

Muslim Haritona, Vol. 10, No. 2, Desember 2025

INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN THE NINGKUK RITUAL: A MODEL OF CHARACTER EDUCATION BASED ON LOCAL WISDOM IN SOUTH SUMATRA

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Received: Aug 6, 2025	Revised: Sep 30, 2025	Approved: Dec 03, 2025

Abstract

This study aims to reveal the moral values contained in the Ningkuk ritual and how these values are instilled in young women in the Sukarami Village community. In addition, this study explains the function of Ningkuk as a model of non-formal character education based on local wisdom and assesses its relevance to the development of national character education. This study examines the integration of Islamic values in the Ningkuk ritual as a model of character education based on the local wisdom of the Sukarami Village community in South Sumatra. Using an ethnographic approach, this study collected data through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and cultural documentation. The results show that the Ningkuk ritual contains Islamic character values, including birrul walidain, gratitude, patience, cooperation (ta'awun), social solidarity (ukhuwah), manners, responsibility, and spirituality. These values are internalized not through verbal instruction but through social practices, cultural symbols, and intergenerational inheritance mechanisms. This study fills a gap in research that has so far overlooked how Islamic values are substantively integrated into the Ningkuk procession, and how this ritual can be reconstructed into a contextual character education model that is compatible with national education policy. This study concludes that Ningkuk is an authentic pedagogical resource that has strategic relevance for formal and non-formal education, especially in the development of local content curricula and culture-based character building programs. These findings offer a theoretical and practical framework for the integration of Islamic values and local wisdom in the design of character education in Indonesia.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap nilai-nilai moral yang terkandung dalam ritual Ningkuk dan bagaimana nilai-nilai tersebut ditanamkan pada perempuan muda di komunitas Desa Sukarami. Selain itu, penelitian ini menjelaskan fungsi Ningkuk sebagai model pendidikan karakter non-formal berdasarkan kebijaksanaan lokal dan mengevaluasi relevansinya terhadap pengembangan pendidikan karakter nasional. Penelitian ini mengkaji integrasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam ritual Ningkuk sebagai model pendidikan karakter berdasarkan kebijaksanaan lokal komunitas Desa Sukarami di Sumatera Selatan. Dengan pendekatan etnografis, penelitian ini mengumpulkan data melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi budaya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ritual Ningkuk mengandung nilai-nilai karakter Islam, termasuk birrul walidain, rasa syukur, kesabaran, kerja sama (ta'awun), solidaritas sosial (ukhuwah), sopan santun, tanggung jawab, dan spiritualitas. Nilai-nilai ini diinternalisasi bukan melalui instruksi verbal, melainkan melalui praktik sosial, simbol budaya, dan mekanisme pewarisan antar

generasi. Penelitian ini mengisi kekosongan dalam penelitian yang hingga kini belum memperhatikan bagaimana nilai-nilai Islam secara substansial diintegrasikan ke dalam prosesi Ningkuk, serta bagaimana ritual ini dapat direkonstruksi menjadi model pendidikan karakter kontekstual yang sesuai dengan kebijakan pendidikan nasional. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa Ningkuk merupakan sumber pedagogis autentik yang memiliki relevansi strategis bagi pendidikan formal dan non-formal, terutama dalam pengembangan kurikulum konten lokal dan program pembentukan karakter berbasis budaya. Temuan ini menawarkan kerangka teoretis dan praktis untuk integrasi nilai-nilai Islam dan kebijaksanaan lokal dalam desain pendidikan karakter di Indonesia.

Keywords: Islamic Values; Ritual Ningkuk; Character Education; Local Wisdom

INTRODUCTION

Character education has become a strategic issue in national and global education policy, particularly in response to concerns about declining morals among the younger generation. In Indonesia, strengthening student character has become part of the broader vision of the national education system.¹ However, the implementation of character education in the field still faces various challenges, one of which is the lack of integration between modern educational values and the wealth of local wisdom possessed by the community.² In fact, local traditions and cultures have great potential as sources of authentic, contextual character education that is more easily accepted by local communities.³ Local traditions can also be interpreted as the continuous and dialectical efforts of a community in facing every challenge it encounters by creating various character-based education programs.⁴ Traditions are universal in human experience. However, cultural manifestations have characteristics that correspond to the situation and location.⁵

The current formal education system tends to adopt a universal character education model without considering the local Islamic cultural and religious context. This creates a disconnect between the values taught in schools and the Islamic values that exist in society.⁶ According to a 2024 report by the South Sumatra Education Office, there has been a 15% increase in juvenile delinquency cases in rural areas compared to the previous year. Even more concerning, specific data for the district where Sukarami Village is located shows the highest increase of 22% in the province. Additional data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs shows that 68% of these juvenile delinquency cases occur among students who are not active in Islamic religious activities, indicating a strong correlation between religious practice and character building.⁷

¹ Messy Ikhsan and Afrinaldi Afrinaldi, "Development of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education Teaching Materials Based on Minangkabau Local Wisdom," *Jurnal At Tarbiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 3 (2024).

² Tri Yunita Sari et al., "Membangun Identitas Lokal Dalam Era Globalisasi," *Academy of Social Science and Global Citizenship Journal* 2, no. 2 (2022): 76–84, https://doi.org/10.47200/aossagcj.v2i2.1842.

³ Nurul Ahsin and Titis Thoriquttyas, "Analyzing The Implementation Of Neuro Linguistic Programming On Islamic Religious Education: A Philosophical Perspective," *Muslim Heritage* 9, no. 2 (2024).

⁴ Mesenu Mesenu and Yernawilis Yernawilis, "The Integration of Islamic Values and Betawi Cultural Wisdom in Strengthening Character Education of University Students in Jakarta through the Merdeka Curriculum and MBKM Programme in the Digital Era," *COUNCIL: Education Journal of Social Studies* 3, no. 2 (2025): 61–70.

⁵ Rika Oktaria Putri, "Makna Jajuluk Dalam Pernikahan Adat Masyarakat Komering Ulu Di Desa Cempaka Kecamatan Cempaka Kabupaten Oku Timur" (2020).

⁶ Riswandha Ipnu & Fisman Bedi Nawawi, "Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Untuk Menghadapi Isu Strategis Di Era Digital," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 1 (2025): 949–55.

⁷ Endun Abdul Haq et al., "Management of Character Education Based on Local," *Nidhomul Haq: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2022): 73–91.

Islamic character education has become a central issue in Indonesia's contemporary education system, particularly in the face of globalization, which threatens traditional Islamic values and local cultural identity. The phenomenon of moral degradation among the younger generation, such as the increase in cases of bullying, gang fights, and the loss of respect for parents and teachers, shows the urgency of developing a more effective and contextual model of Islamic character education. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs shows a 23% decline in daily worship practices among Muslim teenagers in the last three years, indicating a spiritual crisis that requires intervention through education based on Islamic values. Data from the order of the last three years, indicating a spiritual crisis that requires intervention through education based on Islamic values.

The complexity of this issue requires a comprehensive solution that cannot be delayed any longer. The migration of young people to cities for work has led to a breakdown in the transmission of traditional Islamic culture and values, while the absence of a local curriculum that integrates Ningkuk rituals as part of Islamic education into the formal education system in villages has exacerbated the situation. The long-term consequences if this problem is not immediately addressed are very worrying: the loss of local Islamic cultural identity, a weak foundation for the character of the younger generation based on Islamic morals, dependence on foreign education models that are not in line with Islamic values, and academic losses in the form of lost opportunities to explore authentic character education models based on Indonesian Islamic wisdom.

The village of Sukarami in South Sumatra is rich in local traditions that have not been optimally utilized as a source of character education. ¹⁴ One tradition that still survives is the Ningkuk ritual, a cultural practice that reflects noble values and can serve as a model for character education based on local wisdom. ¹⁵ Namun, ritual ini menghadapi ancaman kepunahan akibat modernisasi dan kurangnya transfer pengetahuan kepada generasi muda. Urgensi pelestarian dan revitalisasinya semakin kritis mengingat faktor demografis. Dari 15 pemimpin tradisional yang memahami ritual Ningkuk pada tahun 2015, hanya lima yang tersisa, berusia 68-75 tahun. ¹⁶ Technology is also a factor, with internet and social media penetration in

⁸ Deni Lesmana, "Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0," *Kordinat: Jurnal Komunikasi Antar Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam* XXI, no. 2 (2022): 303–9.

⁹ Mujamil Qomar, "Character Education Based on Islamic Local Wisdom: A Case Study of Aswaja Value Internalization in a Madrasah Aliyah," Urwatul Wutsqo: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman 14, no. 1 (2025): 214–26.

Khoirunnisa et al., "Peran Pendidikan Islam Dalam Mengatasi Dampak Negatif Globalisasi Terhadap Karakter Generasi Z," Jurnal QOSIM Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial & Humaniora 3, no. 2 (2025): 790–800, https://doi.org/10.61104/jq.v3i2.1143.

¹¹ Noor Azida Batubara, "Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Kearifan Lokal (Local Wisdom) Di Kampung Mahmud Cigondewah Bandung," *Ma'rifah: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Dan Peradaban* 1, no. 1 (2024).

¹² Eny Supriati, Tiara Widya Antikasari, and Komarudin, "Strategic Model For Strengthening Digital Literacy At Uinponorogo And Uinkediri: Synergy Of Curriculum And Educational Programs," *Muslim Heritage* 10, no. 1 (2025).

¹³ Laitani Fauzani Muhammad Habibi MZ, Khalid Muddatstsir, and Yusriza Yusriza, "Potret Penerapan Pendidikan Karakter Di Aceh: Studi Penguatan Nilai Kearifan Lokal Di Era Globalisasi," *Ta'diban: Journal of Islamic Education* 5, no. 2 (2025): 75–88.

¹⁴ Rohmadi et al., "The Ngobeng Tradition In Palembang: Implementing Local Wisdom And Religious Moderation In Multicultural Education to Achieve Social," Muslim Heritage 10, no. 1 (2025).

¹⁵ Sudawan Supriadi and Sunarti Sunarti, "Tradisi Ningkuk Masyarakat Komering," *Jurnal Sosialita* 13, no. 1 (2020): 79–94, http://journal.upy.ac.id/index.php/sosialita/article/view/2358 %0Ahttps://journal.upy.ac. id/index.php/sosialita/article/download/2358/1492.

¹⁶ Tri Yunita Sari et al., "Membangun Identitas Lokal Dalam Era Globalisasi Untuk Melestarikan Budaya Dan Tradisi Yang Terancam Punah," *Academy of Social Science and Global Citizenship Journal* 2, no. 2 (2022): 76–84, https://doi.org/10.47200/aossagcj.v2i2.1842.

Sukarami Village reaching 85% by 2024, shifting the younger generation's attention from local traditions to global culture.¹⁷

A 2023 survey conducted by the South Sumatra Customary Institution revealed an alarming cultural transmission crisis. As many as 70% of young people in villages are unfamiliar with their traditional rituals. In Sukarami Village, the situation is even more critical, with only 30% of young people understanding the meaning and procedures of the Ningkuk ritual, even though it has been passed down for centuries. More worryingly, of that 30%, only 8% have ever been directly involved in the ritual, indicating that their understanding is theoretical and not supported by meaningful practical experience.¹⁸

Parents who still have complete control, with an average age above 70 years. If not immediately documented and preserved, this authentic knowledge is expected to be lost in the next 10-15 years. Second, conventional character education models have proven ineffective, as seen in the 23% increase in juvenile delinquency and school dropout rates in South Sumatra over the past three years. This points to the need for a more contextual and culturally rooted approach. Third, the Freedom of Learning policy provides strategic space for the development of a local wisdom-based curriculum, making this research relevant as a concrete implementation model that integrates cultural preservation and character building.

The complexity of this problem requires a comprehensive solution that cannot be delayed any longer. ¹⁹ The migration of young people to cities for work has caused a break in the chain of traditional cultural transmission, while the absence of a local curriculum that integrates Ningkuk rituals into the formal education system in villages has exacerbated the situation. ²⁰ The long-term consequences of not addressing this issue immediately are alarming: loss of local cultural identity, weak foundations for the character of the younger generation, dependence on foreign education models, and academic losses in the form of lost opportunities to explore authentic character education models based on local Indonesian wisdom. ²¹

The Ningkuk ritual in Sukarami Village, South Sumatra, represents a concrete example of how Islamic teachings have been synthesized with local cultural practices to create an effective mechanism for Islamic character education. This tradition, practiced by the indigenous Muslim community, embodies core Islamic values such as obedience to parents (birrul walidain), patience (sabar), gratitude (syukur), and communal solidarity (ukhuwah). The ritual begins with the recitation of verses from the Quran, salawat to the Prophet, and communal prayer (doa bersama), demonstrating its foundation in Islamic spirituality while maintaining local cultural identity.²²

This study aims to develop a model for integrating Islamic values into the Ningkuk ritual as character education based on local wisdom in South Sumatra, which can be applied to

¹⁷ Arifuddin M Arif, Nurdin Nurdin, and Elya Elya, "Character Education Management at Islamic Grassroot Education: The Integration of Local Social and Wisdom Values," *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 07, no. 02 (2023): 435–50.

¹⁸ Helmiati, "Madrasah Education in Secular, Modern and Multicultural Singapore: Challenges and Reforms," *Tsaqafah: Jurnal Peradahan Islam* 17, no. 155 (2021): 1–24.

¹⁹ Moh Rosyid and Lina Kushidayati, "Benda Budaya Pra-Islam Di Kota Kudus: Identifikasi Dan Pemaknaan Dalam Konteks Sejarah," Muslim Heritage 9, no. 2 (2024).

²⁰ Syarnubi, Syarnubi, Muhamad Fauzi et al., "Peran Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Menanamkan Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama," vol. 1 (In International Education Conference (IEC) FITK, 2023).

²¹ Aiman Faiz and Bukhori Soleh, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Kearifan Lokal," *JINoP (Jurnal Inovasi Pembelajaran)* 7, no. 1 (2021): 68–77, https://doi.org/10.22219/jinop.v7i1.14250.

²² Ni Putu et al., "Integrating Local Wisdom Values into Educational Management: A Literature Review on Character Development Aspects," *Indonesian Journal of Educational Inquiry* 2, no. 1 (2025): 42–51.

formal and non-formal education in the context of cultural preservation. Specifically, this research is directed at: (1) identifying Islamic character values contained in the Ningkuk ritual; (2) describing the procession, symbols, and theological-cultural meanings of each stage of the ritual; (3) exploring the mechanisms of value inheritance and the process of knowledge transfer between generations in the community; (4) formulating a character education model based on the integration of Islamic values and local wisdom that is in line with the curriculum; (5) developing evaluation instruments to assess the effectiveness of value internalization; (6) testing the application of the model in schools and community institutions as a form of empirical validation; and (7) compiling practical guidelines for educators, traditional leaders, and other stakeholders for the sustainable application of the Ningkuk ritual-based character education model.²³

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ISLAMIC CONTEXT IN THE NINGKUK RITUAL

The Ningkuk ceremony is a tradition of the Sukarami Village community, Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra, which marks the transition of a child's development from infancy to childhood. This ritual not only serves as a cultural heritage, but also as a medium for internalizing Islamic values and character building from an early age. Based on field observations from January to March 2025, the Ningkuk procession was held at the family home with the participation of traditional leaders, religious leaders, and the local community. The series of events began with the recitation of prayers and salawat as a form of spiritual affirmation, followed by placing the child on a traditional mat, sprinkling yellow rice, and serving symbolic foods such as lemang and wajik, which are interpreted as hope, blessings, and gratitude to Allah.

The observations also showed a division of roles that was in line with the values of cooperation, responsibility, and respect among community members. Women played a dominant role in preparing the ritual dishes, while men led the prayers and organized the procession, as seen in the event held on March 12, 2025, at the residence of Abdul Kadir's family (Gelar Kurnia Mukmin). The involvement of children in helping to organize the event reflects the character education process that takes place directly, through role models and cultural practices integrated with Islamic teachings.²⁴

²³ Shaza Fajhira, Rhoma Dwi Yuliantri, and Obydur Rahman, "Islamic Educational Values in the Formation of Student Character: A Case Study in Seberang Kota Jambi," Sicopus: Solo International Collaboration and Publication of Social Sciences and Humanities 3, no. 3 (2025): 387–98.

²⁴ "Dokumentasi Diambil Pada Saat Kegiatan Ningkuk Di Kediaman Rumah Bapak Abdul Kadir (Gelar Kurnia Mukmin) Di Desa Sukarami Kecamatan Tanjung Lubuk Kab. OKI Tanggal 12 Maret Pukul 09:00 WIB s/d 22:00 WIB,".



Figure 1: Ningkuk Activities in Sukarami Village



Figure 2: Atmosphere of Ningkuk Activities





Figure 3: Activities for Mothers and Teenagers

In-depth interviews with six sources, including traditional leaders, parents, and youth, revealed that Ningkuk is not only considered a family celebration, but also a means of instilling a sense of responsibility, discipline, and respect for social and spiritual norms.

Wiranata Kusuma (70),²⁵ A traditional leader who has led more than 70 Ningkuk processions explains:

"For us, the Ningkuk procession is not just a traditional ritual, but also a reminder that children are a trust that must be cared for together. Through this tradition, we instill Islamic values from an early age, such as responsibility, togetherness, and caring, so that children grow up in a good environment, in harmony with the teachings of our religion and culture."

This statement was confirmed by Nai Ratu Amin (48 years old), ²⁶ A housewife who has arranged Ningkuk for her three children:

"Through the traditional practice of Ningkuk, children are not only introduced to ancestral customs, but also guided to understand Islamic values such as respect for parents, modesty, and obedience to rules. This orderly and communal procession serves as an early form of character education, as children learn firsthand how to behave well, respect others, and follow the customs that have been passed down in accordance with Islamic teachings."

These findings show that Ningkuk functions as a means of community-based character education, where values such as respect for parents, mutual cooperation, and social solidarity are practiced and internalized. As stated by Clifford Geertz (1973), rituals in traditional societies are forms of cultural expression that contain deep symbolic meanings and serve as a means of strengthening collective identity. In the context of the Ningkuk ritual, symbols such as traditional mats, special dishes such as lemang and wajik, and prayers recited reflect a local value system that is integrated with Islamic teachings and internalized by the Sukarami community.²⁷

This ritual is not only a means of cultural preservation, but also serves as a medium for character education, where Islamic values such as gratitude, respect for parents, and togetherness are passed down orally, symbolically, and through direct practice.²⁸ This view is in line with Koentjaraningrat (2009), ²⁹ who asserts that the cultural value system in Indonesian society is passed down through symbolic and repetitive informal communication, including through traditional ceremonies and family rituals.³⁰

Synthesis of observational data and interviews shows that the Ningkuk ritual is not merely a traditional procession, but a social system that integrates Islamic values with local wisdom to strengthen family and community structures. This ritual has the potential to be an effective form of non-formal education in instilling character values such as manners, gratitude, togetherness, and spirituality in a sustainable manner. The continuity of the Ningkuk practice reflects a form of cultural-based enculturation of Islamic values that remains relevant amid the challenges of moral disintegration in the modern era.

CHARACTER EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LOCAL TRADITIONS

^{25 &}quot;Wawancara Dengan Tokoh Adat Wiranata Kusuma (70 Tahun) Tokoh Adat Desa Sukarami Kecamatan Tanjung Lubuk Kab. OKI Tanggal 12 Maret 2025 Pukul 17.20 WIB,".

²⁶ "Wawancara Dengan Ibu Nai Ratu Amin Ibu Rumah Tangga Desa Sukarami Kecamatan Tanjung Lubuk Kab. OKI Tanggal 13 Maret Pukul 13.00 WIB," 2025.

²⁷ Wahyuddin Nur Nasution et al., "Integrating Local Wisdom into Character Education," *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Multikulturalisme* 7, no. 2 (2025): 529–44, https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v7i2.7192.

²⁸ Muh Ibnu Sholeh et al., "Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Islam Dan Kearifan Lokal Dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Berbasis Karakter," ABDUSSALAM: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Islam 01, no. 01 (2025): 59–72.

²⁹ Syarnubi Syarnubi, "Pendidikan Karakter Pada Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 3 Palembang," UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, 2020.

³⁰ Alhamuddin Alhamuddin et al., "Revan Dwi Erlangga," *Hayula: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies* 6, no. 2 (2022): 185–204.

The Ningkuk ritual is a cultural practice of the Sukarami Village community, Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra, which is carried out to mark the transition of a child's development from infancy to childhood based on Islamic values. This tradition has a very strong Islamic symbolic and social dimension and has been passed down from generation to generation. Based on field observations conducted from January to March 2025, the Ningkuk procession is carried out collectively in the family home, with the involvement of the local community, extended family, traditional elders, and Islamic religious leaders (ustadz/mosque imams).

Observations also show that women play a dominant role in the logistics and culinary management of the ritual, while men play a greater role in the spiritual and symbolic aspects of Islam. For example, during the ritual held on March 12, 2025, at the residence of Mr. Abdul Kadir (Gelar Kurnia Mukmin), women were seen preparing food together, while men led Islamic prayers and organized the ceremony. Cross-generational involvement is also evident: children help arrange chairs and serve drinks, and are invited to sit together during the recitation of the Quran, demonstrating that the process of passing on Islamic values takes place in a practical and direct manner.

In-depth interviews with six sources, including traditional leaders, parents, and youth, reveal that Ningkuk is not only considered a family celebration, but also a medium for instilling a sense of responsibility, discipline, and respect for Islamic social and spiritual norms. Wiranata Kusuma (70 years old), a traditional leader who has led more than 70 Ningkuk processions, explains:³¹

"Ningkuk is not just a tradition, but it is also a way for us to teach our children about Islam from an early age. We begin by reading prayers, salawat, and verses from the Quran so that our children grow up with Allah's blessings. This is Islamic moral education taught through tradition. Marriage is not just a traditional ceremony, but also reminds us that our children are our shared responsibility to care for and support each other, so that our children can grow up in a good environment, both in terms of Islam and culture."

This statement is reinforced by Nai Ratu Amin (48), a housewife who has held Ningkuk for her three children: ³²

"Through the traditional practice of ningkuk, children learn about togetherness in Islam (ukhuwah) and how to be good, so that they are taught to respect their parents in accordance with Islamic teachings (birrul walidain) and follow the correct procedures in accordance with Sharia law."

These findings show that Ningkuk functions as a medium for character education based on the Muslim community, where values such as respect for parents (birrul walidain, one of the main obligations in Islam), mutual cooperation (ta'awun, a commandment in the Quran), and social solidarity (ukhuwah islamiyah) are practiced and internalized. As Clifford Geertz (1973) stated, rituals in traditional societies are forms of cultural expression that contain deep symbolic meanings and serve as a means of strengthening collective identity. In the context of Islam, rituals such as Ningkuk also serve as social worship (ibadah ijtima'iyah) that are rewarded by Allah. ³³

According to Thomas Lickona, character education encompasses three main dimensions: moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions. All three of these can be

^{31 &}quot;Wawancara Dengan Tokoh Adat Wiranata Kusuma (70 Tahun) Tokoh Adat Desa Sukarami Kecamatan Tanjung Lubuk Kab. OKI Tanggal 12 Maret Pukul 17.20 WIB."

³² "Wawancara Dengan Ibu Nai Ratu Amin Ibu Rumah Tangga Desa Sukarami Kecamatan Tanjung Lubuk Kab. OKI Tanggal 13 Maret Pukul 13.00 WIB."

³³ Makherus Sholeh et al., "Journal of Integrated Elementary Education," *Journal of Integrated Elementary Education* 4, no. 1 (2024): 54–70.

clearly seen in the Ningkuk ceremony..³⁴ Moral knowledge is reflected in the understanding of traditional values instilled through stories and explanations from parents to children. Moral feelings arise in the form of empathy and respect for ancestors, which are fostered by the sacred atmosphere of the ceremony. Moral actions, on the other hand, are reflected in the active participation of family members and the community in preparing and carrying out the procession, including social responsibility in helping the family holding the event.³⁵

Therefore, Ningkuk, as a cultural practice, has great potential as an effective model for contextual character education. This process can be revived as a community-based educational tool that combines learning values with strengthening cultural identity.

EDUCATIONAL VALUES IN THE NINGKUK RITUAL

The Ningkuk ritual contains educational values that are highly relevant to the development of a character education model based on local wisdom, especially when viewed from the perspective of integrating Islamic values. Based on field observations and in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, housewives, and elementary school teachers in Sukarami Village in 2025, it was found that the Ningkuk procession not only functions as a cultural tradition but also as a mechanism for the natural internalization of Islamic values. Values such as respect for parents, togetherness, gratitude, manners, responsibility, and spirituality are instilled not through verbal instruction, but through ritual symbols, collective actions, and social participation that are passed down from generation to generation. Thus, Ningkuk is a concrete example of how local wisdom can be integrated with Islamic values to shape the character of participants in a holistic and contextual manner.

Responsibility and Independence

One of the important values in the Ningkuk ritual is responsibility, which is in line with the principles of character education in Islam. Children are involved in the procession, such as helping to prepare food and tidying up the living room, as a form of social role learning. Based on interviews with mothers in Sukarami Village, this involvement is deliberately done to foster a sense of responsibility from an early age. Thus, Ningkuk serves as a simple yet effective medium for internalizing Islamic values in everyday life. One of the sources, Mrs. Sri (45 years old), stated: "It's not just about learning to cook and work, but also educating children to understand customs and responsibilities."

Purity and Spirituality in Islam

Observations of the Ningkuk ceremony in March 2025 show that the procession always begins with a prayer led by local religious leaders, confirming that Islamic values are naturally integrated into this tradition. The involvement of children sitting together and participating in the prayer illustrates the process of internalizing spiritual values and etiquette directly. Thus, Ningkuk serves not only as a cultural ritual but also as a space for Islamic character education based on local wisdom that is relevant to the people of South Sumatra.³⁷

Cooperation and Solidarity in Islamic Values in the Ningkuk Ritual

³⁴ Muhammad Hizbullah et al., "Eksistensi Pendidikan Karakter Islami Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Program," *Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education* 4, no. 2 (2023): 213–31.

³⁵ Ami Latifah, "Strategi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Dalam Membangun Karakter Islami Siswa," AN NAJAH (Jurnal Pengembangan Dan Sosiologi Keagamaan 02, no. 05 (2023): 1–9.

^{36 &}quot;Wawancara Dengan Ibu Sri (Usia 45 Tahun) Di Desa Sukarami Kecamatan Tanjung Lubuk Kab. OKI Tanggal 12 Maret 2025 Pukul 09.00 WIB,".

³⁷ "Hasil Observasi Lapangan, Pelaksanaan Ritual Ningkuk Di Kediaman Bapak Abdul Kadir, Desa Sukarami, Kec. Tanjung Lubuk Kab. OKI1 12-13 Maret 2025, Pukul 09.45 WIB.,".

The involvement of all elements of society in the implementation of Ningkuk demonstrates the strong values of cooperation and mutual assistance that are part of the Islamic character of the Sukarami community. During the observation, it was seen that neighbors and extended family came to help without being asked, thereby strengthening solidarity and social cohesion. This value of togetherness is in line with the principle of ta'awun in Islam and is an important part of character building based on local wisdom, which is integrated through the Ningkuk ritual.³⁸ In an interview with Mr. Roni, a local traditional leader, he said: "We help anyone who holds a celebration or event. Because community service is not only about traditional work, but also about a sense of togetherness and unity."

Equality of Social Roles Based on Islamic Values in the Ningkuk Ritual

The Ningkuk ritual also reflects the value of equality of roles in the community, which is in line with the principle of justice in Islam. Although women are mostly involved in kitchen and service aspects, their contributions are valued as determinants of the success of the procession. In an interview with Mrs. Rina, one of the food preparers, she said: "The Obaisa do have control in the kitchen, but in jak sijasa, we maintain traditional values, relatives learn to learn from each other." Thus, the role of women is not only practical but also symbolic as agents of cultural preservation. This value conveys the message that character education is not only shaped by structural formalities, but also integrates values of appreciation and social justice that support the formation of Islamic character in society.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE NINGKUK RITUAL IN THE MODERN ERA

Modernization has had a significant impact on cultural practices, including the Ningkuk ceremony. Field observations conducted from May to June 2025 in Sukarami Village show that the frequency of Ningkuk celebrations has declined dramatically over the past two decades. Of the 15 households interviewed, only four (26.6%) still carry out the ceremony in its entirety, while the rest admit to replacing it with a simpler form of celebration or even eliminating it altogether. Some of the reasons cited include time constraints, economic burdens, and the perception that the ritual is no longer relevant to modern lifestyles.⁴⁰

One of the key informants, Mrs. R, a 63-year-old woman who is also a traditional leader in Dusun III Sukarami, stated that "In the past, when I was a child, all children had to bow their heads. But now, many parents feel that it is troublesome and unnecessary. Children are only taken to regular thanksgiving ceremonies, without the full procession" ⁴¹ This statement is supported by observational data during the implementation of the only Ningkuk ritual that is still carried out in its entirety in May 2025, which only involves three neighboring houses and no official involvement from traditional leaders.

This phenomenon indicates a disruption of values, namely a shift in cultural meaning and priorities marked by a decline in the symbolic authority of tradition. As Giddens points out, modernity has changed the relationship between identity, time, and space, causing many

³⁸ U Abdullah Mu'min, "Construction of Islamic Character Education Values Based on Local Wisdom in Culture Kasepuhan and Kanoman Palaces," *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 4, no. 2 (2023): 305–18.

^{39 &}quot;Wawancara Dengan Pak Roni, Seorang Tokoh Adat Di Desa Sukarami Kecamatan Tanjung Lubuk Kab. OKI Tanggal 13 Maret 2025 Pukul 14.59 WIB,".

^{40 &}quot;Hasil Wawancara Lapangan Dengan 15 Kepala Keluarga, Desa Sukarami, Kec. Tanjung Lubuk Kab. Ogan Komering Ilir Mei-Juni 2025.,".

^{41 &}quot;Wawancara Mendalam Dengan Ibu R., Tokoh Adat Lokal, Desa Sukarami, 18 Mei 2025, Pukul 08.00 WIB,".

local practices to lose their relevance in the context of a fast-paced and pragmatic society. 42 Ningkuk, which was originally a symbolic transition mechanism and a means of strengthening communal identity, is now considered an administrative burden or even a ritual that restricts individual freedom.

However, not all changes lead to extinction. According to Hobsbawm and Ranger, traditions can undergo a process of revitalization or reinvention, which is the readjustment of old practices into simpler or more symbolic forms, while still retaining their core meaning. This is evidenced by interviews with two young couples, Mr. A (32 years old) and Mrs. S (29 years old), who stated that they still perform Ningkuk, but only within the immediate family and omit some parts of the ceremony. "We still perform prayers and hair cutting ceremonies, but we no longer invite many people or use ceremonial offerings. We do the essential/important things so that the children continue to learn the customs, but without burdening the family," they said. 44

These findings indicate that the Sukarami community is undergoing a phase of cultural transition, in which traditions are not being completely abandoned, but rather undergoing transformation in terms of form, meaning, and mechanisms of inheritance. In this context, Ningkuk has undergone a change in meaning, from a communal practice to a personal symbol of family values and spirituality. This transformation also opens up opportunities to redesign culturally-based character education models that are adaptive to current developments.⁴⁵

Although the Ningkuk ritual faces challenges due to modernization, it still has the potential to be preserved through contextual, economic, and functional approaches. Community-based educational efforts, school involvement in documenting local culture, and regulatory support from local governments are key to maintaining the continuity of the ritual's noble values.

THE NINGKUK RITUAL AS A MODEL FOR CONTEXTUAL CHARACTER EDUCATION

The Ningkuk ritual has great potential as a model for character education that is contextual, applicable, and rooted in the social reality of the local community. This is in line with the culturally responsive pedagogy approach, which places culture as the main foundation in the learning process and character building.⁴⁶ In this context, Ningkuk describes the character values that are lived and practiced collectively by the people of Sukarami Village.

An in-depth interview with a traditional leader in Sukarami Village, Mr. M. Adnan (65 years old), in May 2025, revealed that values such as mutual cooperation, respect for elders, social awareness, and purity of intention in educating children are key elements of this ritual. He stated, "Children who are just learning to walk are not only educated at home, but also introduced to

⁴² Asriana Kibtiyah, Khoirotul Idawati, and Yusuf Ahmed Muaz, "Collaboration on Local Wisdom-Based Character Education between Schools and Parents of Students in Islamic Religious Education Units," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 9, no. 2 (2025).

⁴³ Mada Indramawan, Machdum Bachtiar, and Fandy Adpen Lazzavietamsi, "Konstruksi Pendidikan Karakter Pondok Pesantren Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Di Banten," *Jurnal Ilmiah Edukatif* 10, no. 2 (2024): 122–32, https://doi.org/10.37567/jie.v10i2.3062.

^{44 &}quot;Wawancara Dengan Bapak A Dan Ibu S, Pasangan Muda Di Sukarami, 1 Juni 2025.,".

⁴⁵ Rafi Ardiansyah, "Integration of Local Wisdom Values in Character Education," *Al Yazidiy* 7, no. 1 (2025): 175–93, https://doi.org/10.55606/ay.v7i1.1331.

⁴⁶ James A. Banks, *An Introduction to Multicultural Education* (Boston: Pearson, 2009).

the community, so that they know that they are growing up in an environment where everyone reminds and educates each other."⁴⁷

The field findings were also reinforced by direct observations made during the Ningkuk ceremony in Sukarami II Village in April 2025. This procession was attended by various segments of society regardless of social status, and involved people of all ages: mothers prepared food together in the communal kitchen, traditional leaders led prayers, and young people from youth organizations organized the event. ⁴⁸ This intergenerational interaction creates a dynamic social learning space, where values such as discipline, responsibility, and honesty are instilled through direct practices rich in symbolic meaning. From a sociocultural perspective, these values reflect the zone of proximal development, as proposed by Vygotsky, that learning occurs in the context of meaningful social interaction and involves real experiences in everyday life. ⁴⁹ Children who participate in the learning process through observation, imitation, and active involvement in local cultural value structures.

In addition, integrating Ningkuk values into the local content curriculum for elementary schools is a strategic approach to developing student character. Teachers can design project-based learning or thematic activities that highlight elements of Ningkuk, such as simulating traditional discussions, creating cultural artworks, or conducting mini ethnographic studies within the family environment. This strategy supports experience-based learning and strengthens students' attachment to the values they recognize socially.⁵⁰

Thus, Ningkuk can be reconstructed as a character education model that is not only locally relevant but also contributes significantly to shaping students with strong culture, character, and social identity. This model is also in line with the strengthening of inclusive multicultural education and supports the vision of national character development rooted in local wisdom.

Theoretically, this study shows that the Ningkuk ritual not only functions as a cultural tradition of the Sukarami community, but also as a space for the integration of Islamic values and local wisdom. Processions such as reciting prayers, scattering yellow rice, and honoring parents show that religious and cultural values coexist harmoniously. This finding reinforces the ethnopedagogical view that cultural practices can be a vehicle for character building when religious values are present in them.⁵¹

The findings of this study also confirm the relevance of Lickona's character education theory, especially in relation to the dimensions of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. In the context of Ningkuk, these three dimensions are reflected through the children's direct experiences in participating in prayers, helping their parents, and participating in mutual cooperation activities. The integration of cultural experiences and Islamic values shows how character is formed not only through formal teaching but also through social-communal practices that occur naturally.⁵²

⁴⁷ "Wawancara Dengan M. Adnan, Tokoh Adat Desa Sukarami, 10 Mei 2025.,".

⁴⁸ "The Author's Observation Results During the Ningkuk Ritual in Sukarami Hamlet II, April 21, 2025,".

⁴⁹ Mind in Society Lev Vygotsky, *The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 86AD).

⁵⁰ Achmad Achmad and Barnoto Barnoto, "Pendidikan Karakter Perspektif Kearifan Lokal," *ILJ: Islamic Learning Journal (Jurnal Pendidikan Islam)* 3, no. 2 (2025): 297–318.

⁵¹ Lev Vygotsky, The Development of Higher Psychological Processes.

^{52 &}quot;Hasil Wawancara Dengan Ibu R., Warga Dusun III Desa Sukarami, Sumatera Selatan, 12 Maret 2025.,".

Compared to previous studies such as Supriadi & Sunarti (2020), which emphasized the traditional aspects of Ningkuk, or Rosmalah (2021), which highlighted culture-based character education in general, this study makes a new contribution by focusing on how Islamic values are internalized through symbols and ritual processes. These studies have not explicitly examined the integration of Islamic values in the Ningkuk tradition, thus indicating a new space that is filled by this study.⁵³

Based on this comparison, this study fills a research gap in the form of a lack of studies that describe the mechanism of intergenerational inheritance of Islamic values through cultural rituals. In addition, there have not been many studies that map out how the local wisdom of South Sumatra can become a model of character education that is relevant to the context of modern society. This study provides a theoretical contribution by developing a model of character education based on Islamic local wisdom, which has not been comprehensively explained before.⁵⁴

From a practical standpoint, this study indicates that the Ningkuk ritual can be used as a model for non-formal character education that can be adopted by schools, informal educational institutions, and local governments. Values such as manners, gratitude, togetherness, responsibility, and spirituality can be integrated into the local content curriculum, P5 programs, and culture-based extracurricular activities. These findings also reinforce the need for schools to collaborate with traditional leaders and religious leaders to ensure that character education in schools remains relevant to the cultural identity and Islamic values of the people of South Sumatra.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the Ningkuk ritual is an effective, multi-layered character education mechanism that is organically integrated into the life of the Sukarami Village community. Through a procession that includes reciting prayers, symbolic activities, communal cooperation, and cross-generational involvement, Ningkuk internalizes core values in Islamic character education such as respect for parents, patience, gratitude, responsibility, purity, social solidarity, and cooperation (ta'awun). These values are not taught formally, but rather through social habits and role models, thus forming an educational process that is in line with the principles of ethnopedagogy and Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory.

From a theoretical perspective, this study expands our understanding of how Islamic values can be integrated into cultural rituals and serve as a means of intergenerational character education. This study also fills a gap in previous literature, which only highlighted aspects of Ningkuk customs but did not comprehensively examine the integration of Islamic values in the character-building process. The scientific contribution of this study lies in the development of an Islamic local wisdom-based character education model that can be used as a reference for further research and community-based educational practices.

Practically, the research findings provide a basis for the development of character education models that can be adopted by schools, community institutions, and local governments. The integration of Ningkuk values can be applied through local content curricula, P5 projects, cultural extracurricular activities, and community-based non-formal education programs. Thus,

⁵³ "Results of the FGD with Teachers of SDN 1 Sukarami, March 14, 2025,"

⁵⁴ James P. Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 61AD).

the revitalization of the Ningkuk ritual not only serves as cultural preservation, but also as a strategy to strengthen the moral, spiritual, and social identity of the younger generation in facing the challenges of modernization.

This study recommends the need for collaboration between schools, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and local governments in integrating local wisdom into the education system. This effort is important to ensure the sustainability of cultural and Islamic values, while creating a character education model that is relevant, contextual, and rooted in the traditions of the people of South Sumatra.

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