



## Integration of Local Wisdom in Religious Character Education: A Study of the 'Gawe Batigo' Tradition

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to analyze the reinforcement of religious character values based on local wisdom through the Gawe Batigo tradition in Koto Payang, Koto Tuo, and Semumu villages. The background of this research arises from the low interest and courage of the community in leading congregational prayers, resulting in the prayers often being led by the same group of people. The Gawe Batigo tradition is expected to enhance religious character and cultivate new imams in these villages. This research employs a qualitative approach with an ethnographic method. Data were obtained from primary sources through interviews with customary leaders (Depati) and Islamic scholars, and from secondary sources through relevant documentation. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted through data categorization, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that the implementation of Gawe Batigo follows structured stages, including duduk busamo, ngimboa guru, bapacau (trial), batanteik, baarak-arak, prayer performance, and ngantoa ima. The religious character values strengthened through this tradition include worship, morality, discipline, trustworthiness, sincerity, and exemplary behavior. Positive impacts include the formation of future generations such as imams, increased religious knowledge, and reinforcement of congregational prayer practices in the mosque. The negative impact identified is limited rest time for prospective participants, particularly during Ramadan, due to mandatory training sessions.*

**Keywords:** *Local Wisdom, Religious Character, Gawe Batigo*

**Abstrak:** *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penguatan nilai karakter religius berbasis kearifan lokal melalui tradisi Gawe Batigo di Desa Koto Payang, Koto Tuo, dan Semumu. Latar belakang penelitian ini muncul dari rendahnya minat dan keberanian masyarakat dalam memimpin shalat berjamaah, sehingga kegiatan shalat sering dipimpin oleh kelompok orang yang sama. Tradisi Gawe Batigo diharapkan dapat meningkatkan karakter religius sekaligus mencetak imam-imam baru di desa tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode etnografi. Data diperoleh dari sumber primer melalui wawancara dengan tokoh adat (Depati) dan alim ulama, serta data sekunder melalui dokumentasi terkait tradisi tersebut. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi,*

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*wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan melalui pengelompokan, reduksi, penyajian, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan Gawe Batigo mengikuti tahapan yang terstruktur, yaitu duduk busamo, ngimboa guru, bapacau (uji coba), batanteik, baarak-arak, pelaksanaan shalat, dan ngantoa ima. Nilai karakter religius yang diperkuat melalui tradisi ini mencakup ibadah, akhlak, disiplin, amanah, ikhlas, dan keteladanan. Dampak positif tradisi ini meliputi pembentukan generasi penerus seperti imam, peningkatan pengetahuan keagamaan, serta penguatan praktik ibadah berjamaah di masjid. Adapun dampak negatif yang ditemukan adalah terbatasnya waktu istirahat bagi calon pelaksana, terutama selama bulan puasa karena mengikuti latihan wajib.*

**Kata Kunci:** Kearifan Lokal, Karakter Religius, Gawe Batigo

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with high ethnic, linguistic, religious, and ideological diversity, as well as a geographic condition spread across thousands of islands. This diversity has shaped a pluralistic and multicultural society, where each group maintains its traditions and cultural values as identity and guidance for life (Nasution, 2020). Cultural plurality not only serves as a symbol of identity but also as social capital that strengthens community cohesion. However, if cultural values are not preserved and are eroded by globalization, Indonesia risks losing its cultural identity, which serves as the foundation for ethics and moral standards in society (Hartiwisidi, 2020). Therefore, strengthening character education based on local wisdom becomes an essential strategy to ensure that cultural values remain sustainable while shaping young generations to be religious, responsible, and ethical (Hartiwisidi et al., 2022).

Character education is a learning process that instills moral, ethical, and religious values through formal and non-formal interactions at schools and in the community (Ramdani, 2018). The relationship between education and culture is very close; education facilitates the transfer of values, while culture provides a foundation for moral and social identity. Effective character education must emphasize cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, including activities that foster appreciation for local culture. Local wisdom values, such as cooperation, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and social awareness, can serve as concrete means to develop integrity, religiosity, and ethical behavior (Hartiwisidi et al., 2022). Thus, integrating local cultural values

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into education not only strengthens cultural identity but also forms a foundation for developing the social and spiritual competencies of young generations (Iswatiningsih, 2019).

Local wisdom refers to cultural values that are contextual and relevant to the needs of local communities. These values are taught and transmitted through generations within families, communities, and social environments (Ramdani, 2018). They can be manifested in tangible forms, such as cultural artifacts, traditional clothing, and architectural structures, or intangible forms, such as language, literature, arts, rituals, and social norms (Iswatiningsih, 2019). Local wisdom functions as a guide for daily life (*way of life*), helping communities make decisions, maintain social relationships, and balance ecological and spiritual dimensions. Therefore, character education based on local wisdom can bridge traditional values with the developmental needs of young generations facing global and technological dynamics (Iswatiningsih, 2019; Hartiwisidi et al., 2022).

The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has emphasized the importance of Strengthening Character Education (PPK) in schools, aiming to foster a generation with superior character, religiosity, and integrity (Kemendikbud, 2016). PPK emphasizes the strengthening of spiritual, ethical, aesthetic, literacy, numeracy, and kinesthetic dimensions in learning, while highlighting the relevance of character values to the Pancasila philosophy (Kemendikbud, 2016). Muhadjir Effendi, former Minister of Education, emphasized that cultivating character values should be implemented comprehensively, utilizing local wisdom as a source of inspiration and a moral foundation to face complex contemporary challenges (Effendi, 2016). This aligns with educational experts who argue that internalizing local values in education can enhance emotional intelligence, social skills, and students' religious behavior (Hartiwisidi, 2020).

Contemporary social phenomena indicate serious challenges in shaping the character of young generations. Cases of juvenile delinquency, fights, theft, and violence, mostly committed by adolescents, reflect the weakening of internalized religious and moral values (Iswatiningsih, 2019). In addition, the development of information technology, especially the use of smartphones, has altered social interaction patterns, causing many young people to focus more on the digital world and neglect their surrounding environment

(Iswatiningsih, 2019). This situation reinforces the urgency of character education based on local wisdom as a preventive strategy to shape positive behavior, social awareness, and strong religiosity among youth.

In Kerinci Province, particularly in Semumu Village and surrounding areas, the *Gawe Batigo* tradition serves as a concrete example of implementing character education based on local wisdom. This tradition is held seven days before Ramadan and aims to determine candidates for leading congregational prayers, such as imam, bilal, and khatib. The *Gawe Batigo* process includes several stages: *duduk busamo* (collective deliberation), *ngimboa guru* (mental and recitation training), *bapacau* (trial), and other activities emphasizing cooperation, responsibility, discipline, and devotion to Allah (Hartiwisidi et al., 2022). Observations show that prior to this tradition, congregational prayers were often led by the same group of people due to low interest and self-confidence among villagers. Through this tradition, young generations are trained to lead prayers responsibly, while reinforcing religious character values rooted in local culture (Hartiwisidi et al., 2022; Field Observation, 2025).

This study aims to describe the implementation of the *Gawe Batigo* tradition, analyze the strengthening of religious character values through local cultural practices, and examine the contribution of local wisdom to shaping young generations who are moral, religious, and competent. This research also has the potential to serve as a reference for local wisdom-based character education strategies in other regions, as an effort to preserve cultural identity while facing modernization and globalization. Thus, local traditions become not only cultural heritage but also relevant means of character development aligned with social context and contemporary challenges.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Implementation of the Gawe Batigo Tradition**

The research findings indicate that the Gawe Batigo tradition is a highly structured and systematic activity carried out in Koto Payang, Koto Tuo, and Semumu villages, precisely seven days before Ramadan. This tradition aims to select candidates for Imam, Khatib, and Bilal during the Eid al-Fitr celebration. Observations and interviews confirm that Gawe Batigo is not merely a ritual

but a mechanism for shaping the next generation with strong religious competence and social character. The implementation of Gawe Batigo emphasizes managerial principles, including planning, organizing, executing, and controlling, as outlined in the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) management framework (Oktabela, 2019).

The first stage is **Duduk Busamo**, a communal deliberation involving all clan members, including the depati, ninik mamak, anak jantan, anak batino, and alim ulama. Interviews with H. Ardi Ahmad, Dpt., revealed that Duduk Busamo allows every clan member to voice opinions and democratically select Gawe Batigo officers. This deliberation embodies the consensus principle in customary decision-making, producing decisions that are final and indisputable. Observations show that Duduk Busamo occurs seven days before Ramadan as a crucial initial step to ensure the smooth progression of all Gawe Batigo stages.

The second stage is **Ngimboa Guru**, which involves inviting a teacher or trainer to guide candidates for Imam, Khatib, and Bilal. The purpose is to ensure that officers understand religious requirements, Qur'an recitation techniques, and the proper procedures for Eid prayers. Gernadi emphasized that this training is essential to ensure candidates perform confidently, maturely, and with minimal errors on the day of the event. Observations indicate that the training occurs at the customary house, teacher's home, or candidates' residences, both during the day and at night, sharpening their skills through systematic repetition.

The next stage, **Bapacau** or rehearsal, serves as a trial to assess the readiness of candidates. Interviews reveal that all candidates are tested in front of customary leaders and the community. This stage allows for error correction, motivation enhancement, and the cultivation of social responsibility among clan members. **Batanteik**, the waiting stage, demonstrates cohesion and responsibility, as the community waits for the officers to depart for the mosque. H. Ardi Ahmad highlighted that this activity fosters solidarity and respect for the entrusted duties.

The following stage is **Baarak-Arak**, accompanying the officers to the mosque, reflecting the clan's participation and support. The number of people involved demonstrates community cohesion and pride. The **Eid prayer** itself is the culmination, testing the officers' responsibility directly before the

community. Subsequently, **Ngantoa Imam, Khatib, and Bilal** ensures the officers return home under escort, concluding with a communal meal as gratitude and recognition of their successful service. Overall, the findings show that Gawe Batigo is not only a religious ritual but also a culturally based character education mechanism.

### **Strengthening Religious Character Values**

Gawe Batigo has proven effective in strengthening the religious character of community members in several dimensions.

**First, worship (Ibadah).** Officers who have participated in Gawe Batigo show increased adherence to congregational prayers, improved ability to recite supplications, and proficiency in leading worship on various occasions. Gernadi emphasized that this experience cultivates a sense of humility and encourages consistent and sincere worship (Astuti, 2022). Training during Ramadan prepares them to serve as Imams during Eid and other religious events.

**Second, morality and discipline (Akhlak and Discipline).** Observations and interviews indicate that Gawe Batigo officers are accustomed to attending training punctually, respecting teachers regardless of age, and adhering to agreed-upon rules. This discipline goes beyond formal compliance, shaping consistent daily behavior (Ahmad Taufik, 2021). Additionally, they learn to manage social responsibilities, respect customary hierarchies, and prioritize consensus in decision-making.

**Third, exemplary conduct (Teladan).** Officers appointed as Imam, Khatib, or Bilal serve as role models for the community, expected to demonstrate readiness for evaluation, minimum competence in duties, and moral integrity (Akbar, 2020). The tradition fosters awareness that their words and actions are publicly observed, promoting behavior worthy of emulation.

**Fourth, trustworthiness and sincerity (Amanah and Ikhlas).** Findings show that Gawe Batigo duties are performed without material rewards but with full responsibility and self-awareness. Interviews with Gernadi confirm that this attitude builds mental strength, confidence, and sincerity in carrying out religious duties (Abidin, 2017). Repeated training and

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supervision by alim ulama reinforce responsibility and discipline, cultivating competent religious character.

### **Impacts of Gawe Batigo Local Wisdom**

Research findings indicate both positive and negative impacts. The **positive impact** includes producing the next generation of Imams capable of leading prayers regularly and confidently addressing the community. Gawe Batigo officers gain practical religious knowledge, Qur'an reading skills, and social experience in leading and organizing religious activities. This strengthens religious values and social solidarity among clan members, aligning with local wisdom principles that emphasize character education through tradition (Setiyawan, 2012; Farhaeni, 2023).

The **negative impact** mainly relates to time and energy. Intensive training, especially at night during fasting, limits rest for officers. H. Ardi Ahmad explained that while this is necessary to maximize readiness, it presents physical and psychological challenges.

### **Analysis and Implications**

Based on the findings, Gawe Batigo serves a strategic function in strengthening religious character grounded in local wisdom. First, through systematic stages, it builds discipline, responsibility, and religious competence among youth. Second, social interactions during Gawe Batigo cultivate solidarity, communication skills, and deliberation abilities. Third, repeated training and evaluation by customary leaders and alim ulama develop integrity, trustworthiness, and sincerity in performing religious duties. This aligns with Koentjaraningrat's view (cited in Farhaeni, 2023) that clans are cultural units serving as both identity and social education media.

Moreover, the tradition reinforces consistent worship practices, prepares religious leaders to serve the community, and internalizes values of morality, discipline, trustworthiness, and exemplary conduct. The positive impacts of Gawe Batigo also demonstrate that local wisdom can effectively transmit cultural and religious values to the next generation while preserving cultural identity against modernization and Western influence (Setiyawan, 2012).

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Nevertheless, challenges, such as insufficient rest for officers, require adjustments in training mechanisms to maintain a balance between physical readiness and mental well-being. Future implementation of Gawe Batigo can be integrated with formal or non-formal educational activities to strengthen youth character while preserving local tradition.

In conclusion, Gawe Batigo is not only a religious tradition but also a model of character education grounded in local wisdom, shaping discipline, responsibility, sincerity, exemplary conduct, and adherence to religious values. The tradition demonstrates that strengthening religious values can be achieved through social practices involving all community layers, from customary leaders to youth.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Gawe Batigo tradition in Koto Payang, Koto Tuo, and Semumu villages represents a highly structured and systematic cultural practice that extends beyond mere ritual. It functions as a mechanism for cultivating the next generation of religious leaders, instilling strong social and religious character through carefully staged processes such as Duduk Busamo, Ngimboa Guru, Bapacau, Batanteik, Baarak-Arak, and Ngantoa. Each stage emphasizes discipline, responsibility, and competence, reflecting principles of effective management and communal participation.

Participation in Gawe Batigo strengthens multiple dimensions of religious character. Officers develop a deeper commitment to worship, cultivate morality and discipline, serve as exemplary role models, and demonstrate trustworthiness and sincerity in their duties. These outcomes highlight the tradition's effectiveness in internalizing essential values, fostering both personal growth and social responsibility within the community.

Furthermore, Gawe Batigo exemplifies the educational potential of local wisdom. It not only preserves cultural identity but also nurtures religious competence, social solidarity, and leadership skills. While challenges such as intensive training and limited rest exist, the tradition provides a replicable model for integrating cultural practices with character education. Overall, Gawe Batigo demonstrates that local traditions can serve as a strategic tool for religious and moral education, fostering a disciplined, responsible, and value-driven younger generation.

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