

Embedding Pancasila Values in Traditional Performance: The Role of *Amaq abir* Theater in West Nusa Tenggara

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Abstract: This study examines the role of *Amaq abir* traditional theatre in communicating ethical values associated with the principles of Pancasila within the Sasak community of West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Preserved by Sanggar Pustaka Budaya in Central Lombok, *Amaq abir* represents an important form of local cultural heritage that conveys social and moral meanings beyond its artistic function. In the context of globalization, the growing influence of global culture has raised concerns regarding cultural continuity, identity formation, and shifts in moral values. This research employs a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach to explore how Pancasila-related values are articulated through traditional performance practices. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with performers and community members, and documentation of rehearsals and performances. The findings indicate that *Amaq abir* performances communicate ethical values associated with the five principles of Pancasila through narrative dialogues, symbolic masks, traditional musical accompaniment, and collective participation. Values related to religiosity, humanity, unity, deliberation, and social responsibility are expressed both within the storyline and through the social interactions surrounding the performance. These findings suggest that traditional performing arts may function as culturally embedded spaces for character education and moral reflection within community life.

Keywords: *Amaq abir*; Pancasila; Character Education; Ideological Resilience.

1. Introduction

Character education occupies a strategic position in the process of nation-building. In the context of globalization—characterized by the rapid circulation of information, accelerated technological development, and increasingly intensive cross-cultural interactions—the formation of individual character has become an essential necessity. While globalization offers various opportunities for economic and cultural development, it simultaneously introduces challenges in the form of identity crises, shifts in moral values, and the weakening of social solidarity. Consequently, character education functions not only as a means of shaping individual personality but also as a moral safeguard that enables

societies to navigate complex socio-cultural transformations (Endayani, 2023; Hasibua et al., 2021). Within many societies, the cultivation of character values is not limited to formal education systems but is also embedded within cultural traditions and community practices that shape collective moral orientations.

In Indonesia, the urgency of character education is further reinforced by the nation's ideological foundation in Pancasila. Beyond its formal status as the state ideology, Pancasila operates as a philosophical framework that guides collective ethics and social life. Its five principles—belief in God, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice—constitute a normative foundation for maintaining harmony within Indonesia's pluralistic society. Ideally, these principles should be internalized and reflected in everyday social practices. However, contemporary realities suggest that the understanding and implementation of Pancasila values remain uneven. The persistence of intolerance, identity polarization, and declining social cohesion reflects a gap between the normative ideals of Pancasila and their practical realization within society (Bappenas, 2025; Nurhasanah et al., 2021). Previous studies have emphasized that strengthening the ideological values of Pancasila requires not only institutional education but also the involvement of cultural and social practices that reinforce civic awareness and national identity (Aryani et al., 2022; Patimah et al., 2021; Wiratmaja et al., 2021).

This challenge becomes increasingly visible in regions undergoing rapid socio-cultural transformation. The Province of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), for instance, is currently developing as a prominent international tourism destination. While this development opens new opportunities for economic growth and cultural exchange, it also generates pressures that may influence local cultural identities. Communities are required to negotiate global influences while simultaneously preserving their cultural foundations. For younger generations in particular, this situation demands the capacity to remain competitive in the global era while maintaining strong connections to local cultural values and the ideological principles of Pancasila (Simanjuntak & Fitriana, 2020; Suryadmaja, 2025). Studies on globalization and cultural change indicate that the sustainability of cultural identity often depends on the ability of communities to maintain cultural expressions that embody local values while adapting to broader socio-economic transformations (Nurhasanah et al., 2021).

One potential avenue for addressing this challenge lies in traditional performing arts. Historically, performing arts have functioned not merely as forms of entertainment but also as cultural media through which societies communicate moral teachings, social norms, and collective identities. Through narrative structures, symbolic expressions, music, and embodied performance, traditional arts create spaces in which values are conveyed in experiential and emotionally engaging ways. Such experiences often enable audiences to absorb ethical messages more deeply than through formal instruction alone. Research on arts participation has shown that cultural performances can strengthen social cohesion, foster collective identity, and contribute to individual well-being through shared cultural experiences (Sonke et al., 2025). Similarly, studies on traditional performance demonstrate that artistic practices often function as symbolic arenas where communities negotiate identity and social values through collective participation (Smith, 2018). These findings suggest that traditional performing arts may provide culturally grounded platforms for transmitting ethical principles and strengthening social solidarity.

From a theoretical perspective, this process can be understood through the concept of cultural transmission, which explains how cultural practices function as mechanisms for passing values, norms, and collective knowledge across generations. Cultural expressions such as rituals, narratives, and performing arts play a central role in this process because

they embed moral teachings within symbolic and experiential forms of communication. Through participation in cultural activities, communities internalize shared meanings and ethical principles that shape social behavior and collective identity (Hasibua et al., 2021). In this sense, cultural practices do not merely preserve traditions but also operate as informal educational spaces where moral and ideological values are reproduced and negotiated within society.

Within this framework, traditional performing arts may be understood as important cultural media for the transmission of character values and ideological principles. Artistic performances often communicate moral messages through narrative structures, symbolic gestures, music, and audience interaction, allowing ethical values to be conveyed in ways that are both experiential and socially meaningful. Previous studies have demonstrated that performing arts can function as effective platforms for character education and the cultivation of social values, including religious morality, solidarity, and civic responsibility (Putra et al., 2024; Zebua et al., 2022; Nurjatisari et al., 2023). In the Indonesian context, these cultural expressions are frequently intertwined with the philosophical values of Pancasila, which are embedded within local traditions and community practices as part of broader efforts to strengthen national identity and social cohesion (Aryani et al., 2022; Wiratmaja et al., 2021). Through such processes, cultural performances may contribute not only to moral learning but also to the internalization of ideological principles within everyday social life. The integration of local cultural values into educational practices has also been recognized as an important strategy for reinforcing national identity and social harmony in multicultural societies (Redjeki et al., 2025).

Within the cultural landscape of Lombok, one traditional performance that reflects this potential is *Amaq abir* theater. Preserved by the Sasak community in Central Lombok, *Amaq abir* represents a distinctive theatrical tradition that combines narrative dialogue, humor, music, and social interaction. More than merely a form of folk entertainment, the performance embodies layers of cultural meaning and moral reflection that have been transmitted across generations (Renda, 2024). The narratives, symbolic gestures, and interactions within *Amaq abir* frequently articulate values related to religiosity, social solidarity, communal deliberation, and justice—values that resonate strongly with the philosophical principles of Pancasila. Earlier studies have also identified the presence of symbolic meanings and aesthetic elements within *Amaq abir* performances that reflect the cultural worldview of the Sasak community (Renda et al., 2024; Zuhri et al., 2018).

Despite its cultural richness, scholarly discussion of *Amaq abir* remains relatively limited. Existing studies have primarily focused on its artistic characteristics, historical development, and role as cultural heritage (Renda, 2024). While these studies provide valuable documentation of the aesthetic and cultural dimensions of the performance, they rarely examine how *Amaq abir* functions as a cultural space for the transmission of ideological and moral values. Consequently, the potential role of traditional theater as a medium for strengthening Pancasila values and character formation within community contexts has not been sufficiently explored. A similar tendency can also be observed in the broader literature on character education in Indonesia, which tends to emphasize formal educational institutions such as schools and universities as the primary sites for character formation (Arliani et al., 2021; Dewi, 2022; Kulsum & Muhid, 2022; Nurjatisari et al., 2023). Although these studies offer important insights into educational strategies, they often overlook the role of cultural practices outside formal education. In reality, communities frequently internalize ethical principles through everyday cultural experiences, including rituals, performances, and artistic expressions. This indicates that traditional performing

arts represent an important yet underexplored arena for cultivating social values and ideological awareness within society.

Building upon this gap, the present study examines how *Amaq abir* theater operates as a cultural medium for the transmission and internalization of Pancasila values within the Sasak community. Specifically, this study addresses three main questions: (1) how are Pancasila values represented within the narrative structures and performative elements of *Amaq abir* theater; (2) how are these values interpreted and experienced by performers and audiences within the cultural context of the Sasak community; and (3) how can traditional performance contribute to strengthening character education and ideological resilience in contemporary society. By addressing these questions, this study contributes to ongoing discussions on the relationship between cultural performance, ideological transmission, and character education. Empirically, the research provides new insights into the socio-cultural role of *Amaq abir* theater within the cultural landscape of Lombok. Theoretically, it advances the understanding of traditional performing arts as culturally embedded mechanisms for transmitting ethical and ideological values. Practically, the findings offer perspectives for integrating local cultural resources into broader strategies of character formation and ideological strengthening in line with national priorities for reinforcing Pancasila values as outlined in the 2025–2029 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) (Bappenas, 2025) and regional cultural development policies in NTB as stipulated in Regional Regulation No. 7 of 2013 concerning the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan (Pemerintah Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat, 2013).

Through this exploration, the study aims to demonstrate that traditional performing arts such as *Amaq abir* are not merely remnants of cultural heritage but dynamic cultural practices capable of contributing to contemporary educational and ideological discourse. By situating local cultural expressions within the broader framework of character education and Pancasila ideology, this research seeks to offer a culturally grounded perspective on how communities can sustain ethical values while navigating the challenges of social change.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach to examine how Pancasila values are embedded in the traditional performance of *Amaq abir* in West Nusa Tenggara. An ethnographic perspective was used to understand cultural practices, systems of meaning, and social dynamics within the Sasak community that sustains the *Amaq abir* tradition (Creswell, 2018; Siddiq & Salama, 2019; Sugiyono, 2010). Through this approach, the research focused not only on the artistic form of the performance but also on how cultural values are produced, interpreted, and experienced within the community context.

Fieldwork was conducted at Sanggar Pustaka Budaya in Dusun Nyampe, Marong Village, Praya Timur District, Central Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. This location was selected because it represents one of the community-based cultural spaces where *Amaq abir* traditional theater continues to be actively practiced and preserved. The research was carried out over a four-month period, from July to October 2025. This period enabled the researcher to observe rehearsal activities, performance preparations, and social interactions surrounding the performance tradition.

The study involved twelve informants selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in the *Amaq abir* tradition and their knowledge of Sasak cultural practices. The informants consisted of five *Amaq abir* performers, three members of the art community at Sanggar Pustaka Budaya, two local cultural figures, and two audience

members who had experience attending the performance. This diversity of participants allowed the researcher to obtain multiple perspectives on the meanings and values embedded in the performance.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation (Mack et al., 2005). Observation was conducted through both participant and non-participant observation during rehearsals and performances at Sanggar Pustaka Budaya. During these activities, the researcher examined elements such as narrative structure, dialogue, symbolic costumes, musical accompaniment, stage movements, and interactions between performers and audiences. These observations helped reveal how moral and social values are expressed through performative elements and collective participation (King-White, 2017; Whitehead, 2005).

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected informants to explore the creative process of *Amaq abir* theater, the symbolic meanings embedded in the performance, and the interpretation of cultural values by performers and audiences. Each interview lasted approximately 40–60 minutes and was recorded and transcribed for analysis. Documentation was also used to support the research through field notes, photographs, audio recordings, and audiovisual recordings of rehearsals and performances, providing contextual information about symbolic and performative elements.

The collected data were analyzed using an ethnographic interpretative approach to understand the socio-cultural context of the *Amaq abir* performance within Sasak community life (King-White, 2017; Krisnawati, 2023; Whitehead, 2005). The analysis involved organizing observation notes, interview transcripts, and documentation materials, followed by repeated reading and coding to identify recurring themes, symbolic patterns, and moral messages related to the principles of Pancasila. The five principles of Pancasila were used as interpretative categories to examine how ideological values were represented in the narrative structure, dialogue, and symbolic gestures within the performance.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from observation, interviews, and documentation. This cross-checking process helped ensure that interpretations were supported by multiple sources of evidence and reduced the possibility of subjective bias.

A literature review was also conducted to situate the findings within a broader theoretical framework and to connect the results with previous studies (Maxwell, 2013). By integrating ethnographic field data with relevant literature, the study aimed to produce conclusions that are contextually grounded and analytically relevant to discussions on traditional performance, character education, and the reinforcement of Pancasila values. Prior to data collection, all participants were informed about the purpose of the research and provided consent to participate in the study.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Embedding Pancasila Values in *Amaq abir* Traditional Theatre

Amaq abir traditional theater is a distinctive cultural performance practiced by the Sasak community in Central Lombok. The performance integrates ritual elements, entertainment, and moral narratives that are closely connected to the social life of the community. From an ethnographic perspective, *Amaq abir* can be understood through everyday cultural practices in which community members participate in rehearsals, performances, and cultural events that sustain the tradition (Siddiq & Salama, 2019; Whitehead, 2005).

In Marong Village, *Amaq abir* is not associated with a single troupe but is regarded as a collective cultural heritage of the community. Local residents describe the performance as part of their shared identity and emphasize that it should not be attributed to a particular group alone. As one community elder explained during an interview: "*Amaq abir belongs to the people of Marong. It is not owned by one troupe, but by the whole village*" (Community elder, personal communication, August 2025).

During regional cultural celebrations and official events at the district and provincial levels, performers from Marong Village are frequently invited to present *Amaq abir* as a representation of Sasak cultural heritage. This practice reflects the recognition of *Amaq abir* as an important symbol of local identity and communal pride within the cultural landscape of West Nusa Tenggara (Sahudirman, 2025).

Historical accounts and community narratives indicate that *Amaq abir* emerged as a form of social expression that combines entertainment with social commentary (Zuhri et al., 2018). Informants described how the performance traditionally served as a medium for conveying humor, satire, and subtle criticism of social issues within village life. One performer noted: "Through jokes and dialogue, the actors can speak about social problems without directly confronting anyone" (Performer, personal communication, September 2025).

In this way, *Amaq abir* provides a cultural space where community experiences and collective concerns can be expressed through artistic performance. Within the context of contemporary social change, the performance continues to function as a cultural medium that reflects the resilience of Sasak cultural identity (Hasibua et al., 2021; Nurhasanah et al., 2021).

Several symbolic elements are central to the performance structure. Costumes worn by the actors typically consist of traditional Sasak attire characterized by dark tones, which community members interpret as representing simplicity and moral integrity. Masks are also used to portray specific characters in the narrative, particularly the figures of *Amaq abir* and Amaq Tempenges. During rehearsals observed in September 2025, performers were seen carefully preparing these masks before the performance, emphasizing their importance in shaping character identity and narrative meaning. As shown in Figure 1, the masks of *Amaq abir* and Amaq Tempenges serve as distinctive visual markers that help audiences recognize characters and understand their narrative roles within the performance. These masks function as symbolic markers that help audiences distinguish between characters and narrative roles during the performance (Renda et al., 2024).

Figure 1. The Masks of *Amaq abir* and Amaq Tempenges in the Traditional *Amaq abir* Theater Performance, 2025



Source: Primary data, 2025

Another important element of the performance is the language used in the dialogue. Historical sources indicate that *Amaq abir* narratives were originally delivered in Kawi. However, because Kawi was not widely understood by the local community, performers gradually replaced it with the Sasak language so that audiences could more easily follow the story and its moral messages. A senior performer explained: "When the language changed to Sasak, people could understand the story better and the message became clearer" (Senior performer, personal communication, September 2025). In recent years, some performances have also incorporated Indonesian to accommodate audiences from outside the local community (Mahir, 2025).

During performances observed in this study, actor dialogues frequently included humor, satire, and expressions reflecting everyday rural experiences. Improvisation was a prominent feature, allowing actors to adapt their dialogues in response to audience reactions. Audience members were often seen responding with laughter and applause when actors delivered satirical lines referring to common social situations in village life. The performance was accompanied by traditional musical instruments, particularly the *gendang beleq*, which provided rhythmic accompaniment and contributed to the ceremonial atmosphere of the performance (Suryadmaja, 2025).

Community members emphasized that *Amaq abir* performances communicate a number of local values, including mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), loyalty, respect for elders, and social solidarity. These values are conveyed through narrative episodes, character interactions, and symbolic gestures within the performance. As one member of the art community stated: "The story teaches people how to live together and respect others" (Art community member, personal communication, October 2025). In this way, the performance functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium through which social norms and cultural values are expressed in an artistic form (Arliani et al., 2021; Endayani, 2023).

The preservation of *Amaq abir* in Marong Village is closely connected to the activities of Sanggar Pustaka Budaya, a community-based cultural institution that organizes rehearsals, performances, and cultural education programs for younger generations. During field observations, several young participants were seen practicing dialogue, movement, and musical accompaniment under the guidance of senior performers. Through these activities, young participants learn the narratives, performance techniques, and symbolic meanings associated with *Amaq abir* (Zuhri et al., 2018). Local cultural initiatives are also supported by broader policies promoting culture-based tourism development in West Nusa Tenggara (Pemerintah Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat, 2013; Bappenas, 2025).

Overall, the findings indicate that *Amaq abir* functions as a cultural performance that integrates artistic expression with social and moral values. Within the Sasak community, the performance provides a space where cultural identity, communal participation, and value transmission intersect. These characteristics make *Amaq abir* an important cultural medium through which local wisdom and social values are communicated across generations (Nurjatisari et al., 2023; Putra et al., 2024; Wiratmaja et al., 2021).

3.2 Pancasila Values in the *Amaq abir* Performance

The traditional *Amaq abir* theater preserved by Sanggar Pustaka Budaya in Marong Village, Central Lombok, functions not only as a form of entertainment but also as a cultural medium through which moral and ideological values are communicated within the community. Field observations and interviews conducted during the research indicate that elements of the performance—including narrative structure, dialogue, symbolic gestures,

and ritual expressions—contain messages that correspond with the principles of Pancasila. This observation is consistent with Aryani et al.'s (2022) argument that Pancasila values can be implemented through various forms of character education, including performing arts. The following sections describe how each principle of Pancasila is represented in the narrative structure, symbolic elements, and social interactions observed in the *Amaq abir* performance.

3.2.1 First Principle: Belief in The One and Only God

The value of religiosity in the *Amaq abir* performance is reflected through ritual expressions, opening prayers, and narrative elements connected to the spiritual beliefs of the Sasak community (Zuhri et al., 2018). At the beginning of the performance, actors typically deliver a traditional chant (*tembang pembukaq*) as a form of respect to the audience and as a symbolic invocation of divine guidance. As documented in the performance observed during this study, the chant is recited as follows:

<i>Tembang Pembukaq</i>	Opening Performance Song
<i>Tabe-tabe pamiarse sereng sami</i>	We respectfully seek permission from the audience
<i>Ting niki ngaturang kekesahan</i>	This performance will present the story of <i>Amaq abir</i> and the King, renowned throughout the universe.
<i>Cerite biki saq teparan Amaq abir</i>	This story is a legacy from ancient times.
<i>Datu Agung muter jagat</i>	May it serve as guidance for all.
<i>Cerite niki tilaran lek jaman kuni</i>	Should there be any errors in the story, performance, narrative, or speech, the theatre group extends its sincere apologies.
<i>Moge gamaq bau keturunan</i>	
<i>Lamun arak taokne sisip</i>	
<i>Nunas agung pengampure</i>	

Source: Primary Data, 2025

In Sasak cultural tradition, chants (*tembang*) are often interpreted as symbolic prayers. During interviews, one senior performer explained: "the opening chant is not just part of the story; it is a way of asking for blessing so that the performance runs well" (Senior performer, personal communication, September 2025). Another scene illustrating this value appears in the narrative involving *Amaq Tempenges*. In the story, *Amaq Tempenges* is falsely accused by Datu Ide. Unable to defend himself against the accusation, he accepts the king's decision and entrusts his fate to God through a chant that expresses surrender and spiritual devotion. This scene reflects the belief that human actions must be accompanied by prayer and submission to divine will (Sahibi, 2025).

These observations indicate that the *Amaq abir* performance integrates religious expressions within its narrative structure, reinforcing the value of Belief in One Almighty God. Similar findings have been reported by Putra et al. (2024), who argue that performing arts can function as a medium for instilling religious character, as well as by Kulsum and Muhid (2022), who highlight the importance of religious values in character education.

3.2.2 Second Principle: Just and Civilized Humanity

The value of humanity is expressed through narrative episodes that emphasize empathy, justice, and mutual respect among characters. One central storyline in the *Amaq abir* performance involves the abduction of Princess Ayu. In the narrative observed during the performance, this incident becomes a collective concern that prompts the king, *Amaq Tempenges*, and other community members (*kaule*) to seek a solution.

Informants explained that the story illustrates the importance of defending truth and protecting human dignity. As one member of the art community stated: “*Amaq Tempenges represents someone who defends justice even when he suffers*” (Art community member, personal communication, October 2025). Within the narrative, *Amaq Tempenges* perseveres in seeking justice despite being wrongly accused. His persistence ultimately leads to conflict resolution and reconciliation among the characters. According to community interpretations, this moment symbolizes the triumph of justice and moral integrity.

These narrative elements reflect the principle of Just and Civilized Humanity by emphasizing respect for human dignity, empathy toward others, and the importance of resolving conflicts through ethical means (Sahibi, 2025). Similar values have been identified in studies on Sasak folklore and character education, which emphasize empathy and respect as central components of social harmony (Arliani et al., 2021; Dewi, 2022; Kulsum & Muhid, 2022).

3.2.3 Third Principle: The Unity of Indonesia

The value of unity in the *Amaq abir* performance is represented through both narrative themes and collective participation in the performance itself. Observations conducted during rehearsals revealed that preparation for the performance involves collaborative activities among community members, including costume preparation, stage arrangement, and musical accompaniment.

Within the narrative structure, the story of Princess Ayu's abduction also illustrates collective action. According to Sahibi (2025), King Datu Ide announces a royal proclamation offering a reward to anyone who can rescue the princess. This call mobilizes several characters—including *Amaq abir*, his disciples, and *Amaq Tempenges*—to work together to solve the problem.

This narrative reflects the Sasak cultural value of *jwè seli*, which emphasizes mutual cooperation and collective responsibility. In interviews, one performer explained: “*The story reminds the audience that problems must be solved together, not individually*” (Performer, personal communication, September 2025). When interpreted through the lens of the third principle of Pancasila, the Unity of Indonesia, this narrative illustrates how collective cooperation contributes to social harmony. Previous studies have similarly highlighted the role of performing arts in fostering collective identity and strengthening national unity (Nurjatisari et al., 2023; Mintargo, 2021; Renda, 2024).

3.2.4 Fourth Principle: Democratic Life Led by Wisdom of thoughts in Deliberation Amongst Representatives of The People

The fourth principle of Pancasila is reflected in scenes that portray deliberative decision-making processes among characters. In several episodes of the narrative, conflicts are resolved through dialogue and consultation rather than unilateral authority.

Within the story, *Amaq abir* is portrayed as a figure who consistently articulates moral truth and encourages wise decision-making. Informants described him as a character who symbolizes honesty and moral courage. One performer noted: “*Amaq abir represents someone who dares to speak the truth but still respects the wisdom of others*” (Performer, personal communication, September 2025). The presence of *anak baris yang enam*, the six loyal disciples who accompany *Amaq abir*, further illustrates the importance of collective participation in decision-making. Their presence symbolizes community involvement in supporting ethical leadership.

These narrative elements demonstrate how traditional performances can serve as cultural spaces where democratic values—such as dialogue, collective consultation, and moral leadership—are represented through storytelling. Such interpretations are consistent

with research highlighting the role of local wisdom in strengthening civic values and national consciousness (Wiratmaja et al., 2021).

3.2.5 Fifth Principle: Social Justice for all The People of Indonesia

The value of social justice is reflected in narrative messages that emphasize fairness, moral responsibility, and collective welfare. According to Sahibi (2025), the *Amaq abir* narrative contains several moral concepts aligned with the fifth principle of Pancasila.

One of these concepts is *tabah*, which represents perseverance in facing life's difficulties. Another concept is the prohibition of arrogance (*adigang-adigung*), which encourages humility and equality among individuals. Informants explained that these values are often conveyed implicitly through character interactions and narrative outcomes.

The narrative also introduces the concept of *item-putek*, which expresses the belief that good and evil coexist within human life. This philosophical idea encourages audiences to seek balance and justice when confronting social conflicts. Another important value is *jiwè seli*, which emphasizes solidarity and cooperation as the foundation of harmonious social relations. In the story, the rescue of Princess Ayu through Sekti's supernatural power symbolizes the triumph of truth over wrongdoing. Community members often interpret this episode as a metaphor for knowledge, wisdom, and moral clarity.

These narrative elements collectively convey the importance of fairness, cooperation, and moral responsibility in social life. Such findings support previous studies indicating that performing arts can serve as a medium for cultivating social awareness and promoting ethical values within society (Hasibua et al., 2021; Zebua et al., 2022).

3.3. Integration of *Amaq abir* Performance Values with Pancasila Principles

Within this policy framework, the *Amaq abir* performance exemplifies how local cultural traditions can simultaneously contribute to cultural preservation, social cohesion, and local economic development. Previous studies indicate that the integration of local wisdom and Pancasila values plays a crucial role in strengthening national identity and fostering community resilience (Rawanoko et al., 2023). Furthermore, tourism development rooted in cultural values and national ideology is increasingly recognized as essential for maintaining identity in the face of globalization (Riyadi et al., 2024).

In addition, research on community-based tourism demonstrates that culturally grounded development models significantly contribute to sustainable local economies by integrating social, cultural, and economic dimensions (Fahmi et al., 2025). However, this also raises critical concerns regarding the potential commodification of culture, where traditional performances may be reduced to economic assets rather than functioning as authentic expressions of local identity. Therefore, the *Amaq abir* performance should be understood not only as a reflection of cultural resilience but also as a dynamic site of negotiation between preservation, economic interests, and ideological transmission.

From a cultural perspective, the *Amaq abir* performance functions as a performative medium that integrates Sasak cultural symbolism with the universal ethical values embodied in Pancasila. Several symbolic elements reinforce this integration. For example, the *Amaq abir* mask serves as a semiotic representation of moral courage and honesty, conveying ethical messages through visual symbolism (Renda et al., 2024). Similarly, the use of traditional musical accompaniment, such as *gendang beleq*, reinforces the values of collectivity and cooperation that characterize Sasak social life (Suryadmaja, 2025).

Moreover, the dramaturgical structure of the performance creates an aesthetic space through which moral and ideological values are communicated in culturally meaningful ways (Renda, 2018). This suggests that the *Amaq abir* performance is not merely a cultural artifact but a dynamic cultural practice through which Pancasila values are continuously

interpreted, reproduced, and negotiated within contemporary social contexts. The narrative role of the character Amaq Tempenges further illustrates the integration of local values with Pancasila principles. In the *Amaq abir* narrative, Amaq Tempenges represents a figure who consistently upholds truth and justice despite facing pressure and injustice. The term tempenges, which literally means “to remain upright” symbolizes steadfast adherence to moral principles even under difficult circumstances. According to Sahibi (2025), this character embodies the philosophical idea that truth ultimately prevails over tyranny. The narrative episodes in which Amaq Tempenges confronts unjust authority and ultimately persuades the king to reconsider his decision illustrate the ethical principles of justice, dignity, and peaceful conflict resolution. These values resonate particularly with the Second Principle of Pancasila—just and civilized humanity—as well as the Third Principle emphasizing unity and social harmony.

Beyond individual characters, the performance also illustrates the importance of collective participation in sustaining social values. The interactions among performers during rehearsal preparation and stage arrangements demonstrate the principle of *jiwe seli*, which refers to cooperation and mutual assistance within the Sasak cultural tradition. This concept highlights the collective responsibility of community members to support one another in achieving shared goals. Within the context of the *Amaq abir* performance, *jiwe seli* is expressed through collaborative preparation among actors, musicians, and community members, reflecting the cultural practice of *gotong royong*. Such practices correspond closely with Pancasila, which emphasizes social justice and collective welfare (Sahibi, 2025; Putra et al., 2024).

These findings suggest that traditional performing arts can function as culturally embedded mechanisms for transmitting ideological values within society. Similar patterns have been observed in other Indonesian performing arts traditions. For example, the *Sigeh Pengunten* dance in Lampung has been shown to function as a medium for the internalization of values related to unity and cultural identity (Krisnawati, 2023). Likewise, the *Ebeg Banyumasan* performance in Java demonstrates how traditional arts adapt symbolically to new social contexts while maintaining their cultural meaning (Jantro & Kiswanto, 2023). These comparisons indicate that traditional performing arts across different regions of Indonesia share a common capacity to integrate local cultural values with the broader framework of national ideology.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that the *Amaq abir* performance functions as a cultural arena in which local wisdom and national ideology intersect. Through narrative storytelling, symbolic representation, and collective participation, the performance provides a cultural context in which ethical values associated with the principles of Pancasila are symbolically communicated. In this sense, *Amaq abir* represents more than a form of traditional entertainment; it serves as a cultural mechanism that contributes to the preservation of cultural identity, the strengthening of social cohesion, and the development of character education within the Sasak community.

3.4 The Role of *Amaq abir* Performance in Character Education

The findings of this study indicate that the *Amaq abir* performance functions as an important medium of non-formal character education within the Sasak community. Through narrative structures, symbolic masks, and performative interactions, the performance communicates moral values such as courage, loyalty, honesty, and respect for others. These values are not transmitted through formal instruction but through aesthetic experiences that allow audiences to interpret ethical meanings embedded in the storyline and characters (Renda, 2024; Zuhri et al., 2018).

Within the cultural context of the Sasak community, traditional performances often operate as communicative spaces where social norms and ethical values are reproduced through storytelling and symbolic representation. In the *Amaq abir* narrative, characters such as Amaq Tempenges embody moral qualities associated with honesty, courage, and moral integrity. As discussed in the previous section, this character consistently upholds truth despite facing injustice, illustrating ethical behavior that resonates with the principles of justice and social responsibility. Through repeated exposure to these narratives, audiences—particularly younger generations—are encouraged to reflect upon moral choices and social responsibilities within their own lives.

These observations support previous studies suggesting that folklore and traditional performances can serve as effective instruments for character education (Arliani et al., 2021). However, compared with other traditional art forms such as Ebeg Banyumasan and Debus Banten, the educational dimension of *Amaq abir* emphasizes moral reflection and social awareness rather than physical endurance or exclusively spiritual practices (Jantro & Kiswanto, 2023; Putra et al., 2024). This orientation reflects the Sasak cultural perspective in which performing arts function as cultural media for communicating ethical principles within everyday social life.

In addition to narrative storytelling, symbolic elements of the performance also contribute to the transmission of character values. The masks used by different characters function as visual symbols that communicate moral attributes and narrative roles. As illustrated in Figure 2, each mask represents a particular character with specific ethical meanings within the storyline. Through these symbolic representations, audiences are able to interpret the moral tension between justice and wrongdoing in a visually engaging manner.

Figure 2. The Masks of Various Characters in *Amaq abir* Theater Performance



Amaq abir



Datu Ide



Amaq Tempenges



Raksase



Puteri Ayu



Inaq Rangde



Amaq Bongkok



Amaq Mus

Source: Primary data, 2025

Another important dimension of character education conveyed in the *Amaq abir* performance is the value of patriotism and loyalty. Cultural performances have been shown to reinforce national identity by fostering emotional attachment to collective ideals (Mintargo, 2021). In the narrative of *Amaq abir*, this value is personified through the character of Amaq Tempenges, who demonstrates loyalty and dedication despite experiencing injustice. The aesthetic value of manut (obedience and loyalty) reflects the moral discipline expected from individuals within the community. Even when subjected to humiliation and unfair accusations, the character continues to serve the *Kedatuan* with sincerity, illustrating a model of moral responsibility and devotion (Renda, 2018; Sahudirman, 2025).

Field interviews further indicate that participation in *Amaq abir* performances contributes to the development of personal and social competencies among young participants. Through involvement in rehearsals and performances, young performers gain experience in discipline, teamwork, and appreciation of collective effort. These experiences are later reflected in their participation in community activities and youth organizations, suggesting that the educational influence of *Amaq abir* extends beyond the stage into everyday social interactions (Sakti, 2025).

Democratic values are reflected in the collaborative nature of the *Amaq abir* performance production, which involves active participation from performers, musicians, and local community members. This participatory process illustrates principles of cooperation, deliberation (*musyawarah*), and shared responsibility, positioning cultural performance not merely as artistic expression but as a form of participatory social practice that cultivates civic values (Nurhasanah et al., 2021). Previous studies similarly highlight that traditional arts contribute to the development of religious and national character among younger generations (Putra et al., 2024). From a theoretical perspective, such practices can be understood through the lens of cultural pedagogy and civic engagement, where values are transmitted through collective experience and interaction rather than formal instruction. However, this process is not entirely neutral; the extent to which participation reflects genuine democratic deliberation may be influenced by existing social hierarchies and power relations, potentially shaping whose voices are heard within the cultural process.

Comparatively, traditional performances across regions demonstrate different mechanisms of character education. For example, the *Sigeh Pengunten* dance in Lampung emphasizes symbolic gestures of respect and unity as expressions of social harmony (Krisnawati, 2023). In contrast, the *Amaq abir* tradition foregrounds deliberation and communal engagement as central elements of cultural learning, suggesting a more dialogical and participatory model of value transmission. This distinction indicates that while traditional arts broadly support character education, they operate through diverse cultural logics and pedagogical approaches. Furthermore, studies on cultural sustainability and participatory arts suggest that such practices can strengthen democratic culture by fostering collective identity, dialogue, and social cohesion (Duxbury et al., 2017; Mercer & Idema, 2020). Therefore, the *Amaq abir* performance can be understood not only as a medium of cultural preservation but also as a dynamic platform for negotiating and reproducing democratic values within contemporary local contexts. From an ethnographic perspective, these findings suggest that *Amaq abir* operates as a culturally embedded educational space where moral values are learned through participation, observation, and shared cultural experience. The character of Amaq Tempenges serves as a symbolic model of ethical behavior, embodying honesty, courage, loyalty, and obedience—qualities that remain highly relevant for character formation in contemporary society.

Compared with other Indonesian traditional performances such as Ebeg Banyumasan, Debus Banten, and Sigeh Pengunten, *Amaq abir* demonstrates a distinctive emphasis on patriotism, tolerance, and democratic values through collective participation in the creative process (Jantro & Kiswanto, 2023; Krisnawati, 2023; Putra et al., 2024). The integration of narrative symbolism, community participation, and moral reflection positions *Amaq abir* as a significant cultural medium for strengthening character education.

Overall, the findings suggest that *Amaq abir* functions not only as a form of traditional cultural heritage but also as an informal pedagogical platform that connects local wisdom with contemporary educational needs. Through narrative symbolism, participatory performance practices, and community engagement, the *Amaq abir* tradition contributes to the cultivation of ethical awareness, social responsibility, and national identity within the Sasak community.

3.5 Strategies for Strengthening Pancasila Ideology through *Amaq abir* Theatre

The findings of this study indicate that the revitalization of *Amaq abir* theatre represents a strategic pathway for strengthening the values of Pancasila within contemporary society. As demonstrated in the previous sections, the performance integrates narrative symbolism, communal participation, and moral storytelling that communicate ethical values aligned with Pancasila principles. However, the sustainability of this cultural tradition depends not only on preservation efforts but also on the ability of the performance to adapt to changing social contexts. Several performers and cultural practitioners emphasized that innovations in performance presentation—such as the use of lighting, variations in musical accompaniment, and adjustments in performance duration—have been introduced to make *Amaq abir* more appealing to younger audiences while maintaining the philosophical meanings embedded in its symbolic elements (Renda, 2024; Zuhri et al., 2018).

From the perspective of cultural sustainability, revitalization efforts must balance traditional authenticity with creative adaptation. Excessive modification may weaken the symbolic messages rooted in Sasak local wisdom, while rigid preservation may reduce the performance's relevance for contemporary audiences. Similar dynamics have been observed in the adaptation of Ebeg Banyumasan within diaspora communities, where traditional performances evolve in response to new social contexts while maintaining their cultural identity (Jantro & Kiswanto, 2023). In this regard, the revitalization of *Amaq abir* should follow the principle of cultural continuity, in which core cultural values remain intact while the performative format adapts to modern cultural consumption patterns (Endayani, 2023).

Beyond revitalization, *Amaq abir* performances also demonstrate significant potential as a medium for the socialization of Pancasila values within educational and community contexts. The symbolic narratives conveyed through characters, masks, and dramatic interactions communicate moral principles such as justice, solidarity, courage, and responsibility. These symbolic representations provide culturally meaningful opportunities for integrating local cultural traditions into character education programs. Previous studies have shown that performing arts can function as effective pedagogical media for transmitting ethical values through experiential learning processes (Nurjatisari et al., 2023; Putra et al., 2024; Zebua et al., 2022). Similar to the use of Debus performance in Banten as a medium for religious character education in primary schools, *Amaq abir* theatre holds considerable potential for strengthening values of cooperation and unity within both school environments and community-based educational programs (Putra et al., 2024). Such integration is also consistent with the objectives of the Pancasila Student Profile promoted

within the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes culturally grounded learning approaches (Nurjatisari et al., 2023).

At a broader structural level, strengthening Pancasila ideology through *Amaq abir* theatre requires institutional support from cultural policy frameworks and local governance structures. Cultural preservation policies in West Nusa Tenggara recognize traditional arts as important foundations for regional cultural identity and sustainable tourism development (Pemerintah Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat, 2013). Similarly, the 2025–2029 National Medium-Term Development Plan highlights the strategic role of culture in strengthening social cohesion and national identity (Bappenas, 2025). Within this policy context, *Amaq abir* performances can be integrated into cultural tourism programs, educational initiatives, and community cultural festivals as part of broader strategies for reinforcing ideological awareness through cultural participation.

Nevertheless, several challenges remain in implementing these strategies. Limited funding for cultural activities, insufficient arts management capacity, and the lack of systematic integration of cultural education within formal school curricula may hinder the sustainability of traditional arts initiatives (Hasibua et al., 2021). These limitations highlight the importance of strengthening collaboration among local governments, educational institutions, and arts communities. Such partnerships are essential to ensure that *Amaq abir* functions not merely as a cultural attraction but also as an effective medium for character education and ideological reinforcement (Wiratmaja et al., 2021).

Globalization presents a significant challenge to the sustainability of traditional arts, particularly in the form of declining interest among younger generations due to the growing influence of global popular culture (Nurhasanah et al., 2021). This shift reflects broader cultural transformations in which local traditions increasingly compete with globalized forms of entertainment that are more accessible and commercially appealing. Consequently, traditional performances such as *Amaq abir* face the risk of marginalization if they fail to adapt to changing audience preferences. However, this challenge should not be viewed solely as a threat. From a critical perspective, globalization also creates new cultural spaces in which traditions can be recontextualized and reinterpreted, allowing them to remain relevant in contemporary society.

At the same time, globalization opens new opportunities for cultural dissemination through digital technologies. Studies on cultural adaptation and digital heritage suggest that digital platforms can enhance cultural visibility, broaden audience reach, and mitigate the risk of cultural erosion (Simanjuntak & Fitriana, 2020; Duxbury et al., 2017). In this context, the digitalization of *Amaq abir* performances—through social media, documentary production, and virtual performances—offers innovative strategies for engaging wider audiences while preserving the cultural meanings embedded in the tradition (Endayani, 2023; Suryadmaja, 2025). Nevertheless, this process also requires careful consideration, as digital mediation may transform the authenticity and contextual depth of cultural expressions. Therefore, the sustainability of *Amaq abir* depends not only on its ability to adapt to digital platforms but also on maintaining a balance between innovation and the preservation of its cultural integrity (Mercer & Idema, 2020).

From an analytical perspective, these findings suggest that *Amaq abir* can be interpreted as a cultural practice that contributes to the social articulation of Pancasila values within contemporary society. While previous studies have primarily focused on the artistic structures, aesthetic dimensions, or general character education functions of traditional performances (Nurjatisari et al., 2023; Renda et al., 2024), this study highlights the strategic role of *Amaq abir* in linking local cultural values with national ideological frameworks.

The contribution of this research therefore lies in identifying several practical strategies for strengthening Pancasila ideology through traditional performing arts: cultural revitalization, integration into educational programs, institutional policy support, and adaptation to globalization through digital media. Together, these strategies demonstrate how traditional performing arts can function as culturally grounded mechanisms for transmitting ethical values, strengthening social cohesion, and reinforcing national identity in contemporary society.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the traditional *Amaq abir* theatre represents more than a cultural heritage practice within the Sasak community. The findings indicate that the performance functions as a cultural medium through which ethical values associated with the principles of Pancasila are symbolically communicated. Through narrative structures, character representations, symbolic masks, and participatory performance practices, *Amaq abir* conveys local cultural values such as courage, solidarity, loyalty, and moral responsibility. Rather than transmitting moral teachings through formal instruction, these values emerge through aesthetic engagement and collective cultural experience, allowing audiences to interpret ethical meanings within the narrative context of the performance.

The study contributes to discussions on traditional performing arts by demonstrating how *Amaq abir* operates as a cultural space where local wisdom and national ideological values intersect. The analysis shows that symbolic narratives and communal participation enable the contextual articulation of ethical principles that resonate with both Sasak cultural traditions and broader social values. In this sense, traditional performances can function not only as artistic expressions but also as culturally embedded mechanisms through which communities interpret and reflect upon moral and social norms.

More broadly, the findings highlight the relevance of community-based cultural practices in supporting character education within contemporary society. By connecting local cultural traditions with broader ethical frameworks, *Amaq abir* illustrates how traditional performing arts may contribute to sustaining cultural continuity while fostering ethical awareness and social responsibility. Strengthening community cultural initiatives and supporting adaptive forms of cultural revitalization therefore remain important for ensuring that traditional arts continue to engage younger generations in changing social contexts.

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