, and local cultural leaders possessing extensive knowledge of Sasak traditions and values. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure the inclusion of individuals directly involved in the planning, implementation, and reinforcement of culture-based character education within the school community.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations focused on students' social behavior and teachers' instructional practices in integrating Sasak cultural values. Interviews explored participants' experiences and perspectives regarding character education, while document analysis examined lesson plans, school programs, and institutional records. Research instruments included observation guidelines, semi-structured interview protocols, and document review sheets.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted interactively until data saturation was achieved using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024). Data were selected, categorized, and interpreted through descriptive narratives and thematic matrices to identify patterns related to Sasak cultural values and students' social attitudes. Conclusions were drawn inductively through thematic interpretation and clustering of meanings (Chand, 2025; Sheard, 2022).

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Internalization Strategy of Sasak Cultural Values in Islamic Primary Schools**

To enhance the clarity and systematic presentation of the findings, the results are organized according to the types of activities employed to internalize Sasak local cultural values within character education practices at SD 'Aisyiyah 1 Mataram. Each activity is analyzed in terms of its implementation procedures and the specific cultural values embedded within the learning process. The findings are drawn from classroom observations, in-depth interviews with teachers and school administrators, and an

analysis of school program documentation. These data sources consistently demonstrate the integration of Sasak cultural values into students' daily character development activities.

The findings indicate that the internalization of Sasak local cultural values is implemented through four primary strategies: morning assemblies, the use of Sasak folk tales in classroom instruction, teacher role modeling, and communal school activities. These approaches collectively serve as pedagogical mechanisms for fostering students' moral and social development while preserving local cultural heritage.

Classroom observations and school documentation reveal that morning assemblies are conducted routinely before formal classroom instruction and function as a strategic platform for character education. The assemblies typically involve collective prayer, the recitation of selected Qur'anic verses, the delivery of moral messages by teachers, and the organization of students in orderly formations. Through participation in these activities, students are encouraged to develop discipline, attentiveness, and respect for authority. The practice facilitates the internalization of several core Sasak cultural values, particularly *saling aeq* (mutual respect), *pelungguh* (proper etiquette), and discipline. Students demonstrate these values through courteous greetings, orderly behavior, adherence to school regulations, and respectful engagement during assembly activities.

Based on classroom observations and teacher interviews, Sasak values are internalized through Sasak folk tales which are integrated into thematic learning. Teachers narrate local stories such as Putri Mandalika, a well-known Sasak folk tale that conveys moral values related to sacrifice, responsibility, empathy, and social harmony. The activity internalizes values such as *jari diri* (good behavior), *isin* (moral restraint), and empathy. Storytelling is considered an effective learning method because it helps students understand moral values through meaningful and contextual narratives (Halimah et al., 2020; Jubhari et al., 2022). Stories also encourage students' emotional engagement and moral reflection, making character education more concrete and memorable.

Through observation and imitation, students internalized values such as *pelungguh* (proper etiquette), honesty, responsibility, and mutual cooperation. This

finding aligns with Bandura's social learning theory, which states that students internalize values through observation and imitation of significant role models (Lee et al., 2023). This finding also aligns with Gamage et al. (2021), who explained that teacher role modeling has a direct influence on students' character development within values-based educational settings. Similarly, Uswah et al. (2023) found that value internalization becomes more meaningful when teachers demonstrate values through observable behavior rather than merely conveying them cognitively.

Within the framework of Islamic education, the role of teachers as moral exemplars aligns with the concept of *tarbiyah akhlaqiyyah*, in which character formation is achieved through habituation and exemplary conduct. This principle emphasizes that moral values should not only be taught theoretically but also practiced consistently in everyday life. Based on interview findings, teachers actively integrate Islamic moral values and Sasak cultural principles into daily school practices through respectful communication, discipline, and social responsibility. This approach is reinforced by the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which emphasizes the importance of noble character in education. Consequently, students are able to internalize moral values more deeply through meaningful and authentic educational experiences.

Through participation in communal school activities, students are encouraged to work together, help one another, and contribute to collective goals. Such practices internalize values such as *besiru* (mutual cooperation), togetherness, and social responsibility. These activities also foster empathy, respect, and a sense of belonging among students. Group work is considered an effective learning strategy because it promotes cooperation, communication, and shared responsibility among students (Nadeem, 2024; Poom-Valickis et al., 2022). Collaborative learning also strengthens students' social interaction and helps develop positive interpersonal relationships in the classroom.

The findings reveal that the character education program at SD 'Aisyiyah 1 Mataram effectively integrates core Sasak cultural values, including *saling aeq* (mutual respect), *besiru* (collective cooperation), *jari diri* (virtuous conduct), *isin* (moral consciousness and self-restraint), and *pelungguh* (appropriate manners and etiquette),

as well as empathy, discipline, honesty, and social responsibility. These values are systematically internalized through four principal strategies: morning assemblies, the incorporation of Sasak folktales into learning activities, teacher role modeling, and participation in communal school-based activities. The internalization process enables students to engage with cultural values through sustained habituation, meaningful social interactions, reflective practices, and collaborative experiences. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the integration of Sasak cultural values into everyday school life contributes significantly to the development of students' positive social behaviors and reinforces the contextual implementation of character education rooted in local wisdom and Islamic ethical principles. The internalization strategies for local Sasak cultural values can be seen in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Summary of Internalized Sasak Cultural Activities and Values**

Activities for Internalizing Local Cultural Values	Instilled Cultural Values
Morning assembly	Mutual respect ( <i>saling aeq</i> ), discipline, etiquette ( <i>pelungguh</i> )
Folk tales	Good behavior ( <i>jari diri</i> ), moral restraint ( <i>isin</i> ), empathy
Teacher role modeling,	Politeness, honesty, responsibility, respect
Communal and social activities	Mutual cooperation ( <i>besimu</i> ), togetherness, social responsibility

The findings indicate that the four internalization strategies -morning assemblies, Sasak folk tales, teacher role modelling, and communal activities- form an integrated character education ecosystem in which moral values are reinforced through habituation, social interaction, and contextual learning experiences. This integration reflects the principles of holistic character education, which emphasize that character formation becomes more effective when values are consistently embedded in school routines and interpersonal relationships (Aqodiah et al., 2023; Ataman et al., 2024; Nursobah et al., 2025).

#### **Factors Supporting the Internalization of Sasak Cultural Values**

Based on classroom observations, interview findings, and school documentation, this research identifies several supporting factors in the internalization of Sasak cultural values at SD 'Aisyiyah 1 Mataram, including

principal leadership, a culturally responsive school environment, the participation of traditional leaders, and parental involvement. These factors collectively strengthen the implementation of culture-based character education within the school environment.

### ***Principal Leadership***

The analysis shows that the principal effectively and strategically integrates Sasak cultural values and Islamic principles into school programs, daily routines, and character-building activities. This integration fosters a cohesive school culture that reinforces students' moral and social development (Nurjanah et al., 2020). Value-oriented leadership also contributes to the creation of culturally responsive educational environments that support students' moral development (Suherman et al., 2025; Susilo et al., 2026).

From an Islamic perspective, this leadership reflects the principle of *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct), in which leaders become moral role models for the community. Based on observation and interview findings, the principal demonstrates values through participation in prayers, school programs, and respectful daily interactions with students and teachers. This approach aligns with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of exemplary leadership in character formation. The Qur'an states that the Prophet Muhammad SAW is the best example for humanity (Qur'an, Al-Ahzab: 21), highlighting that moral values should be taught through concrete actions.

### ***School Environment***

This research finds that a conducive school environment rich in cultural symbols is an important supporting factor in the internalization of Sasak cultural values at SD 'Aisyiyah 1 Mataram. The physical and social environments are intentionally designed to reflect cultural and religious identities harmoniously. Sasak cultural ornaments, traditional weaving motifs, images of traditional houses, and local wisdom expressions displayed in classrooms strengthen students' cultural awareness. The school environment also supports the internalization of values through structured religious and social routines. Activities such as communal prayer

before and after lessons, classroom cleaning duties, collaborative group work, and regular greetings encourage ongoing moral habits among students.

This finding aligns with ecological and social learning theories, which emphasize that students' character development is strongly influenced by their surrounding environment and daily interactions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Gould et al., 2019; Skinner et al., 2022). Culture-based learning environments also contribute significantly to strengthening students' empathy, cooperation, and social awareness (Bustomi et al., 2025). Therefore, a culturally responsive school environment functions not only as a learning space but also as a medium for sustainable moral habituation.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the school environment plays an important role in shaping students' character through continuous moral practice and social interaction. School routines reflect the concept of *amal shalih* (righteous deeds), which emphasizes practicing moral values through consistent actions in daily life. Islamic teachings also highlight the importance of positive social environments in influencing moral behavior and character development. The Qur'an encourages Muslims to engage in righteous actions and maintain good social relationships as part of collective responsibility (Qur'an, Al-Ma'idah: 2). Through supportive religious and social environments, students practice discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and mutual respect.

#### ***Participation of Traditional Leaders and Community***

The research reveals the importance of the involvement of traditional Sasak leaders as a supporting factor in the internalization of local cultural values. Collaboration between the school and traditional leaders is realized through activities such as cultural visits, storytelling of Sasak folklore, the delivery of traditional advice, and the participation of community figures in school programs. These activities provide students with direct exposure to local cultural practices and moral teachings rooted in Sasak traditions. Through continuous interaction with community figures, students gain a deeper understanding of cultural identity, mutual respect, and social responsibility. Consequently, collaboration between the school and the community supports the sustainability of culture-based character education.

This research demonstrates that community and traditional leader involvement plays an important role in strengthening the internalization of local cultural values within character education. Collaboration between schools, families, and community figures creates authentic social learning experiences that enable students to understand cultural values in real-life contexts. This finding aligns with social constructivist theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs through interaction with the social and cultural environment (Dyson et al., 2021; Kaliisa et al., 2022; Zou & Yu, 2022). Crawford et al. (2024) also explain that community involvement strengthens students' cultural identity, social awareness, and sense of belonging. Therefore, the participation of traditional leaders contributes significantly to sustaining culture-based character education in schools.

From the perspective of Islamic education, community involvement reflects the principle of *ta'awun* (mutual cooperation) and collective responsibility in moral education. Islamic teachings emphasize that character formation is not only the responsibility of schools but also of families and society. The Qur'an encourages Muslims to cooperate in goodness and righteousness as part of social responsibility (Qur'an, Al-Ma'idah: 2). Through collaboration with traditional leaders and community figures, students experience moral values through direct social interaction and cultural practices. Consequently, community participation strengthens the integration of local cultural wisdom and Islamic values within character education.

### ***Role of Parents***

The research further reveals that parental involvement, as an integral component of the school community, plays a crucial role in sustaining the internalization of character values across both school and home environments. Parents actively reinforce Sasak cultural and Islamic values by guiding children to use respectful language, encouraging participation in communal activities, fostering respectful attitudes toward elders, and monitoring the consistent practice of religious obligations at home. This alignment between school- and home-based value education promotes continuity in students' moral development and strengthens their understanding, internalization, and application of ethical values in everyday life

beyond the formal educational setting. Consistent collaboration between parents and schools enables students to experience similar moral guidance in both educational and family settings. Consequently, the internalization of cultural values becomes more sustainable and meaningful in students' everyday lives.

Specifically, the findings demonstrate the pivotal role of parents in reinforcing the internalization of cultural and moral values through ongoing guidance, supervision, and value-based practices within the home environment. Regular communication and collaboration between parents and schools ensure the consistency of moral messages across both family and educational contexts, thereby fostering a coherent framework for students' character development. These findings are consistent with ecological systems theory and social learning theory, which posit that children's moral and behavioral development is significantly shaped by interactions within their immediate social environments and by the support provided through family and community engagement (Iruka et al., 2020; Osher et al., 2020; Skinner et al., 2022). Riyanto et al. (2024) also explain that collaboration between schools, families, and communities positively contributes to the effectiveness of local culture-based character education. Therefore, parental involvement functions as an important factor in sustaining students' moral and social development.

From the perspective of Islamic education, parents hold primary responsibility for guiding children's moral and spiritual development within the family environment. Islamic teachings emphasize that parents are the first educators who shape children's character through advice, habituation, and exemplary conduct. The principle of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) in Islam also highlights the importance of cooperation between families, schools, and communities in fostering virtue and piety (Qur'an, Al-Ma'idah: 2). Through consistent parental guidance, students are encouraged to practice discipline, respect, honesty, and responsibility in daily life. Consequently, parental involvement strengthens the integration of Sasak cultural values and Islamic moral teachings in students' character formation.

### **Factors Inhibiting the Internalization of Sasak Cultural Values**

The research identifies several challenges that hinder the effective internalization of Sasak cultural values at SD 'Aisyiyah 1 Mataram. Drawing on data

obtained from teacher interviews and classroom observations, the primary constraints include limited instructional time and variations in teachers' cultural knowledge and pedagogical competencies. These factors influence the consistency and depth with which cultural values are integrated into classroom practices and character education activities. Consequently, disparities in teachers' capacity to contextualize and transmit local cultural values may affect the effectiveness of the internalization process among students.

### ***Limited Instructional Time***

Teachers are often required to prioritize academic content and curriculum targets within limited instructional schedules, reducing opportunities for reflective and value-based learning activities. This condition limits students' engagement with cultural and character education during classroom instruction. As a result, the internalization of Sasak cultural values cannot always be implemented optimally in everyday learning processes.

Glock et al. (2019) note that academic pressures often restrict meaningful exploration of cultural and moral values, particularly at the primary education level. Teachers are required to complete curriculum targets within limited instructional time, causing character education activities to receive less attention during classroom learning (Birhan et al., 2021; Muzakkir et al., 2024). Utama (2022) explains that effective character education requires consistent habituation, discussion, and social interaction. However, these processes cannot be implemented optimally when instructional schedules are highly limited (Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2021; Simamora et al., 2020). Therefore, balancing academic instruction with character education remains a major challenge in primary education contexts (Muzakkir et al., 2024).

### ***Teachers' Cultural and Pedagogical Competencies***

The research reveals variations in teachers' understanding of the internalization of Sasak cultural values. Not all teachers possess the same level of cultural knowledge or competency in integrating these values into teaching and learning practices. Such disparities may influence the consistency and effectiveness of culture-based character education, as teachers play a central role in facilitating the transmission and reinforcement of local cultural values within the school

environment. This condition affects the consistency of value internalization practices across different classes and learning activities. Consequently, the implementation of culture-based character education varies depending on the teachers' cultural knowledge and teaching abilities. Therefore, the internalization of local cultural values cannot always be optimally implemented in all classroom contexts.

This finding is consistent with Mappaenre et al. (2023), who explain that limited culture-based professional training contributes to uneven instructional practices in character education. Teachers who have limited cultural understanding tend to focus more on cognitive achievement than on reflective and value-oriented learning processes. Such conditions reduce opportunities for students to internalize cultural values meaningfully through classroom interaction and habituation. Therefore, strengthening teachers' cultural and pedagogical competencies is essential for improving the effectiveness and consistency of culture-based character education in schools.

This condition underscores the importance of continuous professional development as part of *thalab al-'ilm*. Educators are expected to engage in lifelong learning to enhance both pedagogical and moral competencies. Continuous development ensures that teachers are able to integrate cultural and religious values effectively. It also supports the consistency of character education practices in the classroom. Without such efforts, the internalization of values may remain superficial. This perspective emphasizes that teaching is not only a cognitive activity but also a moral responsibility. Therefore, strengthening teacher capacity is essential. This approach supports sustainable character development in education.

### **Impact of Sasak Cultural Value Internalization on Students' Social Attitudes**

The internalization of Sasak local cultural values at SD 'Aisyiyah 1 Mataram is reflected in students' social attitudes as observed in their daily interactions and collaborative behaviors. Based on classroom observations and interviews with teachers and school leaders, students show noticeable improvements in interpersonal behavior, particularly in terms of mutual respect, cooperation, empathy, and social responsibility. These attitudes are reflected in students' daily interactions, such as greeting teachers politely, respecting peers during discussions, cooperating in group

tasks, and demonstrating a willingness to help others without being prompted. This finding supports the argument that character education grounded in local cultural values can effectively shape students' social dispositions when implemented consistently within the school environment (Bajovic & Rizzo, 2021; Spohrer, 2024).

The value of *saling aeq* (mutual respect) has an impact on strengthening respectful behavior, helping students become more attentive, patient, and wise during learning activities. This finding is in line with Kurian (2024), who found that culturally responsive character education increases empathy and tolerance among elementary school students. From the perspective of Islamic education, it reflects the internalization of *akhlak al-karimah*, especially the values of *adab* (respect) and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood). The Qur'an instructs believers to speak well and respectfully to others as part of ethical communication (Al-Qur'an, Al-Isra': 53). In addition, the principle of brotherhood is emphasized in the verse: "Indeed, the believers are brothers" (Al-Qur'an, Al-Hujurat: 10).

The value of *pelungguh* (proper etiquette) strengthens students' discipline and courteous behavior in both formal and informal situations. Students demonstrate respectful communication, polite language, obedience to school rules, and appropriate behavior toward teachers and peers in daily interactions (Lickona, 2021). This finding indicates that proper etiquette contributes to the development of students' moral discipline and positive social behavior (A. Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020; Rino & Setiawan, 2025). In Islamic education, proper etiquette reflects the concept of *adab* (respect), which emphasizes respectful conduct, humility, and ethical interaction in social life (Anwar et al., 2025; Silaturahmi et al., 2025). This standard of conduct is further reinforced by the words of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who stated, "The best among you are those with the best manners" (HR. Bukhari), highlighting that good character and proper etiquette are essential components of Islamic moral education.

The value of *besiru* (mutual cooperation) influences students' collaborative behavior, sharing responsibilities, and contributing to collective tasks such as classroom cleaning, group assignments, and social service activities. In Islamic teachings, this behavior reflects the principle of *ta'āwun* (mutual assistance),

reinforcing cooperation as a cultural norm and religious obligation. The Qur'an emphasizes this principle in the verse: "And cooperate in goodness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and injustice" (Al-Qur'an, Al-Ma'idah: 2). Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad SAW stated, "Allah will help His servant as long as he helps his brother" (Narrated by Muslim).

The value of *isin* (moral restraint) influences students to be more careful in their words and actions, demonstrating a sense of responsibility for maintaining harmonious relationships. In Islamic education, this value aligns with the concept of *haya'* (modesty), which is considered an integral part of faith. The Prophet Muhammad SAW said, "Modesty is part of faith" (Bukhari and Muslim), emphasizing that shame and moral restraint are essential elements of a believer's character. The Qur'an also encourages believers to maintain modesty and guard their behavior in social interactions (Al-Qur'an, An-Nur: 30-31).

Overall, the findings point out that each Sasak cultural value contributes differently to the development of students' social character. The value of *saling aeq* (mutual respect) fosters respectful communication and positive interactions between students and teachers. The value of *pelungguh* (proper etiquette) reinforces students' discipline and polite behavior. The value of *besiru* (mutual cooperation) fosters students' sense of responsibility, collaboration, and social awareness through shared activities. The value of *isin* (moral restraint) encourages students to develop self-control and sensitivity to inappropriate behavior. These values are effectively internalized through routine practice, teacher role modeling, and collaborative learning activities.

## CONCLUSION

This research on Sasak cultural values to improve the character of students at SD 'Aisyiyah 1 in Mataram yields the following key insights: 1) the strategies for internalizing Sasak cultural values through morning assemblies, the integration of folktales, teacher role modeling, and communal school-based activities; 2) the Sasak cultural values utilized for social character development include *besiru* (cooperation), *bekelangan* (empathy), *pelungguh* (proper etiquette), *isin* (moral restraint), and *jari diri*

(good behavior); 3) the factors that support the internalization process include the principal leadership, a culturally responsive school environment, the participation of traditional leaders, and parental involvement; 4) the factors inhibiting the internalization process include limited instructional time and variations in teachers' cultural knowledge and pedagogical competencies; and 5) the internalization of these values directly shapes the formation of positive social attitudes, including respect, discipline, politeness, responsibility, cooperation, self-control, and social sensitivity. This research contributes to the teaching of the values of *ta'āwun* (mutual assistance) and *haya'* (modesty) in Islamic education rooted in local culture. Further research is recommended to explore the role of family, digital literacy, and cross-cultural adaptation in character education rooted in local cultural values.

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