

KAYUH BAIMBAI PHILOSOPHY IN BANJAR CULTURE AND SCHOOLS WITH EXCELLENT CHARACTER

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Abstract

This study explores the application of *Kayuh Baimbai* values—emphasizing mutual cooperation, solidarity, and social responsibility—in character-excellent schools in Banjarmasin City. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with teachers, principals, and students; participatory observations; and analysis of school documents such as curricula and activity reports. The selected schools are recognized for integrating local wisdom into their educational practices. Data were analyzed thematically through data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation ensuring validity. The findings reveal that *Kayuh Baimbai*'s values are embedded across multiple school domains: classroom instruction, extracurricular activities, policy-making, and social programs. These values strengthen students' cultural identity, interpersonal relationships, and sense of collective responsibility. However, the study also identifies implementation challenges, including superficial student understanding, limited teacher training, and pressure to meet academic benchmarks that constrain value-based education. The study concludes that while *Kayuh Baimbai* has significant potential for character development, its effective application requires systemic reforms—particularly in curriculum design, teacher training, and school-community collaboration. It also recommends adapting these traditional values to address contemporary social issues such as digital citizenship and environmental responsibility, ensuring their continued relevance in a modern educational context.

Keywords

Banjar Culture, Excellent Character, Kayuh Baimbai, Philosophy, School.



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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and the industrial revolution 4.0, education is no longer understood merely as the transfer of academic knowledge. Still, it has shifted towards a more holistic function: character formation. Global change, technological advancement, and cultural homogenization have pushed many countries to rethink their education systems' goals, focusing on producing ethical, responsible, and socially conscious individuals. In this context, character education becomes increasingly essential for cultivating not only intelligent but also virtuous and empathetic citizens. In Indonesia, where cultural diversity is a national treasure, character education plays a dual role: responding to global developments while preserving the nation's cultural identity. Local wisdom, deeply embedded in Indonesian traditions, is a unique foundation for moral education. One compelling example is the Kayuh Baimbai philosophy originating from the Banjar community in South Kalimantan. This philosophy, which embodies mutual cooperation, togetherness, and social solidarity, faces challenges today, especially among younger generations more drawn to digital lifestyles and individualistic values promoted through global media platforms (rri.co.id, 2024).

The Kayuh Baimbai philosophy, literally translated as “paddling together,” symbolizes the Banjar people's deeply held value of collective action and mutual assistance. Historically, this cultural value has served as a social ethic and a practical principle in guiding daily decisions, interpersonal relationships, and community governance. It represents more than a moral ideal—a way of life that has unified Banjar society across generations. As education systems today strive for more integrative and values-based approaches, such local philosophies offer culturally grounded frameworks for character development. Yet, with the rapid spread of global digital content and westernized ideals, there is a growing disconnect between young people and these traditional norms. The once communal lifestyle of the Banjar people is increasingly replaced by individual competition, consumerism, and personal success narratives (Ayu, 2023; Kustanti et al., 2024). This tension—between maintaining cultural authenticity and adapting to modern influences—poses a significant challenge for educational institutions tasked with instilling moral values and cultural rootedness in students.

Numerous studies in both global and Indonesian contexts have confirmed the critical role of local wisdom in character education. For example, a study by (D.-S. Kim & Hong, 2019; N. Kim & Yoon, 2024; Lee, 2024; Sung & Gounko, 2023) in South Korea demonstrated that incorporating

traditional values into classroom instruction significantly improved students' emotional engagement and sense of belonging to their school communities. In Japan, character education inspired by the Bushido code has long nurtured a disciplined student culture with a strong work ethic and a deep loyalty (Nitobe, 2019, 2023; Rayhan, 2023; Setyanto et al., 2020). Similarly, (Kiilakoski, 2019; Opere & Otieno, 2025; Su, 2022; Syafika & Marwa, 2024) Finland's culturally and socially values-based education has led to higher student participation in collaborative academic and civic activities. In South Africa, Ubuntu-based pedagogy fosters empathy, cooperation, and mutual respect among students from diverse backgrounds, as documented by (Adewale, 2023; Maphalala & Nkosi, 2023; Mukwedeya, 2022; Patel et al., 2024). In Indonesia, efforts to integrate local wisdom were formalized by strengthening education-based character to harmonize national education goals with regional cultural values (Alfian et al., 2025; Opere & Otieno, 2025; Qalam et al., 2024; Susilo & Irwansyah, 2019). Nonetheless, the actual implementation of this program has faced uneven results due to curriculum rigidity, lack of training, and insufficient localization strategies at the school level.

Although the body of literature on local wisdom and character education is expanding, research that specifically explores the integration of Kayuh Baimbai values in the context of schools with excellent character in Banjarmasin remains limited. Much of the existing scholarship tends to generalize the use of local wisdom without a deep investigation into how particular values are operationalized within school culture, curriculum, or pedagogy. There is a lack of detailed exploration into how educational institutions—especially those with a vision of character excellence—translate abstract philosophical values like Kayuh Baimbai into actionable teaching strategies and school policies. Moreover, studies often fail to address the challenges of maintaining these values' relevance amid technological and sociocultural shifts. This study explores the integration of cultural values into local educational practice. The novelty lies in its focus on contextualization, examining the integration of Kayuh Baimbai not as a symbolic ideal and a functional educational model. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how Banjar traditions can coexist with and enhance modern character education practices.

Grounded in these considerations, this study seeks to explore how the values of Kayuh Baimbai are understood, internalized, and applied within the educational practices of schools with excellent character in Banjarmasin City. It aims to analyze educators' and students' philosophical interpretations of these values, uncover the pedagogical strategies used to incorporate them into the

learning environment, and assess their tangible effects on student character formation. Beyond theoretical contributions, the study aspires to offer practical insights for school leaders, curriculum developers, and education policymakers. These insights may help inform the design of more inclusive and culturally responsive curricula that balance academic goals with nurturing social values. The broader objective is to support the development of a character education model that is culturally grounded, pedagogically effective, and socially transformative. Through this, it is hoped that schools can cultivate future generations who are not only intellectually competent but also rooted in their cultural heritage and committed to the well-being of their communities.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the implementation of *Kayuh Baimbai* values in the philosophy of the Banjar community through the collaboration of character-excellent schools in Banjarmasin City. This approach allowed the researcher to understand the meaning, experience, and actual practices of applying local values in school-based character education. The research focuses on internalizing values such as togetherness, cooperation, and social solidarity within the school curriculum and daily activities (Hadi et al., 2021).

The data in this study consists of both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with school principals, teachers, and students; direct observations of classroom activities and school-based social programs; and field notes. Meanwhile, secondary data were gathered from official school documents such as curricula, school regulations, activity reports, and visual documentation that recorded the application of *Kayuh Baimbai* values. The data sources were selected purposively from schools in Banjarmasin that are recognized for implementing character education based on local wisdom.

Data analysis was carried out thematically through three stages: data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was conducted by selecting and filtering relevant information about implementing *Kayuh Baimbai* values. The grouped data were then presented thematically to describe the patterns of value implementation in the schools. Finally, the researcher performed a critical analysis by relating field findings to character education theories and comparing them with relevant previous studies. Data validity was strengthened through source and technique triangulation and *member checking* with respondents to ensure the accuracy of interpretations (Hadi et al., 2021).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The results of this study reveal several significant findings related to the application of Kayuh. This study explored the implementation of *Kayuh Baimbai* values in character-excellent schools in Banjarmasin City. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis at two schools that consistently apply culturally rooted character values. The findings show that *Kayuh Baimbai* values are not merely symbolic traditions but have been internalized across multiple school life dimensions— from classroom learning and extracurricular activities to school policies and students' social behavior. To provide a comprehensive overview of the implementation of these values, the following table summarizes how *Kayuh Baimbai* is integrated into five key aspects of school life.

Table 1. Implementation of Kayuh Baimbai Values in Banjar Philosophy through Collaboration with Character-Excellent Schools in Banjarmasin City

Learning	Extracurricular Activities	School Policies	Social Activities	Challenges
Group discussions, collaborative projects, social simulations	Team sports, collective art performances, joint training	Decision-making through inclusive deliberation processes	Community service, student mentoring, fundraising, and clean-up drives	Students' shallow understanding, academic pressure, and lack of teacher training

Table 1 demonstrates how *Kayuh Baimbai* values are integrated into the educational system and school practices, from instructional strategies to policy formation. Student activities and school-wide initiatives reflect core values such as cooperation, deliberation, solidarity, and social responsibility. However, several implementation challenges persist, including students' limited philosophical understanding of the values, time constraints for teachers, and the lack of professional development in culturally integrated teaching.

Field data revealed that in classroom learning, teachers actively apply cooperative learning methods such as group discussions and project-based assignments to promote teamwork among students. For instance, in civics education (PPKn), students are assigned social problem scenarios to be resolved collectively through simulated deliberations, encouraging experiential learning aligned with *Kayuh Baimbai* principles. In extracurricular activities, collaboration is evident in sports teams and performing arts. Students are encouraged to value each member's contribution and work

collectively toward shared goals. This was observed during school theater rehearsals, where students demonstrated mutual support and empathy while preparing for their performance.

School policies are also aligned with *Kayuh Baimbai's* values. Major decisions—such as program evaluations, student code of conduct, and student council elections—are made through inclusive forums involving students, teachers, and staff. The principal emphasized that inclusive participation fosters a sense of ownership and collective responsibility. Social activities like community service, disaster relief fundraising, and peer mentoring programs further reinforce these values. In one school, the researcher documented a “Friday Sharing” initiative where students regularly donated pocket money to support surrounding communities in need.

However, interviews revealed a gap in understanding between teachers and students. While teachers view *Kayuh Baimbai* as a life principle encompassing trust, equality, and shared responsibility, some students interpret it superficially as simply “helping a friend.” Teachers also reported that the pressure to meet academic benchmarks often limits their ability to address character values in depth. These challenges hinder the development of holistic, value-based education in daily school life.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide strong evidence that the *Kayuh Baimbai* philosophy has been effectively implemented in various aspects of school life within character-excellent schools in Banjarmasin City. This philosophy is no longer merely a cultural symbol but has been internalized in learning processes, extracurricular activities, school policies, and social interactions. Teachers actively utilize group discussions, collaborative projects, and simulations to foster student cooperation during classroom lessons (Liebech-Lien & Sjølie, 2021; Sormunen et al., 2020). In extracurricular activities, students engage in team-based sports and performing arts programs, emphasizing teamwork, collaboration, and mutual support. The schools also adopt participatory decision-making models, involving students, teachers, and staff in determining school policies and organizing events (Constantinides, 2022). Additionally, social programs such as community service, peer mentoring, and fundraising activities provide platforms for students to practice solidarity and empathy beyond the classroom. However, the study also found notable challenges, including students’ limited comprehension of the deeper meaning of *Kayuh Baimbai*, insufficient teacher training in culturally responsive teaching, and academic demands that reduce opportunities to focus on value-based education.

Theoretically, these findings align with the character education framework proposed by (Maidugu & Isah, 2024). (Maidugu & Isah, 2024) Asserts that character education must be a comprehensive effort encompassing moral knowledge, feeling, and action, with schools playing a central role in cultivating these aspects. They emphasize that effective character education is not limited to classroom instruction but must be deeply rooted in the school culture and community practices. In this context, the *Kayuh Baimbai* philosophy directly resonates with (Maidugu & Isah, 2024) theory, as it promotes mutual assistance, shared responsibility, and a collaborative mindset throughout various school activities. The study also aligns with Peterson and Seligman's (2016) virtue ethics theory, which categorizes core virtues such as justice, empathy, and social responsibility as fundamental to personal and societal well-being (Peterson & Kristjánsson, 2024; Ruch & Stahlmann, 2019). Integrating *Kayuh Baimbai* values in Banjarmasin schools shows a deliberate effort to nurture these virtues through experiential learning and active student participation, thus supporting both theoretical models in character education.

Compared to previous studies, the findings of this research are consistent with global literature emphasizing the role of cultural values in education. (Kiilakoski, 2019; Opere & Otieno, 2025; Su, 2022; Syafika & Marwa, 2024) Found that including cultural values in Finland's education system strengthened students' sense of belonging and engagement with their learning environment. Similarly, (D.-S. Kim & Hong, 2019; N. Kim & Yoon, 2024; Lee, 2024; Sung & Gounko, 2023) reported that embedding local cultural values in Korean schools enhanced students' social attachment and emotional connection to their schools. In Africa, (Adewale, 2023; Maphalala & Nkosi, 2023; Mukwedeya, 2022; Patel et al., 2024) the success of Ubuntu-based education is highlighted in promoting community cohesion, empathy, and moral development among students from diverse backgrounds. These studies demonstrate the universal applicability of character education models that draw upon cultural heritage and community values. The findings of this study in Banjarmasin reinforce these perspectives, showing that local philosophies such as *Kayuh Baimbai* are not only culturally significant but also effective in shaping positive student behavior, strengthening social relationships, and building cohesive school communities.

However, this study also reveals critical challenges that raise questions about the assumptions of prior research. While earlier studies generally portray the integration of local wisdom into education as highly successful, the findings from Banjarmasin show that meaningful internalization of *Kayuh Baimbai* values is not easily achieved. Many students still simplistically

interpret these values, focusing on surface-level actions such as helping friends without understanding the more profound philosophy of mutual trust, respect, and collective responsibility. Additionally, the competing demands of academic achievement often hinder teachers from dedicating sufficient time and attention to character education (Castro, 2023; Kahveci, 2023). These issues suggest that earlier research may have overlooked the practical complexities and contextual limitations of implementing value-based education within modern schooling systems. Therefore, this study presents a more nuanced perspective that complements and challenges existing literature, calling for a critical reassessment of how deeply cultural values are internalized in school settings (Iksal et al., 2024; Kilag et al., 2023).

In light of these findings, the researcher argues that successful character education rooted in local wisdom requires more than just the formal inclusion of cultural values in curricula. Schools must undergo a fundamental paradigm shift toward a more holistic educational approach that balances academic achievement with character formation. This requires a restructured curriculum that explicitly integrates opportunities for students to engage in critical reflection, moral reasoning, and value-based discussions (Ngwacho, 2024; Žiha, 2024). Furthermore, there is an urgent need for targeted professional development programs for teachers to effectively enhance their ability to apply culturally responsive teaching strategies. Without such systemic changes, the risk remains that the application of *Kayuh Baimbai* values will be superficial and ineffective in shaping meaningful character development among students.

Beyond curriculum reform, this study emphasizes the importance of involving families and local communities in character education initiatives. Students' understanding and internalization of *Kayuh Baimbai* values can be significantly enhanced through collaborative efforts beyond the school walls. Community leaders, religious organizations, and parents can provide real-life contexts for students to experience these values in everyday interactions. By aligning the efforts of schools, families, and communities, it becomes possible to create an integrated learning ecosystem that reinforces cultural values in formal education and daily life (Akiva et al., 2023; Daniel et al., 2019; Koul & Nayar, 2021). Such a multi-faceted approach is essential to ensure that character education rooted in local wisdom is sustainable and truly transformative.

Furthermore, the study suggests that in the era of digitalization and globalization, it is necessary to reinterpret *Kayuh Baimbai* values to remain relevant to contemporary challenges faced by students. Schools must bridge traditional values with modern realities by connecting *Kayuh*

Baimbai to current issues such as digital citizenship, environmental awareness, and social justice. This process of contextual adaptation can help students see the relevance of traditional philosophies in navigating today's complex social landscape (Du Plessis et al., 2024; Srivastava, 2023). It also enables schools to frame *Kayuh Baimbai* as a dynamic, living value rather than a static cultural relic, thus encouraging continuous reflection and active application among students.

This study reaffirms earlier research on the crucial role of local wisdom in character education, while also offering a critical lens on the practical challenges encountered in its implementation. The findings highlight that integrating local values into education requires more than surface-level inclusion; it demands a deeper internalization process within students so that such values genuinely shape their mindset, behavior, and ethical orientation. To support this process, there is an urgent need for comprehensive curriculum reforms that embed local cultural values in a structured and sustainable manner. Additionally, the professional development of teachers must be prioritized to ensure they possess a thorough understanding of the local values being taught and the pedagogical competence to deliver them effectively in the classroom. Beyond the school environment, strong collaboration between educational institutions and the broader community is essential to foster a shared commitment to preserving and promoting local wisdom. Ultimately, the research underscores that the enduring strength of the *Kayuh Baimbai* philosophy lies in its capacity to adapt to contemporary educational needs while maintaining its cultural integrity. It is a symbol of cultural heritage and a living, evolving foundation for ethical development and character formation in modern education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and analysis, this study concludes that the *Kayuh Baimbai* philosophy has been successfully integrated into various aspects of school life in character-excellent schools in Banjarmasin City, particularly in learning activities, extracurricular programs, school policies, and social interactions. The values of cooperation, solidarity, and collective responsibility are practiced and play a crucial role in strengthening students' social ties, cultural identity, and sense of community. However, challenges such as students' limited understanding of the deeper meaning of *Kayuh Baimbai*, time constraints, and the lack of systematic teacher training remain obstacles to deeper internalization. Therefore, this study recommends future research to develop more structured models for integrating local cultural values into school curricula, explore cross-cultural

comparisons with other local wisdom-based education models, and conduct long-term studies to assess the sustained impact of such character education approaches on student behavior and school culture.

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