

CULTURE-BASED SOCIAL EDUCATION THROUGH THE SAMBAS MALAY ARAK PENGANTIN TRADITION: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

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Abstract

Local cultural traditions can function as informal learning environments, yet limited attention has been given to how participation in living traditions becomes a process of social education, particularly in the Sambas Malay context. This study examines how the Arak Pengantin tradition provides opportunities for social education and how Islamic, Malay, and social values are transmitted, understood, and enacted through participation. Using a qualitative ethnographic design, the study involved 20 purposively selected informants in Sambas, West Kalimantan, with data collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation during six months of field engagement from January to June 2026. Data were analyzed thematically through iterative coding, cross-source comparison, and ethnographic interpretation, supported by triangulation and member checking. The findings reveal four interconnected processes: participation, interaction, and deliberation as initial spaces of social learning; gotong royong as experiential learning through collective work; exemplary conduct and direct participation as intergenerational learning; and repeated participation associated with relationship-building and cultural continuity. Participants particularly described learning adab, respect, ukhuwah, silaturahmi, mutual assistance, and collective responsibility. The study contributes an ethnographic analytical synthesis showing how a living cultural tradition can function as a context for culture-based social education without claiming a universal or causal model.

Keywords: Arak Pengantin; Culture-Based Education; Social Education; Ethnographic Learning; Sambas Malay

A. Introduction

Education is not confined to classrooms, curricula, or formally organized instructional activities. Communities also constitute important educational environments because people learn through participation in shared practices, interaction with others, cooperation, observation, and engagement with culturally meaningful activities. Recent studies on living heritage and community-based learning demonstrate that cultural participation can create experiential learning opportunities in which knowledge, social practices, and values are encountered directly rather than merely represented as abstract concepts (Abdul Aziz et al., 2023; Fontal et al., 2024; Frimpong et al., 2024). Heritage education research likewise emphasizes that learning in cultural settings is strengthened when participants engage directly with places, practices, people, and intergenerational processes rather than simply receiving information about heritage (Greaves et al., 2023; Yemini et al., 2023).

Within this perspective, local traditions can be understood as socially situated educational environments. The educational significance of a tradition does not necessarily lie in an explicit pedagogical curriculum but in the activities through which community members participate, communicate, divide responsibilities, cooperate, follow customary guidance, and observe exemplary conduct. Research on local wisdom in Indonesia has shown that cultural practices may carry religious, social, moral, and communal values that become meaningful through participation and contextual experience (Kurniati & Muthohirin, 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2023). In West Kalimantan, studies of Sambas traditions similarly indicate that cultural practices remain associated with religious and social values and continue to function as expressions of community identity (Januardi et al., 2022; Putri et al., 2024).

The Sambas Malay Arak Pengantin tradition is particularly relevant to this discussion because its implementation involves more than escorting the bride and groom to the wedding stage. The procession brings together families, traditional leaders, religious figures, youth, arts groups, and community members in a sequence of preparation, coordination, procession, and collective activity. These activities create opportunities for participants to encounter customary norms and Islamic values through direct social involvement. Similar ethnographic research on local traditions has demonstrated that cultural rituals may operate as communicative and educational spaces in which intergenerational knowledge is transmitted through participation, symbolic communication, and community interaction. The cultural and educational significance of Sambas traditions has also been documented through studies of Saprahan and other local practices that emphasize togetherness, mutual respect, social responsibility, and cultural continuity (Januardi et al., 2022; Putri et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, an analytical gap remains. Existing studies have generally emphasized the cultural meaning, symbolic values, preservation, or social functions of local traditions, whereas less attention has been given to explaining how participation in a specific living tradition becomes a process of social education. The issue is therefore not simply whether Arak Pengantin contains values, but how those values become encountered, understood, enacted, and potentially habituated through actual participation. Recent heritage-education research similarly calls for closer attention to the processes through which cultural participation produces learning rather than treating heritage simply as an object to be preserved (Fontal et al., 2024; Valencia Arnica et al., 2023). This distinction provides the analytical position of the present study.

The study is informed principally by John Dewey's conception of learning through experience and by Ki Hadjar Dewantara's understanding of education as a process embedded in social and cultural environments. From a Deweyan perspective, meaningful learning emerges through experience, participation, reflection, and interaction with the environment. From Ki Hadjar Dewantara's perspective, education extends beyond formal schooling and is closely connected with family and community life. Recent studies on place-based and culture-based education reinforce the relevance of these perspectives by

demonstrating that learning becomes meaningful when connected with local environments, community practices, and cultural resources (Indrakurniawan et al., 2024; Yemini et al., 2023). Thus, the present study treats Arak Pengantin not as a formal educational institution but as a culturally situated arena in which social learning can occur.

Accordingly, this study addresses four questions: (1) How do cultural and social resources within the Sambas Malay Arak Pengantin tradition constitute opportunities for social education? (2) How does social education take place through participation, experience, interaction, deliberation, mutual cooperation, and exemplary conduct in the tradition? (3) How are Islamic, Malay, and social values transmitted, understood, and enacted through participation in the Arak Pengantin tradition? and (4) What forms of social learning, relationship-building, and cultural continuity are associated with participation in the Arak Pengantin tradition? These questions position the study within current scholarship on experiential, community-based, and heritage education while maintaining an ethnographic focus on participants' lived experiences (Fontal et al., 2024; Frimpong et al., 2024)

The study contributes to the literature by providing an ethnographic explanation of how a living Malay cultural tradition can function as a space for culture-based social education. Rather than proposing a universal educational model, the study develops an ethnographic analytical synthesis showing a contextual pattern from participation and experience toward interaction, cooperation, understanding, enactment, opportunities for habituation, and cultural continuity. This contribution extends research on local wisdom and heritage education by shifting analytical attention from the values represented by a tradition toward the social processes through which participants encounter and learn those values (Abdul Aziz et al., 2023; Fontal et al., 2024).

B. Method

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic design to examine the Sambas Malay Arak Pengantin tradition as a culturally situated process of social education. Ethnography was selected because the research question concerns how meanings, relationships, values, and learning processes are enacted in a naturally occurring community setting rather than measured through predetermined variables. The research was conducted in Sambas, West Kalimantan, during a six-month field period from January to June 2026. The ethnographic orientation allowed the researcher to examine preparation, interaction, collective work, procession, and post-process social relationships as connected components of the cultural practice (Pugh & Mosseri, 2023).

The field setting was approached as a social and cultural environment in which participants interact across family, generational, religious, and community roles. This approach is consistent with place-based education research emphasizing that learning is connected with physical, social, cultural, and community contexts (Yemini et al., 2023). It

also corresponds with heritage education research that emphasizes the importance of examining learning through direct engagement with cultural practices rather than isolating cultural values from their social setting (Fontal et al., 2024).

Participants were selected purposively because the study required people who had direct knowledge of or participation in the Arak Pengantin tradition. The final dataset consisted of 20 informants, identified in the research records through codes 01–20. The coding structure used in the revised manuscript is as follows: 01 represents the traditional leader H. Busadi; 02 represents the religious leader H. Minhadi; 03–06 represent host-family participants; 07–15 represent participating community members; and 16–20 represent Malay youth/pesurung participants. This coding structure resolves the previous absence of codes for the youth/pesurung data and ensures that the youth quotations are consistently attributed to 16–20.

The participant categories are treated as social roles within the ethnographic setting rather than as rigidly mutually exclusive demographic categories. Newlywed participants are discussed in the findings according to their role and experience in the wedding context rather than being artificially assigned additional participant codes. This approach is appropriate for ethnographic research because participants may occupy multiple social positions within a community event, and the analytical emphasis is on their situated experiences rather than on statistical representation (Braun & Clarke, 2022; DiStefano & Yang, 2024).

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Participant observation focused on interactions among traditional leaders, religious leaders, host families, youth, arts groups, and community members during preparation and implementation of Arak Pengantin. Five observation records were organized as OP-01 to OP-05. These observations documented deliberation, task distribution, mutual assistance, procession organization, intergenerational interaction, and post-event social relationships.

The interview data were obtained from participants occupying different social roles in the tradition. Interviews explored the meaning of Arak Pengantin, youth participation, mutual cooperation, customary guidance, Islamic values, social relationships, and participants' experiences of learning through involvement. Selected quotations were retained in the Sambas Malay form when they conveyed culturally specific meanings, while the analytical interpretation was presented in English. This procedure follows the ethnographic principle of retaining participants' voices while situating them within the researcher's analytical interpretation (Pugh & Mosseri, 2023).

Documentation was used to complement observation and interview data. Documentation records included committee formation (DK-01), the Arak Pengantin procession accompanied by *takjidor* (DK-02), collective construction of the *tarub* (DK-03), cooking activities in the *dapur/poktadang* (DK-04), and youth participation in washing and cleaning activities as *pesurung/buruh* (DK-05). These documents were treated as supporting evidence rather than as independent proof of educational outcomes. This triangulation

between observed practices, participant accounts, and documentation strengthened the contextual interpretation of the findings (Adler, 2022).

Data were analyzed thematically through an iterative process of familiarization, identification of meaningful segments, coding, comparison across data sources, development of candidate themes, refinement of themes, and interpretive synthesis. The analysis was guided by the research questions while remaining open to patterns emerging from the ethnographic data. This approach follows contemporary guidance that thematic analysis should demonstrate coherence among research questions, theoretical assumptions, coding procedures, and interpretive claims rather than functioning as a mechanical categorization exercise (Braun & Clarke, 2022, 2023).

The analysis distinguished between empirical findings and interpretive claims. Statements directly derived from observations and participant accounts were treated as findings, whereas explanations connecting those findings with Deweyan experiential learning, culture-based education, and intergenerational learning were treated as interpretation. The final themes were: (1) Participation, Interaction, and Deliberation; (2) Gotong Royong as Experiential Social Education; (3) Exemplary Conduct and Direct Participation as Intergenerational Learning; and (4) Repeated Participation, Relationship-Building, and Cultural Continuity. This thematic organization was selected because it best represented recurring patterns across observations, interviews, and documentation (Braun & Clarke, 2023; Fontal et al., 2024).

Trustworthiness was strengthened through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, prolonged field engagement over six months, and member checking. Source triangulation compared perspectives from traditional leaders, religious leaders, families, youth, newlyweds, and community members. Methodological triangulation compared interview statements with participant observation and documentation. Contemporary qualitative methodology emphasizes that credibility depends not simply on the number of participants but on transparency regarding how different forms of evidence support interpretation (Adler, 2022; DiStefano & Yang, 2024).

Member checking was conducted by returning relevant interpretations to participants for clarification and confirmation. This procedure was used particularly when interpreting the meaning of participation, cooperation, Islamic values, and cultural continuity. Recent methodological literature emphasizes that member checking can allow participants to clarify, correct, or elaborate researchers' interpretations, although it should be implemented reflexively rather than treated as a guarantee of validity (Sahakyan, 2023).

The research process respected voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and local cultural norms. Participants were identified by codes in the manuscript except where a community leader's name was retained because the individual was explicitly identified in the research record as a public cultural or religious figure within the study. The final submission should retain the exact institutional ethics statement and approval information applicable to the actual research process; no approval

number is fabricated here. Ethical transparency is particularly important in ethnographic research because the researcher works within ongoing social relationships rather than with anonymous experimental subjects (Braun & Clarke, 2023; Pugh & Mosseri, 2023).

C. Finding and Discussion

Finding

Overall Findings

The ethnographic findings show that the Sambas Malay *Arak Pengantin* tradition functions as a culturally situated space in which social learning takes place through participation in preparation, coordination, collective work, procession, and interaction among community members. Rather than occurring through formal instruction, learning was embedded in the activities through which traditional leaders, religious figures, families, youth, arts groups, and other community members organized and performed the tradition. Across the observation records, interviews, and documentation, four interconnected patterns were identified: (1) participation, interaction, and deliberation as an initial space of social education; (2) *gotong royong* as experiential social education; (3) exemplary conduct and direct participation as intergenerational learning; and (4) repeated participation associated with relationship-building and cultural continuity. Participants particularly described learning respect, *adab*, *ukhuwah*, *silaturahmi*, mutual assistance, responsibility, and adherence to Malay customary practices. The findings also show that participation did not produce uniform or immediate understanding. In particular, the experience of youth participants indicates that cultural meaning could develop gradually through repeated involvement.

Participation, Interaction, and Deliberation as the Initial Space of Social Education

The first finding concerns the role of participation, interaction, and deliberation during the preparation of *Arak Pengantin*. Observation OP-01 recorded coordination among traditional leaders, the host family, and religious leaders concerning the organization and conduct of the procession. The traditional leader provided guidance concerning customary procedures, while the religious leader considered the compatibility of the practice with Islamic principles. Following this coordination, families and community members became involved in preparing the activities. Documentation DK-01 further recorded committee formation as an initial organizational activity. These observations show that participation began before the procession itself and involved communication, listening, coordination, and the distribution of responsibilities.

The interview with the traditional leader reinforced this observation. H. Busadi explained that *Arak Pengantin* was not merely an activity of accompanying the bride and groom to the wedding stage. According to him, the tradition also teaches younger people to respect elders, honor guests, maintain proper manners, and follow inherited customs (01, 13 January 2026). The religious leader similarly explained that customary practices

should remain compatible with religious teachings and identified respect, caring for others, *silaturahmi*, and *gotong royong* as values that are consistent with Islamic teachings (02, 22 January 2026). The two accounts indicate that customary and religious considerations were present within the organization of the tradition.

The evidence therefore indicates that the initial educational space was formed through organized social participation. Participants encountered expectations concerning how to communicate, respect elders, consider religious guidance, and assume responsibilities while preparing the event. The data do not indicate that these activities were organized as formal lessons. Rather, learning opportunities emerged from participation in the actual organization of the cultural practice.

Gotong Royong as Experiential Social Education

The second finding concerns *gotong royong* as a practical form of participation. Observation OP-03 recorded collective decision-making, task distribution, and mutual assistance during the preparation of the wedding event. Documentation DK-03 showed community members working together to construct the *tarub*, while DK-04 documented collective cooking activities in the *dapur/poktadang*. DK-05 documented youth participation in washing and cleaning activities as *pesurung/buruh*. These activities required participants to perform concrete tasks while coordinating their work with other people.

A host-family participant described how relatives, neighbors, and members of the wider community came to assist with the wedding preparation. The participant explained that young people could directly observe how togetherness and responsibility were practiced in everyday community life (host-family participant, 6, 9, and 13 February 2026). A community participant similarly described *gotong royong* during wedding activities as a shared responsibility rather than something that could be undertaken by the host family alone (community participant, 11–12 February 2026). These accounts correspond with OP-03 and the supporting documentation, which showed cooperation through practical task distribution and mutual assistance.

The youth perspective provides further evidence of this process. A Malay youth/*pesurung* participant explained that the activity provided opportunities to learn from elders, receive instructions, and complete assigned tasks (16–20, 7–8 February 2026). A host-family participant also described the preparation as tiring but enjoyable because many people participated and helped one another. The participant emphasized that young people could learn that important activities could not be completed by one person working alone (host-family participant, 13 February 2026).

Taken together, the evidence shows that *gotong royong* was not merely mentioned as a value but was performed through concrete social activities. Participants had to communicate, divide tasks, follow instructions, assist others, and complete responsibilities. The educational dimension identified in the data therefore emerged from the experience of participating in collective work.

Exemplary Conduct and Direct Participation as Intergenerational Learning

The third finding concerns the transmission of knowledge and values through direct participation and exemplary conduct. Observation OP-04 recorded interactions in which younger participants followed directions from elders and traditional leaders while learning how customary activities were performed. OP-02 also documented interaction among families, traditional and religious leaders, arts groups, and other community members during the procession. The data indicate that younger participants encountered customary expectations through observation and participation rather than exclusively through verbal explanation.

The traditional leader emphasized that young people learn respect for elders, respect for guests, proper manners, and adherence to inherited customs through the *Arak Pengantin* tradition (01, 13 January 2026). In another interview, the traditional leader stated that participants need to participate directly if they are to genuinely learn the values contained in the tradition (21 April 2026). This statement corresponds with the observation records showing that youth were involved in practical activities rather than positioned only as spectators.

The data also show that intergenerational learning involved both instruction and observation. Younger participants received directions from older participants, observed how tasks were performed, and subsequently carried out their own responsibilities. The older generation therefore functioned as a source of practical knowledge through instruction and example. The evidence does not establish that every young participant acquired the same understanding, but it demonstrates repeated opportunities for youth to encounter cultural expectations through direct interaction with more experienced members of the community.

Repeated Participation, Relationship-Building, and Cultural Continuity

The fourth finding concerns the relationship between repeated participation, social relationships, and cultural continuity. Observation OP-05 indicated that interaction and cooperation were not limited to the immediate procession. Community members described wedding activities as occasions for people from different generations to gather and interact. A community participant explained that repeated gatherings during wedding events had become a social habit that helped strengthen relationships in contemporary community life (8 May 2026).

A host-family participant similarly emphasized that the meaningful aspect of the event was not limited to the successful completion of the ceremony. According to the participant, relationships between family members and neighbors became closer because they gathered and worked together. The participant associated the experience with a broader understanding that togetherness and mutual assistance form part of Malay community life (12–13 May 2026).

Youth participants also described experiences that extended beyond a single event. A youth/pesurung participant explained that direct participation demonstrated the importance of mutual assistance and that the experience made it easier to cooperate

during other village activities (16–20, 9 May 2026). Another traditional leader explained that as long as the *adat* continues to be practiced, children have opportunities to learn by directly joining the practice rather than merely hearing stories about it (21 April 2026).

The findings therefore indicate that repeated participation creates opportunities for relationships and cultural knowledge to continue across generations. However, the evidence supports an interpretation of opportunity and continuity, rather than a claim that participation automatically guarantees cultural preservation or long-term social cohesion.

Cross-Theme Pattern

Comparison across the four themes reveals a recurring pattern in the ethnographic data. Participation initially occurs through preparation, coordination, and involvement in the event. Through this participation, individuals encounter concrete experiences that require interaction and cooperation. Collective activities such as preparing the *tarub*, cooking, cleaning, and participating in the procession provide opportunities to enact responsibilities rather than simply hear about them. Younger participants simultaneously encounter customary and social expectations through interaction with elders and other experienced community members.

The data further show that repeated participation can extend these experiences beyond one event. Participants reported that cooperation learned through the wedding context could be relevant to subsequent village activities, while repeated gatherings could strengthen relationships among families, neighbors, and community members. Across the evidence, the pattern can therefore be represented as:

Participation → Experience → Interaction and Cooperation → Understanding and Enactment → Opportunities for Habituation → Cultural Continuity

This pattern should be understood as an analytical summary of recurring relationships in the data rather than as a fixed sequence followed identically by every participant.

Contrasting and Unexpected Finding

An important variation emerged from the experience of a Malay youth/pesurung participant. The participant explained that initially joining the activity as a *buroh/pesurung* was experienced as something that had to be done. However, after participating repeatedly, the participant came to understand that the *adat* was important to preserve and associated the experience with learning to receive advice, respect others, cooperate, and recognize belonging within the Sambas community (16–20, 7–8 February 2026).

This account differs from an assumption that participants enter the tradition with an already positive understanding of its educational and cultural significance. The finding indicates that participation can begin from obligation or social expectation and that meaning may develop gradually through experience. The variation is important because it shows that social education within the tradition is not necessarily immediate, uniform, or predetermined.

Synthesis of the Findings

Overall, the findings show that the educational significance of *Arak Pengantin* is embedded in its social organization and practical performance. The tradition provides opportunities for participants to learn through preparation, collective work, interaction with elders, direct participation, and repeated involvement. The values most consistently articulated by participants included *adab*, respect, *ukhuwah*, *silaturahmi*, mutual assistance, responsibility, and adherence to Malay customary practices.

The evidence also shows that these values were encountered through different forms of participation. Respect was associated with interaction with elders and guests; cooperation was encountered through collective work; responsibility was experienced through the completion of assigned tasks; and cultural knowledge was encountered through direct participation and interaction with older community members. Repeated participation created further opportunities for these experiences to be carried into subsequent community activities.

Findings in Relation to the Research Questions

The findings answer the first research question by showing that cultural and social resources within *Arak Pengantin* include customary guidance, religious guidance, family participation, community cooperation, youth involvement, collective work, and intergenerational interaction. The second question is addressed through evidence of participation, deliberation, collective work, direct experience, and exemplary conduct. The third question is addressed through participants' accounts of *adab*, respect, *ukhuwah*, *silaturahmi*, mutual assistance, and responsibility as values encountered and enacted during the tradition. The fourth question is addressed through evidence of repeated participation, relationship-building, youth engagement, and opportunities for cultural continuity. Taken together, the findings position *Arak Pengantin* as a living cultural practice in which social learning is embedded in participation rather than delivered through formal instruction.

Discussion

Participation as a Culturally Situated Process of Social Education

The central finding of this study is that social education within *Arak Pengantin* occurs through participation in an existing cultural practice. The tradition becomes educational not because it functions as a formal school or because every activity is deliberately designed as instruction, but because participants encounter responsibilities, relationships, customary expectations, and values while taking part in the practice. This finding directly addresses the analytical gap identified in the Introduction and Literature Review: the question is not simply whether the tradition contains values, but how participants encounter and enact those values.

This interpretation is consistent with research on living heritage and community-based education, which emphasizes that participation is important to both cultural continuity and learning. Abdul Aziz et al., (2023) demonstrate the relationship between community participation and community-based heritage education, while Fontal et al., (2024) emphasize the experiential dimensions of learning in heritage settings. The present

study adds a more specific ethnographic explanation by showing how participation becomes educational through concrete social processes: coordination, deliberation, collective work, interaction with elders, and repeated involvement. The finding also provides empirical support for treating cultural practice as a social learning environment rather than simply as an object of cultural preservation. In the Sambas context, the educational resource is embedded in the organization and performance of the tradition itself.

Convergence with Previous Research and Contextual Extension

The findings converge with previous research showing that experiential and community-based participation can create opportunities for learning. Frimpong et al., (2024), for example, emphasize the value of engagement with community members and real-world activities in experiential learning. Similarly, Greaves et al., (2023) demonstrate the educational potential of active engagement with heritage and community spaces, while Yemini et al., (2023) identify contextual and community-based experience as important dimensions of place-based education. The Sambas findings extend these studies by locating experiential learning within a Malay wedding tradition rather than within a deliberately designed educational program. Participants were not necessarily entering the activity with an explicit intention to learn. Instead, learning opportunities emerged while they prepared the event, received directions, worked together, participated in the procession, and observed elders. This distinction is important because it demonstrates how educational processes can be embedded in ordinary community practices.

The findings also converge with Indonesian research on local wisdom and education. Rahmawati et al., (2023) and Yusuf, (2023) show the relevance of local wisdom to character-oriented learning, while Putri et al., (2024) identify togetherness, mutual respect, and social relationships in the Saprahan tradition of West Kalimantan. The present study does not reproduce those findings as a general description of all West Kalimantan traditions. Rather, it provides an ethnographic account of how comparable values are encountered through a different cultural practice, namely *Arak Pengantin*.

Theoretical Interpretation: Experience, Participation, and Learning

The findings can be interpreted through Dewey's conception of learning through experience. The central relevance of Dewey's perspective is that experience becomes educational when individuals engage with activities and their consequences rather than merely receive information. In *Arak Pengantin*, participants do not simply hear that cooperation or responsibility is important. They have to cooperate, receive directions, complete tasks, adjust their actions to others, and participate in an activity with social consequences.

The findings therefore support an experiential interpretation of cultural learning while also adding an important qualification. Participation itself should not be treated as synonymous with learning. The youth participant who initially experienced participation

as an obligation demonstrates that the meaning of an experience can develop gradually. This provides empirical nuance to experiential learning by showing that the educational meaning of participation is shaped by repetition, interaction, interpretation, and the participant's position within the activity.

Ki Hadjar Dewantara's conception of education as extending beyond formal schooling also provides a useful interpretive framework. The findings illustrate an educational environment involving family, elders, religious figures, youth, and the wider community. Education in this context is therefore distributed across social relationships rather than concentrated within a formal institution. The cultural environment itself becomes part of the learning process.

Cultural and Religious Context of the Learning Process

The Sambas context is important because the participants did not describe Malay customary values and Islamic values as completely separate domains. The religious leader explicitly connected respect, care, *silaturahmi*, and *gotong royong* with Islamic teachings (02, 22 January 2026). In another interview, *ukhuwah* and *adab* were identified as prominent Islamic values visible during the tradition, particularly through respect, helping others, and maintaining social relationships (02, 1 May 2026).

This finding is consistent with research showing that local wisdom can provide a context for religious and character education. Kurniati & Muthohirin, (2023) demonstrate the relevance of local wisdom to religious tolerance education, while Hasanuddin & Rusydi, (2024) show how local cultural values can be connected with Islamic education. M. Maulana Malik Ibrahim et al., (2026) similarly illustrate the intersection of tradition, Islamic education, and local wisdom in the Banjar context. The present study extends this literature by showing how such connections are experienced through participation in a wedding tradition.

The implication is not that every Malay tradition necessarily constitutes Islamic education. Rather, in the observed Sambas context, participants interpreted certain social practices as compatible with Islamic values. The educational significance therefore emerges from the interaction between cultural practice, religious interpretation, and social participation.

Repetition, Variation, and the Non-Linear Character of Learning

The unexpected dimension of the findings concerns the youth participant who initially experienced participation as compulsory but later developed an understanding of the importance of preserving *adat*. This finding complicates a simple assumption that cultural participation immediately generates positive cultural identification or character development.

Damayanti et al., (2025) demonstrate how repeated participation in religious activities can provide a context for fostering character-related values. The Sambas findings

are compatible with this emphasis on repeated practice, but they provide an ethnographic qualification: repetition creates opportunities for learning, but the meaning of those experiences may develop progressively. The participant's initial reluctance demonstrates that the educational process involves interpretation over time rather than automatic internalization.

This nuance is particularly important for the concept of habituation. The data support the statement that repeated participation can create opportunities for habituation, but they do not establish that all participants internalize the same values or behave identically as a result. The findings therefore support a contextual and process-oriented understanding of cultural education rather than a deterministic one.

Implications for Culture-Based Social and Islamic Education

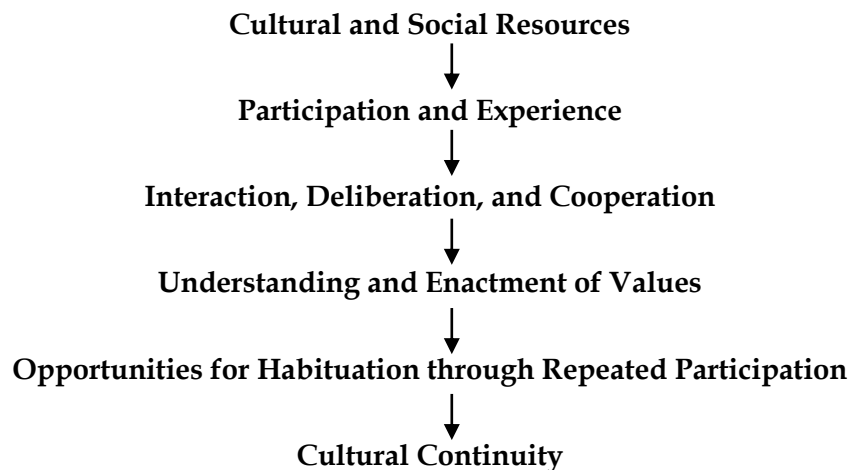
The findings have several implications for educational practice. First, they suggest that culture-based education can recognize community practices as potential learning environments. The educational resource does not always need to be converted into a formal classroom activity. Existing practices may already provide opportunities for learners to encounter cooperation, responsibility, respect, and intergenerational knowledge.

Second, the findings suggest that Islamic education can be connected with culturally embedded social practices when religious values are interpreted and enacted within those practices. In the observed context, *adab*, *ukhuwah*, *silaturahmi*, respect, and mutual assistance were not presented solely as abstract religious concepts. Participants described encountering them through actual relationships and activities.

Third, the findings suggest a role for youth participation in cultural continuity. However, the implication should remain contextual: youth involvement creates opportunities for cultural knowledge to be experienced directly, but it does not guarantee long-term preservation. Educational initiatives that engage local traditions should therefore pay attention to meaningful participation, intergenerational interaction, and opportunities for reflection rather than merely requiring attendance.

The principal contribution of this study lies in shifting the analytical focus from what values a tradition contains toward how participants encounter and enact those values through social participation. Previous research has documented local wisdom, heritage education, cultural identity, and religious values in various traditions. The present ethnographic study contributes a contextual explanation of the social processes connecting participation with experience, interaction, cooperation, understanding, enactment, and opportunities for continued cultural participation.

The contribution can be represented as an ethnographic analytical synthesis:



This synthesis should not be understood as a new universal educational model or causal mechanism. Its contribution is conceptual and empirical: it provides a way of interpreting how an existing living tradition can function educationally within a particular cultural setting. The novelty therefore rests on the ethnographic explanation of the process, not on claiming that the study has created a new theory. Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study is situated specifically in the Sambas Malay cultural context, so the findings should not be statistically generalized to other communities or cultural traditions. Their potential transferability depends on the similarity of cultural, social, and religious contexts.

Second, the study uses qualitative ethnographic evidence from participant observation, interviews, and documentation. Such evidence is particularly appropriate for understanding meanings, practices, relationships, and experiences, but it does not establish causal effects or quantitatively measure changes in character, social cohesion, or cultural preservation. Third, the findings concerning learning are partly based on participants' accounts of their own experiences. These accounts are valuable ethnographic evidence but should be interpreted as reported experiences rather than objective measurements of educational outcomes. Finally, the interpretation remains bounded by the six-month field engagement and the specific events and participants accessible during the research period. These limitations reinforce the need to understand the proposed analytical synthesis as contextual rather than universal.

E. Conclusion

This ethnographic study concludes that the Sambas Malay Arak Pengantin tradition provides a culturally embedded space for social education through participation in communal preparation, deliberation, interaction, cooperation, and ceremonial practice. Social learning occurs primarily through direct involvement rather than formal instruction: participants follow customary guidance, perform practical responsibilities, interact with elders and peers, and experience the consequences of collective activity. The findings demonstrate that community-based cultural practices can function as meaningful

contexts for experiential and social learning.

The findings further demonstrate that Islamic, Malay, and social values are transmitted, understood, and enacted through participation. Values identified by participants include *adab*, respect for elders and guests, *ukhuwah*, *silaturahmi*, mutual assistance, collective responsibility, and commitment to maintaining Malay *adat*. Importantly, the study does not claim that participation automatically produces character transformation or social cohesion. Rather, the ethnographic evidence demonstrates that Arak Pengantin creates opportunities through which such values can be encountered, practiced, discussed, and repeatedly enacted.

The principal contribution of the study is an ethnographic analytical synthesis connecting participation, experience, interaction and cooperation, understanding and enactment, opportunities for habituation, and cultural continuity. This synthesis provides a more precise explanation of the educational significance of a living cultural tradition without converting the findings into a universal or causal model. The study consequently expands the concept of culture-based social education by demonstrating that educational processes can emerge organically from community practices in which cultural, social, and Islamic values are simultaneously lived.

The study is limited by its focus on the Sambas Malay context and a six-month period of ethnographic engagement. The findings represent participants' experiences and interpretations rather than longitudinal measurements of behavioral change. Future research could compare Arak Pengantin with wedding traditions in other Malay communities, examine how youth participation changes over longer periods, and combine ethnographic evidence with longitudinal or mixed-method approaches. Such research could further investigate whether repeated participation is associated with sustained changes in social behavior, cultural knowledge, and intergenerational engagement without assuming such effects in advance.

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