

## **Character Education Based on Customary Law and Religion: The Contribution of Mosque *Sasi* to Meaningful Learning**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines how the Sasi tradition, as practiced in mosques in Maluku, Indonesia, integrates local wisdom and Islamic teachings in character education. The Sasi tradition, rooted in customary law and community-based resource management, promotes values such as cooperation, gratitude, environmental responsibility, and social harmony. As mosques increasingly serve as centers for cultural and moral learning, these practices provide a meaningful model for students' moral and social development. Using a combined methodology of systematic literature review and reflective analysis of field experiences, this study explores how mosque-based Sasi contributes to character education that is both contextually relevant and rooted in local culture. Results show that merging customary values with religious teachings strengthens students' ethical awareness and cultural identity, while also fostering religious commitment and social responsibility. However, several challenges persist: misalignment between mosque programs and formal school curricula, limited documentation of local traditions, insufficient teacher preparation, and the effects of modernization, which reduce youth engagement with cultural practices. Collaboration among mosques, schools, families, and communities is critical for sustaining these efforts, but coordination barriers and resource limitations often hinder effectiveness. Despite these obstacles, the study concludes that mosque-based character education grounded in local wisdom offers a resonant model for holistic moral development. Strengthening curriculum integration, enhancing teacher training, formalizing collaboration, and using adaptive strategies such as digital media can improve the scalability and continuity of this approach. Ultimately, mosque-based Sasi offers a valuable pathway for nurturing ethically grounded, culturally aware, and socially responsible future generations in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *Character education; local wisdom; Sasi tradition; mosque; Islamic values.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Integrating local wisdom and religious teachings, such as the Sasi tradition, directly into character education is increasingly seen as key to developing ethical and socially responsible human resources in Indonesia. Character education in this diverse nation becomes complex when interwoven with customary law values and religious teachings, reflecting the richness of Indonesia's cultural heritage.

Over time, mosques have evolved from mere places of worship into centers of education that instill moral and social values. Mosque-based education integrates Islamic religious teachings and the principles of local customs deeply rooted in cultural traditions. In this context, mosques play a significant role in instilling teachings that shape students' behavior, such as discipline, cooperation, and social responsibility. One cultural practice used as a tool for character education is the Sasi

tradition, which originates from Maluku. This tradition emphasizes the importance of preserving natural resources and of taking responsibility towards others within the community (Mubarok et al., 2025; Puspita & Rosyid, 2025).

The Sasi tradition involves regulating natural resources to prevent overexploitation, which impacts not only the environment but also social harmony. Values such as cooperation, gratitude, and social responsibility, when embedded in Sasi, can enrich character education in mosques (Puspita & Rosyid, 2025; Vaizal & Halomoan, 2025) Thus, education that integrates both customary law and religious teachings not only emphasizes moral values but also fosters a strong social identity by teaching cultural values.

Previous studies have shown that character education based on religious values and customary law has a positive impact on students' moral and religious development. For example, Puspita and Rosyid (2025) found that traditions such as Manganan and Kenduri Nasi, conducted in mosques, strengthen values such as tolerance, gratitude, and cooperation among students, all of which are key elements in the development of resilient character (Puspita & Rosyid, 2025).

However, despite the proven effectiveness of mosque-based character education that incorporates local wisdom, several challenges remain. One such challenge is the difficulty in integrating customary values into formal educational curricula. This often hinders the sustainability and development of mosque-based educational programs. As Nuhari (2025) noted, there is a significant gap between mosque-based education programs and the formal school curriculum, resulting in misalignment between the two (Nuhari, 2025). Additionally, limited resources and challenges related to modernization hinder the implementation of programs grounded in local wisdom (Aulia & Yuliyanti, 2024; Ridho et al., 2025).

Amid these challenges, the Sasi tradition in mosques offers a relevant opportunity to introduce character education that emphasizes religious values while also acknowledging and preserving local wisdom. In this context, the mosque serves as an institution that combines religious teachings and local wisdom to shape individuals who are not only religious but also socially responsible. Therefore, it is important to further understand the contribution of mosque-based Sasi to character education, particularly in creating meaningful, contextually relevant learning for students in Indonesia (Handoyo & Khobir, 2025; Mubarok et al., 2025).

This research seeks to fill the gap in current understanding by investigating how the Sasi tradition, when taught in mosques, can enhance character education. It further aims to identify both barriers and opportunities for integrating this mosque-based approach with formal education to foster more effective and holistic learning (Fachrurradhi et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2024).

## **METHODS**

This study employs a literature review and reflective experience approach. The combination of these methods enables a comprehensive understanding of the integration of customary law and religious teachings in character education, particularly through the mosque-based Sasi tradition. By synthesizing existing research and reflecting on the researcher’s own field experiences, the study aims to offer a nuanced perspective on the role of local wisdom and religious practices in shaping students’ character.

### ***Literature Review***

The first component of the methodology is a systematic literature review of relevant academic sources across disciplines such as education, sociology, anthropology, and religious studies. The focus is on identifying studies that explore the intersection of character education, religious teachings, and local wisdom, particularly those that examine mosque-based education in Indonesia. The literature review process follows a structured approach:

1. Relevant studies are selected for their focus on integrating customary law, religious teachings, and local practices, such as the Sasi tradition, in character education. Research published from 2010 to 2025 is prioritized to ensure coverage of recent findings.
2. Thematic Analysis: After selecting the relevant studies, a thematic analysis is conducted to identify key patterns, challenges, and insights related to mosque-based character education. This involves categorizing the literature by common themes, such as the role of the mosque as an educational institution, the integration of local wisdom, and the impact of religious and customary law on students' moral development.
3. Critical Synthesis: A critical synthesis of the literature review findings is conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of mosque-based programs in promoting character education. This step includes assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the current research, identifying gaps in the literature, and highlighting the potential for future research.

### ***Reflective Experience of the Researcher***

In addition to the literature review, this study incorporates a reflective experience component, drawing on the researcher's personal experiences and fieldwork to offer practical insights into the implementation of mosque-based education. This approach allows the researcher to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world practice, offering a more holistic perspective on the challenges and opportunities inherent in integrating local wisdom and religious teachings into character education. The reflective process includes:

1. **Personal Observations:** The researcher reflects on experiences working with mosque-based education programs, particularly those involving community participation in traditions such as Sasi. These observations help to contextualize the literature findings and offer insights into how cultural practices can be effectively incorporated into educational settings.
2. **Critical Reflection on Practice:** The researcher reflects on the challenges encountered in implementing mosque-based character education programs, including balancing traditional values with modern educational demands and addressing resource limitations in some communities.
3. **Synthesis of Practical and Theoretical Insights:** Finally, the researcher synthesizes lessons from the literature review and personal experiences, offering practical recommendations for educators, policymakers, and community leaders seeking to integrate local wisdom and religious values into character education.

By combining the strengths of the literature review with the researcher's personal reflections, this methodology aims to provide a well-rounded understanding of the role that mosque-based education, particularly the Sasi tradition, plays in character development and moral education.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Through an in-depth literature review and reflection on the researcher's experience, several key findings were identified regarding the contribution of character education grounded in customary law and religion, as embodied in the Sasi mosque tradition, to meaningful learning. These findings provide insights into the potential and challenges faced in implementing character education programs that integrate local wisdom and religious teachings, as well as their impact on students' moral and social development.

### **Integration of Customary Law and Religious Teachings in Character Education**

Character education based on customary law and religious teachings has a significant impact on shaping students' character. Through the Sasi tradition carried out in mosques, local values such as cooperation, tolerance, gratitude, and social responsibility are deeply embedded in students' everyday lives. This aligns with findings from several studies showing that integrating local wisdom and religious teachings can strengthen character formation in a more contextually and culturally relevant way (Hikmawati & Asyhari, 2024; Puspita & Rosyid, 2025).

Mosque-based programs, such as those in the Sasi tradition, provide students with space not only to develop a deeper understanding of religion but also to internalize cultural values that teach them to appreciate others and the environment. However, the challenge is to ensure that the integration of customary

values and religious teachings is systematically and structurally implemented, despite the mismatch with the formal school curriculum.

### **The Importance of the Mosque as a Center for Character Education**

Mosques have long served as centers of education in Muslim communities, not only as places of worship but also as institutions that educate the character and morals of the faithful. Through various programs, such as halaqah, religious study groups, and mosque-based social activities, mosques have made significant contributions to the development of students' character.

These programs teach moral and religious values that are highly relevant to students' daily lives. Mosque-based education has unique characteristics, combining spiritual values with strong community involvement. Activities such as Sasi, in which the community manages natural resources or social initiatives, provide students with practical lessons in environmental and social responsibility. Although mosques play a critical role in character education, many are losing their educational influence due to modernization and changing priorities within formal education. As a result, revitalizing the mosque's role in integrated character education within formal school activities remains crucial (Hadi et al., 2025; Mulyono, 2017).

### **Challenges in Integrating Local Wisdom into the Curriculum**

One of the biggest challenges in implementing mosque-based character education is the gap between the formal educational curriculum and local cultural practices, such as the Sasi tradition. While there is recognition of the importance of local wisdom in character education, studies show that the school curriculum still struggles to fully accommodate local values associated with customs. This contributes to an imbalance between formal education and education based on local cultural practices. In many regions, the formal educational curriculum emphasizes academic achievement and national standards, while local values are rarely systematically incorporated.

Some studies reveal that, although efforts have been made to include local values in character education, the main obstacles are the lack of adequate documentation of local cultural practices and teachers' limited ability to integrate these values into everyday teaching (Inayati et al., 2024; Nuhari, 2025). Therefore, a more flexible and integrative curriculum approach is needed to accommodate the wealth of local culture that can enrich character education.

### **The Role of Stakeholder Collaboration in the Success of the Program**

The success of mosque-based character education depends heavily on close collaboration among various stakeholders, including mosques, schools, parents, and the community. This collaboration creates a more holistic educational ecosystem that is responsive to students' needs. Studies reviewed indicate that stakeholder

involvement, particularly parents and the local community, is essential to ensure the sustainability and success of mosque-based character education programs (Mubarok et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2024).

However, while this collaboration is recognized as a key success factor, challenges emerge in maintaining sustained engagement from all parties. Resource limitations, differing priorities between formal education and cultural values, and ineffective coordination between schools and mosques often hinder this collaboration's success. Therefore, it is important to develop a more structured collaboration model that enables stakeholders to actively participate in the design, implementation, and evaluation of character education programs (Larasati et al., 2025; Ridho et al., 2025).

### **Positive Impact on Character Formation**

Mosque-based character education and local traditions such as Sasi have proven to have a positive impact on students' moral and social development. Several studies show that students involved in mosque-based programs are more likely to demonstrate ethical behavior and responsibility in daily life. They are also more aware of the importance of cooperation, tolerance, and gratitude, which are at the core of character education based on customs and religion.

Moreover, mosque-based programs play a significant role in building students' religious character. Through activities that integrate religious teachings and local wisdom, students not only gain a deeper understanding of religion but also develop a sense of ownership over their cultural identity. This contributes to better social cohesion within the community, with students becoming more capable of appreciating diversity and actively participating in maintaining social harmony (Mubarok et al., 2025; Puspita & Rosyid, 2025).

However, while these positive impacts are clear, findings also indicate that challenges in maintaining student motivation and measuring the long-term impact of character education programs remain issues that need to be addressed. Many mosque-based programs lack adequate evaluation mechanisms, hindering a deeper understanding of their long-term effectiveness.

### **Revitalizing Local Traditions in Character Education**

Revitalizing local traditions, such as Sasi, is key to maintaining the relevance of mosque-based character education amidst the currents of modernization and globalization. Local traditions preserved within the context of mosque-based education provide an effective means of transmitting moral and cultural values to students. Traditional rituals, such as customary ceremonies and communal meals, enrich the learning experience in a more contextual and authentic way.

However, revitalizing local traditions is not without challenges, particularly in adapting these cultural values to remain relevant to contemporary educational

needs. Research shows that, although efforts have been made to revive local traditions, shifts in lifestyle and the influence of global culture often threaten their sustainability. Therefore, a more innovative and adaptive approach is required to blend traditional wisdom with the demands of modern education (Ridho et al., 2025; Vaizal & Halomoan, 2025).

Mosque-based character education rooted in customary law and religion, exemplified by the Sasi tradition, provides a model for moral and social development. This approach draws on local wisdom, rich in cultural and religious values, to shape religious and socially conscious individuals. The mosque's central role as an educational institution lies in its ability to merge religious teachings with cultural values. Activities such as halaqahs, religious study groups, and community-based discussions promote virtues such as cooperation, responsibility, politeness, and tolerance. As noted by (Mubarok et al., 2025), mosque programs develop religious awareness and embed crucial social values. Daily practices communal prayers, recitations, and group discussions encourage ethical conduct, positioning the mosque as a holistic institution for character building rather than merely a place of worship.

Implementing mosque-based character education faces major challenges, most notably the difficulty of aligning mosque teachings with formal school curricula. This lack of alignment fragments efforts and limits reinforcement of introduced values. Synchronizing mosque-based programs with national curricula remains a significant issue, as (Nuhari, 2025) highlights, and requires structural and pedagogical solutions. However, integrating local wisdom, exemplified by the Sasi tradition, enriches education by contextualizing moral instruction in students' real lives. Sasi's blend of religious and indigenous practices strengthens cooperation and mutual respect (Puspita & Rosyid, 2025). Still, formal documentation, curricular recognition, and institutional support are limited obstacles to scaling these initiatives. Many cultural practices remain outside the formal framework because of curriculum and teacher preparation gaps (Inayati et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of mosque-based character education depends on collaboration among stakeholders, including mosques, schools, parents, and community leaders. When institutions reinforce program values together, students benefit from a comprehensive ecosystem for moral development. Research by (Mubarok et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2024) confirms that active community engagement strengthens implementation and maintains cultural relevance. However, limited resources, differing priorities, and a lack of policy support often create coordination difficulties. Weak institutional partnerships, as identified by (Novianti et al., 2025), can threaten program continuity, underscoring the need for structured, sustained collaboration.

Modernization and globalization challenge mosque-based character education, as youth increasingly adopt digital lifestyles and move away from tradition. (Ridho et al., 2025) describe how individualistic and materialistic trends hinder youth engagement in traditions like Sasi. Incorporating digital media and technology may help close this gap, as suggested by (Khojir et al., 2025), by offering religious and cultural values in digital formats that are relevant to students. Yet, further study is required to determine if technology can promote deep moral learning rather than simply serve as an information tool.

Finally, the effective integration of local wisdom and religious values requires curriculum development and adequate teacher preparation. As (Fachrurradhi et al., 2025) argue, instructional materials grounded in local wisdom help students connect moral teachings with their sociocultural realities, enriching the learning experience. Yet this potential cannot be fully realized without well-trained teachers who can employ culturally responsive pedagogy. (Nurhayati et al., 2025) note that many educators lack the skills to implement mosque-based, culturally grounded character education, thereby limiting the program’s overall impact. Therefore, teacher training that emphasizes local wisdom, religious values, and integrative pedagogical strategies is essential for ensuring that mosque-based character education functions effectively and sustainably. Strengthening teacher competencies will enable them to deliver culturally meaningful learning experiences that support students’ moral development in ways that resonate with their religious and cultural identities.

## **CONCLUSION**

Integrating local wisdom and Islamic values through mosque-based programs, particularly Sasi Masjid traditions, effectively promotes students' moral development and social responsibility. The mosque serves as a multifaceted institution that imparts essential religious and cultural values for holistic student growth. These initiatives cultivate core ethical values cooperation, tolerance, and gratitude that are essential to building a cohesive, responsible society. Despite their effectiveness, aligning mosque-based character education with formal systems and sustaining stakeholder collaboration face notable challenges under modernization. To sustain and expand these efforts, it is vital to formalize collaboration, enhance curriculum integration, and invest in teacher training. Future research should prioritize assessing long-term impacts and developing standardized evaluation tools to guide policy and practice. In summary, mosque-based education integrating local wisdom and Islamic values provides a culturally resonant, spiritually rich, and socially responsible model for character education. When systematically integrated

into formal education, this model can shape the moral character of future generations while safeguarding cultural heritage.

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