

# Character Education for Elementary School Students: A Process of Internalizing Religious Values through *Nadoman* in Sumedang Regency

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**Abstract.** This study delves into the *nadoman* tradition prevalent among the Sundanese people of Sumedang district, focusing on how religiosity is transmitted among elementary school children through *nadoman* as a medium for character education rooted in local wisdom. Sumedang district was chosen due to its declaration as the center of Sundanese culture under the "Sumedang as the Sundanese Cultural Center" government program. Utilizing an ethnographic design, the study involved 3 teachers and 30 elementary school students in the North Sumedang sub-district, Sumedang Regency-West Java. The study identified five significant themes: *nadoman* as an expression of appreciation for government policies, *nadoman* as an educational tradition for Sundanese Muslim children, *nadoman* as local wisdom, *nadoman* as a means for internalizing values, and the embodiment of students' religious character through the *nadoman* tradition. Ultimately, the study concludes that the *nadoman* tradition plays a vital role in fostering and fortifying the religious character of children involved, contributing to the development of a character education program rooted in local wisdom within formal education institutions.

**Keywords:** *Nadoman*, Local Wisdom, Character Education, Religious

## 1. Introduction

Globalization fosters a clash of civilizations (Huntington, 1997). It necessitates interactions among countries, cultures, languages, ethnicities, and religions, which can lead to various threats alongside the positive opportunities they offer (Bretos & Marcuello, 2017; Zayani, 2011). One such threat to nations where religion holds significant importance in national culture and daily life, such as Indonesia, is widespread moral degradation (Kodirov, 2020; Rambe, 2022; Razak & Abbas, 2011). Additionally, isolation, anxiety, and a sense of loss of meaning in life also emerge as threats (Strunz & Bartkowski, 2018; Mirza, 2018; Javornicky, 2019). To counteract these threats, a solution that is considered to be effective is character education grounded not only in logic but in emotions, particularly religiosity (Samarina, 2019). This is crucial because religiosity serves as a reference for personal values (Lee & Kawachi, 2019) that influence other domains (Cohen-Zada & Elder, 2018 dan Moustafa, 2018). A highly recommended source of stimulation by character education experts is local wisdom (Saddhono & Pramestuti, 2018; Suastra et al., 2017). Local wisdom embodies crystallized knowledge and perspectives that are deeply rooted in and nurtured by a community. It

represents the theological, cosmological, and sociological outlook of the respective community (Priyatna, 2017 dan Afiqoh, Atmaja, & Saraswati, 2018).

Indonesia boasts a wealth of ethnic diversity, each contributing its own set of local wisdom, including the Sundanese ethnic group. This group has inherited numerous legacies in the form of local wisdom aimed at nurturing children's character. Such wisdom manifests in various forms, including traditional games like *bebentengan*, *gatrik*, and *sondah*, as well as sung poems like "*Jampe-Jampe Harupat*" to comfort children after a fall, and "*Paciwit-Ciwit Lutung*" to foster camaraderie among peers. These practices are carried out in a playful atmosphere (Yuliansyah, 2017, Latifah, 2018). Additionally, there are poems composed to instill religious values, sung to various melodies known as *nadoman* (Hazbini, 2019). Hence, this study aims to delve into the phenomenon of reinforcing religious character education through the *nadoman* tradition among early childhood in the Sundanese ethnic group.

Several studies related to *nadoman* as an educational medium for the Indonesian populace have been conducted by researchers in Indonesia. For instance, Arifin (2019) explored the *nadoman* community at the Tsamrotul Fuad Cipasung Tasikmalaya Islamic Boarding School Mosque, applying Pierre Bourdieu's habitus theory. The findings of his research indicate that the *nadoman* society operates under the influence of the agent's symbolic power. Gunawan (2019) investigated the works of Kiai Muhyidin, a religious figure from Limbangan, Garut, West Java, who lived from 1903 to 1980. Kiai Muhyidin's work titled *Nazmul Hujah*, also known as *Nadoman Akhlak*, illustrates how *nadoman* serves as a means for Sundanese people to bridge Islam with their culture by translating Arabic works into a language understandable to the majority of society. Subaweh (2019) examined *nadoman* in the Aurodan tradition of the Cirebon Asy-Syhadatain Congregation. His research revealed that *nadoman* constitutes an oral tradition in the form of oral poetry in the Cirebon language, utilized as a medium for religious teachers' preaching, which holds significant value and warrants recognition as part of Cirebon's cultural heritage and the broader archipelago. It is deemed essential to integrate *nadoman* into the school curriculum for instructional purposes.

In contrast to previous research, this study centers on investigating *nadoman* culture among elementary school-age children in Sumedang Regency. The aim is to contribute to understanding the process of character education based on local wisdom for elementary school-age children, particularly in fostering religious character through the *nadoman* tradition in Sumedang district. It is hoped that the findings will inform the development of character education enhancement programs advocated by the government in formal educational institutions, aiming to cultivate religious students imbued with local wisdom.

Exploring the transmission of local cultural values through *nadoman* is crucial for national character education, particularly among elementary school students, given the swift pace of globalization, which raises concerns about the erosion of local and national cultural values. Spradley (2016) notes that with the rapid expansion of the world's population, individuals may encounter a phenomenon termed "cultural flooding", where they are influenced by two or more cultures simultaneously or in tandem. This phenomenon leads to cultural disorientation, particularly among the younger generation, as they struggle to discern and prioritize which cultural elements align with the character of their nation and may no longer identify with the cultural heritage of their ancestors.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Indonesia, despite officially asserting its non-religious status, can be viewed as having a religious ideology rooted in the fundamental concept of Belief in One Almighty God (Latif, 2018; Lubis, 2019). This underscores the notion that religious beliefs underpin societal thought processes and positions within the state. An illustration of this can be found in the issuance of Regulation 137 of 2014 by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. This regulation explicitly emphasizes the prioritization of moral-religious values as a cornerstone for the holistic development of elementary school-aged children. Additionally, the regulation delineates five supplementary aspects—physical-motor, cognitive, language,

social-emotional, and arts—that are equally integral to the comprehensive development of these children (Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2014). The emphasis placed on the development of moral and religious values highlights their paramount importance, serving as the bedrock of the nation's ethos while not diminishing the significance of other developmental aspects. This underscores Indonesia's endeavor to cultivate a morally upright and religiously inclined generation by 2045 through character education (Malihah, 2015; Rokhman et al., 2014).

### 2.1. *Nadoman* as a Learning Media

The term “*Nadoman*” holds significant familiarity among Indonesian Muslims, particularly those who have been educated in Islamic boarding schools. Its usage extends across both formal and informal educational settings, encompassing Islamic boarding schools, *madrasas*, and community learning centers focused on religious teachings (Arifin, 2019; Hendayani, 2011; Rohmana, 2014). *Nadoman* refers to a structured form of poetry or verse, arranged methodically according to a specific pattern (Arifin, 2019; Hazbini, 2019; Subaweh, 2019). Within the Islamic boarding school environment, *nadoman* serves as a pedagogical tool for studying various Islamic disciplines, including Arabic grammar, *aqidah* (belief system), *fiqh* (procedures for worship), and moral teachings. This underscores its role as a medium for comprehending different dimensions of Islamic teachings, encompassing creed, ritual, and ethical aspects (Gunawan, 2019; Hendayani, 2011; Masduki, n.d.; Rohmana, 2015; Siti Patonah, 2020). According to Hazbini (2019), *nadoman* embodies traditional practices aimed at transmitting local cultural values and Sundanese heritage rooted in Islamic principles. Consequently, Arifin (2019) suggests that *nadoman* serves as an educational medium within Indonesian Muslim society, facilitated by various agents.

### 2.2. Religiosity and *Nadoman* Values

In relation to the issue of values, at a conceptual level, values can be understood as behavioral inclinations stemming from psychological manifestations, which encompass individual desires, motivations, attitudes, needs, and beliefs. These psychological components give rise to various behavioral patterns (Baier, 1958, 1992, 1995; Baier & Rescher, 1969). Allport (1961) suggests that values are evidenced in the psychological realm known as beliefs, while Kluckhohn defines value as an ideal sought after, influencing the selection of methods, interim goals, and ultimate objectives of action (Kluckhohn, 1951; Kluckhohn & Kluckhohn, 1954). Consequently, values are construed as intrinsic concepts and beliefs that serve as overarching guides in behavior and as criteria for deeming certain behavior commendable or desirable (Halstead & Taylor, 2005).

Drawing from the insights of Halstead & Taylor (1996, p. 169) on values, Islamic values are construed as principles and beliefs derived from Islamic teachings that guide behavior. This understanding aligns closely with the concept of religiosity. Pargament (1999) suggests that religiosity and spirituality share common elements, notably the quest for the Divine. This concept fundamentally asserts that the essence of human existence and all human endeavors entail a quest to encounter the Divine in life. Essentially, it emphasizes that spirituality is inseparable from religion (Fridayanti, 2015; Pargament, 1999, 2002), underscoring the necessity for aligning the development of religious character within a pedagogical framework with the cultivation of student spirituality. Concurrently, children's spiritual growth is influenced and shaped not only by themselves but also by their interactions with others and by the surrounding environment (Stockinger, 2019; Ubani & Murtonen, 2018).

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Design

Ethnography was selected as the research design for this study because it aligns with the study's context, which delves into the cultural traits exhibited by individuals or groups belonging to specific cultural communities within society (Hanurawan, 2016). This approach

fosters engagement between researchers and subjects in comprehending the culture or environment under investigation (Hammersley, 2018; MacLeod et al., 2019). In this instance, the Sundanese community in Sumedang district serves as the focal point for transmitting Islamic teachings to elementary school-age students based on local Sundanese ethnic wisdom. Additionally, ethnography is a commonly utilized design in educational research (Anderson, 1989; Beach et al., 2018; Creswell, 2002; Green & Bloome, 1997; Heath, 1982; Pole & Morrison, 2003; Sukadari et al., 2015).

### 3.2. Procedure

The ethnographic research design in this study follows the steps outlined by Spradley (Spradley, 1999, 2016) , which include selecting ethnographic projects, identifying informants, formulating questions, and discovering cultural themes. Visually, these steps are illustrated in Figure 1.

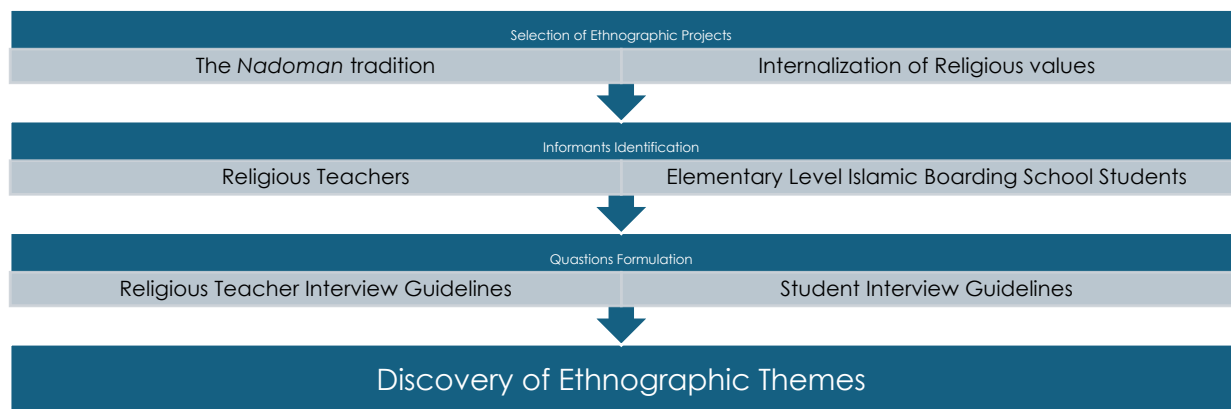


Figure 1. Ethnographic Study Procedures

### 3.3. Site and Subject of the Study

The study took place in one of the sub-districts of North Sumedang, Sumedang Regency. This location was selected due to observations indicating it as an area with numerous venues offering religious education through *nadoman*. The students actively participated in *nadoman* sessions held at big mosques. The study comprised two groups of subjects: firstly, three teachers who implemented *nadoman*-based learning, and secondly, the students engaged in the *nadoman* learning process, comprising 10 students, including 7 males and 3 females.



Figure 2. Site of the Study

### 3.4. Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the research subjects over the course of approximately 8-9 months, from June 2022 to February 2023.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

The interview results were inventoried and categorized. These categories were then analyzed using content analysis techniques to uncover themes within the context of this ethnographic study. The analysis of interview data revealed 215 statements from the subjects, which coalesced into 5 significant themes concerning the process of shaping religious character through *nadoman*. These themes include *nadoman* as a manifestation of appreciation for government policy programs, *nadoman* as a cultural educational practice for Sundanese Muslim children, *nadoman* as local wisdom, *nadoman* as a medium for internalizing values, and The embodiment of students' religious character through the *nadoman* tradition.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. *Nadoman* as an Embodiment of Sumedang as the Sundanese Cultural Center

Sumedang Regency-West Java's tagline is SIMPATI: *Sejahtera, Beragama, Maju, Profesional, dan Kreatif* (Prosperous, Religious, Advanced, Professional, and Creative). It is also known as *Het Paradijs Van Java* (Paradise of Java) and the Italy of the East (Sumedangkab.go.id, 2020). Located at 6°44'-7°08' South Latitude and 107°02'-108°02' East Longitude, Sumedang Regency shares borders with Indramayu Regency in the north, Garut and Bandung in the south, West Bandung Regency and Subang Regency to the west, and is close to Majalengka Regency to the east. Sumedang Regency comprises 26 districts, 276 villages, and 7 sub-districts.

The Sumedang Regency Government has instituted cultural policies aimed at fostering regional development. This encompasses initiatives to establish Sumedang as the Sundanese Cultural Center, with the objective of shaping the government's identity, image, and reputation to compete and adapt to local, national, regional, and global developments. This ethos also underscores the enactment of Sumedang Regent Regulation Number 113 of 2009 concerning Sumedang as the Sundanese Cultural Center (SPBS/*Sumedang Puseur Budaya Sunda*). The SPBS indicators encompass various forms including ideas, behaviors, and artwork (Pramono et al., 2019)

*Nadoman* serves as a tool for appreciating Sumedang district government programs or other regional government initiatives. This approach aids in promoting and endorsing government agendas while offering positive encouragement to the community to engage more actively in program implementation. *Nadoman*, in this context, embodies ideas, behaviors, and artwork aligned with the SIMPATI slogan, notably in fostering a religious society without compromising its Sundanese identity. This sentiment was echoed by several informants:

*Sumedang's slogan, SIMPATI, encompasses various aspects, including the religious facet, while simultaneously serving as a center for Sundanese culture. Strengthening the nadoman tradition, although it has long existed, is a concerted effort towards realizing this vision (Informant 1)*

*The nadoman tradition represents a tangible step and action, as well as a gesture of appreciation for government programs aimed at nurturing a religious and Sundanese community (Informant 3)*

Leveraging *nadoman* as a tool to appreciate Sumedang district government programs or initiatives from other regional governments can foster greater community engagement and participation.

#### 4.2 Nadoman as a Culture of Education for Sundanese Muslim Children in Sumedang

Sumedang, located in the province of West Java, Indonesia, boasts a predominantly Muslim population. The religiosity prevalent in Sumedang society mirrors the worldview and strong values ingrained in Islamic teachings adhered to by its residents. Religious norms in Sumedang can be defined as a set of principles or teachings that serve as guiding lights and standards for individuals in their daily lives (Afiyah, 2016; Armia, 2021). The unwavering certainty in these principles or life instructions stems from the belief that they are divine gifts bestowed by God Almighty. These religious norms serve as manifestations of God's love for humanity, offering solace and tranquility to individuals throughout their earthly existence and in the hereafter (Wijaya, 2008). Religiosity, therefore, holds significant importance in the culture and everyday lives of the people of Sumedang.

*Nadoman* plays a significant role in reinforcing and illustrating people's religiosity, particularly within the Islamic context (Siti Patonah, 2020). It serves as a tool to fortify and deepen the religiosity of the Sumedang populace, aiding individuals in maintaining their connection to religious values and supporting their religious practices in daily life (Sumiyadi et al., 2020). In almost every mosque, children sing *nadoman* through the mosque's loudspeakers before the evening call to prayer (Informant 3), offering praise, extolling the qualities of God, and inviting congregational prayer

Every afternoon, elementary school children, with a collective consciousness, gather to go to the mosque. They join together before setting out, and upon arrival, the mosque officials activate the loudspeakers to convey religious messages in the form of *nadoman* (Field Note 1). This is corroborated by several student statements:

*Every afternoon, my friends and I head to the mosque. I pick up my friend so we can go together. (Student 08)*

*Before Quran recitation lessons with the teacher, I go to the mosque with my friends. Before the Maghrib call to prayer, I recite nadoman about the attributes of Allah, while another friend of mine recites nadoman to invite congregational prayer (Student 13)*

#### 4.3. Nadoman as Local Wisdom of Sumedang Sundanese Muslims

*Nadoman* represents a form of local wisdom in Sumedang, West Java, Indonesia. This local wisdom primarily pertains to oral literary traditions manifested in the form of poetry or spoken verses, often sung orally (Safitri, 2022). Local wisdom, including *nadoman*, holds significant importance in upholding the culture and identity of a region (Rohmana, 2019; Safitri, 2022). By preserving *nadoman* and similar traditions, the people of Sumedang can safeguard their cultural heritage and ensure its relevance and vitality in the modern era.

The synthesis of Sumedang's policy as a Center for Sundanese Culture and efforts to enhance religious values in social life is reflected in the educational curriculum of religious institutions, particularly madrasas and Islamic boarding schools in Sumedang. The curriculum of these institutions is rooted in character values derived from Sundanese local wisdom. One aspect of this wisdom is encapsulated in simple phrases and songs known as *tetembangan*, which hold various functions within the Sundanese culture. For instance, the phrase "*hao hakeng*" aims to delight babies and encourage communication. The *tetembangan* named "*mepende*" fosters aspirations for becoming educated individuals in adulthood. "*Ucang-ucang angge*" is employed to develop children's physical strength, while "*Jampe-jampe harupat*" alleviates pain following a child's fall, and "*Paciwit-ciwit lutung*" cultivates bonds among children. These practices are conducted in a playful environment characteristic of Sundanese culture (Yuliansyah, 2017; Latifah, 2018).

In addition to possessing local wisdom for character education with game-like nuances, the Sundanese ethnic group also holds spiritual nuances within its local wisdom (Rohmana, 2019). This spiritual facet is encapsulated in *nadoman*, which serves to cultivate religious values (Hazbini, 2019). *Nadoman*, a form of poetry, encompasses teachings on creedal, ritual, and moral values, representing a legacy of Islamic principles within Sundanese society (Gunawan, 2019; Hazbini, 2019; Hendayani, 2011; Kusuma, 2014; Mutakin, 2013; Sumiyadi et al., 2020).

**4.3.1. Source of Nadoman Poetry**

*Nadoman* poetry originates from two main sources. Firstly, it is derived from translations of Arabic books, serving as educational materials. Secondly, it stems from the works of religious figures, serving as invitations and warnings, with poetry content aligned with the values of Islamic teachings (Results of Interview with Informant 1).

For the first type, the books integrated into the lesson curriculum at mosques or Islamic boarding schools are translated into Sundanese using a poetic structure. Each line of poetry comprises two sentences, with each sentence containing 12 syllables. The Sundanese translation of the Arabic-language book is written using Malay Arabic script. The forms of Malay Arabic letters are illustrated in Figure 3 below:

NAME OF LETTER	ISOLATED	INITIAL	MEDIAL	FINAL
ALIF	ا	ا	ا، ا	ا، ا
BA'	ب	ب	ب، ب	ب، ب
TA'	ت	ت	ت، ت	ت، ت
TSA'	ث	ث	ث، ث	ث، ث
JIM	ج	ج	ج، ج	ج، ج
HA'	ح	ح	ح، ح	ح، ح
KHA'	خ	خ	خ، خ	خ، خ
DAL	د	د	د، د	د، د
DZAL	ذ	ذ	ذ، ذ	ذ، ذ
RA'	ر	ر	ر، ر	ر، ر
ZAI	ز	ز	ز، ز	ز، ز
SIN	س	س	س، س	س، س
SYIN	ش	ش	ش، ش	ش، ش
SHAD	ص	ص	ص، ص	ص، ص
DHAD	ض	ض	ض، ض	ض، ض
THA	ط	ط	ط، ط	ط، ط
ZHA	ظ	ظ	ظ، ظ	ظ، ظ
'AIN	ع	ع	ع، ع	ع، ع
GHAIN	غ	غ	غ، غ	غ، غ
FA'	ف	ف	ف، ف	ف، ف

NAME OF LETTER	ISOLATED	INITIAL	MEDIAL	FINAL
QAF	ق	ق	ق، ق	ق، ق
KAF	ك	ك	ك، ك	ك، ك
LAM	ل	ل	ل، ل	ل، ل
MIM	م	م	م، م	م، م
NUN	ن	ن	ن، ن	ن، ن
WAU	و	و	و، و	و، و
HA'	ه	ه	ه، ه	ه، ه
HAMZAH	ء	أ، إ، ؤ	أ، إ، ؤ، ؤ	أ، إ، ؤ، ؤ
YA'	ي	ي	ي، ي	ي، ي
C	چ	چ	چ، چ	چ، چ
G	گ	گ	گ، گ	گ، گ
NG	غ	غ	غ، غ	غ، غ
NY	ن	ن	ن، ن	ن، ن
TA' MARBUTHAH	ة	-	-	ة
V	ف	ف	ف، ف	ف، ف

Figure 3. Malay Arabic Script (Nasution, 2013)

Malay Arabic letters closely resemble regular Arabic letters, with additional characters not present in the Arabic script. For instance, the letter "C" is represented similarly to the Arabic letter "ح" but with the addition of three dots. Below is an example illustrating the translation in poetic form from the book *Fathul Qorib* written in Malay Arabic letters.

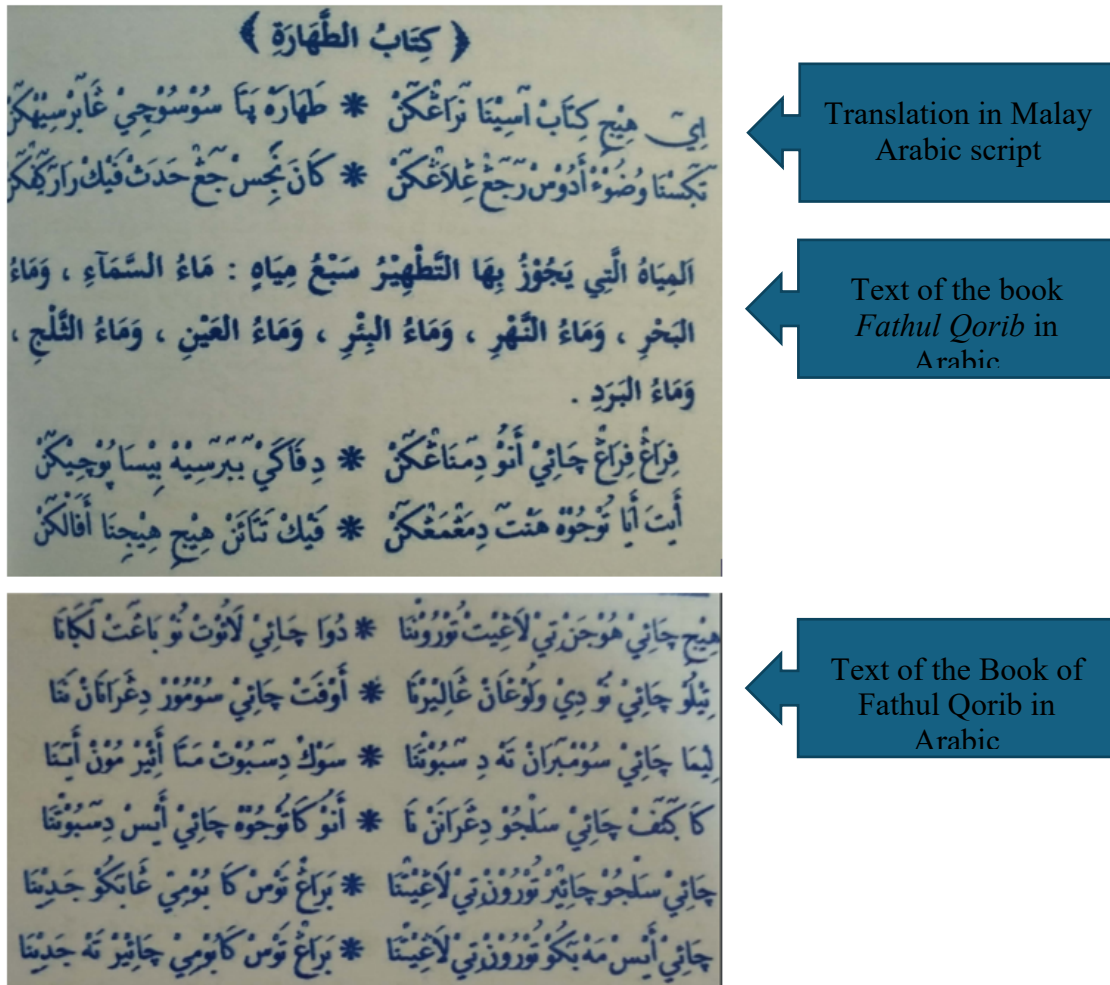


Figure 4. Example of Book Nadoman Material

Below is the Sundanese translation written in Latin letters:

**Ieu Hiji Kitab Eusina nerangkeun\*Toharoh nyata susuci ngabersihkeun  
 Tegesna wudhu adus rejeung ngilangkeun \* kana najis jeung hadas pek arapalkeun  
 Pirang-pirang cai anu dimeunangkeun \* dipake bebersih bisa nyucikeun  
 Eta aya tujuh henteu dimang-mangkeun \* pek tataan hiji-hijina apalkeun  
 Hiji cai hujan ti langit turuna \* dua cai laut nu bangeut legana  
 Tilu cai nu diwalungan ngalirna \* opat cai sumur dingarannana  
 Lima cai sumber tah disebutana \* sok disebut mata air mun ayeuna  
 Cai salju cair turun tilangitna \* barang tos kabumi ngabeuku jadina  
 Cai esmah beuku turun tilangitna \* barang tos kabumi cair tah jadina**

Further, the English interpretation of the text is as follows:

This is a book explaining *taharah* \* Which means purifying and cleansing.  
 Namely ablution, bathing, and removing impurities \* Memorize it, understand it  
 The permissible types of water \* for purification  
 There are 7 types without a doubt \* name them one by one and understand



First, rainwater falling from the sky \* Secondly, the vast sea water

Third, the flowing waters of rivers \* Fourth, it's called the well waters

Fifth, the springs \* often referred to as sources

Liquid snow falling from the sky \* which turn into ice upon reaching the ground

Frozen ice water falling from the sky \* which turn into liquid upon reaching the ground

Each line of these poems is sung with a melody, as depicted in the following musical score:



Figure 5. Nadoman Melody Pattern for Each Line

An example of the second type of poetry, which originates from the works of religious figures as a form of invitation and warning, as stated by Sobarna et al. (2020) is as follows:

1. *Nadoman* for congregational prayer invitation

*“Eling-eling umat Muslimin Muslimat  
 Hayu urang berjama'ah shalat Maghrib  
 Estu kawajiban urang keur di dunya  
 Pibekeleun balik jaga di akherat”  
 (O' Muslim brothers and sisters  
 Let's pray Maghrib together  
 Indeed, that is our obligation in the world  
 As a provision for returning to the afterlife).*

2. *Nadoman* as Warning and Teaching

*“Eling-eling dulur kabeh  
 Ibadah ulah campoleh  
 Beurang peuting ulah weleh  
 Bisina kaburu paeh”  
 (Be aware my brothers and sisters  
 Do not neglect worship  
 Through the days and nights  
 Before we pass to the afterlife!”)*

3. *Nadoman* as Praises

"Gusti urang sarerea  
Kangjeng Nabi anu mulya  
Muhammad jenenganana  
Arab Quraisy nya bangsana"

(Dear our leader  
The glorious prophet  
His name is Muhammad  
A member of the Quraish tribe of Arabs)

### 4.3.2. Nadoman Learning Process and Time

The *nadoman* learning process is conducted in two ways: classical instruction and peer tutoring. For *nadoman* derived from book materials, it is traditionally delivered by the teacher to elementary school students. Some of the book translation materials used for *nadoman* recitation include:

- 1) "Tuhfatul Athfal," which explores the science of recitation.
- 2) "Aqidatul Awam," focusing on monotheism.
- 3) "Su'abul Iman," examining the branches of faith.
- 4) "Safinatushalat," detailing the procedures for prayer.
- 5) "Safinatunnajah," delving into the practical jurisprudence of worship.
- 6) "Riyadul Badi'ah," a comprehensive study covering Aqidah, Worship, and Morals, serving as a sequel to "Safinah Najah."
- 7) "Sulam Taufiq," which further explores aqidah, worship, and morals as a continuation of "Riyadul Badi'ah."

*Nadoman* learning sessions, based on the aforementioned books, take place after the *Maghrib* prayer at the mosque until the *Isya* call to prayer. Children assemble in groups according to the book they are studying. Before delving into the book material, they engage in Quran recitation activities. Individual recitations (*tadarus*) are conducted and directly supervised by the teacher. Following *tadarus*, the *nadoman* learning process ensues, with the teacher orally modeling one line at a time, which the children then replicate. Each session focuses on one verse, lasting approximately 15-20 minutes. *Nadoman* evaluations occur during major Islamic holidays, such as the Prophet's birthday, *Muharram*, and *Rajab (Isra' Mi'raj)*, typically in the form of a performance. Children showcase their learning on stage by singing verses from one of the topics in the book, which they have memorized.

As for *nadoman* derived from religious figures, it is conveyed through peer tutoring. After one or several individuals have received *nadoman* lessons, encompassing praise, invitation, and warning from an instructor, the children practice it in the mosque using the mosque speakers before the evening prayer until the call to evening prayer. Subsequently, other children emulate their predecessors. This process naturally unfolds in the mosque, enabling children from other mosques to listen, imitate, and practice. Eventually, all mosques in each region naturally adopt this *nadoman* tradition.

### 4.4. Nadoman as a Media for Internalizing Religious Values

*Nadoman* serves as a medium for internalizing religious values within Sundanese culture, particularly because many *nadoman* poems convey religious messages (Arifin, 2019). Numerous *nadoman* address religious topics such as belief in God, moral directives, and Islamic teachings, given that Islam is the predominant religion in West Java. These poems

often communicate associated moral and ethical lessons (Hendayani, 2011). The utilization of *nadoman* as a medium for instilling religious values exemplifies how local culture and art can effectively impart and advocate for religious and moral principles within society (Rohmana, 2019).

As a medium for internalization, *nadoman* is orally transmitted to elementary school-age children. According to Subaweh (2019), oral tradition consistently serves as a conduit for passing on educational principles to the next generation and is a practice upheld by certain traditional groups. This practice is observed among students at the mosque, aiming to familiarize them with places of worship and cultivate a habit of engaging in worship (Interview with informant 3). Within Sundanese ethnicity, various terms are used to denote places of Muslim worship, including *tajug (langgar)*, *mushalla*, *masjid jami'*, *masjid kaum*, *masjid agung*, and *masjid raya* (Ardhiati, 2022; Bin Tajudeen, 2017). The distinctions lie in size, building type, and location. For instance, a *tajug* is a prayer space typically accommodating around five or six people.

The internalization process unfolds verbally as students recite *nadoman* line by line and stanza by stanza, accompanied by a standard melody, while the teacher guides them in understanding the values embedded in the *nadoman* to the extent that the children can comprehend. Observations indicate that children recite *nadoman* in places of worship such as prayer rooms or big mosques. The recitation of *nadoman*, encompassing praise, prayer, and warnings, occurs before sunset via loudspeakers. As for *nadoman* derived from book translations, recitations are conducted before the *Isya* prayer (ethnographic field notes).

To ensure the perpetuation of this habitus and its evolution into a cultural practice, administrators of places of worship offer full support for the *nadoman* tradition. One form of assistance provided is facilitating access to loudspeaker facilities in prayer rooms, allowing children aged 7-8 to utilize them (Ethnographic field notes). For instance, a simple button press activates the loudspeaker, and its switch placement is reachable by elementary school-age children (Interview with Informant 3). Broadcasting *nadoman* via loudspeakers in places of worship is viewed as a demonstration of religious devotion and proficiency, as well as a form of *da'wah* or outreach to the local community, given that their voices can be clearly heard at homes, on streets, or in recreational areas. This sentiment is echoed by several students:

*My voice became known throughout the village because I frequently recited nadoman in the mosque (Student 21)*

*I enjoy learning new prayers so I can recite them at the mosque just before Maghrib prayer time (Student 28)*

As a gesture of recognition from the local community, children who regularly perform *nadoman* are afforded the opportunity to showcase their talents at every Islamic holiday celebration, whether it be commemorating the Prophet's birthday, *Isra Mi'raj*, or marking the *Hijriyah* New Year. At these events, children are consistently given the platform to recite *nadoman* on stage as part of religious artistic performances. Consequently, the process of instilling religious values through *nadoman* in elementary school-age children in Sumedang district unfolds organically within places of worship, initially guided by a teacher as a facilitator or role model, and subsequently embraced by students (ethnographic field notes). Those students who have committed *nadoman* to memory eventually become mentors for other children in their community, thereby establishing *nadoman* activities as a customary practice for elementary school children in Sumedang district before the *Maghrib* and *Isya* prayers.

#### **4.5. The Manifestation of Students' Religious Character from the *Nadoman* Tradition**

The manifestation of religiosity through *nadoman* typically involves how individuals internalize religious values, beliefs, and daily practices through religious poetry. This manifestation can vary among individuals, as religiosity is a personal experience shaped by one's understanding

and beliefs about religion. In portraying the religious character of children aged 7-12 years through *nadoman*, Glock and Stark's theory serves as a reference. This theory delineates religiosity into five dimensions: belief, worship, appreciation, knowledge, and morals (Clayton & Gladden, 1974; Glock & Stark, 1970).

The dimension of belief matures and evolves in children engaged in *nadoman* activities. Through *nadoman* content containing credible elements, such as those found in the lay *aqidatul* book discussing the attributes of God, and then repeatedly reciting them, children's belief in the existence of God with all His attributes deepens. This belief is demonstrated in their consistent participation in *nadoman* activities, devoid of coercion or pressure. Chanting *nadoman* with credible content related to God's nature reinforces their belief, thereby representing a dimension of religious character.

The dimension of worship, as a representation of religious character, develops in elementary school children involved in *nadoman* activities. Values of obedience and personal purity are evident in *nadoman* activities containing ritual elements, such as those inviting congregational prayer as seen in the verse "*Hayu urang berjamaah shalat Maghrib*" (Let us perform Maghrib prayer together), or in *nadoman* discussing worship procedures from *fiqh* books. The emphasis on purity and personal cleanliness is realized through practices like ablution, while obedience is demonstrated by consistently performing prayers, especially *Maghrib* and *Isya*, in congregation. They gather in the mosque before the call to prayer, fostering habits of cleanliness, purity, and communal living through congregational prayer.

The dimension of appreciation develops in elementary school children engaged in *nadoman* activities. This is evident in their solemn demeanor while chanting *nadoman*, stemming from *nadoman* types with moral dimensions, such as the "*pepeling*" variety or from books containing moral content reminding individuals not to neglect worship and to always exhibit kindness towards others, particularly parents, teachers, and peers, as a form of social worship. The solemn attitude implicitly discourages neglecting virtuous worship, cultivated through a combination of credible and ritual dimensions.

The dimension of knowledge also grows in children participating in *nadoman* activities, serving as a manifestation of their religious character. This dimension is realized through the memorization of *nadoman* material covering belief concepts, worship procedures, moral teachings, and the ability to comprehend holy texts. Through memorization and exposure to *nadoman*, children acquire a wealth of religious knowledge across various domains, enriching their understanding of religion. *Nadoman* material serves as intellectual capital, accumulating knowledge about religion for children of their age, thereby fostering the development of their intellectual intelligence.

The moral dimension is a culmination of all dimensions of religiosity and manifests as courteous behavior and speech. Children engaged in *nadoman* activities exhibit politeness in their actions and speech, demonstrating their ability to cooperate and be obedient. These traits stem from their involvement in *nadoman* activities, where they show respect by slightly bowing when passing elders (a gesture known as "*engkuh*" in Sundanese), speak gently during *nadoman* recitals, and display solidarity when attending worship together.

## 5. Discussion

Within the framework of this ethnographic design, the themes unveiled underscore the pivotal role of *nadoman* among the Sumedang populace. *Nadoman* emerges as a conduit for the amalgamation of religious tenets with Sundanese cultural heritage, epitomizing endeavors to nurture the religious character of the community, aligning with Sumedang district's overarching mission. Serving as an educational medium through its melodious verses, *nadoman* not only fosters character development but also serves as a source of inspiration for formal educational institutions in crafting thematic-based learning approaches.

In Indonesia, elementary education adopts an integrated thematic learning approach, where music plays an integral role (R.I, 2016). In its implementation, the thematic curriculum cannot be separated from music activities (Sinaga et al., 2018). Music, particularly songs, serves as a conduit for conveying teaching material within the thematic curriculum (Azimah & Utomo, 2018). Songs have a unique ability to encapsulate memories (Funabiki & Konishi, 2003; Harvey, 2010; Thym, 2012). Intrinsically, singing a song enhance engagement and enjoyment in the learning process for students of all ages (Good et al., 2015). Therefore, the integration of thematic learning with songs is imperative, requiring teachers to creatively incorporate thematic songs into the curriculum to enhance students' comprehension (Azimah & Utomo, 2018) and character development, especially through melodies with ethnic nuances.

Teaching through songs offers numerous benefits for students. Particularly, multicultural songs provide educational opportunities by: (1) enhancing understanding in music, language, and culture; (2) honing vocal skills for both singing and speaking; (3) fostering social skills within a multicultural context, promoting self-identity, and encouraging empathy towards individuals from diverse backgrounds; and (4) facilitating emotional expression (Ilari et al., 2013)

The study of *nadoman* within the context of character education based on Sundanese local wisdom offers valuable insights for researchers and teachers alike. It serves as a model for developing thematic song-based learning approaches aimed at enhancing students' comprehension of materials while instilling character values through attitudes and actions. Moreover, exploring studies that enhance teacher capabilities, such as research on teacher learning and the proposal or discussion of models for teacher professional development (James & McCormick, 2009; Nisbet & Shucksmith, 1986; Olson & Craig, 2001), underscores the importance of teacher literacy skills. By enhancing their literacy capabilities, teachers can better understand how they learn and adapt, facilitating their professional growth and transformation. This can be achieved through the development and application of theories that shed light on the process of teacher transformation, thereby empowering educators to continually improve their practice (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002).

## 6. Conclusion

This study concludes that *nadoman* plays a significant role in fostering the development of children's religious character. Through *nadoman*, children's religiosity is cultivated across five dimensions: belief, worship, appreciation, knowledge, and morals. These dimensions encapsulate the essence of God's teachings, encompassing theistic, ethical, and aesthetic values. Therefore, *nadoman* contributes significantly to the effectiveness of character education initiatives. Given that *nadoman* is inherently tied to melodic poetry, future research in this area can explore songs with ethnic motifs to further bolster character education programs. This aligns with the goal of promoting the five national characters of religiousness, nationalism, integrity, independence, and mutual cooperation.

## Recommendation

Based on the foregoing, this research recommends increasing the number of religious materials constructed in the form of "*nadoman*" for the primary education age. Research in the form of developing learning models based on local wisdom to strengthen religious character in Islam is a necessity that can be followed up for further research.

## Limitation

This study acknowledges certain limitations in exploring the development of religious character within the Islamic tradition specifically within the Sundanese ethnic community. To address these limitations and broaden the scope of ethnographic research, future studies could investigate the development of religious character within other religious traditions, both within the same ethnic community and across different ethnic groups.

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