



***SAPA SALAH SELEH* AS JAVANESE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE: THE PERSPECTIVE OF HUMANISM AND VALUE EDUCATION**

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Abstract

The degradation of social ethics, the strengthening of individualism, and the weakening of concern for human values require strengthening character education rooted in local wisdom. One relevant Javanese cultural value is the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy, which embodies the principles of honesty, moral responsibility, and ethical awareness as a manifestation of humanism in social life. This study aims to examine the humanistic values contained in the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy and to analyze their relevance for values education in the contemporary era. The study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with a literature study method. Data were obtained from Javanese cultural texts, local proverbs, and literature on humanism and character education, then analyzed using a hermeneutic approach to interpret the philosophical meaning contained therein. The results show that the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy embodies humanistic values such as self-awareness, honesty, moral responsibility, empathy, self-control, and respect for others. These values are relevant to strengthening character education because they can encourage the formation of tolerant, empathetic, and responsible attitudes in social life. This finding confirms that integrating the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy into education can be an alternative for strengthening a humanist character that is contextual and rooted in local culture.

Key words: *sapa salah seleh*; Javanese philosophy; humanism; character education; local wisdom

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of modernization support has contributed to the marginalization of local philosophies, causing cultural values that once served as ethical and social guidelines to become progressively weakened in everyday life. This phenomenon is evident in the decline of empathy, the rise of individualism, and the fading of the spirit of mutual cooperation in social life (Lego et al., 2025). Technological development and globalization, when not accompanied by the reinforcement of noble values, can influence the

character formation of the younger generation (Prasetyo, 2025). This is evidenced by increasing individualistic attitudes, decreasing social concern, and weakening ethical awareness in social interactions (Herawati et al., 2025; Mazid et al., 2026). The rapid flow of information and instant culture have shifted the meaning of social responsibility, politeness, and empathy, which have long been distinctive characteristics of Indonesian society (Hartini et al., 2023; Tur & Sabrina, 2024). As a result, individualistic behavior and apathy towards the social

environment are increasingly prominent in everyday life.

Phenomena such as intolerance, low empathy, and weakened social awareness are no longer hidden issues but have emerged in everyday life. This condition is evident in the increasing conflict between individuals and groups (Suryani, 2023), a lack of concern for others and mutual assistance, and a weakening of the spirit of mutual cooperation. Mutual cooperation is a social strength of Indonesian society (Istiqomah et al., 2024). If Javanese values and philosophy are not instilled in the younger generation, it will lead to a weakening of social attitudes, cultural values, and the community's collective identity (Insani et al., 2024). This condition also results in the increasingly marginalization of local values, including the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy, in an education system that tends to emphasize cognitive aspects and academic achievement over character building and moral awareness.

In fact, if it is interpreted and implemented correctly, the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy can serve as the foundation for character education that is relevant to both local and universal contexts. *Sapa salah seleh* is whoever is wrong will be caught, which has the meaning of honesty (Mazid et al., 2025). From a Javanese philosophical perspective, life values not only function as behavioral guidelines, but also emphasize harmony, self-awareness, moral responsibility, and respect for fellow human beings (Yuwono et al., 2025). These values are in line with the principles of humanism that view humans as dignified beings who must develop ethical attitudes and social concern (Markauskaite et al., 2023). Therefore, local wisdom-based value education is important to be integrated

systematically in learning to form students who are not only academically intelligent, but also have moral sensitivity, a humanistic attitude, and the ability to face the challenges of the era without losing their national identity (Al-Nahdi & Li, 2025).

Education is no longer sufficient to emphasize only cognitive aspects, but must also address the affective and spiritual dimensions capable of shaping civilized and responsible individuals (Saada, 2023). The Indonesian nation actually possesses a wealth of noble local values laden with ethical meaning (Moeis et al., 2022). One of these is the Javanese philosophy of life known as *sapa salah seleh*. This expression implies that anyone who is at fault must be willing to admit their mistake and take responsibility, even if it requires yielding for the sake of maintaining social harmony (Mazid et al., 2020; Modisane, 2023). This value not only reflects maturity in attitude but also contains the principles of humanism (Khrypko et al., 2025). These principles include self-awareness, empathy, and respect for others, which align with the concept of relational humanism, a view that positions humans as social beings who build meaning and morality through harmonious relationships with others (Aristotle et al., 2009).

The issue of the character of the Indonesian nation is currently a public concern, as various problems are suspected to stem from a crisis of values and morality (Lonto, 2019). One manifestation of this value degradation is evident in dishonesty (Sudrajat et al., 2024). For instance, the widespread dissemination of fake news (hoaxes) in various digital media has raised concerns and anxiety, especially among the millennial generation (Suud, 2018). In this

context, local cultural values, such as Javanese behavior, which is rich in meaning and embodied in cultural symbols, play a crucial role in character building (Suprpto et al., 2024). Indonesian ancestors, particularly the Javanese, are known to uphold noble behavior, a trait inherited from their ancestors (Mutiarra et al., 2023). Therefore, reviving values that emphasize honesty, responsibility, and social harmony is an important part of the solution in shaping the nation's character in today's digital era.

Javanese culture is rooted in a belief in transcendent powers beyond human existence, a worldview often described as magical-religious in nature (Arsadani, 2012). This perspective is reflected in the inscription located on Mount Tidar, a site regarded as the *pakuning tanah jawa* (the nail of Java), symbolizing its spiritual and cultural significance within Javanese tradition. Currently, Mount Tidar continues to serve as an important cultural center, hosting various events such as arts and cultural festivals, *Ruwat Bumi*, and the *Haul* of *Kyai Syech Subakir* (Sakti & Sulistyowati, 2020). One of the most prominent philosophical values associated with Mount Tidar is *Sa Tidar*, which conveys the moral principle of *sapa salah seleh*. Represented by the letter *Sa* inscribed on Mount Tidar, this expression literally means that anyone who is at fault must be willing to admit their mistakes and accept responsibility. More broadly, it embodies a profound ethical message that emphasizes honesty, accountability, and the willingness to yield for the sake of maintaining social harmony. The meaning of this philosophy serves as a moral guide for the people of Magelang and its surroundings and reflects the integrity that characterizes the local community (Mazid et al., 2020).

The *sapa salah seleh* philosophy is a local wisdom of the Javanese people that reflects ethical values, humanism, and moral responsibility (Mazid et al., 2025). From a cultural perspective, this philosophy is rooted in the Javanese value system that upholds harmony, balance, and social order. The phrase "*sapa salah seleh*" embodies the belief that every human action has consequences for which one must ultimately be held accountable. From a philosophical perspective, this philosophy reflects an ethical awareness of human relationships with oneself and others, grounded in the values of honesty, self-reflection, ego control, and respect for human dignity. Therefore, "*sapa salah seleh*" is not only traditional moral advice but also a relevant value system in the study of humanism and values education, helping shape characters with integrity, empathy, and responsibility amid the challenges of modern life.

The relevance of this philosophy is further strengthened when linked to the goals of values education, which are oriented not only to the mastery of knowledge but also to the development of character and humanity in students. The values of honesty, responsibility, empathy, and moral awareness contained in *sapa salah seleh* align with the principles of humanism, which position humans as dignified individuals capable of acting ethically in social life (Mazid et al., 2025). Therefore, studying this philosophy through a cultural and philosophical lens is important to reveal its contribution as a source of local values that can be integrated into character education to strengthen students' humanist attitudes, social awareness, and integrity in the modern era.

Several studies by Mazid et al. (2020, 2025), Mutiarra et al. (2023), and Widiyanto &

Lutfiana (2021) have examined Javanese values and culture in the context of character education and local cultural preservation. However, those studies generally focus on describing cultural values, normative moral internalization, and strengthening students' cognitive aspects. Previous studies have not in-depth reconstructed Javanese philosophy as an operational pedagogical framework for humanist values-based education. Furthermore, the relational and humanistic dimensions of local philosophy, particularly in fostering empathy, social awareness, and harmony among people, remain relatively untouched both conceptually and practically.

In fact, several studies emphasize the importance of a humanistic approach in education that positions students as subjects who develop through social experiences and culturally contextual values. Building on this research gap, this study presents a novel approach by reconstructing the Javanese philosophy of *sapa salah seleh* not merely as cultural heritage but as a humanistic value framework that can be functionally integrated into values education. The main contribution of this article lies in the development of a conceptual model of values education based on Javanese local wisdom that emphasizes social harmony, self-reflection, and the formation of student character relevant to the challenges of modern society.

As a result, it is crucial to explore and revitalize meaningful local values, such as the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy, so that they can be contextually integrated into the Indonesian character education system. This research aims to deeply examine the humanistic values within the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy and to explore their relevance to values education in the contemporary

era. Using a philosophical and cultural studies approach, this paper aims to offer an alternative educational paradigm rooted in local wisdom while remaining aligned with the spirit of universal humanism.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative, descriptive-interpretive approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the humanistic values in the Javanese philosophy of *sapa salah seleh* and their relevance to values education. This approach was chosen because the study of value systems, cultural traditions, and local philosophies requires contextual and interpretive exploration, not quantitative measurements. Data were obtained through library research, grouped into three categories based on thematic relevance, source credibility, and reference currency. First, classical Javanese cultural and philosophical texts related to the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy, such as *Serat Wedhatama*, *Serat Wulangreh*, and *Serat Centhini*, as well as academic works by Endraswara (2012). Second, approximately 30 reputable scientific journal articles published between 2020 and 2025 were obtained through Google Scholar, DOAJ, Scopus, and Copernicus, using the keywords local wisdom, humanism, Javanese philosophy, and character education. Third, national character education policy documents, including Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education, the Pancasila Student Profile, and the Independent Curriculum document.

Data analysis was conducted in two complementary stages. The first stage used a philosophical hermeneutic approach adapted from the thinking of Gadamer et al. (2013), specifically

the concept of the fusion of horizons, to interpret the meanings of values contained in Javanese cultural texts, taking into account their historical and cultural contexts and their relevance to contemporary educational conditions. The second stage used thematic content analysis, referring to the procedures of Braun & Clarke (2006), which included data familiarization, initial coding, theme identification, theme review, theme naming, and interpretation. Through this procedure, key themes such as honesty, moral responsibility, self-reflection, empathy, and social harmony were identified, which recurred across various sources. To ensure data validity, the study employed triangulation of literature sources through cross-reference comparisons and cross-source verification to ensure consistency of interpretation. Conceptual validity was also strengthened through theoretical dialogue with relevant literature on Javanese philosophy, humanism, and character education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Philosophy of *Sapa Salah Seleh*

The philosophy of *sapa salah seleh* is deeply rooted in Javanese literary and ethical traditions, embodied in centuries-old classical texts. In *Serat Wedhatama* by Mangkunegara IV, this principle is reflected in the main teachings of *laku utama* (the practice of the main character), which emphasize that true nobility can only be achieved through inner honesty and adherence to universal moral law—whoever deviates from the truth will undoubtedly bear the consequences. Similarly, *Serat Wulangreh* by Pakubuwana IV explicitly teaches manners and ethical behavior based on the principle of *becik ketitik ala ketara*—goodness will be clearly visible and evil will be revealed in time—

which is substantively aligned with the spirit of *sapa salah seleh* as a system of moral accountability in Javanese social life. Moreover, *Serat Centhini*, the most comprehensive encyclopedia of Javanese culture, documents the cosmological belief that the universe operates on the principles of balance and justice. Within this worldview, every human action—good or bad—will ultimately return to the actor, reflecting a distantly Javanese conception of karma that is social and relational in nature. Hence, those three texts collectively show that *sapa salah seleh* is not just a proverb, but an ethical principle that has taken root as the moral foundation of Javanese civilization.

Authoritative scholars in the field of Javanese philosophy and culture provide an academic framework that strengthens the understanding of the humanistic values in the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy. Endraswara (2012) in his study of Javanese philosophy of life explained that Javanese proverbs and philosophy are essentially a system of wisdom that functions as a regulator of social behavior. Therefore, *sapa salah seleh* reflects the collective awareness that a person's moral integrity cannot be permanently hidden in a community that lives on the basis of harmony and mutual observation. This Javanese ethics emphasized that Javanese society builds its social relations on two main principles: harmony and respect, so that moral violations contained in the context of *sapa salah seleh* are not only individual in dimension, but also constitute a threat to social order and communal trust. Furthermore, Koentjaraningrat (1994) coined that the Javanese value system is closely tied to the concept of feeling and deep inner awareness. Hence, the recognition of mistakes in Javanese tradition is not merely an external demand, but an internal need to restore

balance to oneself and the social environment. These three academic perspectives synergistically emphasize that *sapa salah seleh* represents relational humanism—an ethical system that places honesty, responsibility, and social awareness as the main pillars in building dignified and harmonious human relationships.

Sapa salah seleh is a manifestation of Javanese local wisdom, embodying values of moral responsibility and social ethics (Mazid et al., 2025). In Javanese culture, this philosophy is not merely an oral expression but serves as a guideline for life passed down through generations. A qualitative study based on a literature review that examined various sources, such as documented interviews with cultural figures, educators, and the community in Central Java, revealed that this principle remains alive and relevant in everyday life. Its primary value lies in the teaching that every individual must have the courage to admit mistakes and be willing to bear the consequences. This attitude is seen as the foundation for creating social harmony and developing an honest and responsible character (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025). These findings emphasize the importance of integrating the value of *sapa salah seleh* into values education as part of character building grounded in local wisdom.

The implementation of the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy is evident in various social practices, particularly in local conflict resolution mechanisms. In several villages, traditional mediation processes still prioritize a humanistic approach, emphasizing recognition, accountability, and actors' self-awareness rather than punishment. Honesty is a key value underlying the reconciliation process between residents and serves as a medium for moral learning for the younger generation (Pratt & Bodnaresko,

2023). Thus, *sapa salah seleh* serves not only as a social norm but also as an effective character education tool in developing individuals with ethical and social awareness.

The philosophy of *Sa Tidar* refers to the meaning and way of life embodied in the letter *Sa*, which is inscribed on Mount Tidar in Magelang, Central Java. At the center of the field, on the summit of Mount Tidar, stands a two-meter-high monument with four sides. The first side features the Pancasila emblem, Garuda Pancasila, while the other three sides are inscribed with the Javanese script *Sa Sa Sa*. This monument is known as the *sapa salah seleh* Inscription, which literally means “whoever is at fault will eventually be revealed”. This script can be interpreted as a guideline for character formation, as the sentence in the inscription indicates an honest nature and attitudes that are part of integrity in life (Mazid et al., 2020). Figure 1 presents the *Sa* Monument, believed to symbolize Pakuning Tanah Jawa (“the Nail of Java”) and regarded as the origin of the philosophical values underlying the *sapa salah seleh* principle.



Figure 1. *Sa* Monument (*sapa salah seleh*)

Figure 1 depicts the *Sa* Monument at the summit of Mount Tidar in Magelang City, a cultural site that preserves important historical and

philosophical values within Javanese local wisdom. The monument consists of an upright pillar standing on a terraced stone base, with the Javanese letter *Sa* carved on three of its sides. This inscription refers to the philosophy of *sapa salah seleh*, which embodies the principle that every wrongdoing will ultimately bear its consequences. Beyond serving as a mechanism for conflict resolution, the philosophy of *sapa salah seleh* plays an important role in shaping Javanese society's worldview and attitudes, particularly by cultivating sincerity (Mazid et al., 2020). Within this cultural framework, admitting one's mistakes is not regarded as a sign of weakness, but rather as an expression of moral maturity and a willingness to take responsibility for one's actions. These locally rooted values strengthen social cohesion by fostering mutual trust and respect among community members (Prayitno et al., 2024). Consequently, *sapa salah seleh* functions as a cultural foundation for a society that is not only law-abiding but also guided by an internalized ethical consciousness.

In addition to representing the philosophy of *sapa salah seleh*, the Javanese script *Sa* on the monument also has a deep symbolic meaning from the perspective of cultural semiotics and humanist values. In the theory of cultural symbols, symbols are not only understood as visual signs but also as media that represent society's values, awareness, and outlook on life. The *Sa* script can be interpreted as a symbol of human moral awareness to understand oneself, admit mistakes, and build harmonious relationships with others (Mazid et al., 2025). This meaning aligns with indicators of humanism that emphasize respect for human dignity, personal responsibility, social empathy, and mutual respect in communal life. The

placement of the *Sa* script on three sides of the pillar indicates that these human values must be present in every human relationship, whether with oneself, others, or one's social environment. Thus, the monument functions as a cultural marker and as a symbol of moral-humanistic education that teaches self-reflection, humility, and ethical awareness as the basis for character formation in Javanese society.

The following are the manifestations of the *sapa salah seleh* value in the form of honesty in society, as described by Mazid et al. (2025).

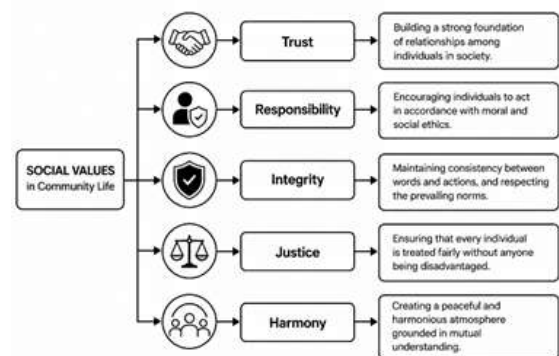


Figure 2. Philosophical value of *sapa salah seleh*

The values of trust, responsibility, integrity, justice, and harmony explained above are essentially integrated into the value of *sapa salah seleh*, a meaningful expression of honesty in Javanese social life. In this view, honesty is not limited to merely admitting mistakes, but also involves building trust with others, demonstrating responsibility for actions, and upholding consistent personal integrity between words and deeds. This philosophy instills the awareness that humans must dare to face the consequences of their actions as part of noble social ethics. Thus, the awareness that humans must dare to face the consequences of their actions (Deeg & May, 2022) reflects the principle of noble social ethics, where personal responsibility is

the basis for creating justice and harmony in communal life (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025).

The principle of *sapa salah seleh*, as a reflection of social justice, aligns with the findings of several previous studies examining the relevance of local wisdom to character formation and social order. Pratiwi & Suyanto (2021), in their study of the internalization of Javanese values in educational settings, emphasized that the principle of honesty in Javanese philosophy functions not only as a personal value but also as a social regulatory mechanism that maintains trust between individuals within a community. Similarly, Sukarno (2023) found that the culture of openly admitting mistakes—as reflected in the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy—contributes significantly to the formation of a harmonious social climate, as humility in admitting mistakes actually strengthens social bonds and minimizes relational conflict. Furthermore, Sobaya et al. (2023) emphasized that the value of honesty in Javanese local wisdom operates in two dimensions simultaneously: the individual dimension of self-integrity and the collective dimension of maintaining a balanced social order. Thus, honesty becomes a moral foundation that supports harmony in communal life. As a result, *sapa salah seleh* does not just contain an individual moral message, but represents a social ethical system that collectively supports a peaceful, just, and morally upright society.

Sapa salah seleh is not only a slogan, but an ethical foundation for building a just, responsible, and respectful society. More broadly, this philosophy encourages the formation of a society that upholds the value of justice, where there is no ego dominance or denial of wrongdoing. Instead, every member of society is required to act honestly and consistently between words and actions. When

the values of responsibility and respect for others are implemented through the principles of *sapa salah seleh*, social life will be more inclusive, tolerant, and oriented toward peaceful problem-solving.

Humanist Perspective on Education

The concept of humanism emphasizes that humans have the capacity to develop and improve themselves, and to achieve self-actualization through meaningful experiences. In this concept, education as a process that must respect individual dignity, empathy, freedom of reflection, and unconditional positive regard. This perspective aligns with the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy, which views mistakes not as a basis for punishment but as a means of moral learning and self-awareness. In the context of education, students are viewed as individuals with the potential to grow if provided with dialogical space, empathetic guidance, and the opportunity to reflect on their actions. Thus, this Javanese philosophy can be understood as a form of local humanism that emphasizes moral responsibility, respect for humanity, and character formation through internal awareness, rather than external pressure.

From a humanist perspective, the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy reflects respect for human dignity as beings with moral awareness and the potential for growth. This principle teaches that every individual, including students, has the right to be treated humanely and with dignity, even when they make mistakes. In the context of education, this approach encourages teachers not to punish repressively but rather to help students recognize their mistakes and learn from them. Mistakes are seen not as a disgrace, but as part of

the psychological, spiritual, and intellectual growth process of humans (Sari, 2023).

Educational humanism emphasizes the importance of developing an individual's holistic potential, including cognitive, affective, and moral aspects (Fenanlampir et al., 2021). The philosophy of *sapa salah seleh* is highly relevant within this framework because it teaches that humans are not merely responsible for the consequences but also possess the awareness to improve themselves. In educational practice, values can be interpreted through a reflective, dialogical, and empathetic pedagogical approach (Ouedraogo, 2021). For example, teachers can create a supportive learning environment where students are encouraged to acknowledge their mistakes, engage in self-reflection, and make meaningful improvements without fear of being labeled negatively. Hence, this local value actually strengthens the principle of educational humanism, which values the learning process as a moral and emotional journey.

The implementation of the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy in education aligns with the findings of Machali & Hidayat (2016), who assert that an inclusive and equitable school culture can only be realized if student mistakes are treated not as objects of punishment, but as opportunities for reflection and moral growth. This contrasts with the findings of Setiawan et al. (2020), who identified that a sanctions-based educational approach actually weakens student self-confidence and hinders the development of social empathy—conditions that directly contradict the spirit of relational humanism espoused by *sapa salah seleh*. Furthermore, Kurniawan & Prastowo (2022) found that integrating local wisdom values into the curriculum significantly strengthens student character formation compared to generic, non-

contextual character education approaches, because local values have cultural closeness that facilitates authentic internalization. These findings reinforce the argument that integrating *sapa salah seleh* into learning practices not only enriches local content but also substantively strengthens the mission of humanistic education as conceptualized by Noddings (2019) through the ethics of care—an approach that places empathy, relational responsibility, and respect for others at the core of the educational process. Unlike the study by Suprpto et al. (2024) which emphasized character education through external habits, this study shows that *sapa salah seleh* offers a deeper dimension, that is, the formation of ethical awareness from inner moral awareness. This ethical awareness makes students reflective, honest, and responsible individuals in facing life in a pluralistic and dynamic society.

The Construction of Values Education

In the context of values education, the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy has great potential for integration into learning through a contextual approach relevant to students' lives. This approach prioritizes the connection between learning materials and students' real-life experiences, so that the values taught are not abstract. One effective way to achieve this is by embracing local culture as a learning resource. By incorporating the *sapa salah seleh* value into learning activities, students are encouraged to understand that responsibility and honesty are not just school norms, but noble values that live within their communities.

Teachers can use various culture-based learning media to convey these values, such as folktales, regional legends, local historical stories, and traditional games with moral elements

(Saputra, 2025; Yunus, 2016). Furthermore, ethical discussions or case studies grounded in local contexts are also effective in stimulating students' critical thinking and moral development (Zhao et al., 2023). This approach allows students to relate values such as responsibility, admitting mistakes, and humility to real-life situations they are familiar with. Thus, students not only understand the concepts theoretically but also see their direct application in everyday life.

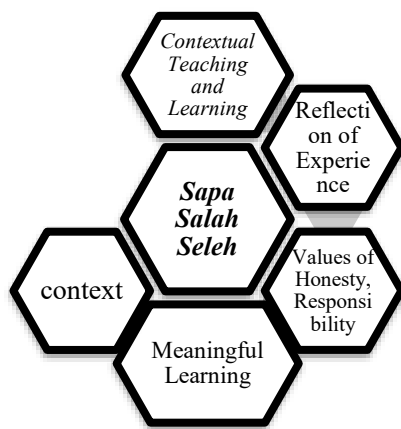


Figure 3. The Integration of *sapa salah seleh* values in Education

Based on the results of a literature study by (Mazid et al., 2020) with several educators, community leaders, religious leaders, and cultural figures in Magelang, it is known that local values such as *sapa salah seleh* are very effective in shaping students' moral awareness. This is because these values originate from the socio-cultural environment close to their lives, making them easier to accept and internalize. Local values not only strengthen the roots of students' cultural identity but also serve as a powerful medium for character formation through meaningful social experiences (Sakti et al., 2024). By integrating these values into the educational process, teachers not only serve as transmitters of knowledge but also as

moral guides who foster a responsible, honest, and empathetic generation. Figure 3 below illustrates the integration of *sapa salah seleh* in education.

Based on the figure above, strengthening this philosophy in the educational context requires a practical, context-specific approach. The Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach provides the most relevant pedagogical framework for integrating the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy into educational practice, as it emphasizes the organic connection between instructional content and students' real-life experiences (Johnson, 2002). This study proposed an integrative conceptual framework entitled the *sapa salah seleh* Values Integration Model (SSVIM), a three-layer model that operates synergistically. The first layer is cognitive internalization, in which students are introduced to the meaning and philosophical context of *sapa salah seleh* through textual analysis and guided discussion. The second layer is affective reflection, in which students are encouraged to relate these values to their personal experiences through reflective journals and contextualized local case studies. The third layer is social actualization, in which students embody the values of honesty and responsibility through structured community-based social projects.

The stages of this model implementation in learning practice are: (1) the introduction stage, the teacher presents the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy as a meaningful apperception linked to contemporary moral issues in the student's environment; (2) the exploration stage, students conduct case analysis, role simulations, and group discussions based on ethical scenarios; (3) the reflection stage, students write personal moral journals as a form of strengthening ethical awareness from within themselves; and (4) the

action stage, students design and implement simple social projects that reflect the values of *sapa salah seleh* in the school environment and society. In the curriculum integration scheme, this model can be inserted across subjects (cross-curricular integration) in the subjects of Pancasila Education, Religious and Character Education, and Javanese Language at the junior high and senior high school levels, with reference to the *Merdeka* Curriculum which provides flexible space through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) as the main instrument for its implementation.

With this conceptual model and integration scheme, *sapa salah seleh* no longer functions as a local content ornament, but is transformed into a systematic pedagogical instrument in shaping students who are reflective, honest, and have a humanistic character. Therefore, educational and cultural institutions have a strategic role in preserving and transforming this local philosophy into an integral part of down-to-earth character education that has a real impact. The philosophy of *sapa salah seleh* aligns with the thoughts of Ki Hajar Dewantara, who emphasized the importance of education as an effort to humanization through the instilling of moral values and character (Sidon et al., 2023). In his view, education must be able to foster ethical awareness in students so that they become responsible, honest, and characterful individuals (Widiyanto & Purnomo, 2023). The principle of *sapa salah seleh*, which emphasizes honesty and the courage to admit one's mistakes, reflects Ki Hajar Dewantara's view of human nature as something that must be nurtured through educational guidance embodied in the principles of *ing ngarso sung tulodo* (leading by example), *ing madyo mangun karso* (building motivation from within), and *tut*

wuri handayani (providing encouragement from behind) (Widiyanto & Purnomo, 2023). Hence, this philosophy is not only a cultural heritage but also a foundation for the practice of values education in accordance with the ideals of national education.

Overall, the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy reflects a blend of local wisdom, humanistic values, and moral education principles that emphasize responsibility, honesty, and self-awareness. In Thomas Lickona's view, effective character education must encompass three main components: knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good (Lickona, 1991). The *sapa salah seleh* philosophy aligns with these three aspects because it emphasizes the recognition of values and encourages self-reflection and concrete action in daily life. Therefore, these local values have strong relevance for addressing the challenges of moral degradation in the modern era, such as increasing individualism, intolerance, and low social awareness. Local values such as *sapa salah seleh* are highly relevant to addressing the challenges of moral degradation in the modern era. Amid increasing individualism, intolerance, and declining social awareness, these values offer an ethical foundation that emphasizes social responsibility, role models, solidarity, and respect for others. By reviving local wisdom in educational practices and daily life, communities can strengthen social bonds, build empathy, and foster a collective consciousness capable of confronting the moral crisis in this fast-paced, competitive global era.

CONCLUSION

This research resulted in three interrelated substantive findings. First, the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy is shown to embody a comprehensive

and systematically structured set of humanistic values, encompassing honesty, moral responsibility, ethical awareness, social empathy, and ego restraint. Collectively, these dimensions constitute a form of relational Javanese humanism—an indigenous ethical model that distinctively positions the harmony of social relationships as the highest orientation of human moral conduct, thereby distinguishing it from Western humanism, which is primarily centered on individual autonomy. Second, *sapa salah seleh* is proven to represent a form of indigenous moral pedagogy that works through the mechanism of intrinsic internalization of values and cosmological awareness, rather than through external pressure or mechanical habituation. As a result, pedagogically, it has greater potential to produce authentic, reflective, and sustainable characters than conventional character education approaches that rely on sanctions and formal compliance. Third, the integration of the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy into the education curriculum — particularly through the *sapa salah seleh* Values Integration Model (SSVIM) conceptual model that stages from cognitive internalization, affective reflection, to social actualization, and is implemented through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) in the *Merdeka* Curriculum — has the potential to significantly strengthen students' moral foundations, foster tolerant and empathetic attitudes, and shape citizens with a humanistic spirit and noble morals as a concrete response to the challenges of moral degradation in the global era.

This study offers two key contributions. Theoretically, it expands the discourse on character education and educational humanism by introducing an indigenous moral pedagogy rooted

in Javanese local wisdom as an underrepresented epistemological alternative in mainstream academic literature. Practically, four recommendations are proposed: (1) *curriculum developers* should systematically integrate the *sapa salah seleh* philosophy into the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly in Pancasila Education, Javanese Language, and Religious and Character Education at the secondary level; (2) *educators* should strengthen pedagogical capacity through local wisdom-based training to embody the *sapa salah seleh* spirit as authentic role models; (3) *future researchers* are encouraged to empirically test the SSVIM model through quasi-experimental or action research designs to assess its effectiveness in student character development; and (4) *policymakers* should enact affirmative policies that formally recognize indigenous moral systems of the archipelago as legitimate sources of national character education, alongside religion-based and universal approaches.

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