

The Values Developed In Shaping The Religious Character of the Kuta Traditional Community in Ciamis Regency

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study are: 1) To identify the religious values that develop in the traditional and social life of the Kuta Indigenous community in Ciamis Regency, 2) To analyze the mechanisms of development and inheritance of religious values, and 3) To explain the contribution of these religious values to the formation of the religious character of the Kuta Indigenous community. A qualitative phenomenological approach was applied in this study, using observation, interviews, and documentation reviews as data collection techniques. The analysis process was carried out descriptively-analytically to trace how these values developed in forming the religious character of the Kuta Indigenous community in Ciamis Regency. The results of the study indicate that: 1) The religious values of the Kuta Indigenous community include monotheism, togetherness and mutual cooperation, adherence to taboos and customs, simplicity, and ecological ethics. These values become the spiritual and social foundations that shape the community's lifestyle. 2) The mechanisms of development and inheritance of values. Religious values are developed through traditional rituals, religious activities, social practices such as cooperation and joint deliberation, as well as customary rules that regulate behavior and village spatial planning. The process of inheritance occurs between generations through the internalization of culture, customary authority, and collective participation. 3) These values shape the religious character of the community in four dimensions: spiritual (ancestral reverence and sacred rituals), social (solidarity and cohesion through collective cooperation), moral (discipline and obedience through taboos and customs), and ecological (environmental concern through customary prohibitions and protection of sacred forests).

INTRODUCTION

The main problem underlying the research on the values developed in shaping the religious character of the Kuta Indigenous community in Ciamis Regency is rooted in the limitations of scientific studies that systematically explain the mechanisms of internalization of values in indigenous communities that still adhere to sacred traditions, such as the prohibition on clearing sacred forests, communal mutual cooperation patterns, and customary regulations related to village

spatial planning. Religious values are the main foundation in forming a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has noble morals and has a complete personality. (Susilo, A., Rahmawati, N., & Putra, 2022) However, in its implementation, religious character education is often still normative and has not been fully integrated with the local cultural context, especially in indigenous communities.

Recent studies have shown that the formation of the religious character of the Kuta Indigenous community is rooted in the actualization of fundamental values such as religiosity, mutual cooperation, simplicity, respect for nature, integrity, and independence. Research by Swaradesy et al. (2024) identified that these values are maintained through community activities, the revitalization of traditional arts, and the strengthening of the local economy based on local wisdom (Swaradesy et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Agustiana et al. (2025) emphasized that customs, rituals, and communal social interactions are the main arenas for internalizing the values of simplicity, togetherness, and social solidarity (Agustiana, Fuzi Astuti Rahayu, M. Rizki Rahmatullah, Syifa Nurfadilah, 2025). A decade-long literature analysis by Muhamad Arif (2024) indicates that although religious values based on local wisdom are recognized as strategic, most studies have not yet thoroughly described the mechanisms of internalization in the context of indigenous communities. Ridho et al. (2025) added that the values of honesty, mutual cooperation, and respect for nature can be transmitted through traditional practices, but their effectiveness is influenced by the penetration of global culture, minimal institutional support, and the challenges of regeneration (Ridho et al., 2025). In addition, Samsudin's research (2025) shows that traditional social norms, religious activities, and religious interactions in village communities remain the main determinants in the formation of the religious character of the younger generation outside formal institutions (Samsudin, 2025). Overall, these findings confirm that the formation of the religious character of the Kuta Indigenous community takes place through the integration of local values, customary practices, and communal life, although studies on the mechanisms of systemic inheritance of values still require further in-depth study.

Research over the past decade has shown that religious character education based on local wisdom continues to receive attention in educational anthropology and indigenous community studies. Various studies confirm that the values of mutual cooperation, simplicity, respect for nature, and adherence to sacred norms remain the moral foundation of indigenous communities, but the mechanisms of their internalization are explained more descriptively than analytically (Rahmawati, 2016)(Sari, N., & Haryanto, 2018). Recent research has identified that ritual practices, customary prohibition systems, and the arrangement of sacred spaces have an important role in shaping the moral structure and religiosity of communities, especially through the processes of ecological socialization and customary regulations that govern human-nature interactions (Satria, 2014). On the other hand, several studies have highlighted that the integration of formal religious education with local traditions has not been accompanied by an in-depth study of how traditional cosmology works as an epistemic source for character formation, thus creating a theoretical gap between the modern character education model and traditional religiosity which is holistic and transgenerational (Wahid, 2019)(Lestari, 2021). These findings confirm that character education in indigenous communities cannot be understood only as a formal learning activity, but rather as a cultural practice that operates through symbolic, ritual, and ecological mechanisms that are inherent in the daily lives of indigenous communities. (Putra, 2022).

From an empirical perspective, research in the last decade has shown that studies on religious character education in indigenous communities are still limited to certain areas and are generally of a momentary nature, so they have not been able to provide a longitudinal picture of the transformation of religious values amidst modernization (Benedikta, 2016). The lack of systematic documentation regarding the process of passing on values between generations also causes the understanding of the formation of religious character to be less than comprehensive, especially because many studies only record customary practices without tracing the dynamics of intergenerational value transmission (Rakhmawati, 2017). This condition emphasizes the need for a more in-depth empirical analysis, especially in the Kuta Indigenous community, to explore how sacred rituals, customary prohibitions, and communal social structures work as a medium for internalizing religious values in everyday life (Hidayat, 2018). Thus, this research not only fills the gap in the literature which still focuses solely on the description of values, but also broadens the theoretical understanding of how sacred traditions, local wisdom, and the social structure of indigenous communities effectively shape religious character in the context of contemporary indigenous societies (Wahid, 2019).

The theoretical and empirical gaps in research on religious character education in indigenous communities indicate that most studies are still limited to descriptive explanations of religious values without outlining the value structure, value hierarchy, and internalization mechanisms that make these values function as behavioral guides. Based on Milton Rokeach's Theory of Values, values are understood as relatively stable beliefs organized in a hierarchy of terminal values and instrumental values, and shape attitudes and actions through the belief-value-behavior process. With this foundation, this study aims to: (1) analyze the structure and hierarchy of religious values of the Kuta Indigenous community in Ciamis Regency based on the categorization of terminal and instrumental values; (2) analyze the internalization mechanisms of religious values through the formation of beliefs, habituation, strengthening of norms, and customary regulations that direct values into collective attitudes and behavior; and (3) examine the function of these religious values in influencing the formation of the religious character of the Kuta Indigenous community as a belief system that regulates moral orientation and social actions. The novelty of this research lies in its analytical approach that not only identifies religious values, but also reveals the systemic relationship between beliefs, values, and behavior based on Rokeach's theory, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of how religious values are formed, internalized, and operationalized in the lives of contemporary indigenous communities.

METHODS

This research approach uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, which aims to understand the subjective experiences and underlying meanings experienced by individuals or groups within a particular socio-cultural context. Phenomenology emphasizes uncovering the essence of lived experiences through a process of in-depth exploration of meaning, allowing researchers to understand how a phenomenon is perceived, experienced, and interpreted by participants (Moustakas, 1994). In the context of research on the Kuta Indigenous community, this approach allows researchers to explore how the community understands religious values, customary practices, sacred rules, and the process of inheriting values that has been passed down through generations as part of the construction of their collective identity. This method is carried out through data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, and symbolic meaning

analysis, which aligns with Creswell's view that phenomenology requires a deep understanding of subjective experiences through participant narratives and the researcher's interpretive reflection (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Philosophically, this approach refers to Husserl's (1970) basic idea of the search for the essence of human experience (Husserl, 1970) as well as Schutz's thoughts on the construction of meaning in the world of social life (Schutz, 1967).

This research took place or was located in Kuta Village, a traditional hamlet in Karangpaningal Village, Tambaksari District, Ciamis Regency. Kuta Village is a traditional village that still survives in Ciamis Regency. Administratively, Kuta Village is under the government of Karangpaningal Village, Tambaksari District, Ciamis Regency. Researchers in determining informants in accordance with the research objectives in order to obtain relevant data for the formulation of the problem made. Participants required in this study are; Traditional Leaders, Kuncen, Elders and Youth Activists of the Kuta Traditional Community because these informants are informants as agents who know and understand the inheritance of values and norms in the traditions of Kuta Traditional Village. Researchers used a purposive sampling technique in selecting participants. Where the data source sampling technique is based on certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2015). The determination of informants was taken from those who are considered to have the most knowledge of the topic being studied or have a strategic position that allows researchers to gain easier access to the object or social situation that is the focus of the research.

The data analysis for this study employed Moustakas' phenomenological approach, which focuses on uncovering the essence of the informants' experiences. The analysis process begins with epoche, which suspends the researcher's biases to allow for a pure understanding of the phenomenon. It continues with phenomenological reduction through the identification of significant statements and the development of essential themes. The next stage is imaginative variation, which examines the various perspectives that shape the informants' experiences. It concludes with a synthesis of meanings and essences, which formulates a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of internalization of religious values within the indigenous community. This approach allows researchers to gain a deeper, more structured, and more scientifically accountable understanding of the religious values that develop within the Kuta Indigenous community (Moustakas, 1994).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research findings on the values developed in shaping the religious character of the Kuta Indigenous community in Ciamis Regency indicate that the religiosity of this community grows from a harmonious blend of Sunda Buhun heritage, Islamic teachings, and ecological wisdom that is maintained from generation to generation, rooted in the philosophy of tritangtu in bhuana God, nature, and humans which becomes the moral and cosmological basis of the community. Based on interviews with the Traditional Leader, Kuncen, Elders, and Youth Activists, as well as field observations and documentation, it was revealed that these religious values were inherited through ancestral proverbs, taboo rules, historical narratives of local Islamization, and the exemplary behavior of traditional leaders, which were practiced through communal rituals, management of sacred spaces, simple living habits, and discipline in maintaining forbidden forests as a symbol of cosmic harmony. The internality of values does not only occur in the context of religious rituals, but is also manifested in everyday social and ecological ethics in the form of obedience to Islamic teachings, respect for ancestors, social

solidarity, mutual cooperation, simplicity, and adherence to customary norms as a mechanism for controlling community morals. The customary and religious sanction system implemented by traditional leaders reinforces adherence to these values, while the Youth Movement contributes to transmitting these values to the younger generation through community activities and the revitalization of traditions. Thus, the religious values of the Kuta Indigenous community serve as both a spiritual guideline and a foundation for social order, cultural resilience, and ecological preservation, ensuring the sustainability of traditional village life to this day.

Religious Values in the Customary and Social Life of the Kuta Indigenous Community

Interviews revealed that the religious values of the Kuta Indigenous community are formed from the integration of Islamic teachings, Sundanese Buhun traditions, and customary norms governing human relationships with God, nature, and each other. Values of piety, respect for ancestors, and awareness of transcendental powers are evident in ritual practices such as *hajat bumi* (earth offerings), *babarit* (religious offerings), *nyuguh* (prayers), and traditional prayers that always begin with praise to God. This religiosity is reinforced by the daily practice of Islamic worship, such as congregational prayer, *tahlilan* (religious recitation of the Koran), and the tradition of reciting the *Barzanji* (religious text), which serves as a platform for the internalization of spiritual values for all generations. These values are maintained not only through the oral teachings of traditional elders but also through the collective belief that violations of customary law carry "*balai*" (moral consequences) understood as spiritual warnings.

In social life, religious values are reflected in the practice of mutual cooperation, solidarity, and an ethic of simplicity, which form the foundation of Kuta social relations. The norms of togetherness, respect for elders, deliberation, and self-control are values passed down through families and communities, thus forming a social character that is obedient, humble, and full of moral responsibility. Respect for sacred spaces such as the forbidden forest demonstrates that the community's religious values are not only related to rituals and worship, but also encompass ecological awareness as a spiritual mandate. The system of social and customary sanctions serves as a mechanism for reinforcing these values, ensuring that every member of the community adheres to religious and customary norms as part of the community's moral integrity. Overall, these religious values serve as pillars in shaping the cultural identity of the Kuta people and maintain social stability and the continuity of ancestral traditions.

Table 1. Religious Values in the Customary and Social Life of the Kuta Indigenous Community

Religious Values	Findings from Interviews, Observations, and Documentation	Meaning of the Values
Spirituality and Divinity	Interviews with the Traditional Leader, <i>Kuncen</i> , and Elders indicate that ritual prayers, praises to Allah, Islamic worship practices, and beliefs in spiritual consequences are taught through communal rituals, ancestral sayings, and exemplary conduct of adat leaders. Observations show that traditions such as <i>babarit</i> , <i>nyuguh</i> , and <i>tahlilan</i> reinforce the community's expression of religiosity.	Strengthening closeness to God, fostering moral awareness, and preserving ancestral traditions within the frame of Islam and local culture.

Social Ethics and Communal Solidarity	Field data show that these values are manifested through collective work, adat deliberations, respect for elders, and active involvement of youth leaders in community activities. Observations during <i>gotong royong</i> confirm that communal togetherness is the foundation of social relations.	Cultivating democratic character, social solidarity, and harmonious community interactions.
Individual Moral Habituation	Information from Elders and the <i>Kuncen</i> explains that adherence to <i>pamali</i> , simple living, orderly behavior, and self-control are taught through early habituation in families and communities. Adat documentation demonstrates the consistency of these values in ancestral teachings.	Developing humble, honest, disciplined, and responsible individuals in daily life.
Ecological Awareness and Adherence to Adat	Observations in the sacred forest and adat-based spatial regulations reveal that preserving nature is understood as a spiritual and moral obligation. Interviews with adat leaders emphasize that violations of ecological norms are subject to social and adat sanctions as moral education.	Strengthening moral integrity, maintaining social order, and viewing nature as a sacred spiritual trust to be protected.

Data source: Results of interviews, observations and documentation analysis of the Kuta Indigenous Community

The religious values of the Kuta Indigenous community can be understood through four main groups. First, spiritual and divine values encompass devotion to God, reverence for ancestors, and transcendental awareness, reflected in traditional rituals, Islamic worship, and belief in moral consequences. These values strengthen spiritual connections and maintain the continuity of tradition. Second, social ethics and togetherness are evident in mutual cooperation, deliberation, and respect for elders, which serve to build solidarity, harmony, and an inclusive social character. Third, values of individual moral habits, such as simplicity and self-control, shape a humble, disciplined, and responsible personality in daily life. Fourth, values of ecological awareness and adherence to customs affirm the community's commitment to preserving the forbidden forest as a sacred space and adhering to customary norms that govern social order. These four groups of values collectively build the religious character of the Kuta Indigenous community, which integrates spirituality, social, morality, and ecology.

Mechanisms for the Development and Transmission of Religious Values

Research findings indicate that the development of religious values in the Kuta Indigenous community occurs through a structured and multi-layered socio-cultural process. The strengthening of religious values begins with the internalization of Islamic teachings and Sundanese Buhun traditions through traditional rituals such as *babarit*, *hajat bumi* (earth offerings), *nyuguh* (nurture offerings), and ancestral prayers. Through these rituals, the community not only practices forms of worship but also reinterprets the transcendental relationship between humans, God, and nature. Traditional elders play a central role as guardians of values, interpreters of ancestral proverbs, and spiritual guides, explaining the meaning of prohibitions, obligations, and moral consequences believed to arise from violations of customary rules. Collective experience in practicing religious traditions such as *tahlilan* (religious gatherings), *pengajian* (religious study groups), and *Barzanji*

(recitation of the Koran) also serves as an effective means of instilling religious values throughout the community.

The transmission of these values occurs through role models, oral communication, social control, and the practice of daily life. The family is the initial space for internalization, where children are introduced to taboos, ethical etiquette, procedures for worship, and the obligation to respect nature and ancestors. At the community level, social control mechanisms such as reprimands, ostracism, or the obligation to perform restoration rituals serve to maintain adherence to religious values and provide an educational effect for the community. Traditions of mutual cooperation, deliberation, and communal work reinforce the inculcation of values of togetherness, humility, and moral responsibility. Sacred spaces such as forbidden forests also play a symbolic role as a medium for ecological-religious education, as the community believes that preserving nature is part of worship and respect for ancestors. Thus, the inheritance of religious values in the Kuta Customary Law does not occur instantly, but through a simultaneous process involving the family, traditional leaders, ritual institutions, and ongoing communal life experiences.

Table 2. Mechanisms for the Development and Inheritance of Religious Values

Type of Mechanism	Findings from Interviews, Observations, and Documentation	Meaning of the Religious Values
Traditional Rituals as a Medium of Internalization	Interviews with the Traditional Leader (<i>Ketua Adat</i>), <i>Kuncen</i> , and Elders, along with observations of <i>babarit</i> , <i>hajat bumi</i> , <i>nyuguh</i> , ancestral prayers, <i>tahlilan</i> , and <i>Barzanji</i> , show that rituals serve as the primary medium for instilling spiritual values and honoring ancestors.	Deepening transcendental understanding; strengthening spiritual ties with God and ancestors; affirming a way of life aligned with divine values.
The Central Role of Adat Elders	Adat documentation and interviews indicate that Elders function as guardians of values, interpreters of ancestral wisdom, and spiritual guides who explain the meaning of <i>pamali</i> , adat obligations, and moral sanctions (<i>balai</i>).	Ensuring the authenticity of ancestral teachings; cultivating moral obedience; maintaining the continuity of religious values across generations.
Role Modeling and Habituation within the Family	Interviews with residents and Youth Leaders show that the family is the primary space for value internalization through habitual worship, politeness, respect for nature, and early introduction to <i>pamali</i> .	Forming religious character from an early age; strengthening spiritual discipline; instilling respect for adat, religion, and nature.
Educative Forms of Social Control	Observations and statements from adat leaders reveal mechanisms such as verbal reminders, temporary exclusion, or restorative rituals for individuals who violate adat, functioning as moral education tools.	Creating moral responsibility; maintaining social order; ensuring collective adherence to religious norms.
Communal Traditions and Deliberation	Observations of <i>gotong royong</i> , adat deliberations (<i>musyawarah</i>), and communal labor indicate that these social spaces serve as arenas for shaping social ethics.	Enhancing solidarity, togetherness, humility, and communal responsibility.
Sacred Spaces as Media for	Observations of the sacred forest (<i>hutan larangan</i>) and spatial adat regulations	Internalizing the sanctity of nature; affirming that

Type of Mechanism	Findings from Interviews, Observations, and Documentation	Meaning of the Religious Values
Ecological–Religious Education	confirm that these areas are regarded as ancestral trusts that must not be exploited.	environmental stewardship is part of worship and religious morality.

Data source: Results of interviews, observations and documentation analysis of the Kuta Indigenous Community

The development and transmission of religious values within the Kuta Indigenous community occurs through six main channels. Traditional rituals such as babarit, hajat bumi, and nyuguh serve as spaces for internalizing divinity and respecting ancestors. The role of traditional elders is central to the transmission of values, as they interpret customary prohibitions and obligations as moral guidelines. At the family level, religious values are fostered through role models and practices, particularly in introducing taboos, ethical etiquette, and worship.

In the social realm, social control in the form of reprimands or restoration rituals ensures community adherence to religious norms. Communal traditions such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong) and deliberation (musyawarah) strengthen values of togetherness and solidarity. Furthermore, sacred spaces such as the forbidden forest serve as a medium for ecological-religious education, instilling an understanding that environmental sustainability is part of worship and spiritual responsibility. All of these mechanisms work simultaneously, fostering a strong and sustainable religious character within the Kuta Indigenous community.

The Contribution of Religious Values to the Formation of the Religious Character of the Kuta Indigenous Community

Research findings indicate that the religious values developed within the traditional and social life of the Kuta Indigenous community play a significant role in shaping a strong, consistent, and integrated religious character in daily life. Values such as piety, adherence to taboos, respect for ancestors, simplicity, and maintaining harmony with nature encourage the community to view every activity in life as part of worship and spiritual responsibility. The practice of Islamic rituals and traditions not only strengthens the spiritual connection with God but also fosters gratitude, humility, and a moral awareness that every action has ethical consequences. This makes the community's religious behavior not merely a symbolic routine, but rather a fundamental orientation that guides their attitudes, decisions, and interaction patterns.

Furthermore, religious values directly contribute to the formation of social character based on mutual cooperation, solidarity, caring, and respect for others. Customary norms, understood as ancestral mandates and moral commands, foster a community that is obedient to rules, disciplined, and upholds collective ethics. Belief in social and communal sanctions for customary violations strengthens self-control, fostering a sense of caution, responsibility, and honesty. Religious values closely linked to the preservation of the forbidden forest also foster ecological character: a love of nature, a sense of trust, and an awareness of preserving God's creation. Overall, religious values serve as a foundation that guides the Kuta Indigenous community toward a life in harmony spiritually, socially, and ecologically, thus shaping their religious character as a stable cultural identity that is passed down across generations.

Table 3. Contribution of Religious Values to the Formation of the Religious Character of the Kuta Indigenous Community

Religious Values	Contributions Based on Interviews, Observations, and Documentation	Impacts on the Community
Spirituality and Divinity (<i>piety, ancestral reverence, pamali</i>)	Interviews with the Traditional Leader, <i>Kuncen</i> , and Elders indicate that these values serve as the foundation of the community's worldview, structuring relationships between humans, God, ancestors, and nature. Observations of adat rituals and religious practices show strengthened spiritual awareness and belief in <i>pamali</i> as a moral compass.	Fosters gratitude, humility, obedience to moral-adat rules, and strengthens ethical awareness in everyday life.
Social Ethics and Communal Solidarity (<i>mutual cooperation, solidarity, consensus-making, respect for elders</i>)	Field data show that collective work, adat deliberation, and respect for elders reinforce social cohesion and harmony. Youth Leaders actively help preserve traditions of togetherness through communal activities.	Cultivates caring attitudes, politeness, cooperation, inclusiveness, and a strong sense of communal orientation in social life.
Individual Moral Habituation (<i>self-control, simplicity</i>)	Interviews with Elders and observations of adat families show that these values are cultivated through simple living, adherence to <i>pamali</i> , self-regulation, and personal discipline. Adat documentation confirms the consistency of these teachings across generations.	Produces individuals who are disciplined, honest, responsible, humble, and possess strong personal integrity.
Ecological Awareness and Adherence to Adat (<i>preservation of sacred forest, adat norms</i>)	Observations of sacred spaces such as the forbidden forest and interviews with adat leaders reveal that environmental stewardship is viewed as a spiritual obligation. Compliance with adat rules is reinforced through social sanctions and restorative rituals.	Encourages love for nature, ecological responsibility, soci

Data source: Results of interviews, observations and documentation analysis of the Kuta Indigenous Community

The table summarizes four groups of religious values of the Kuta Indigenous community, along with their contributions and impacts on the formation of the community's religious character. First, the values of divinity and transcendence provide a spiritual foundation that guides community behavior in interpreting life as a form of devotion, thus impacting the emergence of characters of gratitude, humility, and a strong moral orientation. Second, the values of customary obedience and self-control function as regulatory mechanisms that direct community actions to align with ancestral

norms, resulting in social discipline and high self-control. Third, the values of social ethics and communal solidarity strengthen social cohesion through the practice of mutual cooperation, deliberation, and intergenerational respect, which then gives rise to a character of care, harmony, and responsibility. Fourth, the value of ecological awareness places nature as a spiritual trust, thus giving rise to an ecological character oriented towards environmental conservation. Overall, this table shows that religious values not only shape the spiritual aspect but also structure the social, moral, and ecological behavior of the Kuta Indigenous community in an integrated manner.

DISCUSSION

Religious Values in the Customary and Social Life of the Kuta Indigenous Community

The religious values of the Kuta Indigenous community are formed through a blend of Islamic teachings and ancestral traditions, internalized through rituals, social practices, and customary norms. Research findings on the religious values of the Kuta Indigenous community indicate that the value structure developed within this community is the result of an integration of Islamic teachings, Sundanese Buhun heritage, and customary norms that govern human relationships with God, nature, and each other. This value integration can be analyzed using Rokeach's Theory of Values, which explains that the value system consists of terminal values (ideal life goals) and instrumental values (the means or principles used to achieve those goals) (Rokeach, 1973). In the context of the Kuta Indigenous community, spiritual and divinity values function as terminal values that represent the orientation of life, namely piety, cosmic harmony, and closeness to God, while traditional rituals, Islamic worship, and taboos act as instrumental values that direct the community's behavior towards these moral goals.

Traditional rituals such as babarit, hajat bumi, nyuguh, tahlilan, and Barzanji demonstrate how religious values are internalized through collective spiritual experiences. This analysis aligns with Durkheim's view that social rituals serve to strengthen collective moral consciousness and communal identity (Durkheim, 1912). Through rituals, communities not only express transcendental beliefs but also renew their commitment to customary norms and ancestral traditions. Elders and Kuncen act as guardians of meaning, who, according to Berger & Luckmann, are agents in the process of internalization, objectivation, and institutionalization of values, ensuring their persistence across generations (Arif, bin Abd Aziz, et al., 2023; Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, 1991; Fauzi et al., 2025).

Findings on social ethics and togetherness indicate that the values of mutual cooperation, deliberation, and respect for elders are important mechanisms for shaping social character. These collectivist values are consistent with the concept of communal morality in cultural anthropology, which explains that social solidarity is formed through shared work practices and norms of mutual support (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). The involvement of youth in traditional activities shows the process of value regeneration, where communal values are maintained through participation and social activities.

Furthermore, individual moral habits such as modesty, self-control, and adherence to taboos demonstrate the existence of a character-building mechanism that occurs within the family and community environment. This aligns with Bourdieu's habitus theory, which states that patterns of action are formed through repeated experiences within social structures, resulting in relatively stable

moral dispositions (Bourdieu, 1977). In Kuta society, religious habitus is built through habituation from childhood, parental example, and verbal instructions from traditional elders.

The values of ecological awareness and adherence to customs demonstrate the close relationship between religiosity and ecological ethics. The protected sacred forest demonstrates that nature is understood as a moral entity that must be respected. This approach aligns with cultural ecology theory, which asserts that belief systems can be an effective mechanism for maintaining ecosystem balance (Satria, 2014). The social and customary sanctions imposed on violators of ecological norms also show how religious values function as social control that creates social order and environmental sustainability.

Overall, the four groups of values spirituality, social ethics, individual moral habits, and ecological awareness are interrelated and form a unified religious value system. This analysis shows that the religious character of the Kuta Indigenous community does not exist in isolation within the ritual dimension alone, but encompasses complementary social, moral, and ecological dimensions. Thus, religious values serve as the foundation of cultural identity, a moral guideline, and a mechanism for preserving tradition and the environment. The theoretical approach used demonstrates that the internalization of values occurs not only through verbal teachings, but also through social structures, role models, rituals, sacred spaces, and daily practices that consistently shape collective moral awareness. The following is a visualization of Religious Values in the Customary and Social Life of the Kuta Indigenous Community:

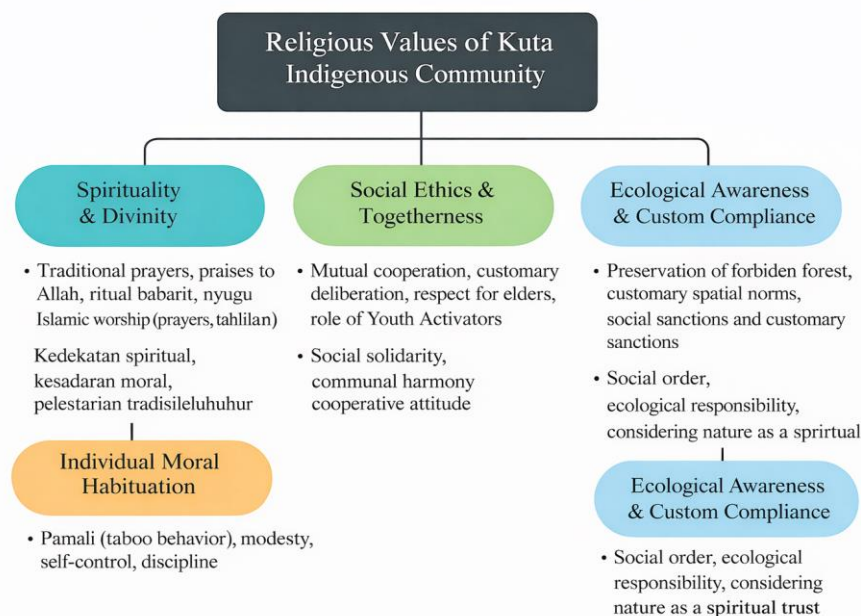


Figure 1. Religious Values in the Customary and Social Life of the Kuta Indigenous Community

Mechanisms for the Development and Inheritance of Religious Values

The findings of this study on the mechanisms for the development and inheritance of religious values in the Kuta Indigenous community through traditional rituals, the role of elders, family, social control, communal traditions, and sacred spaces demonstrate that this community has developed a system of religious values that is integrated and embedded in everyday social practices. This pattern

aligns with various recent studies on local wisdom-based character education in Indonesian indigenous communities. Miranti, Nurjanah, and Dwiastuty (2018), through a study of the local wisdom of the Sundanese community in Choblong Village, found that religious and moral values are instilled through local traditions, religious practices, and family customs, which can then be integrated into the formal education curriculum (Ira Miranti, Nurjanah, 2018). This finding strengthens the research results in Kuta Custom that family, rituals, and tradition-based social interactions are the main arenas for internalizing religious values.

Makmur and Dastina's (2018) research on family education values in traditional ceremonies in Kerinci shows that traditional ceremonies contain the values of monotheism, deliberation, mutual cooperation, and politeness which function as a vehicle for character education at the family and community level (Abdullah, 2019; Testiani Makmur, 2018). This strongly resonates with findings in Kuta, where rituals such as babarit, hajat bumi, and nyuguh are not merely ceremonies, but also "open classes" that instill piety, ancestral respect, social solidarity, and ecological awareness. Thus, this research strengthens the argument that traditional rituals are important instruments in community-based character education, not merely ceremonial cultural heritage.

More specifically in the context of indigenous communities in West Java, Purnama's (2021) research on the local wisdom of Kampung Naga as a reinforcement of community-based character education found that religious values, cooperation, independence, and integrity were internalized through spatial structures, social interaction patterns, and daily customary practices (Purnama, 2021). This pattern closely parallels the value structure of Kuta Customary Law, particularly regarding respect for sacred space, communal mutual cooperation, and adherence to customary norms. However, this study positions Kampung Naga primarily as a "school partner" for strengthening character education, while your research broadens the focus by analyzing the mechanisms of value internalization from a "community" perspective, thus revealing the dynamics of religiosity as a habitus formed through interactions between family, elders, and ritual institutions.

In the realm of formal education, Mansur and Sholeh (2024) demonstrated that local wisdom-based character education in Islamic elementary schools is carried out through the integration of local culture, religious habits, and a collaborative school culture (Arif, 2024; Mansur, 2024). This research emphasizes the role of educators and school policies in implementing local values in learning. In comparison, research in the Kuta Customary Community shows that indigenous communities can function as independent "loci of character education," where the role of teachers is functionally carried out by elders, kuncen (guardians), parents, and youth activists. In other words, while Mansur and Sholeh emphasize the integration of local wisdom into school institutions, your findings highlight how indigenous communities themselves are comprehensive institutions for character education.

The strong religious-ecological dimension in the Kuta Indigenous community is also in line with the research of Susanto and Basid (2024) regarding the Djawa-Soenda Religion (ADS) as a form of "local religion" which emphasizes harmony with nature as part of religious values and resistance to modernity which has the potential to damage tradition (Susanto & Basid, 2024). Like ADS, the Kuta Indigenous community positions the forbidden forest and other sacred spaces as spiritual trusts that must not be exploited, and violations of these are understood as actions with moral and spiritual consequences. This reinforces your theoretical reading that Kuta religious values are inseparable from ecological ethics, and that preserving nature is understood as part of worship and moral integrity.

Other relevant research is Purnama's study of Kampung Naga and other local wisdom studies that emphasize the role of indigenous communities as the basis for national character education (Purnama, 2021). On the other hand, the study by Mansur and Sholeh (2024) and various local studies of wisdom character education in schools show that in general the focus of research is still at the level of program design and implementation in formal educational institutions (Afandi, 2021; Mansur, 2024). Meanwhile, new studies on hypothetical models of religious character education based on local wisdom in Kuta Ciamis tend to formulate conceptual or hypothetical models, rather than taking an in-depth look at the mechanisms of internalization of values that live within the community (Darisman et al., 2025; Hayah, 2017; Maarif, 2015). It is at this point that your research makes an important contribution: it complements the existing literature by showing how models of religious values are actually enacted, negotiated, and transmitted through concrete social practices, rituals, and customary authority structures.

Finally, this finding is also in line with the general trend in the literature over the past decade that places local wisdom as an important source of character education at the family, school, and community levels, but also affirms the challenges of modernization and generational change. Studies on local wisdom-based character education in various regions of Indonesia show that local wisdom contains religious values, mutual cooperation, nationalism, and integrity that can strengthen character education, but also faces the risk of value erosion due to the penetration of global culture and the weakening of the younger generation's ties to tradition (Ira Miranti, Nurjanah, 2018). In this context, the layered mechanisms found in Kuta Custom involving families, traditional elders, communal rituals, social control, and sacred spaces show that the traditional community has a strong social and religious capacity to maintain, adapt, and transform religious values amidst the changing times.

The Contribution of Religious Values to the Formation of the Religious Character of the Kuta Indigenous Community

The religious values that develop within the traditional life of the Kuta Indigenous Community serve as a moral and spiritual framework that guides behavior, shapes religious awareness, and regulates social-communal relationships. This value system stems from the integration of Islamic teachings and ancestral traditions, passed down through generations through rituals, taboos, mutual cooperation practices, and binding customary rules. The strengthening of piety and spiritual awareness in the form of piety is reflected in the community's adherence to religious teachings and respect for sacred sites. This spiritual awareness is constructed through traditional rituals such as *hajat lembur* (a ceremony for offering food), *nyuguh* (a ceremony for offering food), and respect for ancestors, which instill a sense of connectedness between humans, nature, and the Creator. Its contribution is evident in the community's behavior, which consistently maintains the sanctity of sacred sites and refrains from engaging in actions that violate ethical-religious values. This aligns with Geertz's (1976) view that ritual practices serve to reinforce structures of meaning and strengthen the religious orientation of a community (Geertz, 1976).

Internalization of Social Ethics and Adherence to Norms, with values of adherence to taboos and customary rules, serves as a social mechanism in developing discipline, moral responsibility, and collective obedience. Taboos, such as prohibitions on clearing sacred forests or building houses with walls, serve to foster self-control and maintain tradition. These values reinforce the character of

obedience, which, according to Durkheim (1995), is a fundamental element in the formation of collective consciousness and social stability (Durkheim, 1995).

The formation of social attitudes based on mutual cooperation, with traditions of mutual cooperation, *sauyunan*, and deliberation, serves as a means of internalizing the values of togetherness, solidarity, and social concern. These practices teach inclusive social character (Arif, Aziz, et al., 2023) and strengthen social cohesion within the community. This contribution aligns with Koentjaraningrat's (2009) view, which explains that mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) is a core value of Indonesian culture, fostering a collectivist character and a sense of shared responsibility (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). The fostering of simplicity and a moderate lifestyle ethos is evident in the rule against building permanent houses, a frugal lifestyle, and the prohibition of excessive behavior. Simplicity contributes to the development of a moderate and humble character, in accordance with the Islamic concept of *al-wasathiyah*. This aligns with Azra's (2017) view that moderation and simplicity are important characteristics of the religiosity of traditional Muslim communities in the archipelago (Abubakar, 2018; Azra, 2005; Jesica Dwi Rahmayanti & Muhamad Arif, 2021).

Strengthening ecological character and responsibility towards nature, religious values related to the protection of sacred forests and customary spatial planning contribute to fostering a spiritually based ecological character. Communities view nature as part of a sacred system, thus fostering behaviors that protect, care for, and prevent environmental damage. This view is consistent with Lansing's study, which emphasized that spiritual value systems often serve as effective ecological mechanisms in traditional societies (Lansing, 1991b). Overall, these religious values contribute significantly to the formation of the religious character of the Kuta Indigenous community through the internalization of culture, rituals, and social norms. The religious character thus formed is comprehensive: spiritual, social, moral, and ecological. This value system not only maintains cultural identity but also supports community order and environmental sustainability (Abidin et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that: 1) the structure and hierarchy of religious values of the Kuta Indigenous community are formed from a combination of Islamic teachings and ancestral traditions that are structured into terminal values in the form of monotheism, social harmony, customary morality, and ecological ethics, as well as instrumental values such as taboos, simplicity, mutual cooperation, deliberation, and customary rituals that function as guidelines for action towards higher value goals; 2) the mechanism of internalization of religious values takes place through the process of forming beliefs in customary rituals and Islamic worship, habituation through family and daily life practices, strengthening norms through taboos and customary rules, and customary regulations that ensure these values are transformed into stable collective attitudes and behaviors; and 3) these religious values function to shape the religious character of the Kuta Indigenous community in four main dimensions, namely divine awareness, social solidarity, moral discipline, and ecological concern that comprehensively regulate moral orientation, social actions, and the order of community culture so that religiosity becomes the identity and foundation of the sustainability of customary life.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the religious values of the Kuta Indigenous community serve as the foundation for the formation of a religious character that harmonizes spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions, while also emphasizing the importance of local wisdom in character

education. However, this study has limitations such as the limited scope of informants, the absence of longitudinal data, and the lack of written documentation that could strengthen triangulation. Therefore, further research is needed through longitudinal studies, comparisons between indigenous communities, quantitative or mixed methods approaches to examine the relationship between values and behavior, and exploration of the dynamics of religious values in a digital context to further comprehensively understand the inheritance of values in indigenous communities.

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