

A Character Education Learning Model Grounded in Sundanese Cultural Philosophy: An Analysis of Dedi Mulyadi's Public Leadership

Yatun Romdonah Awaliah^{1,*}, Sutrisna Wibawa², & Rony Kurniawan Pratama³

¹Sundanese Language Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

²Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia

³Applied Communication, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia

*Corresponding email: yatun.romdonah@upi.edu

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Abstract: Character education in Indonesia, despite its codification in the Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter framework and the Profil Pelajar Pancasila project, continues to rely on normative content that remains distant from students' cultural and digital lives, even as digital communication has become a primary site where values are displayed, contested, and absorbed. This study develops a five-stage conceptual framework for character education grounded in Sundanese cultural philosophy, reading the public communication of West Java Governor Dedi Mulyadi as a contemporary site of cultural pedagogy. Dedi Mulyadi is chosen as the focal figure not because his political program is endorsed, but because the tension between authentic cultural performance and strategic image-making that his account exemplifies is precisely where students' ethical formation in the digital age is most actively tested. A qualitative design combining Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis with multimodal reading was applied to a purposive corpus of eighteen Instagram posts from the @dedimulyadi71 account, selected from a shortlist of forty-two posts through pre-specified inclusion criteria and supplemented by verified news reports. Inter-coder agreement was assessed at the level of value-cluster assignment, with an initial Krippendorff's alpha of 0.74, which reached full consensus after structured deliberation. The analysis identifies five recurrent value clusters, namely *handap asor*, *someah hade ka semah*, *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh*, which surface through egalitarian dialogue, the Sundanese *loma* register, affective gestures, and embodied performances that function as symbolic capital. These clusters are operationalized into a cyclical conceptual framework with five stages: exploration, identification, reflection, internalization, and contextual application, with a deliberate critical-reflection stage that guards the framework against uncritical admiration of populist style. **Conclusion:** Sundanese cultural philosophy can be transformed into a contextual, humanistic, and critically aware framework for character education when digital leadership content is treated as pedagogical material for analysis rather than admiration.

Keywords: character education, Sundanese cultural philosophy, critical discourse analysis, ethnopedagogy, digital leadership.

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■ INTRODUCTION

Character education in Indonesia is not lacking in policy. The Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter agenda was codified in Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017, and the Profil Pelajar Pancasila was launched in 2020 as the orienting framework of the Kurikulum Merdeka, with six character dimensions that schools are expected

to cultivate (Pravitasari & Mahfud, 2023; Eko et al., 2024). Implementation, however, has been uneven. Recent studies on the Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5) report that the dimensions are integrated symbolically rather than substantively, with persistent traditional pedagogy, a dominant reliance on summative assessment, and limited teacher capacity (Sakti et al., 2024;

Anggraeni & Purnomo, 2023; Hidayati et al., 2024). The picture is familiar to teachers: a thick official curriculum and a thin lived one.

The urgency argued here is not a test-score argument. Character formation and academic achievement are distinct constructs, and conflating them produces misleading diagnoses. The urgency is specific to character formation in digital environments. The Indonesia Character Survey 2023 indicated that fewer than 40 percent of secondary-school students could provide a contextual example of a Pancasila value they had practiced in the past week, even though those same students spent several hours each day on social media (Pusat Studi Pancasila UGM, 2024; Kemp, 2023). The gap, in other words, is between the official vocabulary of character and the informal spaces where character is actually being modeled, contested, and absorbed.

We start from a different premise. Character is not a list of nouns to be memorized but a way of being in relation to others. This posture is rehearsed in everyday talk, in how one greets a stranger, in how one corrects a child, in how one apologizes after a mistake (Lickona, 1991; Nucci & Narváez, 2008; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). If that is right, then the most fertile ground for character education sits in cultural materials that students already recognize, and any credible model has to take seriously the specific cultural philosophies of the communities in which schools are embedded (Alwasilah, Suryadi, & Karyono, 2009; Hasanah, Gustini, & Rohaniawati, 2016; Yusuf et al., 2024; Sakti et al., 2024).

Sundanese cultural philosophy offers one such reservoir. The triad of *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh* names the duty to sharpen, to love, and to nurture one another (Suryalaga, 2009; Rosidi, 2011), and is reinforced by *handap asor*, the disposition of lowering oneself before others, and *someah hade ka semah*, the duty to be gracious toward guests (Dewi et al., 2025; Awaliah et al., 2024). These are not mere social manners. They are normative orientations that

structure how power, speech, and care are supposed to circulate in Sundanese communal life, and they have already been the subject of careful pedagogical work in primary schools and madrasahs (Hasanah et al., 2016; Asyahidah, Dewi, & Sudarmansyah, 2025; Dewi et al., 2025). We treat them, with Geertz (1973), as cultural systems that give moral life its texture.

The pedagogical question is how such philosophies can be taught in a way that is neither nostalgic, folkloric, nor merely decorative. Indonesian ethnopedagogy has long argued that local knowledge can be reconstructed into curriculum content, classroom strategies, and teacher dispositions (Alwasilah et al., 2009; Ilfiandra & Saripudin, 2023). However, most operationalizations still draw their illustrative material from textbook anthologies or village ethnography. Meanwhile, the empirical ground has shifted. Data Reportal records 167 million active social-media users in Indonesia in 2023, with Instagram alone hosting 89.15 million accounts (Saud & Margono, 2021; Kemp, 2023). Recent studies confirm that young Indonesians acquire significant portions of their civic and ethical sensibility from short-form video and visual feeds rather than from canonical texts (Choi, Cristol, & Gimbert, 2018; Mihailidis, 2018; Ardiansyah, Wibowo, & Rahmawati, 2024; Wahyudi, Wibawa, & Arimbi, 2025). If ethnopedagogy is to remain relevant, it has to be able to read this material.

This is the gap we want to close. Where existing Sundanese ethnopedagogical scholarship has demonstrated that *silih asah*, *silih asih*, *silih asuh* can be integrated thematically into primary-school routines and madrasah cultures (Hasanah et al., 2016; Asyahidah et al., 2025; Dewi et al., 2025), and where Indonesian political-communication research has read Dedi Mulyadi's persona through marketing-communication and political-branding lenses (Atsilah, Utami, & Tripambudi, 2018; Suprpto & Mursidi, 2025), no study to our knowledge has crossed the two

literatures by treating a contemporary public-leadership digital corpus as ethnopedagogical material from which a critically aware character education framework can be derived. The novelty lies in the procedure for translating a digital public-leadership corpus into a teachable five-stage framework that embeds a critical step in its pedagogy.

A legitimate question arises: why choose a politically controversial figure as the anchor for a character education framework? Three reasons make this choice defensible and generative rather than merely convenient. First, the tension between authentic cultural expression and strategic image-making that Dedi Mulyadi's account exemplifies is precisely the kind of ethical ambiguity that students navigate daily in their digital lives. Pretending that character education material can be politically neutral misreads how values actually circulate in the digital public sphere (Moffitt, 2020; Enli & Rosenberg, 2018). Second, controversy is itself a pedagogical resource. Research on critical media literacy consistently shows that contested figures, more than unambiguously positive ones, compel students to interrogate the distinction between performed and internalized value, which is the analytical competence character education should cultivate (Mihailidis, 2018; Choi et al., 2018). Third, Dedi Mulyadi's ongoing governorship has generated a growing corpus of documented public encounters explicitly framed in Sundanese cultural vocabulary, providing empirical density that most hypothetical examples cannot match. The figure is not celebrated here; his public communication is used as a laboratory whose richness and contestedness make analytical work possible.

Our use of the corpus is analytical, not exemplary: we read it as cultural-political discourse to be examined, not as a virtue catalog to be admired (Fairclough, 2010; Mulderrig, 2017). Recent research on populism and mediated authenticity shows that the strategically managed persona is where contemporary

political ethics is publicly contested and therefore where students will encounter ethical claims most densely (Enli & Rosenberg, 2018; Enli, 2025; Luebke & Engelmann, 2022; Wahyudi et al., 2025). Most importantly, the framework proposed here embeds a deliberate critical-reflection stage that prevents it from collapsing into uncritical celebration of any single figure. Without that stage, the concern about using a populist figure would be decisive; with it, the populist persona becomes a productive analytical object rather than a pedagogical idol.

Dedi Mulyadi, the current Governor of West Java and former Regent of Purwakarta, has long built his political identity around explicit Sundanese cultural performance, from his choice to wear the *iket Sunda* in office to his preference for speaking Sundanese in public encounters and his self-description as a *handap asor* leader (Atsilah et al., 2018; Suprpto & Mursidi, 2025; Pikiran Rakyat, 2025). His Instagram account, @dedimulyadi71, archives this performance daily, and his governorship since February 2025 has produced a controversial program of sending students to military barracks for character training, a program questioned by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (Tempo, 16 May 2025; Visi News, 3 May 2025). Reading his digital communication critically, therefore, requires both an ethnopedagogical lens, which is sympathetic to the cultural materials it surfaces, and a critical-discourse lens, which is attentive to the symbolic capital being accumulated and to the political work the performance also performs (Fairclough, 2010; Bourdieu, 1991; Mulderrig, 2017). Three research questions guide the study:

1. What cultural values rooted in Sundanese philosophy can be identified in the public communication of Dedi Mulyadi as recorded in @dedimulyadi71?
2. Through which discursive and multimodal strategies are these values performed and made available for public uptake?

3. How can these values be transformed into a contextual, humanistic, and critically aware character education framework?

In answering these questions this study contributes on three fronts: empirically, by offering a documented inventory of Sundanese cultural values in a public-leadership corpus that has so far been read through political-communication or marketing lenses; conceptually, by articulating a cyclical five-stage framework that links Sundanese ethics to recognizable pedagogical processes; and methodologically, by demonstrating how Critical Discourse Analysis combined with multimodal reading can serve ethnopedagogical research without flattening its political stakes.

■ METHOD

Research Design

This study used a qualitative design with a critical-interpretive orientation. We are interested less in counting features and more in tracing how cultural meaning is constructed, layered, and circulated across visual and verbal channels (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within that orientation, the analytical engine is Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis, which reads any communicative act simultaneously as text, as discursive practice, and as social practice (Fairclough, 1995, 2010). Fairclough alone is not enough for material that is heavily image-based and gestural. We therefore combine his framework with the multimodal critical discourse analysis tradition associated with Machin and Mayr (2012) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), which provides protocols for reading color, framing, posture, and the relations between image and caption. The unit of analysis is the Instagram post, treated as a multimodal artifact comprising a caption, audiovisual content, hashtags, and the news-mediated frame surrounding it.

Search Strategy

The data source was the Instagram account @dedimulyadi71, the personal account of West Java Governor Dedi Mulyadi. Sampling was purposive. We searched the account between 1 March and 15 April 2026, scrolling chronologically through posts dating from 1 May 2025 to 28 February 2026, and archiving each post that satisfied at least one of three preliminary markers: (i) explicit use of Sundanese vocabulary in caption or audio; (ii) the presence of an interpersonal pedagogical encounter such as a school, community, or ecological visit; or (iii) documented uptake by mainstream news media within seven days of posting. This first sweep yielded a shortlist of forty-two candidate posts. From this shortlist, eighteen posts were retained for in-depth analysis after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria. One additional post, dated 21 April 2026 (entry 14, the Bu Atun reflection meeting at SMAN 1 Purwakarta), was included outside the original search window because it represents a direct documented response to the controversial barracks program that falls squarely within the analytical scope of the study; this decision is flagged explicitly in Table 1 and in the supplementary database. Each retained post was triangulated against at least one verified news report from outlets including Tempo, Kompas, Tirto, Radar Bogor, tvOne, Detik, Visi News, Pikiran Rakyat, and Antara, both to verify the date and content and to capture how the broader public sphere reframed it (Atsilah et al., 2018; Suprpto & Mursidi, 2025; Wahyudi et al., 2025).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Table 1 makes the sampling decisions auditable. Each criterion was applied conjointly: a candidate post had to satisfy the linguistic marker (L), the pedagogical encounter (P), and the news-uptake (N) conditions before being considered

for inclusion, and then had to clear the thematic balance and ethical accessibility criteria. Making the criteria operational here, rather than discretionary, is intended to address the risk of cherry-picking in purposive sampling of social media corpora.

Table 1. Operational inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to the 42-post shortlist (final N = 18)

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Time window	Posted between 1 May 2025 (start of governorship) and 28 February 2026 (operational cut-off). Entry 14, dated 21 April 2026, was added with an explicit analytical justification (a documented restorative response to the barracks program).	Posts dated outside the window without documented analytical justification.
Linguistic marker (L)	Explicit Sundanese vocabulary in the caption or in the spoken audio of the accompanying video (<i>loma</i> or <i>halus</i> register).	Indonesian-only posts without any Sundanese marker.
Pedagogical encounter (P)	Visible interpersonal encounter with citizens (school visit, community visit, ecological encounter, public apology) showing at least two human participants in dialogue or in a documented care relation.	Ceremonial speeches, internal government meetings, monological broadcasts, or posts in which the leader appears alone without an interpersonal encounter.
News uptake (N)	Documented coverage in at least one mainstream news outlet (Tempo, Kompas, Tirto, tvOne, Radar Bogor, Visi News, Detik, Antara, Pikiran Rakyat).	Posts that did not generate independent journalistic coverage and therefore cannot be triangulated.
Thematic balance	After applying L+P+N, the corpus was balanced to include all four documented thematic types: school visits, community visits, ecological encounters, public apologies. Up to five posts per thematic type, prioritizing posts with the densest Sundanese marker.	Within an over-represented thematic type, posts with a thinner Sundanese marker were excluded.
Ethical accessibility	Posts showing consenting adults, public officials, or institutional settings.	Posts in which minors' faces were the central image and could not be analytically discussed without re-circulating identifiable images.

Note: the full shortlist of 42 candidate posts, with criteria scored for each candidate and the reasons for the exclusion of the 24 dropped candidates, is provided in open access in the supplementary database accompanying this article.

Data Analysis

The analytical procedure proceeded in three tiers, following Fairclough (2010), with the cultural-philosophical lens functioning as the research instrument.

Textual tier (Fairclough)

At the textual tier, we coded each post for lexical choice, register (Sundanese *loma*, Sundanese *halus*, Indonesian, or code-switch), modality (deontic, epistemic, expressive),

addressee, and illocutionary force. Sundanese markers that served as positive indicators of each value cluster were specified in advance: for *handap asor* we coded explicit self-naming of the value, kinship terms used to elevate the addressee (e.g., *ibu*, *akang*), apology lexicon (*hampura*, *abdi sadar*), and inversion lexicon (*ngalayanan*, not *dilayanan*); for *someah hade ka semah* we coded hosting lexicon (*mangga*, *dilenggahkeun*, *dahar heula*) and kinship reframe (*urang teh dulur*); for the *silih* values we coded mutual-action lexicon (*sami-sami*, *diajar deui*, *urang ngajagaan*). The full operational codebook, with 17 codes across 4 families, is provided in the supplementary database (Sheet 4_Codebook).

Discursive-practice tier (Kress and van Leeuwen)

At the discursive-practice tier we adapted the visual-grammar categories of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and Machin and Mayr (2012) into seven indicators per post: shot type (close-up, medium, wide), camera angle (eye-level, low, high), social distance (intimate, personal, social, public), gaze direction, modality of colour and light, salience of focal subject, and information value (left-right and top-bottom positioning). Each indicator was scored from the highest-resolution video frame available in the post, with cross-references to news-photo reproductions when the original video had been overwritten by platform compression.

Social-practice tier (Fairclough plus political communication)

At the social-practice tier, we read each post against the wider field of Indonesian leadership communication and against existing Sundanese ethnopedagogical scholarship (Alwasilah et al., 2009; Suryalaga, 2009; Hasanah et al., 2016), and against recent literature on populism and mediated authenticity (Enli &

Rosenberg, 2018; Enli, 2025; Luebke & Engelmann, 2022). This tier is where sustained attention was given to the alternative reading that the consistency of the Sundanese performance reflects a deeply internalized cultural philosophy rather than a disciplined personal-branding strategy.

Coding procedure and inter-coder agreement

Coding was conducted in two phases. In the first, inductive phase, each author independently read all eighteen posts and produced an open list of cultural-discursive features without consulting the Sundanese a priori frame. Any feature that surfaced in at least three independent readings was retained. This phase generated a working list of twenty-three features. In the second, framework-anchored phase, the three authors collectively mapped inductively surfaced features onto the Sundanese principles drawn from Suryalaga (2009), Rosidi (2011), Alwasilah et al. (2009), and Hasanah et al. (2016), retaining only features for which the mapping was textually grounded. Six inductive features did not map cleanly onto Sundanese principles and were retained as standalone codes. This two-phase procedure is intended as a safeguard against the confirmation-bias risk that a purely top-down application of the a priori frame would introduce.

To track inter-coder agreement, the three authors independently coded each post for value-cluster assignment using the operational codebook. Agreement was computed on the value-cluster assignment task (five categories, eighteen posts, three coders). The initial three-way agreement was 78.3 percent. Disagreements were of three types: a code assigned by one author but not by the other two, a stronger version of a code being assigned, and a code omitted in favor of a thematically adjacent one. For each disagreement, we returned to the source post and the news triangulation, discussed the textual

evidence, and reached consensus through structured deliberation. Krippendorff's alpha on the pre-discussion coding decisions is $\alpha = 0.74$, which is acceptable for qualitative interpretive coding of this complexity (Krippendorff, 2019; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). The post-discussion consensus was reached through a reconciliation protocol in which each disagreement was isolated. The three coders jointly returned to the source post and the news triangulation to identify the textual basis for resolution, following the deliberation procedure recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) for interpretive coding of culturally specific material. We report the pre-discussion alpha as the independent-reliability estimate; all disagreements and their resolution rationale are recorded in Sheet 5_Coding_Sheet of the supplementary database.

Ethics and limitations of method

Two ethical and methodological caveats deserved brief note here, and were elaborated. First, the corpus belongs to a public official acting in his public capacity on a public platform; consent is therefore limited to the standard scholarly courtesy of using the material for analysis and not amplification, and no private messages, third-party minors' faces, or identifiable

bystanders were re-analyzed beyond what already appears in mainstream news. Second, the Sundanese-literate reading performed here is interpretive; the limits of Fairclough, Kress, and van Leeuwen apply to fragmented social media corpora.

■ RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The corpus assembled from @dedimulyadi71 yields a dense and surprisingly consistent picture. Across the eighteen posts spanning ten months of public-leadership communication, we find the same small family of Sundanese cultural concepts being performed repeatedly, sometimes named explicitly and sometimes folded into gesture and framing.

An Inventory of Sundanese Values in @dedimulyadi71

The eighteen analyzed posts are summarized in Tables 2 through 4, organized by dominant value cluster rather than by chronological order. This restructuring makes the analytical chain easier to read at a glance. The fully integrated inventory with all seven coding columns, including verbatim caption excerpts and news triangulation per post, is provided in open access in Sheet 2_Corpus_Master of the supplementary database.

Table 2. Handap asor cluster: posts in which the leader explicitly or implicitly performs self-lowering (N = 8)

No.	Date	Setting	Sundanese marker/language	Pedagogical implication
1	1 May 2025	Resimen Barracks, Purwakarta	handap asor (reframing stigma as care); Indonesian + Sundanese intonation	Discipline reframed as care; opens space for restorative pedagogy (with critical reading)
7	14 July 2025	Polluted river, Bekasi	handap asor extended to ecology; Sundanese halus to non-human nature	Extends ethical circle beyond humans; ecocritical entry point
8	29 July 2025	Fishing village, Indramayu	handap asor + embodied service; Sundanese loma	Body as text: physical labor next to citizens performs the value

9	11 August 2025	Public stage, Sukabumi landslide	handap asor + public apology; Sundanese halus	Public apology as moral pedagogy: leaders can be wrong
12	22 September 2025	Pesantren, Cianjur	handap asor named explicitly; Sundanese halus	Direct articulation of cultural concept; teacher-ready quote for classroom use
14	21 April 2026	SMAN 1 Purwakarta, reflection with Bu Atun	handap asor + nyarita titi rintih; Sundanese halus	Restorative-justice posture in cultural register; teacher honored, students given path back
15	7 November 2025	Tea plantation, Pangalengan	handap asor + silih asah; Sundanese loma	Inverts expert-novice hierarchy; models knowledge humility
17	5 December 2025	Riverbank settlement, Cirebon	handap asor + bodily presence; Sundanese halus	Service framed in Sundanese ethical idiom; presence in marginal space as ethical claim

Source: authors' analysis of @dedimulyadi71 (May 2025 – February 2026), cross-verified with mainstream news reports listed in the references

Table 3. Someah hade ka semah cluster: posts that enact the guest-host frame (N = 3)

No.	Date	Setting	Sundanese marker/language	Pedagogical implication
3	27 May 2025	Roadside, Subang–Purwakarta route	someah hade ka semah; Sundanese halus to elders	Hospitality reversed: leader treats marginal citizens as guests
13	8 October 2025	Roadside, Tangkuban Parahu	someah hade ka semah + kinship reframe (urang teh dulur); Sundanese halus	Public-service work re-described as kinship, not charity
18	12 February 2026	Pasar Garut	someah hade ka semah; Sundanese halus	Hospitality as administration: governing through the grammar of the guest meal

Source: authors' analysis of @dedimulyadi71 (May 2025 – February 2026), cross-verified with mainstream news reports listed in the references.

Table 4. *Silih asah / silih asih / silih asuh* constellation: posts that operate primarily through mutual sharpening, affection, or nurture (N = 7)

No.	Date	Setting	Sundanese marker/language	Pedagogical implication
2	8 May 2025	Cikole Lembang barracks (gelombang II)	nyarita titi rintih; Sundanese loma	silih asih + silih asah: leader as inquirer, not commander
4	12 June 2025	Bandung town hall with street sweepers	silih asah + egalitarian dialogue; Indonesian–Sundanese code-switch	silih asah + silih asuh: critical inquiry with cultural warmth
5	30 June 2025	Roadside near Tangkuban Parahu, ill vendor	handap asor + silih asih; Sundanese loma	silih asih + silih asuh: relational kinship over charity transaction

6	5 July 2025	Illegal villa demolition, Puncak	silih asah (rule of law as care); Sundanese halus	silih asah + silih asuh: firmness with cultural grammar of fairness
10	26 August 2025	Classroom, SDN Pasundan, Bandung	nyarita titi rintih + eye-level framing; Sundanese loma	silih asah + silih asuh: pedagogical posture; lower yourself before asking
11	9 September 2025	On-camera office response	hormat ka nu luhur; Sundanese halus	silih asuh: restores cultural standing of the teacher
16	20 November 2025	Roadside near Monumen Juang	nyarita titi rintih + low-volume care; Sundanese loma whisper	silih asih: kindness as quiet practice

Source: authors' analysis of @dedimulyadi71 (May 2025 – February 2026), cross-verified with mainstream news reports listed in the references.

Read across the corpus, the inventory is not random. *Handap asor* appears in some form in eleven of the eighteen entries. *Silih asuh* operates in twelve. *Someah hade ka semah* surfaces in three entries that explicitly enact a guest-host frame. The *loma* register is present in fifteen. The clustering is itself a finding: even when the topic varies widely, the cultural grammar remains stable. Whether this stability indicates a deeply internalized cultural philosophy or a disciplined personal-branding strategy is a question treated seriously (Bourdieu, 1991; Enli & Rosenberg, 2018; Atsilah et al., 2018).

A note on terminology is necessary here and applies to all subsequent sections. We refer to the full five-value set, namely *handap asor*, *someah hade ka semah*, *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh*, when describing the complete constellation. We use the phrase “the *silih* values” specifically to refer to the three mutually relational principles (*silih asah*, *silih asih*, *silih asuh*). The term “triad” is not used as shorthand for all five values, as doing so would misrepresent the framework’s architecture.

Handap Asor as Both Ethics and Aesthetics

Handap asor, the Sundanese disposition of self-lowering before others, is the most consistent feature of the corpus and the one that operates most clearly across both verbal and

bodily channels. At the verbal level, it is signaled by register choice: Dedi Mulyadi rarely uses Sundanese *halus* to elevate himself; he uses it to elevate the addressee, especially elders and teachers, while reserving *loma* for affectionate, peer-level talk with citizens at large (entries 3, 6, 14, 15, 17 in Tables 2 and 4). At the bodily level, *handap asor* is performed by physical lowering. He crouches at a polluted riverbank (entry 7). He sits on the pavement next to a sleeping man (entry 16). He is at a student’s eye level in a classroom (entry 10). He drags a fishing boat alongside villagers (entry 8). The body literally goes down.

Read with Bourdieu (1991), this is symbolic capital being accumulated through a counter-intuitive move. In a context where Indonesian political performance is often built on visible elevation, on stages and motorcades, on protocol that physically separates leaders from citizens, the gesture of going low is highly marked. It produces what Castells (2013) has called counter-power in communicative networks, a credibility effect that comes precisely from refusing the standard performance of authority.

Audience reception was tracked across two readable signals: comment volume and tone on the posts during the seven days following each upload, and framing applied by mainstream news outlets that re-circulated the posts. In nine of the

eighteen posts, the dominant comment register was affirmation of authenticity, with recurring phrases including *pemimpin merakyat*, *bapak aing*, *seperti orang biasa*, and *handap asor pisan*. In five posts, comment streams were polarized, with a visible counter-current accusing the leader of *pencitraan* (image-making), particularly under the military-barracks posts (entries 1 and 2). The four remaining posts were dominated by emotive but non-evaluative reactions. Mainstream news outlets reproduced the affirmation frame at a roughly two-to-one ratio relative to the criticism frame, with critical framing concentrated in Tempo and Tirto and affirmation framing concentrated in tvOne, Pikiran Rakyat, and several local outlets (Suprpto & Mursidi, 2025; Wahyudi et al., 2025). What this tells us pedagogically is that the gesture is not received uniformly: students who encounter these posts encounter the *handap asor* gesture alongside a structured controversy over its sincerity, and that controversy is itself part of the curriculum to be analyzed, not noise to be filtered out.

The gesture is not romanticized here. As Mulderrig (2017) reminds us, the discourse of humility can be politically strategic and even disciplinary, since it draws audiences into emotional alignment that bypasses critical evaluation. However, for the pedagogical purpose at hand, what matters is that *handap asor* is being shown rather than merely defined. Students reading these posts encounter the value as a contested posture rather than a slogan, which is closer to how moral learning actually works (Lickona, 1991; Nucci & Narváez, 2008; Sakti et al., 2024).

Someah Hade Ka Semah as a Strategy of Inclusion

The second cluster is the principle of *someah hade ka semah*, often glossed as graciousness toward guests. We coded it explicitly in three entries: the encounters with

elderly bottle collectors (entries 3 and 13) and the market vendor in Garut (entry 18). The interesting move here is that the principle is reversed. Usually *someah* describes a host treating a guest. In the corpus, the leader, who is technically the host of the province, repositions citizens as guests of the state. In entry 13, he tells the elderly couple, “*Mangga sok damel di dieu, urang teh dulur*,” asking them to come work as park attendants while reframing the employer-worker tie as kinship. In entry 18, he sits with a vendor in Garut and her children, sharing a meal, and uses “*Mangga dahar heula*” before any administrative talk.

This reversal does cultural work. As Suryalaga (2009) and Rosidi (2011) note, the principle was originally articulated in domestic contexts where the boundary between host and guest was clear. In the public sphere of digital leadership, however, the boundary becomes performative: whoever positions themselves as the host of an encounter accrues moral authority. By systematically positioning citizens as guests, Dedi Mulyadi reframes the bureaucratic encounter as an ethical one (Dewi et al., 2025; Asyahidah et al., 2025). For character education, this matters because it shows students that hospitality is not just about table manners; it is a structuring principle for civic life. A school that teaches *someah hade ka semah* through this lens can ask students how they would design a class meeting, a community service project, or even a debate, in such a way that participants are treated as guests rather than as objects of administration (Mihailidis, 2018; Ardiansyah et al., 2024).

The Five-Value Constellation in Public Communication

This section draws together all five values of the Sundanese constellation, namely *handap asor*, *someah hade ka semah*, *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh*, to show how they operate not in isolation but as an integrated ethical system

across the corpus. previous section examined the first two values primarily through the posts in which they are most legible as dominant codes. Here we read all five together to trace the structural interdependencies among them and to attend to how a single encounter can activate several values simultaneously. The section also introduces *nyarita titi rintih*, a sixth practicum-level value that emerged inductively from the coding and that functions as the communicative medium through which the five structural values are enacted in spoken and paraverbal interaction; its operational inclusion is flagged in the supplementary codebook (Sheet 4_Codebook).

Handap asor as relational ground. While *handap asor* was treated primarily as a gestural and register phenomenon, its role in the five-value constellation is more foundational: it functions as the enabling posture from which the other four values become possible. In entries 8 and 17, where the leader drags a fishing boat alongside villagers in Indramayu and wades into the marginal riverbank settlement in Cirebon, *handap asor* is not merely a stance; it is a precondition for *silih asuh* to be received as care rather than condescension and for *silih asah* to operate as genuine mutual inquiry rather than hierarchical instruction. Suryalaga (2009) and Rosidi (2011) both note that *handap asor* is relational rather than merely dispositional: it requires a social other to be meaningful, which is why it saturates the corpus so densely. In twelve of the eighteen entries coded, *handap asor* co-occurs with at least one other value from the five-value set, and in no entry does it stand alone. Read as relational ground rather than isolated gesture, it anchors the entire constellation (Bourdieu, 1991; Dewi et al., 2025; Awaliah et al., 2024).

Someah hade ka semah as civic ethics. The principle of graciousness toward guests extends, in the corpus, well beyond the three entries in which it is the dominant code. In entries 4, 9, and 14, the leader enters spaces that belong

to others: a town hall frequented by street sweepers, a disaster-struck community stage, and a school where a teacher has been humiliated by students, and in each case he adopts the posture of someone who has come as a guest rather than as a host. However, at the constellation level, it means that *someah hade ka semah* functions as the ethical grammar governing how *handap asor* enters an already-occupied space. Without *someah*, the lowering gesture of *handap asor* risks becoming a performance of intrusion; with it, the entry is hospitable rather than colonizing. In entry 14, the *someah* register is audible in the way the leader opens the encounter with the teacher Bu Atun using *halus* address forms and a seated position before any apology or policy discussion begins. The value is doing civic and pedagogical work simultaneously, establishing who counts as the host of a moral encounter before anything is asked of anyone (Suryalaga, 2009; Asyahidah et al., 2025; Dewi et al., 2025).

Silih asah as mutual epistemic practice. *Silih asah*, the duty to sharpen one another through knowledge exchange, is distinctive in the corpus as the only value that consistently positions the leader as a learner. In the town-hall encounter with street sweepers (entry 4), he begins the exchange by asking questions about the experience of sweeping in the rain, maintains an egalitarian code-switch between Indonesian and Sundanese loma throughout, and offers his own view only after several sweepers have spoken. In the tea plantation encounter (entry 15), the inversion is even more explicit: he is coded as a novice of plantation ecology, and the experienced pickers instruct him. In the classroom visit at SDN Pasundan Bandung (entry 10), the *nyarita titi rintih* register is deployed most fully: speech is measured, eye-level framing keeps the camera and the leader at student height, and questions are genuinely open-ended rather than pedagogically rhetorical. *Silih asah* as practiced

here corresponds closely to what Freire (1970) called dialogic education and to what Alwasilah et al. (2009) articulate as the ethnopedagogical commitment to knowledge generated communally rather than transmitted from above (Hasanah et al., 2016; Sakti et al., 2024).

Silih asih as affective commitment. *Silih asih*, the duty to love one another, surfaces most consistently in moments when the person encountered is vulnerable, potentially aestheticized or instrumentalized for audience affect, and the critical question is whether the corpus resists or enacts that aestheticization. In entry 5, the roadside encounter with the chronically ill vendor near Tangkuban Parahu, the camera holds on the vendor's face for an unusually long period before cutting to the leader's response, and the response itself is not a speech but a series of quiet arrangements, a visit from medical staff, sustained employment for the vendor's family. In entry 7, the public apology at the polluted riverbank, the *silih asih* dimension is performed through deontic language directed at industrial actors and by the leader's bodily presence at the water's edge rather than at a podium. In entry 16, the encounter with the sleeping man near Monumen Juang in the whispered *loma* register, *silih asih*, is rendered almost entirely through paralinguistic means: a lowered voice, unhurried movement, and the quiet placement of money without waking the man. Each of these instances corresponds to what Fauzia, Maslihah, and Wyandini (2020) identify as the affective-relational dimension of the *silih* values, which is distinct from the epistemic dimension of *silih asah* and the structural dimension of *silih asuh*. For character education, *silih asih* is perhaps the most easily sentimentalized and therefore the most in need of critical scaffolding at Stage 3 (Nucci & Narváez, 2008; Lickona, 1991).

Silih asuh as care and its critical reading. *Silih asuh*, the duty to nurture one another, is the

most structurally prominent value in the corpus: it appears in twelve of the eighteen entries and organizes the framing of every encounter in which someone is positioned as needing guidance, discipline, support, or protection. At its most straightforward, *silih asuh* appears during the pesantren visit (entry 12), where the leader sits among students studying Quranic texts and explicitly frames his role as someone learning alongside them rather than overseeing them. It appears in entry 11, where an on-camera apology restores the cultural standing of a teacher who has been disrespected, and in entries 3 and 13, where elderly citizens in precarious livelihoods are offered sustainable employment framed as kinship obligation rather than charity. In these entries, the nurturing posture is legible, consistent with the value's Sundanese genealogy, and productive for pedagogical use (Dewi et al., 2025; Dewi & Maftuh, 2020).

The controversial entries, however, require a direct critical reading rather than a gentle qualification. The decision to send students to military barracks for character training has been criticized by KPAI and several journalists for its disciplinary logic and the absence of a professional psychological assessment (Tempo, 16 May 2025; Visi News, 3 May 2025; Holopis, 23 April 2026). Filing entries 1 and 2 under *silih asuh* without further comment would let a warm cultural-linguistic frame, the language of *pengasuhan*, naturalize a practice that is otherwise straightforwardly coercive. Our reading is direct: in entries 1 and 2, the *silih asuh* lexicon does not transform the disciplinary practice; it legitimizes it. The reframing of "naughty kids" as "great future kids" through the vocabulary of nurture is precisely the kind of move Mulderrig (2017) identifies in her analysis of emotional governance, in which affective language secures compliance with policies that would otherwise face public resistance. The discursive function of *silih asuh* in those two posts is therefore not

nurture in the sense Suryalaga (2009) and Rosidi (2011) describe, but the legitimization of a disciplinary apparatus through a culturally resonant vocabulary of care. Entry 14, the restorative reflection meeting at SMAN 1 Purwakarta, complicates this reading in a productive direction: it shows the same leader, two months later, using the same *silih asuh* lexicon in a context of genuine restorative practice, listening to the teacher Bu Atun in a seated, eye-level encounter and offering students a path back rather than a punitive sanction. The juxtaposition of entries 1 and 2 with entry 14 is itself a curriculum: it asks students to consider what it takes for a nurturing vocabulary to refer to actual nurture rather than to the management of dissent (Foucault, 1980; Pratama, 2021; Mulderig, 2017; Fairclough, 2010).

Nyarita titi rintih as the communicative thread. Cutting across all five values is the practicum-level value of *nyarita titi rintih*, which can be rendered roughly as speaking carefully, attentively, and with measured sorrow where sorrow is warranted. It is not a structural ethical principle in the way the five values are; it is the characteristic way in which each of those values is realized in speech. It appears in eight of the eighteen entries, always in the *loma* register, and it is most fully developed in entries 2, 10, and 16. In entry 2 (Cikole Lembang barracks), the leader speaks to student participants without the commanding intonation expected in a military setting, using open questions and extended listening turns. In entry 10 (SDN Pasundan Bandung classroom), the measured speech is reinforced by an unhurried camera frame that never cuts away from the child's face. In entry 16 (roadside near Monumen Juang), the whisper register is maintained even though there is no acoustically necessary reason to whisper. As Suryalaga (2009) and Rosidi (2011) observe, *nyarita titi rintih* is the register that signals the speaker takes the interlocutor seriously as a moral

subject rather than as an audience or a problem. In the terms of this study, it is the communicative form that allows *silih asah* to be recognized as genuine inquiry, *silih asih* as genuine care, and *silih asuh* as genuine nurture rather than rhetorical cover. Its absence from the barracks posts (entries 1 and 2) is therefore analytically significant: the vocabulary of *silih asuh* is present, but the register that would authenticate it is not (Alwasilah et al., 2009; Hasanah et al., 2016).

Transformation in Digital Affective Space

Reading the corpus as if Sundanese cultural philosophy were simply being performed in a new medium is too simple. The medium does its own work. Instagram is not a neutral channel; its specific affordances shape what survives and what does not. Three platform affordances do most of the analytical work here. First, short-form video and the fifteen-to-ninety-second Reels format favor content with a clear emotional arc and a single visual anchor. *Handap asor* is well suited to this affordance because crouching, bowing, and the apology gesture translate cleanly into a tight close-up. *Nyarita titi rintih*, the careful and measured speech, requires temporal extension and ambient soundscape, which Reels compresses; it accordingly appears less frequently in the inventory and is largely confined to the longer-form posts. Second, the like metric and the comment-volume signal are read by the platform's recommendation system as engagement, and apologies, embraces, and tears reliably outperform reflective monologue (Saud & Margono, 2021; Wahyudi et al., 2025; Zhang & Zhang, 2025). The platform therefore systematically over-recommends one Sundanese value while under-recommending another, regardless of the leader's intention. Third, the algorithmic suppression of political content that Meta implemented in 2024 means that posts framed as personal encounters rather than political statements circulate more widely, which

structurally rewards the handclap aesthetic over more explicitly civic appeals (Theocharis et al., 2023; Bossetta, 2018). What students encounter when they scroll, in short, is a curated subset of Sundanese ethics, with humility amplified and measured speech dampened. Teachers who fail to name this dynamic will overestimate the medium and miss the values that are quietly being lost in translation.

A further question is whether the consistency documented here reflects a deeply internalized cultural philosophy or the surface effect of a disciplined personal-branding strategy that has learned which Sundanese signs perform best on the platform. The data do not permit a definitive choice between these readings. Three observations make the branding reading credible. First, the corpus is unusually consistent for organic communication, a diagnostic feature of strategic personal branding (Enli & Rosenberg, 2018; Enli, 2025; Suprpto & Mursidi, 2025). Second, several of the most affectively dense posts coincide with politically sensitive news cycles, suggesting some degree of timing optimization. Third, Dedi Mulyadi has a long political biography in which Sundanese identity has served as a public-relations asset since at least his tenure in Purwakarta regency (Atsilah et al., 2018). Three observations push the other way. First, the same Sundanese vocabulary appears in his pre-Instagram speeches and in interviews with journalists who did not select the framing, suggesting deeper linguistic habituation than a branding model alone would predict. Second, the

handap asor gestures in entries 7 and 16 would not perform optimally for engagement metrics, since they involve neither high-affect crowds nor named victims, yet they are present. Third, the language register modulation, in particular the consistent use of *halus* to elders even when the camera is off, is harder to fake than the gestural performance. The conclusion is that the corpus shows both an internalized cultural

habitus and further shaping by platform incentives. For character education, that distinction matters less than it might first appear, because the framework treats this very question, the question of whose tears students are watching and what economy of attention is being served, as one of the questions students learn to ask (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002; Mulderrig, 2017; Choi et al., 2018; Mihailidis, 2018).

A Cyclical Conceptual Framework for Character Education

These strands are synthesized into the conceptual framework presented in Figure 2. We deliberately call it a conceptual framework rather than a fully tested instructional model, consistent with this study's single-case scope, and we return to that distinction. The framework rests on three commitments. First, it is grounded in Sundanese cultural philosophy as articulated by Suryalaga (2009), Rosidi (2011), and the contemporary ethnopedagogical tradition (Alwasilah et al., 2009; Hasanah et al., 2016; Sakti et al., 2024). Second, it draws empirical material from contemporary digital public communication; the procedure is transferable to any well-documented public-leadership corpus, in any region of Indonesia. Third, it builds in a critical step that protects the framework from sliding into uncritical celebration of any one figure, including Dedi Mulyadi.

The framework unfolds in five integrated stages, each carrying both a philosophical principle and a communicative practice. *Exploration* (Stage 1, informed by *silih asah*) is the entry point. Students collect multimodal texts from public leadership communication and read them at a peer level rather than as objects of either admiration or contempt. *Identification* (Stage 2, informed by *handap asor*) asks students to map the cultural values they locate in the corpus using a simplified version of the matrix in this study. The point is not to produce final

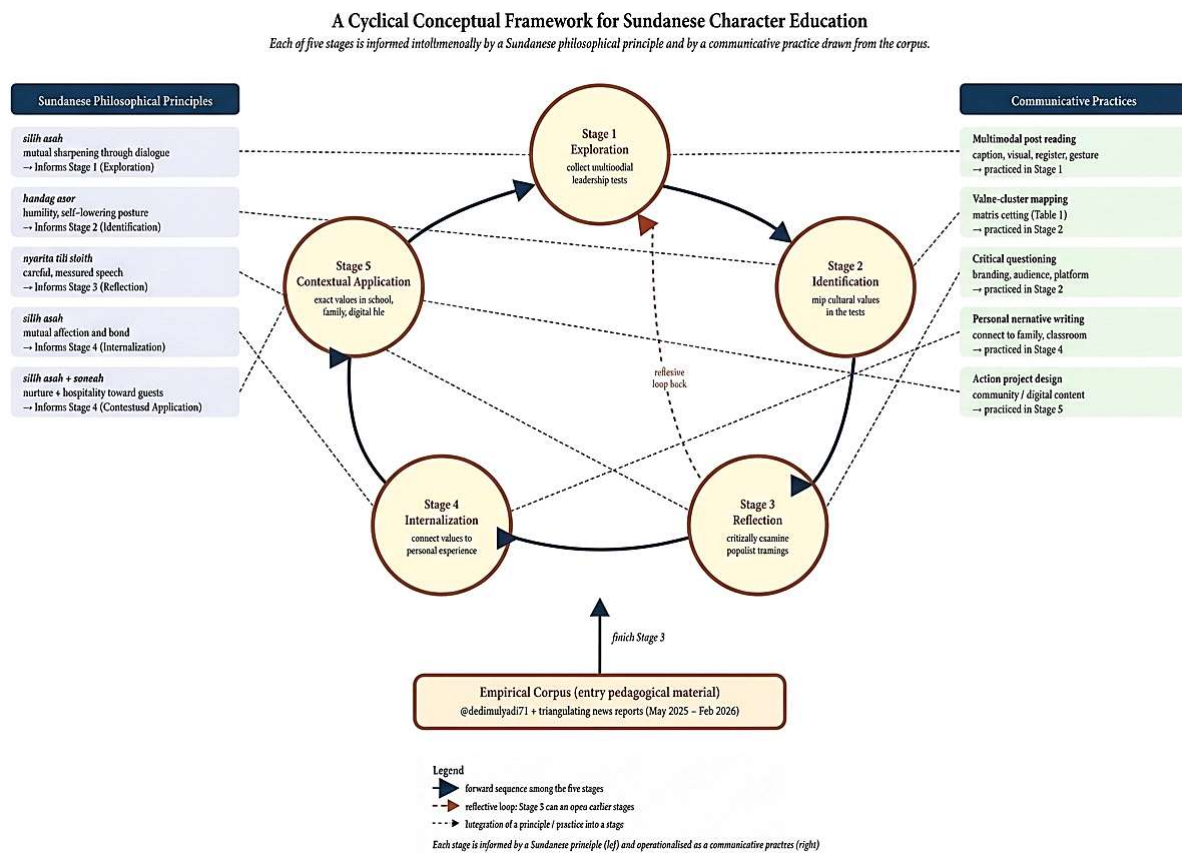


Figure 1. A cyclical conceptual framework for Sundanese character education, derived from a critical discourse analysis of @dedimulyadi71. each of the five stages is informed by one sundanese philosophical principle (left column) and operationalized as one communicative practice (right column). the framework is cyclical, with stage 3 (reflection) explicitly capable of re-opening earlier stages

coding but to lower oneself to the level of the data, to notice that values are not abstractions but have words, gestures, and visual frames. *Reflection* (Stage 3, informed by *Nyarita Titi Rintih*) is deliberately critical. *Internalization* (Stage 4, informed by *silih asih*) moves the analysis toward the student's own world. *Contextual application* (Stage 5, informed by *silih asuh* and *someah*) asks students to design an action in which the cultural value is enacted rather than only described.

The pedagogical novelty of this framework sits at two specific levels rather than at the level of the overall sequence. The first is integrative architecture: in conventional inquiry-based learning, cultural content is typically loaded into

the first stage and then progressively shed as the inquiry becomes more general. Here, by contrast, each of the five stages is paired with one specific Sundanese principle that disciplines the activity at that stage. The framework therefore does not begin with culture and end with abstraction; it remains culturally accountable throughout. The second locus of novelty is the deliberate critical-reflection stage placed at the center of the cycle rather than at the periphery. Most constructivist models treat reflection as a final consolidation step. We position it as Stage 3, before internalization, with an explicit license to reopen earlier stages. This positioning matters because the framework is meant to work on affectively dense material that is partly designed to bypass critical evaluation;

placing reflection only at the end would let the affective material do most of its work before students are equipped to read it (Fairclough, 2010; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Mihailidis, 2018).

Because Stage 3 carries this analytical weight, we want to make it concrete rather than nominal. Six facilitating questions are proposed for teachers to use to operationalize the reflection stage during a 60 to 75-minute classroom session. The questions are designed to deconstruct populist framings without requiring students to first agree on a political position. First: which Sundanese value does the post claim to enact, and is the value named explicitly or only implied through gesture and register? Second: who is shown in the post, who speaks, and who is silent, and how does the camera position the leader relative to those silent participants? Third: which audiences benefit from the post, and which audiences pay the cost of the policy or program it documents? Fourth: how does the platform reward this particular Sundanese value, and which other Sundanese values are absent because the platform does not reward them? Fifth: if the same encounter happened without a camera, would the speech, the gesture, and the policy decision look the same? Sixth: which mainstream-news outlets reframed this post, with what evaluative slant, and what does the spread of framings tell us about how the public is reading the post? These six questions are not exhaustive, but they translate the abstract phrase “critical reflection” into a workable classroom routine (Fairclough, 2010; Mihailidis, 2018; Choi et al., 2018).

Regarding the media literacy demands these questions place on students: questions four and six assume a degree of familiarity with platform mechanics and news framing that cannot be taken for granted in Indonesian high school classrooms. The framework therefore recommends a scaffolded entry sequence. In Stage 1, students work with ecological and dialogue-format posts (entries 4, 10, 15) before encountering apology-

format posts (entries 7, 9, 14), because the cognitive register of the former leaves room for analytical work that the affective register of the latter does not. For Stage 3, a minimum of one preparatory session specifically on platform affordances is recommended, using simplified materials adapted from Mihailidis (2018) and Bossetta (2018), before the six reflection questions are deployed. This preparatory session is designed to be teachable without prior media literacy training, though a teacher with that background will deliver it more effectively.

Student progress through the framework can be tracked through three concentric indicators of growth rather than a single mastery threshold, because character formation is not binary. At the level of awareness (Stage 2), the criterion is whether the student can map a Sundanese value onto specific verbal and visual evidence in the corpus rather than offering a vague impression. At the level of critical reading (Stage 3), the criterion is whether the student can identify at least one plausible counter-reading of the post, that is, can name what is not shown or what policy costs the post obscures. At the level of contextual application (Stage 5), the criterion is whether the student can propose a personally situated action that enacts the value in a context other than the one analyzed, which represents transfer from the analytical to the performative. These three indicators can be assessed through a structured portfolio spanning the five stages, which also serves as a record of the student’s iterative rereading of the same corpus as the cycle progresses (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Nucci & Narváez, 2008).

Implications and Limitations

Three implications follow from the analysis. First, character education in Indonesia stands to gain by treating contemporary digital leadership communication as a primary curricular resource rather than a peripheral example. Public posts

are easier for students to relate to than excerpts of classical texts, and they make the abstract concept of “value” tangible (Choi et al., 2018; Mihailidis, 2018; Wahyudi et al., 2025). Second, the ethnopedagogical tradition that has long argued for cultural rooting in Indonesian education (Alwasilah et al., 2009; Hasanah et al., 2016; Sakti et al., 2024; Dewi et al., 2025) finds, in this case, a concrete demonstration that local cultural philosophies can travel into digital genres without being diluted, provided that teachers do the analytical work of naming what is being performed. Third, the critical step built into Stage 3 of the framework is not optional. Without it, character education risks becoming the pedagogical wing of populist communication, since, as Bourdieu (1991), Mulderrig (2017), and Enli (2025) have shown, populist leaders are particularly skilled at accumulating symbolic capital through performances of humility.

The framework is grounded in Sundanese cultural philosophy and has been derived from a corpus of Sundanese-language public communication. A school in Central Java, East Kalimantan, or Nusa Tenggara would need to substitute culturally equivalent philosophical concepts from its own tradition. The Javanese values of *tepo seliro* and *andhap asor* carry structural parallels to *handap asor* and *silih asuh*, and the Buginese concept of *sipakatau* shares the relational architecture of the *silih* values (Ilfiandra & Saripudin, 2023). The methodological procedure, namely selecting a local public-leadership corpus, applying CDA with multimodal reading, identifying recurrent value clusters, and mapping them onto the five-stage cycle, is region-agnostic. For schools in West Java with ethnically diverse student populations, teachers can use the analytical distance that the framework builds in to frame Sundanese values as one cultural tradition among others, inviting students from different ethnic backgrounds to contribute parallel values from

their own heritage, which the contextual application stage can then accommodate.

A related consideration is the teacher capacity required to implement the framework. Effective delivery involves, at minimum, familiarity with Critical Discourse Analysis as a reading practice, enough multimodal literacy to decode Instagram’s visual grammar, a working knowledge of Sundanese cultural philosophy or the relevant local equivalent, and comfort with politically sensitive material. What is proposed here is therefore not an assumption that these competencies already exist, but a brief professional development pathway. A two-day workshop, structured around the six reflection questions as worked examples, with coaching from a Sundanese-language educator or a communication faculty member, would be sufficient to introduce the framework to a school-level team. Modules for such a workshop could be derived directly from the analytical sections of this article and from the supplementary codebook (Ilfiandra & Saripudin, 2023; Alwasilah et al., 2009).

Five limitations deserve frank acknowledgment. First, our corpus is one account, one figure, and one ten-month window. We cannot generalize to Sundanese public communication as a whole, much less to leadership communication in Indonesia. The framework is better described as a conceptual framework derived from a single well-documented case rather than as a fully validated learning model with documented classroom outcomes. Replication on other Sundanese figures, especially non-political ones, and on leaders rooted in other Indonesian cultural traditions, is required before stronger claims can be made. Second, the analysis is interpretive and depends on a Sundanese-literate reading. The first author is a native Sundanese speaker with formal training in Sundanese-language education, which strengthens the cultural-linguistic coding but introduces an insider-

perspective limitation that researchers without access to the Sundanese language would not share. Third, Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA was developed primarily for relatively stable text-based discourses and does not natively account for the fragmented, algorithmically curated, and rapidly editable nature of platform content; key signals such as comment-section reception, hashtag co-circulation, and platform-recommendation pathways sit outside the model's textual tier and require supplementary methods (Wahyudi et al., 2025; Zhang & Zhang, 2025). Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodal grammar, similarly, was developed primarily on print and broadcast images and translates imperfectly to short-form vertical video (Bossetta, 2018; Theocharis et al., 2023). Fourth, the framework has not yet been tested in a classroom. The next step is a design-based implementation in a small number of high schools, with iterative refinement based on teacher and student feedback (Mihailidis, 2018; Choi et al., 2018; Ardiansyah et al., 2024). Fifth, the adaptability of the framework to non-Sundanese cultural contexts remains to be demonstrated empirically; the procedure is transferable, but the specific value vocabulary will need to be replaced with culturally grounded equivalents in each new context.

■ CONCLUSION

This study began from a discomfort that many teachers in Indonesia share: character education programs deliver values to students in a register that has very little to do with how those students actually live. We tried to take that discomfort seriously by reading a familiar piece of contemporary Indonesian public communication, the Instagram account of West Java Governor Dedi Mulyadi, as if it were a curriculum. The corpus turned out to be remarkably consistent. Eighteen carefully selected posts across ten months yielded the same small family of Sundanese cultural concepts, performed

in slightly different settings: *handap asor* in the choice to crouch and to apologize, *someah hade ka semah* in the reframing of citizens as guests of the state, and the *silih* values in the way the leader sharpens, loves, and nurtures the people he encounters. We are not the first to identify these principles in the Sundanese ethnopedagogical literature, but this study offers a procedure for translating them into a teachable conceptual framework, drawing its empirical material from a contemporary digital public-leadership corpus.

The result is a cyclical five-stage framework: exploration, identification, reflection, internalization, and contextual application, in which each stage is paired with a specific Sundanese principle and a specific communicative practice, and in which a deliberate critical-reflection stage protects the framework from sliding into populist celebration. This particular figure was chosen precisely because the tension between authentic cultural expression and strategic image-making that his corpus embodies is not an obstacle to good pedagogy but the very material good pedagogy needs. Students who learn to read Dedi Mulyadi's Instagram account with both cultural appreciation and analytical clarity are practicing the cognitive and moral skill that the digital age demands.

Three qualifications close this article. First, the framework is grounded in a single cultural tradition and a single corpus, and parallel work on Javanese, Buginese, Acehnese, and Papuan materials is a necessary next step. Second, the framework remains conceptual rather than classroom-validated; design-based implementation is the immediate research priority. Third, the reflection stage protects the rest of the framework from collapsing into admiration and must be treated as non-negotiable. Character education that uses digital public leadership content to cultivate cultural values is genuinely promising, but only if it also equips students with the analytical tools to read that content critically.

That combination, the cultural and the critical, is what character education in Indonesia has been quietly waiting for.

■ DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI USAGE IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the writing of this manuscript, the authors used AI-assisted tools (Grammarly) to refine language and proofread. The authors have reviewed and edited the content generated by these tools and assume full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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