



The Role of Tawhīd Values in Shaping Islamic Character among Malay Communities of the Archipelago

Halimatu Sa'diah^{1*}; Haris Riadi²; Marlizayani³; Faridah⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Department of Islamic Education, STAIN Bengkalis, Indonesia.

^{1*}Corresponding Email: halimatussadiah.nulis89@gmail.com

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Abstract: Before the arrival of Islam, the Malay community was known to adhere to animism and dynamism and was influenced by Hindu and Buddhist teachings. Religious transformation began when Islam entered through trade routes, with Arab traders as the bearers of the teachings of monotheism. The values of the monotheistic creed that were gradually instilled not only changed the belief system of the Malay community but also shaped the identity and character of Islam. This study aims to examine the role of the values of the monotheistic creed in shaping the character of Islam within the Malay community, which is integrated with local culture. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing a library research method that involves examining academic literature, historical documents, and local cultural sources. The results of the study indicate that the monotheistic creed makes a significant contribution to shaping the character of a faithful, sincere, responsible, disciplined person who upholds the values of divinity. The monotheistic creed also strengthens the identity of Malay Islam and serves as a moral foundation in community life. The implications of this study suggest that understanding and strengthening the values of monotheism rooted in local culture can be utilized as an effective, wisdom-based character education strategy in responding to moral challenges in the modern era.

Abstrak: Sebelum datangnya Islam, masyarakat Melayu dikenal menganut kepercayaan animisme, dinamisme, dan dipengaruhi oleh ajaran Hindu dan Buddha. Transformasi keagamaan dimulai ketika Islam masuk melalui jalur perdagangan, dengan para pedagang Arab sebagai pembawa ajaran tauhid. Nilai-nilai akidah tauhid yang ditanamkan secara bertahap tidak hanya mengubah sistem kepercayaan masyarakat Melayu, tetapi juga membentuk identitas dan karakter Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran nilai-nilai akidah tauhid dalam membentuk karakter Islam masyarakat Melayu yang terintegrasi dengan budaya lokal. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan metode penelitian kepustakaan, yang mengacu pada literatur akademis, dokumen sejarah, dan sumber budaya lokal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa akidah tauhid memberikan kontribusi yang signifikan dalam membentuk karakter pribadi yang beriman, ikhlas, bertanggung jawab, disiplin, dan menjunjung tinggi nilai-nilai ketuhanan. Akidah tauhid juga memperkuat identitas Islam Melayu dan menjadi landasan moral dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman dan penguatan nilai-nilai tauhid yang berakar pada budaya lokal dapat dijadikan sebagai strategi pendidikan karakter berbasis kearifan lokal yang efektif dalam menjawab tantangan moral di era modern

A. Introduction

The entry of Islam into the Indonesian archipelago cannot be separated from the significant contribution of the Malay community, which is one of the first ethnic groups to be open and responsive to Islamic preaching. Between the 7th and 13th centuries AD, international maritime trade routes connected Muslim traders from Arabia, Persia, and India with coastal communities in eastern Sumatra, including Aceh, Palembang, and the Riau coast (Jusu et al., 2023). This trade interaction was not just an exchange of economic commodities but also an exchange of spiritual and cosmological values, which brought the influence of Islamic teachings into the local cultural structure. The peaceful and wise presentation of Islam found wide acceptance among the Malay community, which is known to be open, has high social values, and upholds deliberation and cooperation. In this context, Islam is not a foreign force that imposes itself but rather a value system that is naturally integrated into the lifeblood of coastal communities (Panji et al., 2023).

The Malay cultural area in the archipelago is widespread, covering most of the coast of Sumatra, Riau, and West Kalimantan. These areas later developed into centres of Islamic sultanates that not only functioned as political forces but also as epicentres for the spread of integrative Islamic values (Jannati et al., 2021). The existence of sultanates such as the Siak Sultanate, Deli Sultanate, Aceh Darussalam Sultanate, and Sambas Sultanate played a crucial role in instilling the principles of Islamic faith, particularly monotheism, into the social and cultural structure of Malay society (Pradana et al., 2021; Yusof, 2020). The influence of Islam extends not only to the realm of ritual worship but also encompasses the layers of ethics, literature, customary law, and even art and culture. In the Malay community, the values of monotheism are manifested in daily practices such as kenduri, tahlilan, the tradition of reciting pantun, and informal educational structures, including surau and village madrasahs (Asbar & Setiawan, 2022; Khasanah & Mazida, 2021).

In the process of assimilating Islamic values, Malay society gradually abandoned its previous belief system, which was characterized by animism, dynamism, and influences from Hinduism and Buddhism. Islamic teachings, particularly the creed of monotheism, became the central axis in shaping the community's perspective on life, death, and the relationship between humans and God. Monotheism is not only an abstract theological principle but also an epistemological foundation that organizes and structures the cognitive framework and practices of Malay society (Marzali, 2020). Monotheism is internalised in the form of a religious personality, politeness in speech, adherence to social ethics, and fostering a sense of spiritual responsibility towards the social environment. This can be seen in the avoidance of shirk practices, superstitious beliefs, and a life orientation that always leads to total devotion to Allah SWT (Amalia & Agustin, 2022; Amir, 2021).

Previous studies have highlighted the role of Islam in shaping the identity of Malay society in general. Hayani research on Islamic character education in the context of a multicultural society (Hayani, 2020) emphasizes the importance of forming an Islamic character that is not merely normative but practical and contextual. However, these studies have not explicitly elaborated on the dynamics of monotheistic values within more specific

social structures and cultural expressions, such as through oral literature, customs, and collective rituals, which shape the identity of local Malay communities, including those in Riau, Deli, Aceh, and Sambas. There is still analytical space to explain how the values of monotheism are not only present in religious texts or formal institutions but rather live and develop in everyday social practices and cultural expressions.

In this context, the main application of the study is an effort to uncover the layers of values contained in the expression of Malay culture and tradition, which are not simply seen as heritage or symbols of ethnicity but as an active value system that contains the teaching of monotheism in a substantial way. The reader will be guided to understand that behind the external form of pantun, gurindam, kenduri, and collective dhikr, there is a content of monotheism that is contextually framed by each Malay region. This approach enables us to see how theological values (the belief in monotheism) not only exist in the theoretical or doctrinal realm but are also embodied in social customs, literary aesthetics, and mechanisms for strengthening societal morals.

The novelty in this study lies in the contextual approach that places the values of the creed of monotheism not merely in the theological realm but as a system of life values integrated into Malay cultural expressions such as pantun, gurindam, kenduri, and collective zikir (Ritonga et al., 2023; Suryani et al., 2022). This study offers a new perspective, suggesting that local Malay culture is not only a symbol of ethnicity or traditional heritage but also a medium for internalizing monotheism, which forms the character and identity of the Islamic community sustainably. This approach emphasizes that the values of monotheism can be used as a strategy for character education based on local wisdom, which has not been widely explored as a focus of study in previous research. This finding enriches the treasury of Islamic and cultural studies by integrating theological and anthropological aspects into a complete analytical framework. As stated by Rafika (2022) and Sufa et al (2022), the meaning of culture cannot be separated from the religious values that are integrated into the social practices of society.

For readers who may have previously viewed Malay culture as a customary entity or hereditary tradition, this study offers a new perspective: that the culture actively serves as a medium for the formation of Islamic character. This is particularly important in the modern era, where spiritual values are often disconnected from cultural expression (Alwi & Iqbal, 2022; Mawardi et al., 2020; Wahyuni & Putra, 2020). Through this study, readers will gain insight into how each region has a unique approach to maintaining and upholding the values of monotheism, both through formal institutions such as madrasahs and customary law, as well as through informal expressions like oral advice and daily lifestyle patterns. By dissecting this dynamic, the study not only enriches the understanding of Islamic cultural heritage in the archipelago but also opens up an applicative space in the fields of education, da'wah, and the development of locally based Islamic cultural curricula (Sulaiman et al., 2020). Thus, from something that is not deeply understood, namely the structure of monotheistic values in Malay culture, readers are led to a broader, functional, and contextual understanding.

B. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach based on library research to explore in depth the representation of the tauhid creed's values in the cultural construction and formation of Islamic character within the Malay community. Data collection techniques are directed at written sources, such as scientific journals, academic books, research articles, and cultural documents, which are selected purposively based on their scientific relevance and credibility (Waruwu, 2023). The study focuses on four central regions: Riau, Deli, Aceh (on the island of Sumatra), and Sambas (on the island of Kalimantan), which share similarities in historical, geographical, and value system aspects, thus providing a space for a contextual comparative approach. Data analysis was conducted through three systematic stages: identification of key literature, categorization based on the dimensions of tauhid values, and in-depth interpretation of the symbolic and narrative meanings integrated into local traditions, literature, and cultural expressions. To support this process, tools such as Mendeley are used for managing references, as well as academic literature search engines like Scopus and Google Scholar. The analysis technique is inductive and interpretive with a hermeneutic approach to interpreting spiritual values in texts, whether in the form of literature, pantun, fables, or traditional advice. This procedure is structured and can be replicated by other researchers by following the flow of literature selection, cultural context mapping, data organization, and critical reading of how the values of monotheism shape the social structure and character of Malay society across generations.

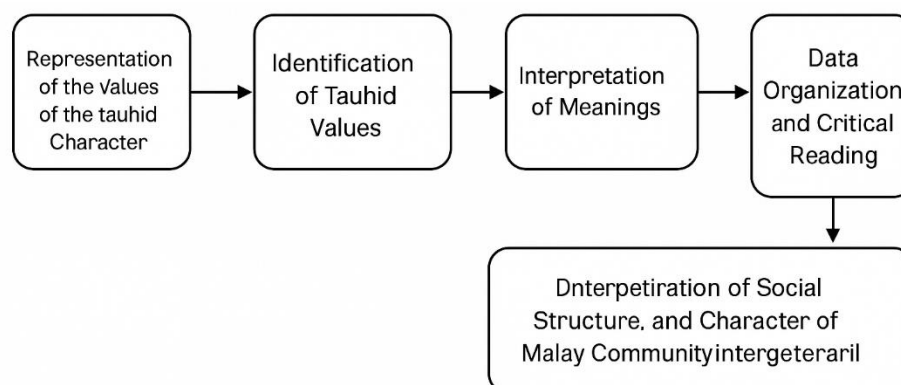


Figure 1. Research Flow

C. Result

Manifestation of the Values of the Tauhid Creed in the Formation of Islamic Character in Malay Culture (Riau Islands, Deli, Aceh and Sambas)

The creed of monotheism in Malay culture, particularly in Riau, Deli, Sambas, and Aceh, serves not only as the basis of theological beliefs but is also manifested in various aspects of people's lives in practical terms (Amir, 2021). The values of monotheism are not only understood as religious concepts but are translated into behaviour, customs, and traditions that shape Islamic character. Malay society incorporates the values of monotheism

into every social and spiritual activity, as well as various traditional ceremonies, which are often marked by devotion to Allah (Fathi, 2023).

a. Instilling the Value of Tauhid Belief from an Early Age

In the culture of the Riau Malay community, the instillation of the values of the monotheistic creed begins from the birth of a child as a spiritual manifestation of the family's commitment to the principle of the oneness of God. The tradition of reciting the prayer over a baby becomes a formal ritual, a spiritual declaration that the child's life has been under the auspices of the Islamic faith (Mahmuddin et al., 2023). After the birth procession, it continues with the implementation of customs such as aqiqah and the marhaban assembly, which are accompanied by the recitation of *the thayyibah sentence* and prayers of blessing. The Riau Malay culture consistently places the family as the primary agent of spiritual education, allowing the values of monotheism to be naturally internalized in the child's personality development from an early age (Shaliha, 2023; Sari et al., 2023).

The Deli Malays, as part of the Malay ethnic group in North Sumatra, instil the values of monotheism by teaching them from an early age through the family environment, from calling the call to prayer for babies to religious education through traditional educational institutions such as surau and pesantren, as well as religious activities that are integrated into the rhythm of daily life. Parents play a central role as the first educators, who instil faith in Allah SWT, teach the creed, familiarise children with basic worship such as prayer and dhikr, and introduce them to reading the Quran (Nurmalinda & Kurniati, 2023). In addition, non-formal educational institutions, such as the Quran Education Park (TPA) and madrasahs, also serve as a means of internalizing monotheistic values in children.

In the Acehese tradition, the process of instilling the value of monotheism begins early on through symbolic and spiritual practices that are passed down from one generation to the next. When a baby is born, the call to prayer will be recited as a form of initial declaration that the child's life is rooted in the oneness of Allah SWT. This action is not merely a religious ritual but a concrete form of internalizing the value of monotheism as the primary foundation of life (Samad & Munawwarah, 2020; Zulgafrin, 2023). In addition, the Acehese people also have a habit of praying for babies with monotheistic sentences, such as "*Lā ilāha illāllāh*," as a spiritual introduction that strengthens the foundation of monotheism in children from the early stages of their development.

In the Sambas Malay community, the role of education in the value of the creed of monotheism is realized through the tradition of the hair-shaving assembly or aqiqah, which is accompanied by the reading of prayers containing sentences of monotheism and hopes that children will grow up under the protection of faith (Asrani et al., 2022). In daily practice, parents from an early age accustom their children to Islamic greetings, such as "*Bismillah*" and "*Alhamdulillah*," and teach the importance of dependence on Allah SWT rather than on His creatures (Hadri, 2022; Riansyah, 2023).

Table 2. Instilling the Values of Tauhid Belief from an Early Age in the Malays of Riau, Deli, Aceh and Sambas

Region	Similarities in Planting Tauhid
Riau	Praying for a baby at birth; getting used to <i>the thayyibah sentence</i> in the family, aqiqah, marhaban assembly.
Deli	Performing the prayer on newborn babies, instilling faith from an early age, getting used to <i>the thayyibah sentences</i> in the family, reading the Quran in TPA institutions, surau and Madrasah
Aceh	Azan and iqamah when the baby is born; monotheistic prayer sentences such as <i>Lā ilāha illāllāh</i> .
Samba	The tradition of aqiqah and the prayer of the sentence of tauhid; introduction to the sentence of <i>thayyibah</i> from an early age.

The table above shows that the existence of the Malay community in Riau, Deli, Aceh, and Sambas demonstrates historical consistency in establishing monotheism as the primary foundation for the structure of culture and collective identity. These four regions reflect a socio-religious space supported by strong values of monotheism, not only as a belief system but also as a principle of regulating behaviour and social relations that are instilled from an early age (early age) in forming Islamic character in children (Mardiyanti et al., 2023). The similarity in instilling the belief in monotheism lies in calling the baby to prayer at birth and then teaching the habit of reciting *the shahadah sentence* from a young age.

b. The Role of the Value of the Belief of Tauhid in Satra

In the context of Riau Malay culture, the values of the monotheistic creed are powerfully expressed through classical literary works and customary systems that align with Islamic teachings. Gurindam Dua Belas by Raja Ali Haji (Danusa, 2021) is a form of instructive literature that instils the principles of monotheism, such as piety, awareness, sincerity, and the afterlife, in the form of short poems that educate and are easily internalized by the community (Mutmainnah, 2020).

The values of the monotheistic creed have a profound influence on the culture and literature of Deli Malay. The monotheistic creed serves as the foundation for shaping social norms, customs, and behaviours that uphold the values of divinity, sincerity, and simplicity. In the realm of literature, works such as poetry, gurindam, hikayat, and pantun often contain moral and spiritual teachings rooted in monotheism, including faith in Allah, the importance of good deeds, and warnings about the afterlife (Ahmad & Setyowati, 2022). Deli Malay literature is not only a means of entertainment or aesthetics but also functions as a medium for preaching and moral education that strengthens the Islamic character of its people, which is practised in institutions such as TPA.

Aceh places the value of monotheism at the centre of all social and spiritual activities in its cultural traditions. Acehnese literature, including Sufi poems and theological tales, delves into the relationship between servants and God in depth, emphasizing *ma'rifatullah* and total love for Allah SWT. The cultural system in Aceh is institutionalized in law through

the customary concept of "*bak Po Teumeureuhom, hukom bak Syiah Kuala*", which positions Islamic law as the basis of all customary rules.

In the Sambas Malay community, the cultivation of monotheistic values in the cultural and oral-literary space develops in daily life. Poems, proverbs, and folk tales not only function as entertainment media but also as a means of transmitting Islamic values, including monotheism, honesty, and the prohibition of polytheism (Hambali, 2023; Sulissusiawan et al., 2022).

Table 3. Comparison and Similarity of the Role of the Faith of Tauhid on the Malay Satra of Riau, Deli, Aceh and Sambas

Region	Similarity	Difference
Riau	Cultivating the value of monotheistic belief in literary works in the form of preaching media that is expressed in poems, stories, and gurindam.	Focus on the role of family and classic literature, such as the Gurindam Dua Belas and the Marhaban tradition, as a reinforcement of the value of monotheism.
Deli	Instilling the values of the belief of monotheism in literary works in the form of preaching media expressed in poetry, pantun, fables, and gurindam.	Reinforcement through non-formal institutions (TPA, Madrasah); literary works focus on social norms and collective values.
Aceh	Instilling the values of the belief of monotheism in literary works in the form of preaching media expressed in poetry, pantun, fables, and gurindam.	Institutionalised in Islamic customary law (<i>Bak Po Teumeureuhom</i>), Sufistic literature emphasises ma'rifat al-Lah.
Samba	Instilling the values of the belief of monotheism in literary works in the form of preaching media expressed in poetry, pantun, fables, and gurindam.	Not institutionalized in law; focuses on social practices and the value of deliberation in the practice of monotheism.

The table above illustrates that the four Malay regions, namely Riau, Deli, Aceh, and Sambas, share similarities in creating literary works, such as poetry, pantun, hikayat, and gurindam, as a means of da'wah to instil the values of monotheistic belief. Literature in these four regions serves as a means of moral and religious education, reflecting the values of monotheism. However, there are differences in how it is implemented; Riau emphasizes the role of the family and classical literature, such as Gurindam Dua Belas, while Deli strengthens the values of monotheism through non-formal institutions, including TPA and Madrasah, with a focus on social norms. Aceh institutionalizes monotheism in Islamic customary law and emphasizes aspects of Gullah. Meanwhile, Sambas does not institutionalise these values in law but prioritises social practices and the value of deliberation in the practice of monotheism.

c. The Role of the Value of Tauhid Belief in Cultural Traditions

In the tradition of the Riau Malay community, the instillation of values and beliefs rooted in monotheism is carried out through various customary practices that align with

Islamic teachings. Traditions such as pat flour, kenduri arwah, and thanksgiving assemblies not only function as social activities (Dewi et al., 2022; Noviana et al., 2023) but also as spiritual means to strengthen awareness of the oneness of Allah SWT. Every customary ritual always begins and ends with prayer, reading of the sentence of monotheism, and dhikr, which reflects total dependence on God. Parents and traditional elders are the central intermediaries in instilling these values in the younger generation through direct practice and role models (Enjelina et al., 2022).

Culture, with its foundation in the belief in monotheism, is not only a theological foundation but also plays a transformative role in shaping the meaning behind cultural practices that are passed down from one generation to the next. Practices such as plain flour, kenduri, and traditional marriage, which were previously rich in cosmological symbolism, are reoriented with spiritual values that align with the principle of monotheism, emphasizing prayers of gratitude, tawakal, and hope in Allah. Even in the taboo system, the value of monotheism plays a role as a normative filter that rejects all forms of polytheism, instils awareness of ihsan, and strengthens the ethical dimension in social interaction (Triwirandi et al., 2021).

The instillation of the values of the monotheistic faith in the traditions of the Acehese people occurs systematically and is institutionalised in social and religious structures. The *peusijuek* (white flour) tradition, observed at various life stages, such as birth, marriage, and departure for the Hajj, always begins with the recitation of monotheistic prayers and verses from the Qur'an (Rahma et al., 2023). This practice is not only a symbol of blessing but also a form of strengthening spirituality based on monotheism. In addition, the *khanduri activity* held in various religious and social moments always emphasizes the position of Allah SWT as the centre of all life's affairs (Rahma et al., 2023).

The Sambas Malay community instils the value of monotheism through collective traditions that are religious and communal. The traditions of living together, warding off disasters, and reciting the Qur'an are important mediums for internalizing Islamic values, including the principle of monotheism. In this activity, the community together chants prayers and dhikr as a form of spiritual strengthening of the oneness of Allah. These values are also instilled through family traditions, such as reciting daily prayers, guiding children to recite the "thayyibah" sentence, and encouraging them to be humble and sincere in their actions (Mualimin, 2020).

Table 4. Similarities and Differences in the Role of Tauhid Values in Tradition

Region	Cultural Traditions
Riau	The tradition of clapping plain flour, offering of spirits, thanksgiving assembly, praying together
Deli	The tradition of clapping plain flour, feasting, the tradition of abstaining from prohibition, and praying together
Aceh	The tradition of clapping plain flour (<i>pausijuek</i>), khanduri haji, praying together
Samba	The tradition of bermukun, rejecting evil, khatam al-Quran, and praying together.

The table above illustrates the similarities and differences in the role of monotheism in the Malay cultural tradition across four regions: Riau, Deli, Aceh, and Sambas. In general, these four regions share similarities in cultural traditions, with monotheism serving as the primary basis and standard practices such as pat flour, kenduri, and joint prayer. However, each region has a different approach to internalizing the value of monotheism.

D. Discussion

The existence of Malay communities in Riau, Deli, Aceh, and Sambas demonstrates historical consistency in establishing monotheism as the primary foundation of culture and collective identity (Hanif & Dwi, 2021; Hanif & Dwi, 2021). These four regions reflect a socio-religious space characterized by strong monotheistic values, not only as a belief system but also as a principle regulating behaviour and social relations (Askacita, 2023; Mualimin, 2020; Winda, 2023; Yunus et al., 2023).

Despite the variations in institutional forms and cultural expressions, the four regions exhibit structural similarities in actualizing the value of monotheism in everyday life. Aceh institutionalizes the principle of monotheism in the legal and governmental systems through the Qanun Syariah (Yunus et al., 2023), Riau, Deli, and Sambas internalize it through traditional education, literature, and customs rooted in Islamic values (Danusa, 2021; Diana & Tiaraputri, 2020; Januardi et al., 2022; Sibarani, 2020; Wahab et al., 2020). The dominance of monotheistic belief in the religious space of the Malay community in these four regions is a key element in the process of forming a holistic Islamic character that encompasses spiritual, ethical, and social aspects as a whole. Thus, Riau, Deli, Aceh, and Sambas can be positioned as strong representations of the construction of Malay culture, which makes the belief in monotheism the heart of the formation of Islamic identity and personality across generations (Hafiz & Tafsiruddin, 2022; Panji et al., 2023; Rafli, 2022).

Aqidah is the basis of belief that is held wholeheartedly by every Muslim, serving as the primary foundation for thinking, behaving, and acting (Pradana et al., 2021). Aqidah encompasses belief in supernatural entities, including Allah SWT, angels, His books, the apostles, the Last Day, and destiny. Tawhid is the core of all Islamic teachings and forms the foundation of a Muslim's life, distancing them from shirk and instilling the awareness that everything comes from and returns to Allah.

Before undergoing the process of Islamization, the Malay people of the archipelago lived under the dominant influence of Hindu-Buddhist and animist religious and cultural traditions (Sudarman & Hidayaturrahman, 2020). The belief system at that time was polytheistic, characterized by a belief in the existence of spirits, gods, and other supernatural entities that were considered to play a role in regulating aspects of human life (Rohmatin, 2021). Religious practices at that time were also full of elements of spirituality that were not based on the principle of monotheism. This finding was obtained through a study of the dynamics of local beliefs recorded in the cultural construction of the Malay people in the archipelago, which showed the existence of a uniform initial spiritual pattern before

receiving the influence of Islam (Jannati et al., 2021; Marzali, 2020; Muasmara & Ajmain, 2020).

E. Implication

The findings of this study reveal a new perspective: the values of the monotheistic creed are not only private theological teachings but also function as a collective value system integrated into the culture, customs, and literature of the Malay community. Investigations into the regions of Riau, Deli, Aceh, and Sambas reveal that the values of monotheism can form a consistent Islamic character, even in the form of traditions that are expressively different. This confirms that local culture has excellent potential as an educational and spiritual medium for internalizing divine values in the next generation. This approach can strengthen cultural preservation initiatives while grounding Islamic teachings in a context that is more closely aligned with and relevant to the realities of society.

The results of this study also provide a conceptual basis for further studies that wish to explore the relationship between spiritual values and social construction in local Islamic culture. The cross-regional comparative analysis model used can be replicated in other regions with cultural diversity to examine how monotheism operates within a diverse cultural framework. In addition, this culture-based approach can enrich the development of a more contextual Islamic education curriculum, as well as provide a da'wah strategy rooted in local values. This research also provides impetus to expand the study of non-formal cultural media—such as pantun, hikayat, and kenduri—as effective vehicles for conveying messages of faith and character formation in traditional Muslim societies.

F. Limitation and Suggestion for Further Research

This study has several limitations that need to be openly acknowledged so that the reading of the findings can be done proportionally. One of the main limitations lies in the library study approach, which relies entirely on written sources and scientific documentation, thereby failing to capture the direct empirical dimension of the Malay community itself. Another limitation is the scope of the region, which is limited to only four representative locations—Riau, Deli, Aceh, and Sambas—which, although rich in cultural data, still do not reflect the entire diversity of Malay culture in the archipelago. In addition, the interpretation of monotheistic values in local traditions and literature is conducted through textual interpretation, which does not fully capture the actual dynamics of current social practices of society. This has implications for the limitations of generalizing the findings, as well as opening up space for other approaches that can complement the dimensions of reality and actuality.

G. Conclusion

Based on the results of a literature review of four representative regions of Malay culture—Riau, Deli, Aceh, and Sambas—it can be emphasised that the values of the monotheistic creed have a significant contribution to shaping the Islamic character of the

Malay community as a whole and sustainably. The four regions, although they employ varying approaches to internalising the values of monotheism, exhibit a consistent pattern in making monotheism a spiritual, moral, and social foundation in everyday life. The problems formulated regarding how the values of the creed of monotheism are integrated into the structure of Malay culture, as well as the exploratory objectives to map the role of these values in character formation, have been answered through the identification of manifestations of the values of monotheism in local traditions, education systems, literature, and customary law. The main contribution of this study lies in the integrative explanation that culture is not merely an ethnic or historical expression but an active medium capable of transforming theological values into real social practices. This study expands the understanding of the relationship between religion and culture within the context of Malay society, providing a conceptual and practical foundation for the development of Islamic character education grounded in local wisdom. Theoretically, this study confirms that the belief in monotheism is not only the foundation of individual faith but also a collective framework for the formation of social ethics in Malay society, rooted in Islamic values.

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Author's Biography

	<p>Halimatu Sa'diah, SE.Sy    is a master student of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Islamic Religious Education Study Program, IAIN Datuk Laksemana Bengkalis, Riau, Indonesia. Currently, her research is related to the Study of Islamic Character Aqidah and Malayness.</p> <p>Email: halimatussadiah.nulis89@gmail.com</p>
	<p>Dr. Haris Riadi, S.Ag, M.Ag    is lecturer of the Master's Program at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Islamic Religious Education Study Program, IAIN Datuk Laksemana Bengkalis, Riau, Indonesia. Currently, her research is related to the Study of Islamic Character Aqidah and Malayness.</p> <p>Email: harisriadi@kampusmelayu.ac.id</p>
	<p>Marlizayani, S.Pd.I    is a master student of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Islamic Religious Education Study Program, IAIN Datuk Laksenama Bengkalis, Riau, Indonesia. Currently, her research is related to the Study of Islamic Character Aqidah and Malayness.</p> <p>Email: marlizayani93@gmail.com</p>
	<p>Faridah, S.Ag    is a master student of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Islamic Religious Education Study Program, IAIN Datuk Laksemana Bengkalis, Riau, Indonesia. Currently, her research is related to the Study of Islamic Character Aqidah and Malayness.</p> <p>Email: Idaf31913@gmail.com</p>