# The Existence of The Mystique of The Protected Forest as A Form of Student Character Education Value
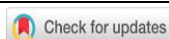
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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The purpose of this study is to explore the protected forest mystique in Wonosalam, Jombang Regency, as a form of character education for students. The protected forest's myths promote personality development by incorporating moral principles, such as, patience, honesty, and sincerity into character education. The novelty of the research highlights local myths and traditions that are rich in spiritual, material, and moral qualities, which in turn help students develop their character and preserve their culture in the face of globalization. **Method:** Employed in this research is a qualitative approach, bolstered by data collection techniques such as interviews with the village head, recordings of stories, documentation of the surrounding environment and observation of Wonosalam village. The data analysis technique used is descriptive. The research focuses on the myth of the Wonosalam protected forest. R**esults:** Analysis based on Niels Mulder's mystical theory and Imam Ghazali's character education concept show that the protected forest mystique has interrelated material, spiritual, and moral dimensions. These mystical stories contain moral values such as honesty, patience, and sincerity that are crucial for students' character education. By understanding these mystics, students can develop a balanced character and appreciate traditional values and local spirituality. **Novelty:** this research lies in the approach that integrates mysticism with Islamic value-based character education. The technique that combines Islamic value-based character education with mysticism is what makes this research novel.

## INTRODUCTION

Mysticism is intricately linked to secrecy. People often view mystical practice as a private matter, as it involves their personal beliefs and spirituality (Hermansya & Subandiyah, 2021). Mystical practice is a personal pursuit, a unique journey to reconnect with one's roots, aimed at revealing the mysteries of existence or liberating oneself from earthly attachments (Niels, 2013). Consequently, it is considered discourteous to explore mysticism extensively, as it relates to personal convictions that necessitate thoughtful articulation.

Mystical existence, according to Mulder, symbolizes the unity of existence at its center, which includes everything in *Sang Hyang* (the Single One), *Hyang Sukma* (the Supreme Soul), and *Urip* (Life), from which existence originates and returns (Nova, 2024). Although the order in which life in this world is an expression or shadow of a higher truth, this unity of existence is unknown. The idea of unity and interpenetration is reflected in the concept of "God". Mystics believe that the essence of "God" is inherent in creation, existing within everything. The goal of existential mysticism is to clarify the genesis of mystical practice and the ongoing practice of mysticism.

Folklore, including myths, is essential component of cultural wealth that plays an important role in preserving the identity and traditional values of a nation (Kholifatu, 2022). Myths are not only a narrative, but also serve as a vehicle for transmitting moral values, norms, and knowledge from one generation to the next (Raharjo, 2022). Given the effects of shifting

perceptions and enjoyment of myths, the sustainability of myths as cultural heritage in the age of globalisation is a pressing matter. Thus, a deeper understanding of the function of myths in society is key to preserving local wisdom amidst rapidly growing external influences (Raharjo, 2023).

Additionally, myths serve as the foundation for folklore, which is essential to capturing the diversity of people's lives. People honour history and cultural customs through myths, giving them an epic quality with magical components (Sudarma, 2018). In addition to providing amusement, myths serve as stewards of cultural legacy, expressing shared values and beliefs that unite generations (Wijaya, 2019). In the face of globalisation and changing circumstances, a thorough grasp of mythology not only unlocks cultural riches but also serves as the foundation for conserving the core of communal life (Utami, 2020). Mysticism highlights the complexity of these beliefs and considers them an unreasonable view (Nova, 2024). The dimension of belief in mysticism is considered a teaching full of mystical elements, including secrets, darkness, and concealment. This statement indicates that mysticism is not just a belief, but also a teaching that is closely related to deep mystical elements. Motive for mysticism stems from an individual's desire to believe in mysticism and their level of religiosity, a view that is enriched by Mulder who emphasized that the motive for mysticism is related to the drive to achieve belief and religiosity through certain actions (Pratiwi, 2019).

Folklore has a tremendous impact on children's character development by transmitting moral ideals, and via storytelling, children interact with storylines that foster characteristics such as empathy, respect, and responsibility (Rohmat, 2024). These stories are an effective tool for character development in early childhood, teaching moral lessons and fostering character qualities (Tabroni et al., 2022). Folklore, particularly among students, has the capacity to develop character in addition to entertainment. A comprehensive grasp of the impact of folklore on the development of student character is essential. Conversely, the significance of character education in folklore is paramount in cultivating an individual's values, ethics, and worldview (Anggraeni, 2022). This paper attempts to investigate the values of character education in mythological stories to better understand their impact on societal moral and ethical growth.

The investigation of the presence of mysticism in the myth of the protected forest in Wonosalam aims to provide an understanding of the development of character education, especially among students (Puspitasari et al., 2023). The research centres on comprehending mysticism and its impact on character development, particularly regarding students' morality, ethics, and spirituality (Wulandari, 2020). This study aims to investigate the potential of character education within myths, offer pertinent insights for students' lives, and aid in the preservation of cultural heritage through a character education framework (Rahmawati, 2023). This research provides a comprehensive analysis of mysticism in myths, emphasising the importance of uncovering the mystical dimension to enhance students' character development. This research reveals the mystical aspects of myths and emphasises the importance of this understanding in fostering character development as a crucial component of personal growth in adulthood (Halfian, 2019).

An integrative problem-solving approach that combines Niels Mulder's mystical theory with Imam Ghozali's concept of character education provides a solid framework for addressing challenges in students' character development (Dimas et al., 2021). Niels Mulder's exploration of mysticism provides valuable insights into the spiritual dimension and individual experiences related to belief in the supernatural within the context of folklore analysis. This analysis can serve as a tool for character education in the lives of individuals, particularly students (Junaini, 2017). Through Imam Ghozali's concept of character education, the analysis of mystical existence can be articulated into values that underlie positive character. For example, sincerity, patience, honesty, trustworthiness, and justice. The implementation of these values in students' daily lives can form a good and strong character (Mustamin et al., 2023). By developing character education strategies based on the results of the analysis of mystical existence, students can undergo their unstable period with local wisdom enriched with religious values (Nafi'ah, 2023).

Mysticism and character education, if well integrated, become a solid foundation to form a generation of students who have a balanced character, both in terms of spirituality and morals (Anto, 2024). This can help them overcome the challenges of modern life by understanding traditional values and spirituality. Thus, this approach is not just about analyzing myths, but also making a positive contribution in shaping the character of students who are resilient and have integrity (Santosa, 2023). The problem in today's modern era pertains to the insufficient learning character improvement models. Widiatmaka's (2023) research indicates that character education can be built through social society. This study demonstrates that folklore from the community can effectively contribute to character education. The process of character change affects behavior in learning and the environment, fearful character can be built if every time we scare someone continuously with things they are afraid of, while people who are afraid if we give scary things with good packaging with good form habits will change the pattern of fear (Rochim, 2024). According to Rahmawaty (2023), the community is the best place to shape the character of a good society. The study discusses the street children care community that applies Bugis values.

Based on several opinions about character education, this research has a novelty, namely shaping character education through mythical stories that develop in society. The mythical thing taken by the researcher is an example of the character that must be built by the community, namely eliminating fear of something in order to be strong in facing challenges in the 5.0 era. The results of the discussion of relevant research and the phenomena in this study formed the focus of the problem of how the material existence of mythical myths of Wonosalam protected forest in the implementation of character education, how the spiritual existence of mythical myths of Wonosalam protected forest in the implementation of character education, the moral existence of mythical myths of Wonosalam protected forest in the implementation of character education.

**RESEARCH METHOD**
In this research, the author uses a qualitative approach to present the results of the analysis of the existence of mysticism in the Myth of the Salvation Forest that emerged and developed in Wonosalam District, Jombang Regency as a form of Student Character Education value. A qualitative approach is a form of research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and behaviors that can be observed. According to Moleong (2018), research on literary works generally involves authors, social environment, and cultural elements. Skinative research is a research process to understand a tradition of research with a typical method, which examines a human or community problem.

The use of a qualitative approach in this study is based on several considerations that (1) the data source of this research is oral literature in the form of folklore, namely myths that exist and develop in the Wonosalam District area, Jombang Regency, (2) the data in this study are in the form of mysticism in the folklore of the protected forest myth in Wonosalam District, Jombang Regency, (3) the researcher is the key instrument in analyzing the data in the folklore of the protected Forest myth in Wonosalam District, Jombang Regency. (3) the researcher is the key instrument that analyzes and examines the data in the mythical story of the protected forest in Wonosalam District, Jombang Regency. (3) this research is the result of interpretation conducted through the study of sociology, anthropology, and literary ecology which focuses on the existence of mysticism in myths as a form of student character education values and in the form of descriptive data that has been collected previously, (4) this research uses a study with a theory that functions as a tool of interpretation of the object of research with the aim of obtaining the meaning contained therein, (5) this research is a data analysis of the existence of mysticism in mythical stories in Wonosalam District, Jombang Regency which focuses on the form of character education that can be examined using the concept of character education according to Imam Ghazali as a form of student character education values.

The data source in this research is folklore found in Wonosalam Subdistrict, Jombang Regency, which focuses on Myths related to the origins of Wonosalam which are believed to originate from and mean the Salvation Forest. The data source is processed through a transliteration and transcription process so that it becomes written data, with the aim of facilitating the process of

data classification and analysis. Data collection techniques in this study used literature study techniques and notes, namely recording when conducting interviews, and making written notes from the recording results. The research model in this study uses content analysis. To test the validity of the data in this study using the adequacy of referential materials with evidence of recordings and the results of transcription and transliteration of recordings. Data analysis techniques in this study include (1) transcription of recording data, (2) transliteration of recording data, (3) data classification, (4) structure analysis and interpretation, and (5) data testing. Data testing is done by checking and validating the data results to the data source repeatedly so that the data obtained can be accounted for. The research procedure can be seen in the Figure 1.
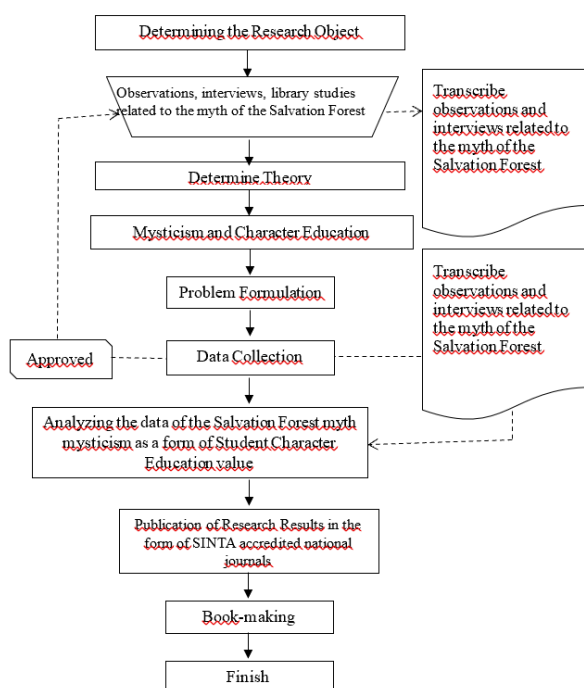


**Figure 1.** Research flowchart.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
### *Results*

Mysticism is about rituals and spiritual experiences, but it also has a dimension of existence that is connected to human material, spiritual, and moral realities. In mysticism, certain objects, such as ancestral tombs, heirlooms, or sacred places, are believed to have magical powers. These objects are often used in rituals and practices of mysticism to achieve certain goals, such as healing, protection, or spiritual attainment. Mysticism also has a close relationship with sacred places, such as mountains, caves or springs. These places are believed to have high spiritual energy and can assist individuals in achieving spiritual enlightenment.

Mysticism focuses on exploring the inner self, the spiritual dimension hidden behind the ego and worldly passions. This dimension is believed to be the source of wisdom and spiritual enlightenment (Suwandana, 2023). The ultimate goal of mysticism is to achieve oneness with God, or transcendent reality. This union is a spiritual experience that cannot be described in words, and leads the individual to true happiness and peace. Mysticism has a mystical code of conduct that its followers must abide by. This code emphasizes moral values such as honesty, sincerity, compassion and devotion to God. The traditions of mysticism, such as rituals and spiritual practices, often contain moral elements that are important to teach and safeguard. These traditions assist individuals in developing a noble and moral character.

Mystical existence is not just about spiritual experiences, but also has important material and moral dimensions. These dimensions are interrelated and cannot be separated from each other. Understanding the existence of mysticism as a whole can help us to understand the meaning and purpose of the practice of mysticism in human life.

**The material existence of the mythical material existence of the Wonosalam protected forest myth in the implementation of character education**

Material existence in mysticism refers to the existence of physical objects that are believed to possess magical or spiritual powers. These objects are often used in rituals and practices of mysticism to achieve certain goals, such as healing, protection, or spiritual attainment. Magical objects, such as amulets, heirlooms, or sacred objects, are believed to possess magical powers that can assist individuals in achieving their goals. These objects are often passed down through generations and are considered heirlooms that have high spiritual value. Sacred places, such as mountains, caves or springs, are believed to have high spiritual energy and can assist individuals in achieving spiritual enlightenment. These places often become pilgrimage or meditation destinations for followers of mystical traditions. Symbolism plays an important role in mysticism. Symbols, such as numbers, pictures or colors, are often used to represent abstract spiritual concepts. These symbols can assist individuals in understanding and experiencing spiritual reality (Anjani, 2020).

The existence of matter in mysticism is not based on scientific evidence Belief in the magical powers of supernatural objects and holy places is a matter of faith for followers of mysticism. However, the presence of matter in mysticism has important symbolic and spiritual significance. Magical objects and sacred places can serve as reminders to individuals of spiritual forces that exist beyond the material world. Symbols can assist individuals in understanding and experiencing spiritual reality in a more profound way (Saputra, 2019). Occult objects and sacred places can be used as aids in rituals and mystical practices to achieve certain goals. Occult objects, sacred places and symbols can assist individuals in understanding and experiencing spiritual reality in a more profound way. Occult objects and shrines can serve as a reminder to the individual of the spiritual forces that exist beyond the material world. Understanding the presence of matter in mysticism can help us to appreciate the diversity of spiritual traditions and beliefs that exist in the world, understand the meaning and purpose of the practice of mysticism in human life, develop respect for the beliefs of others, even if they are different from our own.

Material existence in mysticism refers to physical objects that are considered to have magical or spiritual powers, and this is reflected in the stories and beliefs of the Wonosalam community and its surroundings. These objects, such as sacred tombs, plants believed to be sticks, or other symbols, are used in various spiritual practices and have deep meanings for the local community (Ichsan, 2020). The following is an analysis of material existence in several myths that developed in Wonosalam.

The tomb of Mbah Wali Wono Segara is not only the final resting place of Mbah Wali Wono Segara, but also an important spiritual site. Next to the tomb are two trees that are believed to be the staff and binding of Mbah Wali Wono Segara's white horse, the Nogosari tree and the Jirek tree.

> "*On the left side of the tomb there is wit Nogosari, which is believed by the community to be the stick of Wali Wono Segara and on the right side of the tomb there is wit Jirek, which is the stick used to hold Wali Wono Segara's chariot.*"

These objects serve as reminders of the existence and spiritual power of Mbah Wali Wono Segara, providing strong symbolism for visitors.

Mount Kuncung is also believed to have once been tall and sharp before becoming flat due to the legend of Semar and Raden Warkudara. The Semar statue in front of the tomb is also a reminder of the legend.

> "*In this incident, Seno, also called Raden Warkudara, kicked Semar while he was meditating, and the kuncung worn by Semar fell right on top of Mount Kuncung.*"

Mount Kuncung is a symbol of change and spiritual power that can transform nature, as well as an important geographical marker for the Wonosalam community. The jatropha plant was used as a sacrifice to open residential land in Jarak Village, and is still considered to have magical

powers. Prince Jimat was ordered (*wangsit*) to plant jatropha as a condition (*tumbal*) to open residential land in this village. Jatropha has a symbolic meaning as a protector and healer in the community's beliefs, reflecting the belief that natural objects have spiritual powers.

Kali Judeg and the large Wungu plant, believed to be Prince Benowo's stick, are part of a mystical story that is important to the community. *Tongkat* (*teken*) Prince Benowo is also still there, in the form of a huge Wungu plant." This plant is a silent witness to the history and struggle of Prince Benowo, and physical evidence of the spiritual story that has been passed down from generation to generation.

Material existence in mysticism in Wonosalam and its surroundings includes various objects and places that are considered to have spiritual or magical powers. These objects not only serve as aids in rituals, but also as symbols that assist individuals in understanding and experiencing spiritual reality more deeply. Appreciating and understanding the existence of these materials is important to appreciate the diversity of spiritual traditions and beliefs that exist in the world, as reflected in interviews with local residents.

### The existence of spiritual mythicism of Wonosalam protected forest myth in the implementation of character education

Spiritual existence is the essence of mysticism, which focuses on exploring the inner nature of man and achieving oneness with transcendent reality. This spiritual dimension reaches beyond physical and material boundaries, leading individuals to true wisdom and spiritual enlightenment. Mysticism believes that beyond the ego and worldly passions lies the pure and spiritual core of the human self. This core self, often referred to as the soul, spirit, or atman, is the true essence of man that is connected to God and the universe. The ultimate goal of mysticism is to discover this inner nature through the process of spiritual enlightenment. This self-discovery leads individuals to a deeper understanding of themselves, God, and the meaning of life (Sulistyorini, 2021).

Mysticism aims to achieve union with a transcendent reality, often referred to as God, Allah, Brahman, or Nirvana. This transcendent reality transcends the boundaries of space and time, and is the source of all existence. Oneness with the transcendent reality brings the individual to an experience of infinite existence, where ego and individuality vanish, and the individual merges with the entire universe. This experience is often described as indescribable bliss and true peace. Achieving union with transcendent reality is the pinnacle of spiritual enlightenment. It brings the individual freedom from suffering true wisdom, and cosmic consciousness. Spiritual enlightenment transforms the individual from an egocentric being to one who is loving, wise and in harmony with the universe. Individuals who attain this enlightenment become role models for others and help spread goodness and peace in the world (Choli, 2020).

The spiritual existence of mysticism is a unique and personal experience for each individual. There is no definitive path to spiritual enlightenment, and each individual must find his or her own path. However, some basic principles that can help on the spiritual journey are, Faith having a strong belief in God and transcendent reality is the fundamental foundation in mysticism. Devotion that practices religious and moral teachings with utmost obedience and sincerity. Devotion that devotes oneself to God and serves others sincerely. Self-purification that purifies oneself of worldly passions and ego through spiritual practice and self-discipline. Meditation that practices meditation and contemplation to calm the mind and open up to spiritual realities. The spiritual existence of mysticism offers a path to true happiness and peace. For those who dare to embrace it, mysticism can be a source of great enlightenment, wisdom and spiritual transformation.

The existence of the Salvation Forest myth in Wonosalam and its surroundings is closely related to the community's belief in the spiritual and mystical powers hidden behind ancestral stories. Mr. Tasrip, the caretaker of Gunung Kuncung, tells the story of Mbah Wali Wono Segara, a spiritual figure who is believed to have opened the land of Wonosalam. According to his narrative:

> *"Mbah Wali Wono Segara came from Majapahit. No one knows his real name. The name Mbah Wali Wono Segara is a nickname from the words 'wali' which means rope, 'wono' which means forest, and 'segara' which means ocean. Whoever climbs Mount Kuncung if his mind is cloudy, will definitely become bright. Dados, whoever comes, from wherever they are and for whatever reason, when they arrive in Wonosalam, their problems will disappear."*

From this quote, it can be seen that mystical spiritual existence in the Wonosalam tradition focuses on purity and self-purification through interaction with sacred places such as Gunung Kuncung. This spiritual experience is expected to bring enlightenment and a deep understanding of oneself and the relationship with the universe.

The legend of Gunung Kuncung tells the story of a mystical event involving Semar and Raden Warkudara:

> *"The Wonosalam community continues to preserve the traditions and stories that have been passed down from generation to generation, so that Gunung Kuncung and Wonosalam become one of the places that has high historical and cultural value. Understanding Gunung Kuncung is not just a legend, but also reminds us of how people preserve the history and culture inherited from their ancestors."*

These stories reflect people's belief in the spiritual power of legends that are passed down orally. Mysticism here plays a role in maintaining the identity and continuity of the community's spiritual values. Mbah Sari Merto recounts the origins of Galengdowo Village which also has mystical and spiritual aspects:

> *"I heard stories from my elders, that the community then deliberated and decided to build a platform in this place and continue living here. During the process of clearing the land to make the platform, people found a very deep rice field."*

In the story, spirituality is reflected in the belief that ancestral actions, such as clearing land with mystical powers, shape the village's identity and history. Devotion to the land and ancestors is central to the spiritual life of the Galengdowo people.

> *"People believe that castor plants have magical powers. If someone is dying and does not pass away, by placing a castor plant under the bed, the death process will be easier."*

These beliefs show how people attribute the presence of certain plants to spiritual forces that affect life and death. These myths strengthen the spiritual bond between people, nature and ancestors.

> *"When Prince Benowo was meditating, he saw a river that was blocked (judge or stagnate) by a big stone. Prince Benowo was confused by the state of the river, and finally he hit the stone with a stick (teken) until the stone was perforated."*

This story reflects how people see spiritual actions, such as meditation, as a means to overcome physical obstacles and find solutions through mystical forces. Spiritual existence here includes supernatural intervention that affects nature. Spiritual existence in the mysticism of Wonosalam and its surroundings includes belief in supernatural forces that affect daily life, self-purification through interaction with sacred places, and respect for ancestors and stories passed down through generations. These spiritual experiences help individuals achieve enlightenment, overcome difficulties, and understand a deep connection with God and the universe, in accordance with the mystical principles described earlier.

**The existence of moral mythicism of Wonosalam protected forest myth in the implementation of character education**

The existence of morals in mysticism is closely related to the mystical ethics that a mystic must possess. This ethic emphasizes moral values such as honesty, sincerity, compassion, and devotion to God. Some important aspects of the moral existence of mysticism is that mysticism has a mystical code of ethics that its followers must uphold. This code of conduct emphasizes universal moral values such as honesty, sincerity, justice, compassion, and devotion to God. The mystical code of conduct serves as a spiritual guide for mystics in living their lives. It helps them in taking the right decisions and acting in a manner that is in harmony with spiritual values. Mysticism has rich and varied traditions, which often contain moral elements that are important to teach and safeguard. These traditions may take the form of rituals, spiritual practices, stories or moral teachings. Mystical traditions assist individuals in developing a noble and moral character. The moral values taught in mystical traditions can be applied in daily life, thus bringing benefits to individuals and society.

The moral existence of mysticism is not just about rules and guidelines, but also about inner transformation. The main purpose of the ethics of mysticism is to assist individuals in achieving purity of heart, freedom from worldly passions, and oneness with God. By applying the moral values of mysticism in daily life, individuals can achieve true happiness and contribute to the creation of a better world. Some examples of the application of mystical moral existence in daily life include being honest and sincere in every word and deed, maintaining justice and equality within oneself, showing love and compassion to all living beings, devoting oneself to God and serving others sincerely, and preserving nature and the environment (Putri, 2023).

The moral existence of mysticism offers a path to a more moral and meaningful life. For those who apply these moral values in their lives, mysticism can be a source of spiritual transformation and positive contribution to the world. The existence of morals in mysticism is very close to the mystical ethics that a mystic must possess. This ethic underscores moral values such as honesty, sincerity, compassion, and devotion to God. Some important aspects of moral existence in mysticism can be found in the Myth of the Salvation Forest that developed in Wonosalam and its surroundings.

In an interview with Mr. Tasrip, the caretaker of Gunung Kuncung, there is a story about Mbah Wali Wono Segara, a spiritual figure trusted by the local community. This story reflects universal moral values and mystical traditions that have been preserved for generations:

> "*Panjenenganipun rawuh kangge tapa brata lan ngendhih nganti dumugi sedo... The land is very beautiful, the trees are lush and the atmosphere is comfortable and calm*".

The story emphasizes the importance of meditation, self-control and inner calm as part of the mystic's code of conduct. The salvation and purity of heart sought by Mbah Wali Wono Segara is the essence of spiritual values in mysticism. Mr. Tasrip also said that Gunung Kuncung became a religious pilgrimage destination because it is believed to provide enlightenment for those who come with a dark mind "*Whoever uploads Gunung Kuncung when his mind is dark, will surely dados padhang* (light)." This shows how the mystical tradition in Wonosalam offers not only moral rules but also deep inner transformation, helping individuals achieve true happiness and spiritual enlightenment.

Mbah Sari Merto, an elder of Galengdowo Village, told us about the origin of her village and the values of togetherness and social care that are still maintained today. "*People are willing to give land to me, even though there is no family relationship*". Values such as social care, sincerity and gotong royong applied by the Galengdowo community are concrete examples of the application of mystical moral values in daily life. Mr. Agus Darminto, the Village Head of Jarak Keenam, tells stories about the myths and history of the village that show how mysticism and moral values are integrated in people's lives:

> "*Nalikane tekan slope Anjasmoro, Pangeran Jimat... oleh petunjuk (wangsit) supaya nandur nandur wit jarak minangka syarat (tumbal) kanggo membuat lahan ningukiman ning desa iki*".

These mystical beliefs and practices not only provide spiritual guidance but also create positive impacts for the community, such as the blessings and protection believed to come from the jatropha plant. Samiun, an elder of Wonomerto Village, talks about how the local community maintains and cares for the tomb of Pangeran Benowo, and respects the traditions and beliefs inherited from the ancestors "The tomb of Pangeran Benowo is still well maintained. The traditions and beliefs are passed down from generation to generation". The preservation of traditions and respect for ancestors shows a high sense of moral responsibility in maintaining spiritual and cultural heritage.

The existence of morals in mysticism in Wonosalam is reflected in various aspects of people's lives, ranging from honesty, sincerity, and compassion, to devotion to God and preservation of traditions. These values not only provide spiritual guidance but also encourage inner transformation, create positive impacts for individuals and society, and safeguard valuable cultural and spiritual heritage.

*Discussion*

Based on the research results, student character education can be implemented by focusing on the values taught by Imam Ghozali. Sincerity can be taught through volunteering or charity activities, patience through guidance and counseling programs, and honesty through academic integrity enforcement (Lukmantoro et al., 2024). Amanah can be applied in leadership roles, justice through the ethics and social justice curriculum, and compassion through community service projects. *Tawakal* and *zuhud* can be developed through religious activities and simple living (Lukmantoro et al., 2024). Students who internalize these values will have strong moral and spiritual integrity, and become agents of change who bring peace, justice, and humanity to society (Agustina et al., 2023a). To develop student character education in accordance with the concept of character education according to Imam Ghozali and also in line with the *kebatinan* values found in Wonosalam, several steps and forms of implementation are needed that are integrated in campus activities and community life. The application of sincerity can be realized through selfless charity programs, such as social services, donations, and community service (Agustina et al., 2023b). Students are encouraged to be active in social activities in the community with the intention of helping others without expecting rewards, as well as forming communities or volunteer groups that focus on community service. Patience can be developed through workshops or training on stress management and emotional control, as well as encouraging a culture of mutual respect and tolerance in campus life. Students are taught to be patient in facing challenges and problems in the community, as well as holding mentoring and coaching programs in the community.

Honesty must be upheld with a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of academic fraud, as well as holding discussions or seminars on the importance of honesty in various aspects of life. Students are encouraged to become role models of honesty in the community and campaign for honesty values through community activities and social media. Trust can be built by giving responsibility to students in various projects and campus organizations to practice trust, as well as creating internship programs that emphasize integrity and responsibility. Students are expected to be active in community activities that require trust and build a reputation as trustworthy and responsible individuals in the community.

Justice can be implemented by establishing student bodies or organizations tasked with ensuring justice in every aspect of campus life, as well as holding seminars and discussions on the importance of justice in everyday life. Students are encouraged to be active in advocating for social and legal justice in society and undertake activities that fight for the rights of those less fortunate. Compassion and humanity can be promoted through activities that promote empathy and concern for others, such as volunteering at orphanages or hospitals, and forming clubs or organizations that focus on humanitarian activities. Students are invited to get involved in humanitarian programs in the community and campaign for compassion and humanitarian values through various media.

*Tawakal* can be realized by holding spiritual activities such as religious studies, congregational prayers, and dhikr together, and encouraging students to always rely on prayer and effort in achieving their goals. Students are invited to be active in religious activities in their neighborhood and educate the community about the importance of *tawakal* in everyday life. *Zuhud* can be implemented by holding seminars or workshops on simple living and avoiding excessive consumption, as well as encouraging students to focus more on self and spiritual development than on material possessions (Nadya et al., 2023). Students are encouraged to model a simple and non-materialistic lifestyle in their environment and campaign for *zuhud* values through social activities and the media. By applying this character education concept, students not only develop intellectually but also morally and spiritually. The application of the values taught by Imam Ghozali will help them become individuals with high integrity and be able to make a positive contribution to society. In addition, by incorporating the mystical values that exist in Wonosalam, this character education will be richer and more relevant to the local cultural context.

## CONCLUSIONS

**The fundamental findings** in this study have interconnected material, spiritual, and moral dimensions that can be integrated with character education. The values of honesty, patience, and sincerity contained in local myths become a means of learning in the formation of student character. This research shows that myth-based local wisdom can be an effective approach to preserve tradition and culture in the development of character education and the challenges of modern life. **Implication**: Based on the research results, students' character education can be implemented by emphasizing the values taught by Imam Ghozali. Sincerity can be taught through volunteer or charity activities, patience through mentoring and counseling programs, and honesty through academic integrity enforcement. Amanah is applied in leadership roles, justice through the ethics and social justice curriculum, and compassion through community service projects. *Tawakal* and *zuhud* can be developed through religious activities and simple living. Students who internalize these values will have strong moral and spiritual integrity, and become agents of change who bring peace, justice, and humanity to society. **Limitations**: this research is limited to the myth of the salvation forest in Wonosalam and the mystical tradition. This study used a qualitative approach with a primary focus on character education values, with data generated from interviews with village heads. Future **Research:** This research will expand the context of local culture and integration with international culture. The similarities between local and international cultures are interesting to analyze with a comprehensive comparison of cultures and meanings. The moral values of honesty, sincerity, and patience contained in mystical stories from local and international cultures have great potential in shaping students' character through spiritual and social.

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