

## Mangan Barema Tradition for Productive Values in Elementary Character Education

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### ABSTRACT

The Mangan Barema tradition is a communal cultural practice carried out by the people of Sumbawa that reflects values of cooperation, equality, and social responsibility. Despite the growing attention to local wisdom and character education, limited studies have examined how specific cultural traditions function as ethnopedagogical learning systems that contribute to character formation. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Mangan Barema tradition and to identify the productive values embedded in the practice in relation to elementary school character education. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach, using participant observation, in-depth interviews with community leaders and local residents, and documentation analysis. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the Mangan Barema tradition embodies productive values such as cooperation, responsibility, equality, discipline, and social solidarity through collective activities including food preparation, ritual processions, and communal dining. These activities function as participatory learning processes that reinforce moral awareness and social responsibility among participants. The study concludes that the Mangan Barema tradition represents a form of community-based character education that supports the development of students' social and moral values through culturally grounded learning practices.

### INTRODUCTION

Character education has become a strategic priority in contemporary educational systems, particularly at the elementary school level where foundational moral values and behavioral dispositions are formed (Sakti et al., 2024). Despite its prominence in policy and curriculum frameworks, character education is often implemented through abstract moral instruction and standardized value integration programs that are detached from students' sociocultural realities (Novitasari et al., 2024). This disconnection raises a critical concern: how

can character education move beyond normative discourse to become a lived and experiential process rooted in students' community contexts?

Scholarly discussions on ethnopedagogy propose that local culture should not merely function as contextual enrichment but as a substantive pedagogical foundation for learning. Studies have demonstrated that integrating local wisdom into educational practice can strengthen cooperation, empathy, and social responsibility among students (Astuti & Apriliani, 2025). Similarly, culturally relevant pedagogy emphasizes that meaningful learning emerges when instructional processes are aligned with learners' cultural identities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). However, a closer examination of existing literature reveals that many studies remain descriptive in nature, focusing on identifying cultural values without critically analyzing the structural mechanisms through which these values are internalized in formal educational settings. In other words, culture is frequently treated as symbolic content rather than as an operational system of value transmission.

In recent years, the integration of cultural knowledge into formal education has gained increasing attention among scholars and policymakers. Cultural practices are not only symbolic representations of community identity but also function as living systems through which values, norms, and social responsibilities are transmitted across generations. When educational processes are connected to these cultural practices, students are able to engage in contextual learning experiences that allow them to observe, participate in, and internalize social values through real-life interactions. Therefore, understanding how cultural traditions operate as learning environments becomes an important step in strengthening culturally grounded character education

Parallel to this, research on communal traditions in Indonesia has primarily explored their sociocultural and anthropological dimensions, such as their role in maintaining social cohesion and collective identity (Kusnadi, 2023). While these studies provide important cultural documentation, they seldom examine how such traditions function pedagogically, particularly within the framework of elementary character formation (Habibie et al., 2025). Conversely, studies in character education tend to prioritize psychological models, instructional strategies, and curriculum-based interventions, often overlooking community-based participatory structures as mechanisms of moral habituation. This disciplinary separation results in a conceptual gap between cultural practice and formal character education research (Dewi et al., 2025). Local wisdom embedded within community traditions also functions as a medium for transmitting cultural knowledge and social values across generations (Mardiana et al., 2024).

In the Indonesian context, many traditional practices continue to play a significant role in shaping social interactions and community identity. These traditions often involve collective participation, which fosters social cohesion and strengthens communal bonds among community members. Through shared activities such as ritual preparation, communal gatherings, and traditional ceremonies, individuals actively engage in social learning processes that reinforce cultural values and social responsibilities.

The Mangan Barema tradition, practiced in Tatede Village, Lopok District, Sumbawa Regency, represents a communal ritual involving collaborative food preparation, ritual procession, and egalitarian communal dining. The tradition embodies values of cooperation, responsibility, equality, discipline, and social solidarity that correspond closely with contemporary character education objectives (Tominc & Rožman, 2023). Yet, despite its

normative relevance, empirical investigation into how this specific tradition operates as a structured ethnopedagogical system for elementary school students remains limited. Existing discussions on local wisdom in education rarely analyze how ritual participation systematically facilitates value habituation and social learning in ways that complement or extend formal schooling (Maharani et al., 2024).

This gap is particularly significant in communal societies where character formation may rely more on participatory cultural engagement than on classroom-based instruction alone. Without examining the pedagogical logic embedded within cultural rituals, ethnopedagogy risks remaining a conceptual ideal rather than an empirically grounded framework (Assari et al., 2020). Therefore, research that bridges cultural anthropology and elementary character education is necessary to clarify how community traditions function as experiential learning environments that contribute to character formation among elementary school students.

Despite the growing interest in ethnopedagogical approaches and the integration of local wisdom into character education, previous studies have largely treated cultural traditions as contextual teaching resources rather than as structured pedagogical systems. Much of the existing literature focuses on identifying moral values embedded in local culture or documenting the sociocultural functions of communal traditions, without examining how these traditions operate as participatory learning environments that systematically facilitate value internalization. Consequently, limited attention has been given to understanding how ritual participation within community traditions can function as a mechanism of experiential learning that contributes to character formation among elementary school students. This gap indicates the need for empirical research that bridges cultural practices and formal character education by analyzing how specific communal traditions operate as ethnopedagogical systems of value transmission.

Based on this context, the present study is conducted in Tatede Village, Sumbawa Regency, where the *Mangan Barema* tradition continues to be actively practiced and where elementary school students directly participate in communal cultural activities. By situating the investigation within this living cultural context, the study seeks to analyze not only the symbolic meanings of the tradition but also its pedagogical implications (Gallegos et al., 2021). Accordingly, this research aims to: (1) Analyze the stages and implementation process of the *Mangan Barema* tradition. (2), Identify and critically interpret the productive values embedded within the tradition, (3) Examine how these values function as mechanisms of character formation for elementary school students within an ethnopedagogical framework.

Through these objectives, the study seeks to contribute to ethnopedagogical discourse by demonstrating how local traditions operate as structured systems of experiential value transmission that support character education for elementary school students.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive analytical design to explore the productive values embedded in the *Mangan Barema* tradition and examine their relevance to the character formation of elementary school students. The research was conducted in Tatede Village, Lopok District, Sumbawa Regency, where the tradition continues to be practiced in community life. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their knowledge, roles, and direct involvement in the tradition, including traditional

leaders, community leaders, a school principal, elementary school teachers, and students who had participated in *Mangan Barema* activities. Data were collected through participant observation of ritual practices, in-depth semi-structured interviews to explore cultural meanings and educational values, and documentation in the form of field notes, photographs, and activity records. Data collection was conducted iteratively until data saturation was achieved, indicated by recurring patterns and the absence of new information across sources.

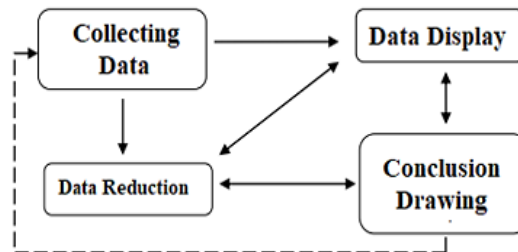


Figure 1. Miles and Huberman's (1984) data analysis components

Data analysis in this study followed the model developed by Miles and Huberman (1984). The model consists of four stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. All interview and observation data were transcribed and reviewed repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context. Open coding was conducted to identify meaningful units related to social values and character development, followed by the categorization of similar codes into broader conceptual themes. These themes were then interpreted to explain the relationship between cultural practice and character education. The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through source and method triangulation, member checking with selected participants, and the use of rich contextual descriptions to enhance credibility and transparency.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Meaning and Practice of the *Mangan Barema* Tradition

Findings from observations in Tatede Village indicate that the implementation of the *Mangan Barema* tradition consists of three main stages: collaborative food preparation, the *junjung pasaji* procession, and communal dining without social distinction. During the preparation stage, community members participate voluntarily according to customary roles, demonstrating collective responsibility and mutual cooperation. As expressed by participants, individuals contribute based on shared understanding rather than formal instruction, indicating that participation is guided by internalized cultural norms. The procession stage symbolizes gratitude and respect for shared resources, while communal dining reflects equality among participants regardless of social status, age, or role.

These findings suggest that the *Mangan Barema* tradition functions as a form of experiential learning in which values are transmitted through direct participation in cultural practice. Rather than being conveyed through formal instruction, values are internalized through repeated engagement in meaningful social interaction. From an ethnopedagogical perspective, this process illustrates how cultural traditions operate as informal educational environments that shape behavior through participation, observation, and social interaction.

Culturally, the *Mangan Barema* tradition has similarities with communal traditions in other regions of Indonesia, such as the *Begibung* tradition in Lombok. Shalihet et al., (2025) explains that the *Begibung* tradition plays a role in strengthening social relationships and reducing differences among community members, as participants gather to eat together from

a shared tray without distinguishing social status or roles. Similarly, the *Makan Badulang* tradition in Riau (Dwi Sartika et al., 2024) reflects values of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and the preservation of local culture

### 1. Preparing Food



Figure 2. Preparing Food

Figure 2 shows the preparation of food in the *Mangan Barema* tradition, which represents a crucial initial stage. This preparation is carried out collectively by community members in a spirit of mutual cooperation. As stated by participant (TM): *“Proses mempersiapkan makanan ta balangan tanpa ada perintah, melainkan serea masyarakat ete bagian masing tau salki ya siapkan sera alat dan bahan ade ya butuhkan untuk basmasak, sementara tau sewai ete bagian masing-masing tawa besmasak serea menu makanan khas Samawa.”*

This means: “This stage proceeds naturally without the need for formal instructions, as everyone already knows their role based on long-standing customs. Men are responsible for gathering food, slaughtering animals, and preparing the venue. Meanwhile, women prepare, cook, and serve traditional foods such as *singang*, *sepat*, grilled fish, and rice. All food ingredients are obtained through the voluntary participation of community members without any obligation regarding the amount or type of contribution. The most important aspect is the spirit of cooperation and sincerity in carrying out the *Mangan Barema* tradition.”

This stage reflects value habituation through collective responsibility and aligns with experiential learning principles in ethnopedagogical practice, in which social values are internalized through participation in shared activities(Santika, 2020).

## 2. Junjung Pasaji Parade



Figure 3. Junjung Pasaji Parade

Figure 3 shows the stages of the pasaji procession in the Mangan Barema tradition, which constitutes an important component with profound symbolic meaning in its implementation. Based on interviews with participant (TM): *“Tahapan awal yanansi mempersiapkan makanan keisi bumi tu trus atur dalam dulang kaleng sudah nan untuk tahu Sawai Ade junjung dulang Bao otak trus belangan bariring menuju lako lokasi acara. Masyarakat yasepan prosesi ta sebagai cara tu hormati dan rasa syukur. Saat acara berlangsung para warga Balangan dengan tertib sambil ya bawa dulang pang Bao otak. Kegiatan ta siong hanyak ya sepan tau sewai pintar jaga keseimbangan ke pintar jaga keluarga, tetapi sebagai penghormatan terhadap rezeki Ade ya dapatkan. Proses ta ngka hanya antat Makana ko pang Acra Bae tetapi km mo jadi retual penghormatan Ade ya perkuat tali silaturrahmi, persatuan, dan identitas budaya Desa Tatede, Kecamatan Lopok, Kabupaten Sumbawa.”*

This means: *“This procession begins with the preparation of food and offerings, which are then arranged on a tray (dulang) and carried by women in a procession to the event location. The local community regards this procession as a form of respect and gratitude. During the procession, residents walk in an orderly manner while carrying the offerings on their heads. This action not only demonstrates women’s ability to maintain balance and their role as guardians of the family, but also serves as a symbol of respect for the sustenance received. This procession is not merely about transporting food to the event location but also serves as a ritual of respect that strengthens social bonds, unity, and the cultural identity of the people of Tatede Village, Lopok District, Sumbawa Regency within the Mangan Barema tradition.”*

Symbolically, this ritual reinforces social cohesion and collective identity, supporting theoretical perspectives that cultural rituals function as mechanisms for transmitting social norms across generations (Runturambi, 2022).

### 3. Eating Together (*Mangan Barema*)



Figure 4. Eating Together (*Mangan Barema*)

Figure 4 shows the stages of the *Mangan Barema* activity, which constitutes the main component of the tradition and the most important part of the entire sequence of previously conducted processes. This activity begins after a communal prayer, as a form of gratitude and a request for blessings for the sustenance that has been received. Community members participating in the *Mangan Barema* tradition sit in groups around a tray containing prepared food. All food is eaten together without the use of modern cutlery, as eating by hand is considered to better demonstrate the values of togetherness and closeness among community members.

In practice, there is no difference in seating based on social status, age, or position, because in this tradition all participants are regarded as having equal status. According to participant (TM): "*Mangan barema ta siong hanyak sekedar mangan tetapi untuk ya persatuan ate ke untuk meningkatkan nilai solidaritas bahwah sarea tau de itut dalam tradisi mangan barema ta sama serea kedudukan tanpa ada beda. Kegiatan ta bali nongka hanyak sekedar mangan bae tetapi sebagai alat tawa memperkuat nilai gotong royong, solidaritas sosial, dan identitas budaya masyarakat Desa Tatede, Kecamatan Lopok, Kabupaten Sumbawa kalis dunung sampe to.*"

This means: "*Mangan Barema* is not merely about eating, but also about uniting hearts and reinforcing the idea that all individuals are equal. This activity is not simply communal dining but also serves as a medium for strengthening the values of mutual cooperation, social solidarity, and the cultural identity of the people of Tatede Village, Lopok District, Sumbawa Regency, which have been preserved across generations."

The practice of eating without social distinction demonstrates an egalitarian social structure and functions as a contextual model of moral equality relevant to character education in elementary learning environments (Riansyah, 2023).

#### Productive Values in Character Building for Elementary School Students

The findings reveal that the *Mangan Barema* tradition embeds cooperation, responsibility, equality, discipline, and social solidarity within its ritual structure. While these values correspond with

dominant character education frameworks that emphasize habituation and social learning, the mechanism of transmission observed in this study differs from classroom-based instructional models (Bandura, 1977). In formal schooling, character education is frequently delivered through explicit moral instruction or curricular integration. In contrast, the *Mangan Barema* tradition demonstrates that value internalization occurs through participatory cultural structures rather than verbalized teaching.

From the perspective of social learning theory, repeated participation in communal activities enables observational learning and behavioral modeling. However, the findings extend this perspective by showing that value transmission is not merely individual imitation but collective ritual engagement embedded within shared cultural norms. This suggests that character formation in communal societies operates through socially structured participation rather than isolated pedagogical intervention.

The cooperative dimension of the *Mangan Barema* tradition is particularly evident during the preparation stage, where community members work together to organize food, ritual materials, and ceremonial arrangements. In this process, individuals voluntarily contribute their time and resources, reflecting a strong sense of collective responsibility. For elementary school students who observe or participate in these activities, the experience provides an authentic example of how cooperation functions within real social contexts. Such experiential learning enables students to understand the meaning of cooperation not only as a moral concept but also as a practical behavior necessary for sustaining communal life.

Furthermore, the ritual structure of *Mangan Barema* reinforces the values of equality and social solidarity. During communal dining, participants sit together and share food without distinctions of social status, age, or economic background. This egalitarian arrangement reflects cultural principles that emphasize mutual respect and collective belonging within the community. For young participants, this experience serves as a powerful form of social learning, illustrating how fairness, inclusivity, and solidarity are practiced in everyday cultural interactions. Through repeated exposure to these practices, children gradually internalize the importance of respecting others and maintaining harmonious social relationships.

Overall, the findings indicate that the *Mangan Barema* tradition functions as a form of community-based character education in which moral values are transmitted through participatory cultural engagement. Rather than relying solely on formal pedagogical instruction, the tradition provides an experiential learning environment where children observe, practice, and internalize socially valued behaviors within real communal settings. This suggests that integrating cultural traditions into educational discourse may strengthen character education by providing contextual learning experiences that connect moral values with lived social practices.

### **Ritual as Experiential Learning System**

Experiential learning theory emphasizes that knowledge is constructed through direct experience and reflection. Rather than receiving information passively, individuals develop understanding through active engagement with their social and cultural environments. In the context of community traditions, learning occurs as individuals participate in collective activities that allow them to observe, practice, and internalize social values. Cultural rituals therefore provide a meaningful context where learning is embedded within lived experiences rather than delivered solely through formal instruction.

The stages of collaborative preparation, ritual procession, and communal dining within the Mangan Barema tradition reflect the principles of experiential learning. Each stage involves active participation and shared responsibility among community members, creating opportunities for individuals to learn through interaction and observation. For elementary school students who are involved in or exposed to these activities, the ritual becomes a practical learning environment where values such as cooperation, discipline, and respect are demonstrated in real social situations. Through repeated participation, these experiences gradually shape children's understanding of social responsibilities and communal norms.

Nevertheless, unlike classroom experiential learning models that are often designed as temporary instructional activities, the Mangan Barema tradition represents a recurring, intergenerational system of experiential moral practice. The ritual is not conducted merely as an educational exercise but as a living cultural tradition that continues to be practiced by the community across generations. This continuity allows cultural values to be transmitted organically through collective participation, where younger members of the community learn by observing and engaging with older generations. Such a process illustrates how cultural traditions function as sustainable informal learning systems embedded within everyday social life.

While previous ethnopedagogical studies Santika, (2020) highlight the importance of integrating local wisdom into education, many treat cultural elements as supplementary teaching materials. The present findings challenge this limited view by demonstrating that the ritual itself operates as a structured learning environment. Thus, the tradition should not be reduced to contextual content but understood as an alternative framework of character formation that complements formal schooling.

### **Egalitarian Structure and Moral Equality**

The communal dining stage of the Mangan Barema tradition, where participants sit together and share food without distinctions of social status, age, or economic background, reflects an egalitarian social structure embedded within the cultural ritual. In this setting, all community members participate as equals, emphasizing the collective identity of the group rather than individual hierarchies. Such arrangements illustrate how cultural traditions can create social spaces that reinforce mutual respect and inclusivity. For younger participants, particularly elementary school students, observing and engaging in this practice provides a concrete experience of equality within everyday social interactions.

From a theoretical perspective, this egalitarian structure aligns with character education principles that emphasize respect, fairness, and equality among individuals. Character education frameworks often highlight the importance of developing attitudes that recognize the dignity and value of every member of society. However, the findings of this study indicate that the transmission of these values within the Mangan Barema tradition does not occur through abstract moral explanations. Instead, equality is enacted through ritualized social practices that allow participants to directly experience what it means to interact within a community that prioritizes collective harmony over social distinction.

This distinction is significant because moral principles may be more effectively internalized when they are embodied in structured social interaction rather than delivered through normative instruction alone (Sakti et al., 2024). When individuals repeatedly participate in communal activities that model egalitarian relationships, the values of respect and fairness become integrated into everyday behavioral patterns. In the context of

elementary school students, such experiences may contribute to the gradual development of social awareness and empathy, as children learn to recognize the importance of treating others as equal members of the community.

Therefore, the findings suggest that the effectiveness of culture-based character education may depend on the degree to which values are embedded in lived collective practices. Cultural traditions such as Mangan Barema provide opportunities for individuals to experience moral values through direct participation rather than through conceptual discussion alone. This expands current discussions in ethnopedagogy by proposing that cultural participation can function as a systemic mechanism of moral habituation. By recognizing the pedagogical potential of communal rituals, educators and researchers may better understand how community-based practices contribute to the formation of ethical and socially responsible behavior among younger generations.

### **Implications for Ethnopedagogical Theory**

Theoretically, this study contributes to the refinement of ethnopedagogical discourse by demonstrating that local cultural traditions function as structured experiential learning systems rather than merely symbolic cultural references. Ethnopedagogy emphasizes the integration of cultural knowledge and community practices into educational processes, yet many discussions in the literature still frame local wisdom primarily as contextual material for classroom instruction. The findings of this study suggest that cultural traditions such as Mangan Barema possess an inherent pedagogical structure through which social values are transmitted and internalized by community members through direct participation.

The results indicate that communal traditions provide an integrated framework in which social norms, role distribution, and collective responsibilities operate simultaneously as mechanisms of learning. Within the Mangan Barema tradition, participants engage in a series of ritual stages that require cooperation, coordination, and shared accountability. These processes create opportunities for individuals, including elementary school students, to observe and participate in socially valued behaviors within authentic community contexts. Through repeated participation, these cultural practices facilitate the internalization of values such as cooperation, discipline, and social solidarity, illustrating how cultural engagement can function as an experiential form of character education.

From an ethnopedagogical perspective, these findings highlight the importance of recognizing cultural participation as a pedagogical process rather than viewing local traditions solely as cultural heritage. When cultural rituals are understood as structured systems of experiential learning, they can provide alternative frameworks for character formation that complement formal educational practices. This perspective broadens the scope of character education by emphasizing that moral development can occur not only through classroom instruction but also through participation in culturally embedded social practices that reflect the values of the community.

However, it is important to acknowledge that this study is context-specific and grounded in qualitative interpretation within a particular cultural setting. The transferability of these findings to other sociocultural contexts may therefore require further investigation. Future research may explore comparative analyses of similar communal traditions in different regions or adopt mixed-method approaches to examine the long-term influence of cultural participation on students' character development (Annisa et al. 2020). Such studies may

provide deeper insights into how ethnopedagogical frameworks can be integrated more systematically into contemporary educational discourse.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that the *Mangan Barema* tradition functions not only as a cultural ritual but also as an experiential learning environment that facilitates the transmission of productive social values. The findings show that the structured stages of the tradition—collaborative preparation, ritual procession, and communal dining—embed and reinforce values of cooperation, responsibility, equality, discipline, and social solidarity through direct participation and social interaction. These values were found to be relevant to the character formation of elementary school students, particularly in fostering social awareness, mutual respect, and collaborative behavior.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of ethnopedagogical perspectives by providing empirical evidence that local cultural practices can function as informal educational systems that support character formation through value habituation and experiential learning. The findings extend existing discussions on culture-based education by demonstrating how a specific local tradition operates as a structured medium for transmitting character-related values within a community context.

Practically, the results suggest that integrating local cultural traditions into elementary education can provide contextually relevant strategies for character education. Culture-based learning grounded in community practices offers opportunities for students to connect moral concepts with lived experiences, thereby strengthening both educational relevance and cultural preservation. These findings may serve as a reference for educators and curriculum developers seeking to incorporate local wisdom into character education programs.

This study is limited to a specific cultural setting and a qualitative sample; therefore, further research is recommended to explore the application of ethnopedagogical approaches in diverse cultural contexts and educational levels. Future studies may also examine the long-term impact of culturally grounded learning on student character development.

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