

NOBLE CHARACTER AS THE CORE VALUE OF THE TEACHINGS OF INDIGENOUS BELIEF ADHERENTS TOWARD THE ALMIGHTY GOD: A SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. This article examines *budi pekerti luhur* as the core value of indigenous belief teachings (*penghayat kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*) from the perspective of the sociology of education. Departing from the view that education is not confined to formal institutions, the study positions indigenous belief teachings as a living source of value education embedded in cultural and spiritual practices. Using a qualitative fieldwork approach, the research was conducted in Banyumas Regency, Central Java, involving five informants drawn from indigenous belief families and organizational activists, selected through snowball sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The findings indicate that *budi pekerti luhur* is understood as the integration of thought, speech, and action aligned with humanitarian, spiritual, and social-order values. This core value is expressed through principles such as *ngelakoni perintah lan ngedohi cegah*, cosmological concepts including *sangkan paraning dumadi* and *manunggaling kawula–Gusti*, as well as spiritual disciplines and culturally embedded symbolic practices. From a sociological perspective, *budi pekerti luhur* serves as a form of social education that shapes moral and spiritual values beyond formal schooling, highlighting the significant contribution of local wisdom and indigenous spirituality to values and character education in Indonesia.

Keywords: Noble character (*budi pekerti luhur*), indigenous belief adherents, value education, sociology of education, local wisdom.

1. Introduction

Adherents of indigenous beliefs toward the Almighty God constitute an integral part of Indonesia's spiritual and cultural diversity. They are found across various ethnic groups and are not confined to Javanese *kejawen* traditions, which are often most widely recognized. *Sunda Wiwitan* among the Sundanese, *Kaharingan* among the Dayak, *Marapu* among the Sumbanese, and *Aluk To Dolo* within Torajan society represent indigenous belief systems that continue to live and develop within Indonesian society. According to the 2023 Cultural Statistics, adherents of indigenous beliefs are organized into 176 associations across 15 provinces. Central Java, with 53 organizations (30.11%), East Java, with 42 organizations (23.86%), and the Special Region of Yogyakarta, with 21 organizations (11.93%), constitute the three provinces with the largest number of indigenous belief organizations (1).

The persistence of indigenous belief communities is reflected in a wide range of traditions and rituals that remain socially and symbolically meaningful. These include ritual practices among the Sundanese, such as the *Shrada Banawa Sekar Nusantara* ritual held in August 2023 at the Gunung Padang site in Cianjur, West Java (2). Among Javanese communities, death-commemoration rituals such as *perlon* continue to be practiced in Cilacap, Central Java (3).

The *pasola* tradition among the Sumbanese functions both as a harvest celebration and an expression of collective gratitude (4). Similarly, mortuary rituals such as *tiwah*, *ijambe*, and the *wara* or *mabatur* ceremony represent the final stage of death rites among Dayak adherents of Hindu Kaharingan (5).

The teachings that live within indigenous belief communities are not limited to theological orientations toward the divine (6,7), but also encompass ethical values (8,9), cosmological perspectives (10,11), and modes of conduct that guide adherents' behavior in everyday social life (12,13). One value that consistently emerges, particularly within Javanese indigenous belief traditions, is *budi pekerti luhur* (noble character). In Javanese cultural understanding, this teaching emphasizes harmony between thought, speech, and action in relation to fellow human beings, nature, and the Creator (14,15). Concepts such as *sangkan paraning dumadi*, *manunggaling kawula–Gusti*, *memayu hayuning diri*, and *memayu hayuning bawana* illustrate how indigenous belief teachings position human beings as moral and spiritual subjects engaged in an ongoing process of self-cultivation and reflection (16–19).

Within Indonesia's social context, which is dominated by formal religions and institutionalized education systems, indigenous belief teachings are often positioned merely as personal or cultural expressions of spirituality. As a consequence, their educational dimension—particularly their role in shaping ethical dispositions and moral subjectivity—has received limited scholarly attention. From the perspective of the Sociology of Education, however, education does not take place solely through formal institutions such as schools (20,21). Rather, it unfolds through social processes embedded in cultural practices, symbols, and everyday lived experiences (22–26). In this regard, *budi pekerti luhur* within indigenous belief teachings is not transmitted through written curricula or standardized pedagogical systems, but is internalized through spiritual discipline, ancestral guidance (*pitutur leluhur*), reflective experience, and active participation in communal and ritual practices. Education here functions as a social process through which awareness, ethics, and social responsibility are continuously formed.

Against this backdrop, this article aims to analyze *budi pekerti luhur* as the core value of indigenous belief teachings toward the Almighty God from the perspective of the Sociology of Education (27). Emphasizing this perspective is important, given that existing studies on adherents of indigenous beliefs tend to focus on two main areas. First are studies addressing access to civil rights, such as educational access for students adhering to the Sapta Darma belief (28), as well as access to social security and civil documentation (29–31). Second are studies examining the challenges faced by adherents of indigenous beliefs, particularly regarding marriage administration (32) and community adaptation in the context of globalization (33). Meanwhile, doctrinal studies are also relatively numerous, including arguments that belief in the Almighty God should not be categorized as a religion based on its teachings and rituals (34), as well as studies examining fasting practices within *kejawen* teachings (35). However, studies that specifically address *budi pekerti* as the core educational value of indigenous belief teachings remain relatively rare.

Focusing on research conducted in Banyumas Regency, Central Java, this article examines how *budi pekerti luhur* is constructed, interpreted, and practiced as a process of social education in the everyday lives of indigenous belief adherents. The primary concern of this study is not the mechanism of intergenerational transmission, but rather how doctrinal values function as a medium for shaping moral and spiritual subjects within social life. This perspective contributes to the Sociology of Education by broadening the understanding of value and character education beyond formal institutions and mainstream religions. It aligns with perspectives on character formation that emphasize the role of families and communities alongside schools (36), as well as with Émile Durkheim's concept of moral education as a foundation of social life (37,38).

In the midst of contemporary concerns regarding moral decline in the digital era (39), examining local ethical values such as *budi pekerti luhur* is particularly relevant. Banyumas Regency was selected as the research site due to its relatively large population of adherents to indigenous beliefs in Central Java, alongside Cilacap and Boyolali. Although precise official data remain limited, a news source reported that in 2022, the population of indigenous belief adherents in the province reached approximately 9,770 individuals (40). These considerations support the selection of Banyumas Regency as an appropriate and meaningful research location.

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach using a field study method. The research was conducted in Banyumas Regency, Central Java. The research subjects consisted of family members of adherents of indigenous beliefs, as well as administrators and activists of indigenous belief organizations. The selection of indigenous belief groups was not limited to a single organization, allowing for broader representation of indigenous belief traditions in the research setting.

Research subjects were selected using a snowball sampling technique. Through the data collection process, five informants were identified, each possessing characteristics relevant to the study of indigenous belief teachings and the practice of *budi pekerti luhur* in everyday social life, as described below:

Table 1. Characteristics of research Informants

No.	Name (Initials)	Gender	Age	Occupation	Education	Address	Affiliated Indigenous Belief Organization
1	EW	Female	39	Librarian	Senior High School	Sumpiuh	Paguyuban Budaya Bangsa
2	T	Male	57	Teacher	Bachelor's Degree	Sumpiuh	Paguyuban Budaya Bangsa
3	FL	Female	40	Civil Servant	Master's Degree	Kalibagor	Kawruh Rasa Sejati
4	A	Male	34	Entrepreneur	Not Specified	Baturraden	Secretary of MLKI (not affiliated with a specific organization)
5	H	Male	55	Extension Worker and Motorcycle Taxi Driver	Not Specified	Kebasen	Paguyuban Penghayat Kawruh Hak 101

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. The interviews were guided by an interview protocol focusing on three main aspects: (1) *budi pekerti luhur* as a value embraced by indigenous belief adherents toward the Almighty God, (2) the meanings attributed to *budi pekerti luhur* by indigenous belief adherents, and (3) the implementation of *budi pekerti luhur* in everyday life.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three interrelated and concurrent stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (41). Data condensation involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data from interview transcripts, observational field notes, and documentation into analytically meaningful units aligned with the research

questions. Data display was conducted through narrative restatement supported by selected excerpts from interviews, observations, and documents, enabling the identification of patterns and relationships among categories. The final stage involved conclusion drawing and verification, in which emerging interpretations were continuously examined, compared across data sources, and refined. This analytical process was iterative and ongoing until well-substantiated and credible conclusions were achieved.

3. Results And Discussion

3.1. Description of the Research Findings

Based on the data collected, it can be concluded that *budi pekerti luhur* (noble character) is understood by adherents of indigenous beliefs as the core value of their teachings and the fundamental basis for everyday life. This understanding is reflected in the statements of the following two informants:

“Actually, the core of indigenous belief teachings at the national level is *budi pekerti luhur*—that is, good thoughts, speech, and actions.” (*Informant T, 57 years old*).

“Primarily, it is *budi pekerti luhur*. Essentially, it concerns behavior and speech that must be good. Among fellow human beings, one must truly humanize others.” (*Informant EW, 39 years old*).

These interview excerpts indicate that *budi pekerti luhur* is not interpreted narrowly as individual ethics, but rather as an integrated unity of thought, speech, and action that aligns with humanitarian values, belief in God, and social order. Furthermore, this core understanding can be elaborated into several analytical categories, as discussed below.

3.1.1. *Budi Pekerti Luhur* as the Practice of *Ngelakoni Perintah* and *Ngedohi Cegah*

The practice of *ngelakoni perintah* (carrying out obligations) and *ngedohi cegah* (avoiding prohibitions) constitutes one of the primary expressions of *budi pekerti luhur* as understood by indigenous belief adherents. This understanding is clearly articulated in the following statement by an informant:

“We are expected to *ngelakoni perintah*. Carrying out obligations means that in this world, there are many kinds of obligations—those issued by the government, for example. Previously, the Constitution was elaborated through laws and regulations. Riding a motorcycle requires wearing a helmet—that is an obligation. Owning land requires paying taxes—that is also an obligation. Obligations established by the government through laws and regulations are essentially good. *Ngedohi cegah*—avoiding prohibitions—means not violating existing rules, whether written or unwritten. Government regulations are mostly detailed, although some are not. In society, many rules are unwritten, yet they are still rules. For example, after midnight, one should not play loud music—this is not written anywhere, but it is still a rule. All positive things are summarized as obligations, while negative things are summarized as prohibitions. In the past, elders explained this simply through terms such as *srei*, *drengki*, *jahil*, *methakil*, and *panasten*. *Srei* means greed, *jahil* means being disruptive, *methakil* means mischief, and *panasten* refers to feeling resentment when others succeed. These are teachings passed down by elders. So even though I am already this old, I am still learning. I have not fully practiced these teachings; I am still learning continuously.” (*Informant T, 57 years old*).

This account emphasizes the importance of fulfilling obligations and avoiding prohibitions as fundamental principles in the lives of adherents of indigenous beliefs. Within social life, numerous rules exist, both formally codified and informally maintained through social norms. Positive rules, understood as obligations (*perintah*), are expected to be observed, while negative behaviors, categorized as prohibitions (*cegah*), must be avoided. Adherence to these principles is viewed as essential for maintaining social order and harmony within the community.

3.1.2. *Budi Pekerti Luhur* as an Ethical, Spiritual, and Cosmological Value

Beyond its ethical dimension, *budi pekerti luhur* is also deeply rooted in the cosmological and spiritual worldview of indigenous belief adherents. Belief in concepts such as *sangkan paraning dumadi* positions human beings as creatures who originate from God and will ultimately return to God. Life in the world is therefore understood as a process of learning and self-awareness. The philosophy of *sangkan paraning dumadi*, which emphasizes consciousness of one's origin and ultimate purpose, shapes attitudes of *pasrah* (sincere surrender), moral responsibility, and careful deliberation in action. This understanding is reflected in the following statement by an informant:

“Essentially, it is about *pasrah*—*pasrah* in *manembah*. That is the core.”
(Informant FL, 40 years old).

The statement above is further elaborated by Informant A, who provides a more detailed explanation of *sangkan paraning dumadi*, which Informant FL summarizes as an attitude of *pasrah* in devotional practice. The following excerpt illustrates this understanding:

“Noble values are essentially very universal values. We are expected to become individuals who are beneficial, beginning with ourselves, a philosophy drawn from *memayu hayuning diri*. When we are able to be of benefit, we can make peace with ourselves, and only then can we make peace with others. Once this is achieved, *memayu hayuning bawana* can be realized—something broader in scope that reaches the universe. Essentially, our ancestors' spiritual teachings focused on the self. The self is understood as part of the universe, which, in Javanese terms, is called *jagad cilik*. This is a representation of *jagad gedhe*, the entire universe. I believe all human beings can accept this: we are part of God's creation. This is what I understand as a universal value. Another reference point concerns who we are and what we will become. In Javanese ancestral teachings, there is the concept of *sangkan paraning dumadi*. This concept teaches us, as God's creatures or as the ‘small universe,’ that we live in a temporary world. We will not remain in our current position forever. From childhood to adolescence, adulthood, and eventually returning to that origin—this is what is taught through the values of *sangkan paraning dumadi*. Where do we come from? And to where will we return?” (Informant A, 34 years old).

The extended excerpt above clearly demonstrates the interconnectedness between the individual, relationships with others, and the broader universe. A morally upright individual is understood as one who can benefit others. Such beneficial action is grounded in the awareness that human beings are part of *jagad gedhe* (the universe) and will ultimately return to God, their Creator. This orientation toward social usefulness, coupled with an awareness of one's origins and life purpose, constitutes the essence of *budi pekerti luhur* as understood and practiced by adherents of indigenous beliefs.

3.1.3. *Budi Pekerti Luhur* in Spiritual Practice (*Laku Spiritual*)

The findings also indicate that spiritual practices (*laku spiritual*)—such as *tirakat*, *semedi* (meditation), fasting, self-restraint, and specific ritual observances—play a significant role as a medium of social education. These practices are not understood merely as forms of individual worship, but as processes through which self-discipline, control of desires, and sensitivity toward others and the surrounding environment are cultivated. This understanding is illustrated in the following account by an informant:

“In our teachings, the core practices include, for example, fasting related to one's *weton*. We fast for three days, known as *ngapit weton*. We always prepare *bubur wetonan* and ritual offerings (*sajen*). On other days, such as Tuesday *Kliwon* and Fridays, these practices are carried out continuously. All of this is intended to strengthen our belief and reinforce our sense of identity. In terms of worship, there are also prayers and *semedi*. In the morning, and especially before sleeping and upon waking, we perform a kind of meditation. This belief brings a sense of calm when we connect it to our breath. Do you believe that the

divine element exists within human beings? It is through the breath that this connection is made. That is why there is a proverb, *Gusti Allah mboten sare* (God never sleeps), which makes sense, especially when we are asleep. Everything is like being dead, except for the breath. This is a real and logical example that can be grasped by reason. In the month of *Sura*, rituals are certainly performed, especially on the eighth day of *Sura*. In the month of *Mulud*, rituals are also conducted. Major rituals are performed as well. Altogether, there are five internal rituals practiced within the family.” (*Informant H, 55 years old*).

The informant’s account describes a range of ritual practices performed within the family context. As an indigenous belief adherent whose lineage traces back through multiple generations, the informant is deeply familiar with these rituals, ranging from *wetonan* fasting—fasting conducted on one’s birth day according to the Javanese calendar—to rituals observed on specific days in culturally significant months such as *Sura* (Muharram) and *Mulud* (Rabi‘ al-Awwal). These practices are undertaken to strengthen spiritual conviction and to shape a sense of identity as an adherent of an indigenous belief.

3.1.4. *Budi Pekerti* as Symbol, Cultural Language, and Value Education

The value of *budi pekerti luhur* within indigenous belief teachings is also conveyed through symbols, cultural language, and meaningful ritual practices. Natural symbols, refined language, and rituals connected to life cycles and the natural world are understood as modes of communicating values that are difficult to articulate verbally. This understanding is reflected in the following statement by an informant:

“The most important thing is *budi pekerti*. The belief is that we, as adherents of indigenous beliefs, must remain strong and unwavering and continue to practice our teachings. ‘You were born as a Javanese person, you were born on Javanese land, so you must live out what has become your destiny—carry out your obligations and practice the teachings of your ancestors.’ This is what I sometimes convey to Wulan. She is taught about politeness and prayers. As a child who grew up within an indigenous belief tradition, Wulan should feel proud of her identity and recognize what distinguishes her from others. In my family, my parents taught us to use *krama inggil*. I am accustomed to using *krama inggil* with anyone, because we all have kinship ties and must show respect. ‘You must practice *tirakat*: *ngasrep, mutih*—not eating salty, sweet, savory, or spicy foods, and avoiding animal-based foods. One eats only rice and steamed vegetables; sweetness comes from fruit. Eggs, even when boiled, are not allowed; boiled chicken is also prohibited, because it is animal-based. Philosophically, this is related to our belief in *sedulur tua* and *sedulur enom*. Within our bodies, we have elder and younger siblings who accompany, protect, and shelter us wherever we go. When we were born, the elder sibling emerged first—the amniotic fluid, which is actually our *sedulur tua*. After birth, there is the placenta, our *sedulur enom*. In truth, throughout life, we are protected by these elder and younger siblings wherever we are. Practicing *tirakat* is a way of honoring them—honoring our siblings.” (*Informant EW, 39 years old*)

The informant’s narrative provides a comprehensive account of *budi pekerti luhur* as the foundation of the lives of adherents of indigenous beliefs. It explains, among other aspects, the symbolic expression of respect through the use of *krama inggil*, the highest level of refinement within the Javanese language hierarchy. It also highlights various forms of *laku* (ascetic or disciplined practices), which are philosophically interpreted as expressions of respect for *sedulur tua* (elder sibling) and *sedulur enom* (younger sibling)—two elements understood as inherently connected to human existence from the prenatal stage onward. Amniotic fluid, which medically functions as a protective cushion for the fetus, is symbolically understood as *sedulur tua*, while the placenta, a vital organ that sustains fetal life, is interpreted as *sedulur enom*. The conceptualization of these biological elements as “siblings” reflects the indigenous belief adherents’ reverence for the human body as an integral part of the universe. Practices of

tirakat or *laku prihatin*, such as abstaining from certain foods, are thus understood as acts of respect toward these elements that are inseparable from the human body. All of these practices are grounded in a sense of responsibility as Javanese individuals to preserve ancestral teachings, as exemplified by the informant's guidance to her daughter (Wulan).

3.1.5. *Budi Pekerti Luhur* as a Process of Social Education

Based on the findings and discussions presented above, *budi pekerti luhur* can be understood as a process of social education through which indigenous belief adherents are shaped into moral and spiritual subjects. This educational process unfolds through the internalization of values, patterns of conduct (*laku hidup*), reflective experiences, and individuals' engagement in meaningful social and spiritual practices. The following statement by an informant further clarifies this understanding:

"In Javanese ancestral teachings, there is the concept of *sangkan paraning dumadi*. This concept teaches us that, as God's creatures or the 'small universe,' we live in a temporary world. We will not remain in our current position forever. Therefore, we begin with simple things. More complex matters will later fill our lives and journeys. What we do not yet understand will gradually be comprehended through those basic principles. That is why in Javanese culture, there is the expression *ngelmu kuwi ketemune kanthi laku*—knowledge is attained through practice. Experience is gained through life's journey, unlike knowledge, which remains merely theoretical. Anyone can acquire knowledge through various forms of literacy. What follows is the relationship between human beings—the relationship of the *jagad cilik* with the *jagad gedhe*. This relationship is expressed in the spiritual concept known as *manunggaling kawula–Gusti*. This principle has been taught and practiced across generations, emphasizing the relationship between the individual self and the Creator. In practice, people express their beliefs in different ways. Our ancestors were deeply rooted in traditions and rituals. When attempting to illustrate or simulate that we are a small part of something greater, this cannot be expressed through verbal language or vocabulary. How, then, is this connection established? It is returned to the language of nature, expressed through natural symbols. When we speak of universal values, elements of the universe are conveyed through media and ritual processes, according to belief. That is why, even today, symbolic values are still returned to the universe. How is this done? In coastal areas, it takes the form of *sedekah laut* rituals. In highland areas, it takes the form of *merti bumi*. These are expressions of beliefs that have been practiced across generations. Therefore, what we pass on to the next generation is simple, because nothing is truly difficult. Later, younger generations will come to understand these values on their own." (Informant A, 34 years old).

From the interview excerpt above, it can be concluded that the informant understands *budi pekerti luhur* as an elaboration of the concepts of *sangkan paraning dumadi* and *manunggaling kawula–Gusti*. Through the former, *budi pekerti luhur* is understood as awareness of one's existence as part of the universe, living in a temporary world, and ultimately returning to the Creator. This reflects a consciousness of human origins and destiny. As the *jagad cilik*, the human self must remain connected to the *jagad gedhe*, or the universe.

Within the framework of *manunggaling kawula–Gusti*, this connection with the universe also implies that individuals must cultivate harmonious relationships with fellow human beings and with the natural environment. Such interconnectedness is represented through symbolic expressions that vary according to the geographical and social contexts in which individuals live. For coastal communities, this connection is expressed through *sedekah laut* rituals as a form of gratitude toward nature, while for highland communities, it is manifested through *merti bumi* ceremonies. These rituals, which have been transmitted across generations, serve as a medium of social education for younger generations. Participation in such rituals serves as a process of value internalization through which moral and spiritual subjects are formed in accordance with indigenous belief teachings.

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study affirm that *budi pekerti luhur* constitutes the core value of the teachings of adherents of indigenous beliefs toward the Almighty God and serves as a form of social education outside formal educational institutions. From the perspective of the Sociology of Education, this reinforces the view that education is not confined to schools and official curricula, but also unfolds through social, cultural, and spiritual practices embedded in community life (25,42). *Budi pekerti luhur* operates as a value framework that shapes adherents' moral and spiritual orientations through everyday lived experiences. The principle of *ngelakoni perintah lan ngedohi cegah* reflects a mechanism of social norm internalization that aligns with Émile Durkheim's concept of moral education. Durkheim (37) emphasized that moral education aims to instill discipline, social attachment, and moral awareness in individuals in order to maintain social order. Within indigenous belief communities, obedience to obligations and prohibitions—whether derived from the state or from unwritten social norms—is understood as part of ethical conduct intended to sustain social harmony. These norms are not enforced coercively, but are internalized through personal awareness and reflection, thereby shaping autonomous moral subjects.

The cosmological and spiritual dimensions embedded in concepts such as *sangkan paraning dumadi*, *manunggaling kawula–Gusti*, as well as *memayu hayuning diri* and *memayu hayuning bawana*, demonstrate that *budi pekerti luhur* is rooted in indigenous belief worldviews concerning the relationships among human beings, God, fellow humans, and nature. In line with previous studies (15,18,19), Javanese teachings position human beings as *jagad cilik* (the microcosm) interconnected with *jagad gedhe* (the macrocosm). Awareness of one's origin and life purpose cultivates attitudes of *pasrah* (sincere surrender), moral responsibility, and careful deliberation in action. Within the framework of the Sociology of Education, moral values are not merely presented as normative rules, but are continuously constructed through spiritual reflection and existential experience. Spiritual practices such as *tirakat*, *semedi*, fasting, and family-based rituals function as pedagogical media that foster self-discipline and control of desires. These practices underscore that value education operates through embodied experience rather than solely through verbal instruction (21,24). The Javanese concept of *ngelmu kuwi ketemune kanthi laku* illustrates that moral and spiritual knowledge is acquired through life journeys and concrete practice. Accordingly, value education within indigenous belief communities is reflective and transformative, differing from formal education models that tend to emphasize cognitive and instructional approaches.

The use of symbols, cultural language such as *krama inggil*, and rituals based on life cycles and the natural environment further indicate that *budi pekerti luhur* is communicated through a rich symbolic system. These symbols function as effective media of value education because they operate within affective and cultural domains (22,23). Moral education is not transmitted doctrinally, but is lived through repeated social and spiritual practices, allowing values of *budi pekerti* to be deeply internalized by adherents. This finding also resonates with arguments on character education that emphasize the role of families and communities as primary environments for character formation (36). Indigenous belief communities demonstrate that character values such as honesty, respect, self-restraint, and social responsibility can be cultivated through consistent cultural and spiritual practices, without reliance on formal education systems. This strengthens the argument that character education grounded in local wisdom and spirituality is highly relevant in Indonesia's pluralistic context.

Overall, this discussion underscores that *budi pekerti luhur* within indigenous belief teachings represents a form of social education that shapes moral and spiritual subjects through value internalization, modes of conduct, and symbolic practices. These findings expand the scope of the Sociology of Education by positioning indigenous belief communities as legitimate and meaningful alternative educational spaces, while simultaneously challenging the

dominance of formal education paradigms in understanding processes of value formation in Indonesian society.

4. Conclusion

This study affirms that *budi pekerti luhur* constitutes the core value of the teachings of adherents of indigenous beliefs toward the Almighty God and serves as an ethical and spiritual foundation in their lives. From the perspective of the Sociology of Education, *budi pekerti luhur* operates as a process of social education that shapes moral and spiritual subjects through the internalization of values, modes of conduct (*laku hidup*), symbolic practices, and reflective experiences, without reliance on formal educational institutions. These findings demonstrate that value and character education can develop effectively through living belief systems and cultural practices within communities, contributing to the formation of moral, social, and ecological awareness.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations, particularly in its research scope, which was confined to Banyumas Regency, and in the relatively small number of informants involved. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized to all indigenous belief communities in Indonesia, which are characterized by diverse teachings and cultural practices. In addition, this study has not examined comparatively the relationship between value education within indigenous belief communities and character education in formal educational institutions. Future research is therefore encouraged to expand the geographical and social scope of investigation and to develop comparative analyses to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the role of indigenous belief teachings in value and character education in Indonesia.

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