

PENCAK SILAT AS AN ETHNOPEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE: THE PROCESS OF INTERNALIZING DISCIPLINARY VALUES IN LOCAL SUNDANE TRADITIONS

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Abstract:

This article examines pencak silat in the context of Sundanese society, a social tradition that plays a crucial role in fostering discipline. This study begins with the view that the process of values education does not only occur in formal settings but also develops through collective cultural practices. The aim of this research is to understand how discipline is instilled and passed down through the practice of pencak silat in local Sundanese traditions. This study employed a literature review method, critically reviewing recent literature relevant to pencak silat, Sundanese culture, character education, and ethnopedagogical approaches. The results indicate that discipline in pencak silat is formed through regular practice, adherence to etiquette, and teacher-student relationships that emphasize role models and respect. These values are not taught normatively but develop through habituation and direct experience. The discussion demonstrates that discipline in pencak silat is intertwined with local values such as politeness, responsibility, and togetherness. In conclusion, pencak silat makes a significant contribution to culture-based character education. The impact of this research is expected to enrich the discourse on contextual character education rooted in local traditions.

Keywords: Pencak Silat, Ethnopedagogy, Discipline, Sundanese Tradition

1. Introduction

The issue of character education, particularly discipline, has once again become a serious concern in contemporary educational discourse. Various reports and research findings indicate that student discipline issues arise not only in the form of violations of school rules but are also reflected in a low learning ethic, weak academic accountability, and declining respect for the moral authority of educators. A national study conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2022) showed that discipline remains a major challenge in the implementation of character education in Indonesia, particularly in educational institutions that employ a uniform learning approach with minimal cultural context. This phenomenon indicates that character education has tended to be understood normatively and procedurally. The value of discipline is often reduced to compliance with rules, schedules, and administrative sanctions, without addressing the dimension of students' internal awareness.

Numerous studies confirm that short-term, instructional, compliance-oriented character approaches fail to foster a sustainable habitus of discipline (Lickona, 2019; Nucci, 2020; Suyadi & Sutrisno, 2021). Consequently, discipline emerges only within formal educational settings but is not internalized in students' social lives outside of school. In a global context, UNESCO (2021) emphasizes the importance of reorienting education, focusing not only on cognitive and technological competencies but also on strengthening cultural and humanitarian values. Education is required to return to the social and cultural roots of society to develop individuals with character, responsibility, and a strong cultural identity. However, the direction of globalization and standardization of education often encourages learning practices that are disconnected from local contexts, leaving cultural values positioned as complementary rather than the primary source of learning (Banks, 2020; Tilaar, 2021).

It is in this context that ethnopedagogy gains relevance. Ethnopedagogy rests on the assumption that educational practices have long been embedded in the traditions and culture of society through the transmission of values, role models, and social conditioning. Alwasilah (2018) emphasized that ethnopedagogy not only utilizes culture as a learning context but also utilizes culture as an epistemological source of education. Several recent studies have shown that the ethnopedagogical approach is significantly effective in internalizing character values because these values are learned

through real and meaningful cultural experiences (Supriatna, 2021; Hidayat & Wibowo, 2021; Rosyid, 2023). One cultural practice with strong ethnopedagogical potential is pencak silat. Various studies have positioned pencak silat not merely as a martial art or traditional sport, but as a traditional educational system that integrates physical, mental, moral, and spiritual aspects. Maryono (2020) emphasized that in pencak silat, the value of discipline is built through compliance with school rules, consistent training, self-control, and pedagogical relationships between teachers and students that emphasize role models.

Similar findings are demonstrated by Wilson's (2021) research, which states that traditional martial arts significantly contribute to the development of self-discipline and emotional control. In local Sundanese tradition, pencak silat is inseparable from a cultural value system that upholds the balance between physical strength and nobility of character. The principles of *silih asah*, *silih asih*, *silih asuh* form the ethical foundation of Sundanese pencak silat practice, implicitly fostering discipline as a moral awareness, not simply adherence to rules. Studies by Nugraha (2022) and Rahmat (2023) show that the value of discipline in Sundanese pencak silat is internalized through the practice of orderliness, patience in training, respect for teachers, and self-control in social relationships. These values have been shown to contribute to the formation of individual character in everyday life.

However, in contemporary formal education, pencak silat is often reduced to an extracurricular activity or merely a physical activity. Its philosophical and ethnopedagogical dimensions tend to be marginalized by an orientation toward achievement and competition. Several studies indicate that the lack of conceptual understanding of pencak silat as a culture-based educational practice has resulted in its pedagogical potential not being optimally utilized in strengthening character education (Herlina, 2022; Wibowo, 2023). This situation demonstrates a gap between the richness of local traditions and their utilization within a modern educational framework. Based on this description, this study considers it important to position pencak silat as an ethnopedagogical practice that plays a role in the internalization of disciplinary values within local Sundanese traditions.

Through a literature review approach, this article attempts to critically examine various recent literature related to ethnopedagogy, character education, and pencak silat to develop a comprehensive conceptual understanding of how disciplinary values are formed and transmitted through cultural practices. Thus, it is hoped that this will not only enrich academic discourse on local culture-based education but also provide a conceptual contribution to the development of more contextual, reflective, and sustainable character education.

2. Research methods

This article was compiled using a qualitative approach through library research. This method was chosen based on the nature and objectives of the research, which were not aimed at testing relationships between variables or empirically measuring social phenomena in the field, but rather at understanding, interpreting, and formulating the meaning of pencak silat as an ethnopedagogical practice in the process of internalizing disciplinary values in local Sundanese traditions. In the context of culture-based education studies, library research is seen as a relevant approach to exploring the construction of ideas, scientific findings, and theoretical frameworks that have developed in various literatures (Zed, 2018; Creswell, 2021).

The data for this study are sourced from secondary sources obtained through various scientific publications, including academic books, national and international journal articles, conference proceedings, and institutional reports discussing ethnopedagogy, character education, pencak silat, and disciplinary values. The literature used was selectively selected by considering the relevance of the theme, the strength of the argument, and the recency of the publication, with a primary focus on works published within the last ten years. However, several classic works are still used as conceptual references if they have significant theoretical contributions, particularly in the study of ethnopedagogy and character education (Alwasilah, 2018; Lickona, 2019).

The data collection process was conducted through a systematic literature search using keywords such as ethnopedagogy, character education, discipline, pencak silat, and Sundanese culture. Each source found was not immediately used as analysis material, but first underwent a critical reading stage to assess the depth of the study, the consistency of the argument, and its suitability to the research focus. Literature that was generally descriptive, repetitive, or lacked a clear academic foundation was eliminated to maintain sharp and focused analysis (Sugiyono, 2020). Data analysis was conducted through in-depth reading of the texts using content analysis and thematic analysis.

In the initial stage, the authors identified key ideas related to the concepts of ethnopedagogy, character and discipline, and pencak silat as a cultural practice. These ideas were then classified and compared to identify patterns of meaning, conceptual relationships, and differences in perspective among authors. Through this process, pencak silat is understood not merely as a martial art but as a pedagogical

space that allows for the internalization of values through habituation, role modeling, and social relations, as emphasized in the studies of Maryono (2020) and Nugraha (2022).

To maintain the quality and depth of analysis, this study did not stop at summarizing the literature findings but instead attempted a conceptual synthesis. The synthesis was conducted by linking the findings on pencak silat and discipline with an ethnopedagogical framework and character education theory. This approach aligns with Creswell's (2021) perspective, which emphasizes that qualitative, literature-based studies should generate new understanding through the process of interpretation and integration of ideas, not simply the compilation of sources. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, namely by comparing various literature from different disciplinary backgrounds and perspectives. Furthermore, consistency of interpretation was maintained by using ethnopedagogy as the primary analytical framework, ensuring that the reading of the literature remained within the research objectives. In this way, the study's results are expected to have theoretical coherence and be academically accountable (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Result

3.1.1 Pencak Silat as a Social Practice

Pencak silat, in various contexts of community life, emerges as a social practice inextricably linked to the relationships between individuals and the dynamics of the communities in which it develops. It is not practiced as a stand-alone personal activity, but rather as a collective practice that demands ongoing social engagement. Participation in pencak silat from the outset presupposes a willingness to enter into a social order with agreed-upon rules, rhythms, and norms. Within this framework, pencak silat functions as a social space that shapes how individuals relate, behave, and position themselves within the community. Pencak silat practice takes place through regular meetings that are not only oriented toward physical training but also serve as venues for intense social interaction. Training spaces, whether held at schools, hermitages, or open spaces within the community, serve as a meeting place for individuals from diverse backgrounds bound by shared interests and commitments.

In this space, the learning process does not occur one-way, but rather through reciprocal interactions that allow for the exchange of experiences, the development of attitudes, and the formation of a sense of community. Thus, pencak silat serves as a social medium that brings individuals together within a shared community of values. Furthermore, pencak silat creates a vibrant and sustainable informal learning space. There is no clear boundary between learning activities and social life, as the learning process occurs alongside the community's daily practices.

The learning process is not framed by a written curriculum or formal academic structure, but rather occurs through routine practice, repetitive movements, and ongoing social interactions. This pattern demonstrates that pencak silat builds a learning system embedded in the social life of its community. Within this social practice, pencak silat also establishes a relatively clear role structure.

There is a division of roles between teachers, senior students, and junior students, each with specific positions and responsibilities. This structure is not rigid, but stable enough to form recognizable relationship patterns. Through this role structure, pencak silat creates a social order that allows for the continuous transmission of knowledge, skills, and values. Thus, pencak silat can be understood as a social practice that organizes community life. It creates spaces for interaction, regulates social relations, and creates patterns of learning that occur collectively. This demonstrates that pencak silat has a strong social dimension and plays a significant role in shaping individual learning experiences outside the context of formal education.

3.1.2 Discipline Becomes an Inherent Value in the Training Process

In the practice of pencak silat, discipline emerges as a value that is lived out concretely and consistently in every stage of training. Discipline does not exist as an abstract concept or a moral slogan, but rather manifests itself in the form of order that regulates the rhythm of life in the training community. Punctuality, consistency in following the training schedule, and adherence to applicable rules are part of the daily practice shared by all community members. Discipline in pencak silat is also reflected in the seriousness with which the training process is carried out. Every movement is executed with full attention, following predetermined stages, and not haphazardly.

The training process demands perseverance and patience, as mastery of techniques cannot be achieved instantly. In this context, discipline serves as a mental attitude that enables individuals to persist through a long and repetitive learning process. Furthermore, discipline is evident in self-control during training. Pencak silat requires the ability to manage energy, emotions, and body posture to ensure safe and orderly training. Excessive use of force or uncontrolled emotional behavior is seen as a violation of the disciplinary values upheld within the community. Thus, discipline is not only related to adherence to

external rules but also concerns an individual's ability to self-regulate. Discipline also shapes the collective ethos within the pencak silat community.

Regular practice and adherence to rules create a shared rhythm that allows each member to move in unison. This rhythm strengthens a sense of togetherness and collective responsibility, as each individual recognizes that the indiscipline of one individual can impact the entire training process. In this context, discipline serves as a value that maintains the continuity of pencak silat practice as a collective activity. Thus, discipline in pencak silat does not stand as an externally imposed value, but rather grows out of a shared need to maintain the regularity and quality of the training process. Discipline becomes an inherent part of pencak silat practice and shapes how individuals navigate the learning process and interact within the community.

3.1.3 Internalization of Values Occurs Through Habituation

The value of discipline in pencak silat is not developed through verbal moral messages or direct normative instructions. The process of internalizing values occurs through continuous habituation in practice. Each training session becomes an experiential space that allows individuals to experience, repeat, and reinforce discipline through concrete actions. Habituation occurs through a relatively consistent routine. A consistent training schedule, repeated training stages, and consistently applied rules form a stable pattern of experience. Within this pattern, individuals learn to adapt to the rhythm of training and internalize regularity as part of everyday life.

Discipline develops not in response to a momentary command, but rather as a result of long-term engagement in the same practice. The habituation process also occurs through repetition of movements and technical practice. Mastering pencak silat moves and techniques requires intense and continuous repetition. Through this repetition, individuals learn to appreciate the process, be patient with their limitations, and consistently strive to improve their abilities. These experiences gradually shape a disciplined attitude that becomes inherent in the individual's learning process. Habituation in pencak silat also involves a social dimension. Interaction with fellow trainees creates a situation in which individuals learn to adapt their behavior to prevailing community norms.

When order is practiced together, habituation becomes a mutually reinforcing collective process. Discipline is no longer understood as a mere individual demand, but as a shared habit maintained by all members of the community. Thus, the internalization of the values of discipline in pencak silat occurs through repeated and sustained direct experience. Habituation becomes the primary mechanism that allows the values of discipline to become deeply ingrained, thus forming a relatively stable and long-term attitude within the individual.

3.1.4 The relationship between teachers and students is educational and ethical.

The relationship between teacher and student in pencak silat exhibits a unique character and is imbued with educational and ethical content. This relationship is not solely built on the transfer of technical skills, but also through interactions that emphasize respect, role modeling, and responsibility. The teacher is positioned as a figure of moral authority, not only because of their mastery of techniques, but also because of the attitudes and behaviors displayed in daily practice. In this relationship, students learn through direct observation and involvement. The teacher's manner of speaking, acting, and acting in various training situations serve as an important source of learning. The value of discipline is not taught through explicit verbal instructions, but rather through concrete examples demonstrated by the teacher.

This process allows these values to be learned implicitly through relational experiences. The teacher-student relationship is also characterized by consistently maintained ethical obedience. Students are expected to respect the teacher and follow their instructions, while the teacher is responsible for maintaining the integrity and safety of the training process. This obedience is not authoritarian, but is built on trust and respect. In this context, discipline is practiced as part of the relational ethics that govern the interaction between teacher and student. This educational and ethical relationship creates a learning space conducive to the transmission of values. Students learn not only pencak silat techniques but also how to behave, respect others, and position themselves in social relationships. Thus, the teacher-student relationship serves as the primary medium for the formation and transmission of disciplinary values.

3.1.5 Pencak Silat: Integrating Discipline with Local Values

In the context of Sundanese traditional pencak silat, the value of discipline does not exist as a rigid rule separate from the community's social life. Discipline is closely intertwined with local values that are lived and practiced in daily life, such as politeness, respect, responsibility, and togetherness. The integration of these values forms a unique way of practicing discipline that is appropriate to the local cultural context. Discipline in Sundanese pencak silat is practiced as part of a lifestyle, not simply as a training requirement. Order and obedience are practiced alongside respect for others and maintaining harmony within the community.

In this context, discipline is not interpreted as a restriction on individual freedom, but as a way to maintain order and harmony in communal life. The integration of discipline and local values is evident in the way participants interact with one another. Mutual respect, careful speech, and attention to social standing are part of the daily practices that accompany the training process. These values frame the practice of discipline so that it is not rigid or repressive, but rather is lived naturally as part of the community culture. Thus, pencak silat functions as a space where disciplinary and local values are intertwined and practiced simultaneously. Discipline not only shapes the order of training but also shapes social attitudes that reflect the cultural identity of the Sundanese people. These findings indicate that pencak silat plays a crucial role in maintaining and transmitting local values through meaningful daily practices.

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1 Pencak Silat in an Ethnopedagogical Perspective

In contemporary ethnopedagogical studies, education is understood as a cultural process that is never neutral to the social context and local values. Education does not only take place in the classroom but also grows and develops through social practices passed down through generations. Pencak silat, in this context, can be seen as a culture-based educational medium that works through direct experience, community involvement, and intergenerational relationships. Pencak silat presents an educational pattern that does not rely on a written curriculum but has a relatively established pedagogical structure. Practice rules, etiquette, role hierarchies, and learning rhythms form a vibrant educational system within the community. This pattern aligns with the idea that ethnopedagogy positions culture as a source of knowledge and values, not simply an object to be taught (Smith, 2020; McCarty & Lee, 2019).

Education is not imposed from the outside, but rather grows from within social life itself. In pencak silat, the learning process is inseparable from life practices. Students learn through the simultaneous engagement of the body, emotions, and social relations. This approach challenges the modern educational paradigm, which tends to separate the cognitive dimension from the affective and moral dimensions. Thus, pencak silat demonstrates that local cultural practices have a comprehensive and relevant pedagogical capacity, particularly in shaping the character and attitudes of students. Furthermore, pencak silat can be understood as a form of cultural pedagogy that is resistant to the homogenization of education. Amidst the currents of globalization and standardization of education, pencak silat maintains its own educational logic rooted in the local context. This strengthens the argument that ethnopedagogy is not simply an alternative approach, but rather an epistemological necessity to maintain the diversity of ways of educating humans.

3.2.2 Discipline as a Process of Internalizing Values

The discipline fostered in pencak silat demonstrates a different facet of values education than formal disciplinary practices in schools. Discipline is not introduced as a set of rules to be mechanically obeyed, but rather develops as an inner attitude formed through a long and repetitive process. This approach aligns with contemporary character education perspectives that emphasize the internalization of values through habituation and meaningful experiences (Berkowitz & Bier, 2017; Kristjánsson, 2020). In pencak silat practice, discipline manifests itself in regular practice schedules, commitment to the process, and self-control.

All of this is taught not through moral lectures, but through direct engagement in a consistent rhythm of practice. This process demonstrates that values become part of the individual when they are experienced, not simply understood cognitively. This approach demonstrates that discipline has a deeper ethical dimension than mere obedience. Discipline in pencak silat is closely linked to responsibility to oneself and the community. Students learn that tardiness, negligence, or insincerity impact not only themselves but also the overall harmony of the practice. Thus, discipline develops as a moral awareness, not as a response to sanctions. In the context of formal education, this reading serves as an implicit critique of administrative and coercive disciplinary practices. Pencak silat offers a more humanistic and contextual model of discipline, where values grow from collective experience and meaningful social relationships.

3.2.3 The Role of Teachers as Pedagogical Actors

The relationship between teacher and student in pencak silat reaffirms the educator's central role as a pedagogical actor. The teacher serves not merely as a technical instructor but as a moral figure who serves as a reference for attitudes and actions. In recent pedagogical studies, the educator's role as a role model is seen as a key element in values and character education (Biesta, 2022; Sockett, 2019). Pencak silat teachers exercise their pedagogical authority not through repressive control, but through exemplary behavior and consistent attitudes. The teacher's manner of speaking, behaving, and enforcing rules serve as a means of learning values for students. This relationship creates an ethical educational space, where

obedience is born of respect and trust. This approach demonstrates that values education is inseparable from the quality of the relationship between educator and student. When relationships are built on respect and exemplary behavior, values such as discipline, responsibility, and courtesy are more easily internalized. This is an important reflection for modern education, which often experiences relationship crises due to an overly technocratic approach.

3.2.4 Local Sundanese Values as an Ethical Framework for Education

Local Sundanese values frame the practice of pencak silat within a distinctive ethical framework. The concepts of politeness, respect, togetherness, and balance form the foundation of social relations and the training process. These values are not taught explicitly but are lived out through daily practices within the pencak silat community. From a culture-based education perspective, local values are seen as a relevant and contextual source of ethics for character formation (Battiste, 2018; Lee, 2021). Sundanese values give meaning to the practice of discipline, so that discipline is not understood as a restriction of freedom, but rather as an effort to maintain social harmony. This integration of local values demonstrates that effective character education must stem from the cultural context of students. When the values taught align with their cultural experiences, the internalization process becomes more meaningful. Pencak silat, in this regard, serves as a space for the intersection between values education and cultural identity.

3.2.4 Problems: Between Tradition and Modern Education

Amidst the dominance of modern education systems focused on standards and academic achievement, tradition-based educational practices, such as pencak silat, are often marginalized. Formal education tends to position local cultural practices as supplementary activities, rather than as equal sources of knowledge (Zhao, 2020; Pinar, 2021). This tension reflects fundamental differences in how education is viewed.

Modern education emphasizes instrumental rationality and the measurement of learning outcomes, while pencak silat emphasizes the process of character formation through experience and social relations. The challenge ahead is how to foster dialogue between these two approaches without diminishing the uniqueness of local traditions. Pencak silat offers an alternative, more contextual and humanistic approach to education. By acknowledging its internal pedagogical logic, modern education can enrich itself through the reflective integration of local cultural practices. This discussion emphasizes the importance of creating space for ethnopedagogy in educational development rooted in the social and cultural realities of society.

4. Conclusion

Pencak silat, in the Sundanese context, demonstrates itself not merely as a martial art or a symbolically inherited tradition, but as a cultural practice that carries out a real and ongoing educational function. Through the rhythm of training, social relations, and shared habits, the value of discipline grows as an ethical awareness tied to social responsibility, self-control, and efforts to maintain community harmony. This educational process does not take place through normative teaching, but through direct lived experience, where the teacher is present as a cultural figure and ethical role model who plays a crucial role in the transmission of values. Local Sundanese values frame the entire practice of pencak silat as a way of life, so that discipline is not understood as a form of coercion, but rather as an attitude aligned with politeness and togetherness. In a modern educational landscape that tends to be detached from cultural roots, pencak silat demonstrates that local traditions have strong and relevant pedagogical capacity and are worthy of being read as a source of knowledge and educational ethics that are contextual, humane, and meaningful.

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