

The Values of Customary Education as Moral and Spiritual Principles of the Baduy Community and Their Relevance in the 4.0 Era

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe and analyze traditional education as the source of ethical and spiritual values for the Baduy community and its relevance in facing the challenges of the 4.0 era. The research was conducted in Kanekes Village, Leuwidamar District, Lebak Regency, Banten Province, home to the Outer Baduy community. This location was selected due to the Baduy community's renowned steadfastness in maintaining their customs, ethical codes, and ancestral heritage amidst rapid modernization. The unique character of the Baduy people—marked by resilience, honesty, humility, discipline, and profound spiritual and social responsibility—is cultivated through their traditional education, which operates without formal schooling. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive method with an Ethnographic approach, data was gathered through in-depth interviews with customary leaders and Outer Baduy residents, supplemented by relevant literature studies. The findings indicate that Baduy customary education thrives through the intergenerational transmission of principles via role modeling, adherence to customs, and daily activities. Prominent moral principles include honesty, cooperation, obedience to customary rules, and respect for the natural environment. Meanwhile, spiritual values are reflected in the adherence to *pikukuh karuhun* (ancestral teachings), the prohibition of modern technology use in Inner Baduy, and maintaining a restricted lifestyle as a form of self-control. Field observations show that although some Outer Baduy residents have begun to integrate with the outside world and utilize technology, traditional moral and spiritual principles remain their primary guideline. In the current 4.0 era, Baduy customary education proves highly relevant, serving as a robust moral and spiritual bulwark against the rapid tides of modernization and globalization.

Keywords: *Traditional education; Moral values; Spiritual values; Baduy Tribe; 4.0 Era.*

INTRODUCTION

Customary education, understood as a learning process embedded within the daily life and traditions of a local community, functions as a local system for transmitting information, values, and customs from one generation to the next through established principles and guided methods. Indonesia's profound ethnic diversity—encompassing differences in tribes, religions, races, languages, and cultures—is defined by numerous distinct groups, each possessing unique social and cultural characteristics.

In Banten Province, the Baduy Tribe stands out due to its unique self-isolated existence in Kanekes Village, approximately 46 km south of Rangkasbitung. The

Baduy community maintains a highly autonomous lifestyle, deliberately avoiding external cultural influence and external assistance. Access to formal education poses a significant challenge, as they are traditionally prohibited from attending school, adhering instead to ancestral customs which prioritize a simple life and ancient ways (Winursiti, Sapriya, & Supriatna: 2025). This adherence is encapsulated in the ancient adage, “*Larangan tidak boleh dilakukan, Buyut tidak boleh diubah*” (Prohibitions must not be violated, *Buyut* must not be changed), emphasizing unwavering compliance with their established norms and taboos, known collectively as the *pikukuh*.

The development of a child's character within the Baduy community is primarily dependent on parental tutelage, with family education playing a crucial role in cultivating cultural, spiritual, and moral values. Field data indicates that Baduy parents prioritize the *pikukuh* above all else, making it the supreme guide for every individual action. Parents educate their children based on the *pikukuh*, instilling the core teaching of living simply, often articulated as: “*Panjang tidak boleh dipotong, pendek tidak boleh disambung*” (What is long must not be cut, what is short must not be added to). This principle highlights the community's adherence to discipline and deep respect for tradition, representing a steadfast refusal to alter established norms.

Despite previous research investigating various facets of Baduy cultural preservation and education—such as studies by Winursiti et al. (2025) on oral literature and tradition amidst globalization, Riyadi et al. (2025) on character development, and Purwanti (2024) on the role of customary law in social control—a significant research gap remains.

Existing literature has not deeply explored the holistic transmission of moral, social, and spiritual values within the family unit, nor has it fully analyzed the role of customary law in maintaining the traditional education system as an integrated whole. Therefore, this research is crucial to address this gap by comprehensively examining the Values of Customary Education as the Moral and Spiritual Principles of the Baduy Community and their Relevance in the 4.0 Era.

This study is specifically focused on the Outer Baduy community, analyzing how their traditional education system operates, what specific moral and spiritual values it embodies, and how these principles maintain the community's character and resilience against the backdrop of the 4.0 era, despite their lack of formal schooling. The unique ability of the Baduy community to instill discipline and life values solely through custom and tradition makes this an important case study for local wisdom and cultural sustainability.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method with an Ethnographic

approach. Ethnography was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of the beliefs, behavioral patterns, and customary language accepted by the community over time (Yuono, 2024; Putri, 2023). The primary goal was to provide knowledge about the customary education values in terms of the Baduy community's morality and spirituality.

Subjects of Research

The research subjects consisted of two key informants from the Outer Baduy community: Kang Jamal (Customary Leader/Head of the Tribe) as the first key informant, and Kang Sarman (Customary Leader/RT Chairman) as the second key informant.

Instruments and Interview Questions

Data were collected in three basic stages: preliminary observation, data verification, and analysis. Primary data was collected through preliminary observation—to witness various events in Outer Baduy—and in-depth interviews with the tribal leaders.

Secondary data was collected simultaneously through literature study (document analysis) to serve as a complement and comparative basis for the primary findings. The researcher posed four main questions to the informants: 1) What is the history of the Baduy Tribe? 2) What are the teachings followed by the Baduy Tribe? 3) What are the Customary Education values taught in terms of Baduy spirituality and morality? 4) Is there a relevance between the customary education model and the 4.0 era?

Data Collection

The three basic stages of this research are preliminary observation, data verification, and analysis. The data collected consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data collection was carried out through preliminary observation to observe various events in outer Baduy and in-depth interviews with tribal leaders to reinforce the data collected. Secondary data was collected from literature studies at the same time.

These literature studies were used to supplement and compare the data. After data collection, the next stage is data verification. At this stage, the data obtained previously is studied. The purpose of the verification process is to evaluate the balance between secondary and primary data. In the final stage, data analysis is carried out to summarize the research results obtained so that conclusions can be formulated in accordance with the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History and Foundational Teachings of the Baduy Tribe

The name "Baduy" was first introduced by the Dutch during their invasion, often used interchangeably with terms like badoe'i, badoej, badoewi, urang Kanekes, and

urang Rawayan (Heriawan et al., 2019). The origin of the name remains debated, linked either to the nomadic nature of the people (compared to the Arabian Bedouins/Badowi), or local geographical sites such as the Cibaduy River or Baduyut trees. However, the name Baduy eventually became more familiar than the community’s self-designation, Urang Kanekes. The Baduy believe they are descendants of Batara Cikal, one of the seven gods sent to earth, often associated with Prophet Adam, and tasked with maintaining the world's balance through asceticism (*mandita*). Today, the community is divided into Inner Baduy (strictly adhering to customs) and Outer Baduy (who reside in villages such as Cikadu, Kaduketuk, and Gajeboh, and have begun to adopt some contemporary customs, including exposure to limited education and modern transportation).

The foundational belief system of the Baduy is Sunda Wiwitan, a syncretic local religion emphasizing a simple life, balance with nature, and strict obedience to ancestral values (Wiwitan meaning "the beginning"). They revere Sang Hiyang Keresan or Nu Ngersakeun (The Almighty), who is identified in their creed as "Batara Tunggal" (The One God), "Batara Jagat" (Ruler of the Universe), and "Batara Seda Niskala" (The Unseen). The central guiding principle governing their entire conduct, social relations, and spirituality is the *Pikukuh Baduy*—an ancestral constitution passed down orally (*karuhun*). Key elements of the *pikukuh* include: *Ulah ngarobah parobahan* (Do not alter anything established by the ancestors), *Ulah ngaruksak* (Do not destroy), and *Hirup kudu bener, ulah ngabalier* (Live correctly, do not deviate) (Wardah et al., 2025). The purpose of the *pikukuh* is to maintain human sanctity, spiritual and natural balance, and the integrity of the Baduy identity against external influence.

Moral and Spiritual Values in Customary Education

Baduy customary education is rooted in two main principles: complete obedience to the *pikukuh* as a form of spirituality, derived from their belief in Sang Hyang Tunggal; and the protection of the environment as a central moral mandate. They view the natural world as the "Teacher of Life" and believe that damaging nature is a serious sin, as their primary duty is to safeguard ecological balance. The moral education is characterized by several strong social and work ethics:

1. Cooperation and Solidarity: Manifested through the principle of Rereongan or *Silih asah, silih asih, silih asuh* (to sharpen, to love, to nurture one another). This is demonstrated during major communal activities (e.g., house building, rice planting) where the entire community participates without regard for status.
2. Self-Reliance and Simplicity: They reject modernization not out of inability, but as a spiritual commitment to avoid worldly greed. They practice annual rice farming solely for storage (*lumbung*) and shun reliance on external aid, believing that contentment and living modestly (*seadanya*) are the keys to divine favor and ancestral happiness (Subai et al., 2023).

3. **Hard Work and Productivity:** Taught through role models and customs, they are highly disciplined, engaging in profitable activities like farming (*ngahuma*), weaving, and crafting. Idleness is considered a moral violation, as it disrespects God's provision.
4. **Honesty (*Kejujuran*):** Honesty is considered a matter of self and tribal honor. They speak plainly, avoid deceit, and require honesty as a primary criterion for selecting customary leaders (Suanto, 2025).
5. **Democratic Values:** The selection of customary leaders is based on thorough deliberation (*musyawarah*) involving the *tangtu tilu jaro tujuh* customary institutions, prioritizing wisdom and consensus over individual mandate.

Relevance of Customary Education in the 4.0 Era

The rapid technological advancement of the 4.0 era, characterized by hyper-connectivity, convenience, and speed, simultaneously introduces moral risks such as the erosion of social solidarity, the loss of humanistic values, and rising consumerism and individualism (Suryani, 2021). In this context, the traditional educational values preserved by the Baduy community become highly relevant.

Baduy education, by emphasizing the *Pikukuh Karuhun* and Sunda Wiwitan principles, fosters individuals who are not only resilient but also possess strong moral and spiritual foundations (Nurjaman, 2023). Its relevance lies in its ability to enforce a balance between technological progress and humanistic principles. While the digital world promotes individualistic traits, the Baduy emphasize simplicity, communal help, and unwavering ecological consciousness (Komalasari, 2023). Their practices serve as a moral and spiritual inspiration for contemporary education, reminding us that progress must be measured not just by technical perfection, but by a society's capacity to maintain the integrity of the heart, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability (Nurjaman, 2023). The Baduy model demonstrates the resilience and adaptability of local wisdom, proving that traditional values can function as a crucial ethical anchor against global change.

CONCLUSION

Baduy traditional education is an effective non-formal learning system rooted in local wisdom and transmitted across generations through role modeling, customs, and daily routines. This study, conducted using a qualitative descriptive method with an ethnographic approach, confirms that Baduy traditional education is vital not only for cultural preservation but also for shaping the moral and spiritual character of its community. Core values, including honesty, hard work, discipline, simplicity, and profound respect for nature and ancestors, form the foundation of their social life. Field findings demonstrate that adherence to the *pikukuh karuhun* successfully maintains the essential balance among humanity, the environment, and the Creator. These spiritual and moral values remain highly intact even as the Outer

Baduy community begins engaging with the outside world. Consequently, Baduy traditional education proves highly relevant in the modern 4.0 era, serving as a critical source of moral and spiritual inspiration for contemporary education. The Baduy model offers a compelling case for modern systems to prioritize ethical, social, and spiritual development alongside cognitive achievement, positioning traditional education not merely as a cultural legacy but as a robust character education model essential for preservation and integration into modern learning processes.

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