

## Character Education Values in Pupuh *Pucung* from Ki Hadjar Dewantara's Educational Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines Pupuh *Pucung* as a culturally grounded medium for character education by analyzing its moral values through the educational philosophy of Ki Hadjar Dewantara. Using a qualitative descriptive approach with content analysis, this study analyzes selected Pupuh *Pucung* texts to identify character values and interpret their alignment with the principles of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, and *Tut Wuri Handayani*. The results show that Pupuh *Pucung* contains core character values, including perseverance, discipline, responsibility, self-reflection, togetherness, and social awareness, which are conveyed through simple, rhythmic, and easily memorized poetic structures. These values function not merely as moral advice but as experiential narratives that encourage internalization through reflection and social context. The analysis further reveals that Pupuh *Pucung* operationalizes Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational principles by presenting moral exemplars, fostering collective learning motivation, and encouraging learners' autonomy. This study concludes that Pupuh *Pucung* is not only a traditional literary form but also a pedagogical text with strong relevance for character education based on local wisdom. The findings imply that integrating Pupuh *Pucung* into educational practices can strengthen moral awareness, cultural identity, and holistic character development in both formal and nonformal learning contexts. Future research is recommended to explore the empirical implementation of Pupuh *Pucung*-based learning models and their impact on students character development.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping students character, morality, and personality, particularly amid rapid technological advancement and globalization that increasingly challenge the sustainability of local cultural values. These conditions demand educational approaches that do not merely emphasize cognitive development but also foster moral and cultural awareness. One strategic response to this challenge is the integration of local wisdom into educational practices, as local cultural values function as an essential medium for strengthening national identity while instilling ethical and social values aligned with learners lived experiences. Character education integrated with local wisdom has been widely recognized as an effective approach to addressing moral development while simultaneously preserving cultural identity within educational contexts (Masrukhi et al., 2024).

Within Sundanese culture, pupuh represents a literary heritage with significant educational value. As a traditional poetic form governed by conventions such as *guru wilangan*, *guru lagu*, and *padalisan*, pupuh reflects not only linguistic aesthetics but also disciplined and orderly patterns of thought. Beyond its aesthetic function, pupuh serves as a medium for conveying moral messages, ethical principles, and life teachings transmitted across generations, positioning it as a form of non-formal education capable of instilling character values from an early age (Sidik et al., 2024; Sumarlina et al., 2025). Previous studies have demonstrated that pupuh contains moral teachings relevant to character education, including honesty, responsibility, and respect for parents and teachers (Damayanti & Nurgiyantoro, 2018) while also functioning as a means of preserving Sundanese cultural values (Irawan et al., 2022).

One of the most widely recognized types of pupuh is Pupuh *Pucung*, which is characterized by its light, humorous, and easily memorable form, making it particularly effective for conveying moral advice and social satire. Despite its apparent simplicity, Pupuh *Pucung* conveys profound messages related to perseverance, discipline, and self-reflection. These values are closely aligned with the educational paradigm formulated by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, which emphasizes education rooted in national culture, moral character formation, and the development of student autonomy through the principles of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, and *Tut Wuri Handayani*.

Although numerous studies have highlighted the importance of character education based on local culture, most remain descriptive and focus on general implementations of local wisdom without explicitly examining traditional literary works within the framework of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational philosophy. Research that specifically investigates Pupuh *Pucung* from this perspective remains limited, despite its strong potential as a contextual medium for character education. While previous studies emphasize the moral and disciplinary values embedded in pupuh (Damayanti and Nurgiyantoro, 2018), or discuss Sundanese culture in character education more broadly (Yoseptry, 2022) they do not explicitly analyze Pupuh *Pucung* in relation to Dewantara's educational principles. Therefore, this study aims to examine how Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational values are reflected in Pupuh *Pucung* as a medium for character education grounded in Sundanese local wisdom, thereby addressing this research gap and clarifying its academic contribution.

Ki Hadjar Dewantara conceptualized education as a process that extends beyond the transmission of knowledge toward the cultivation of character, independence, and social responsibility. His educational philosophy is grounded in the principles of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, *Tut Wuri Handayani*, which position educators as moral exemplars, motivators, and facilitators of learners' autonomy. Dewantara emphasized the integration of local culture and moral values as essential foundations of character formation, framing education as a process of value internalization rather than merely cognitive achievement (Mudana, 2019).

In contemporary educational contexts, Dewantara's ideas remain relevant in addressing moral and character-related challenges. His principles offer a humanistic and culturally responsive approach for internalizing values such as honesty, responsibility, leadership, independence, and freedom, which are crucial for students' holistic development across intellectual, emotional, and ethical dimensions (Albany, 2021; Fauzi and Saepulloh, 2022). This relevance highlights Dewantara's philosophy as a viable framework for strengthening character education amid evolving social dynamics.

Dewantara's character education framework is further reinforced through the Tri-Center of Education, encompassing the family, school, and community as interconnected environments for moral development. This model promotes consistency in value internalization and remains effective in responding to contemporary moral challenges in the era of Society 5.0 (Khafid et al., 2023). Empirical studies demonstrate that its consistent application fosters discipline, responsibility, and social awareness among learners (Ramazhana & A'yun, 2024), while also providing a strong foundation for modern character education design and policy, including the Character Education Strengthening Program (Gerakan Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter, PPK) (Sutrisno & Zuchdi, 2023). In this study, Dewantara's framework functions as an analytical lens for examining moral values embedded in *Pupuh Pucung* as a culturally grounded pedagogical text. Local wisdom also functions as social capital in character education management, enabling the internalization of moral values through consistent interactions among family, school, and community environments (Setyo et al., 2021).

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using content analysis to examine the meanings and educational values embedded in *Pupuh Pucung* and their relevance to Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational principles. This approach was selected because it enables in-depth and contextual interpretation of cultural texts, particularly oral literature, as carriers of moral and educational values (Sumarno, 2020).

The research data consist of *Pupuh Pucung* texts selected purposively based on their relevance to moral and character education themes. The analyzed texts were obtained from documented Sundanese literary sources, including published manuscripts and secondary literature commonly used in educational and cultural studies. The unit of analysis in this study comprises stanzas (*bait*) and lines (*larik*) that explicitly or implicitly convey character values such as perseverance, discipline, responsibility, and self-reflection. These values were identified as analytical categories aligned with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational principles.

Data analysis was conducted through a systematic content analysis procedure involving three stages: data reduction, categorization, and thematic interpretation. In the data reduction stage, relevant stanzas and lines containing character-related meanings were selected. Subsequently, the data were categorized according to the principles of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, and *Tut Wuri Handayani*. The final stage involved interpretative analysis to explain how the identified values in *Pupuh Pucung* reflect Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational philosophy. This procedure follows established content analysis practices in character education research (Permatasari et al., 2019).

To ensure data validity, triangulation was applied through cross-referencing interpretations with relevant theoretical frameworks and findings from previous studies on character education and spiritual-based values (Ardiyanti & Khairah, 2021; Danawati et al., 2020; Suraji & Sastrodiharjo, 2021). This process aimed to maintain consistency and credibility in interpreting the moral and educational meanings embedded in *Pupuh Pucung*.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 3.1. Character Values Identified in *Pupuh Pucung*

The results of the analysis indicate that *Pupuh Pucung* functions as a medium for conveying moral and educational values within Sundanese society. Rather than serving merely as entertainment, *Pupuh Pucung* communicates ethical guidance through simple, rhythmic, and easily memorable verses. The character values identified in the analyzed texts include perseverance, responsibility, discipline, self-reflection, togetherness, and social awareness. These values are articulated explicitly through advisory expressions and implicitly through depictions of social consequences resulting from certain behaviors. One example illustrating these values can be found in the following stanza:

*"Hayu batur urang diajar sing suhud  
Ulah lalawora bisi engke henteu naek*

*Batur seuri urang sumegruk nalangsa."*

This stanza emphasizes earnestness in learning, awareness of responsibility, and reflection on the consequences of negligence. The call to learn diligently reflects perseverance, while the warning against carelessness highlights discipline and responsibility. The emotional response described in the final line reinforces self-reflection, indicating that moral lessons in Pupuh *Pucung* are conveyed through experiential and affective dimensions rather than abstract moral instruction. In addition to individual character formation, the findings show that Pupuh *Pucung* also promotes communal values. The collective tone of the verses emphasizes empathy, togetherness, and social responsibility, suggesting that moral development is positioned within a social context. These findings demonstrate that Pupuh *Pucung* contributes not only to cognitive understanding but also to affective and social development through culturally grounded moral narratives.

### 3.2. Discussion of Character Values in the Context of Local Wisdom

The character values identified in Pupuh *Pucung* reflect local wisdom that remains relevant as a foundation for character education. This finding supports previous research indicating that traditional cultural expressions function as effective media for transmitting moral and ethical values within society (Mazid et al., 2020). However, the present study extends earlier research by demonstrating how these values are concretely articulated through poetic structures that are accessible and meaningful to learners. These findings reinforce textual studies of Pupuh *Pucung* that emphasize its advisory function and conventional poetic structure as a medium for moral value transmission in Sundanese traditions (Arisandi & Darsa, 2025).

From an educational perspective, the integration of perseverance, discipline, responsibility, and self-reflection within Pupuh *Pucung* aligns with studies emphasizing the effectiveness of local wisdom-based character education. (Hartiwisidi et al., 2022) report that character strengthening programs grounded in cultural traditions foster moral habits, discipline, and social responsibility among students. The present findings reinforce this argument by showing that moral values embedded in Pupuh *Pucung* are conveyed through familiar cultural forms, thereby facilitating deeper internalization.

Moreover, the effectiveness of integrating traditional arts into education has been widely recognized. (Karwati et al., 2021) found that traditional arts can function as instructional media that enhance students' understanding through culturally contextualized learning approaches. In this regard, Pupuh *Pucung* serves as an example of how oral literature can bridge cultural heritage and educational practice, making moral learning both meaningful and engaging. This supports studies on pupuh and tembang in ritual and social practices, which emphasize oral literature as a meaningful medium for conveying moral values within lived cultural contexts (Istiqomah & Isnanto, 2019). Similar findings are reported in studies on ethno-learning, which demonstrate that culture-based pedagogical approaches effectively support character formation through the internalization of moral values embedded in local traditions (Cahyaningsih et al., 2025).

### 3.3. Pupuh *Pucung* and Ki Hadjar Dewantara's Educational Principles

The values embedded in Pupuh *Pucung* show a strong alignment with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational paradigm, particularly the principles of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, and *Tut Wuri Handayani*. Dewantara emphasized that education should cultivate moral character, foster learning motivation, and encourage learners' independence. These principles provide an analytical framework for interpreting the educational meanings contained in Pupuh *Pucung*. The encouragement to learn earnestly in Pupuh *Pucung* reflects the principle of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, which positions educators and role models as moral exemplars. Meanwhile, warnings against negligence and depictions of shared social consequences resonate with *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, emphasizing collective motivation and mutual responsibility within the learning process. Furthermore, the reflective consequences described in the verses align with *Tut Wuri Handayani*, as they promote self-awareness and internal motivation rather than external coercion.

Through this alignment, Pupuh *Pucung* can be understood not only as a cultural artifact but also as a pedagogical text that embodies Dewantara's educational philosophy. The findings demonstrate that traditional literary works are capable of operationalizing abstract educational principles into concrete moral narratives that are easily understood and internalized by learners. This finding is consistent with studies on oral literature as a source of character values in both formal and nonformal learning contexts, which emphasize the pedagogical potential of traditional texts in shaping learners' moral development (Fitriana et al., 2018). Moreover, education grounded in local wisdom aligns with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's view of guiding learners' innate potential toward moral and spiritual fulfillment (Irsan et al., 2024).

### 3.4. Educational Implications for Character Education

The findings of this study highlight the broader educational implications of utilizing Pupuh *Pucung* in character education. Engagement with culturally grounded literary texts supports the development of affective and social dimensions of learners, including empathy, social awareness, and moral sensitivity. These findings resonate with studies on the humanistic exploration of local wisdom, which emphasize holistic character development through meaningful cultural engagement (Fardinal, 2023). Empirical studies also indicate that character education grounded in local wisdom has a significant impact on students' moral awareness, cultural identity, and social behavior when implemented systematically in formal education (Jayanti & Wulandari, 2024). The effectiveness of arts-based character education is also influenced by the professional competence of educators. (Haerani et al., 2020) emphasize that well-prepared arts teachers play a crucial role in facilitating meaningful and culturally relevant learning experiences. When educators are able to contextualize moral values embedded in traditional literature, learning becomes more engaging and impactful.

Furthermore, the integration of Pupuh *Pucung* into educational settings aligns with humanistic education theories that view learners as individuals with inherent potential that can be nurtured through value-oriented and learner-centered learning experiences (Anzani et al., 2023). In both formal and nonformal education, *Pupuh Pucung* can function as an integrative learning medium that unites moral, cultural, linguistic, and artistic dimensions into a cohesive educational experience. Accordingly, *Pupuh Pucung* should be positioned not merely as an aesthetically valuable cultural heritage but as a relevant and adaptive medium for contemporary character education.

## 4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Pupuh *Pucung* is not merely a traditional literary form but a culturally grounded medium that carries significant educational value for character formation. The analysis demonstrates that moral values embedded in Pupuh *Pucung*, such as perseverance, responsibility, discipline, honesty, and self-reflection, function as ethical guidance that can be internalized through meaningful learning experiences. These values position Pupuh *Pucung* as a relevant and contextual resource for character education rooted in local wisdom. Furthermore, the findings confirm that the values embodied in Pupuh *Pucung* are strongly aligned with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational principles of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, and *Tut Wuri Handayani*. This alignment indicates that traditional literature can operationalize Dewantara's educational philosophy by transforming abstract moral concepts into concrete, experiential learning narratives. As a result, character education based on cultural texts enables learners to develop moral awareness, learning motivation, and personal autonomy in a holistic manner. The implications of this study suggest that the integration of Pupuh *Pucung* into educational practices can strengthen character education in both formal and nonformal settings. Educators are encouraged to utilize traditional literary works as pedagogical media that foster moral reflection, cultural identity, and social awareness. Future research is recommended to explore empirical applications of Pupuh *Pucung*-based learning models in classroom contexts and to examine their impact on students' character development across different educational levels and cultural settings.

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