

Character Values in Baris Arug Dance: Sasak Local Wisdom and Pedagogical Potential for Elementary Education

*¹ Sri Sukarni, ¹ Agus Salim, ¹ Tesa Yustika, ¹ Babat Nufus Tarenaksa, ² Ruslan Yusoh

¹ Faculty of Culture, Management and Business, Universitas Pendidikan Mandalika, Mataram, Indonesia.

² Darussalam School, Narathiwat 96130, Thailand.

*Corresponding Author e-mail: srisukarni@undikma.ac.id

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Abstract

This study documents Baris Arug, a traditional Sasak dance from Longserang Village, Lingsar District, West Lombok Regency, and examines the character values embedded in its historical background, performance structure, symbolic elements, and sociocultural functions. It also explores the dance's pedagogical potential for elementary education. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected from October to December 2024 through observations of rehearsals and community performances, semi-structured interviews with 17 purposively selected informants—one dance elder and leader, four senior dancers, four musicians, three community leaders, and five younger members—and document analysis. The data were analyzed iteratively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings show that community oral histories associate Baris Arug with the collective joy of farmers after successfully cultivating new agricultural land. Performed by thirteen male dancers in a commander-led formation, the dance embodies togetherness, courage, discipline, hard work, leadership, responsibility, and gratitude through marching movements, costumes, masks, farming tools, music, and ritual offerings. Baris Arug also functions as community entertainment, a means of strengthening social cohesion and cultural identity, and a medium for transmitting local values across generations. These findings indicate that Baris Arug offers culturally grounded material for local-content and extracurricular learning in elementary schools. However, because the study did not examine classroom implementation, its educational contribution should be understood as a pedagogical potential that requires further development and empirical evaluation.

Keywords: Baris Arug Dance; Character Values; Elementary Education; Local Wisdom; Traditional Dance

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INTRODUCTION

Traditional arts and dance provide embodied and culturally situated learning experiences through which children can develop character, cultural identity, and social skills. Rosala and Budiman (2020) found that local-wisdom-based dance learning in primary schools can support responsibility, cooperation, and respect through structured movement activities and culturally meaningful practices. Similarly, traditional dance extracurricular activities have been associated with discipline, hard work, independence, social care, and responsibility when teachers consistently guide students throughout the learning process (Trivena et al., 2024).

Research on arts education more broadly also indicates that participation in collective artistic activities can support children's cognitive, emotional, social, and psychomotor development (Hernández & Ortega, 2019; Boal-Palheiros & Ilari, 2023). A large randomized study further showed that expanded access to arts education reduced disciplinary infractions and improved empathy and school engagement, particularly among elementary students (Bowen & Kisida, 2023). These findings are consistent with embodied-learning perspectives, which explain how children develop attention, coordination, self-regulation, and interpersonal awareness through active participation in movement and artistic practices (McLeod, 2017; Fitch & Leverenz, 2017; Calçada & Gilham, 2022).

Character education grounded in local wisdom connects moral learning with cultural symbols, practices, and social relationships that are familiar to children. Traditional performances can embody values such as religiousness, cooperation, nationalism, independence, and integrity, allowing children to encounter these values through observable actions rather than through abstract instruction alone (Umah, 2021). A meta-analysis also indicates that local-wisdom-based learning has positive effects on character-related outcomes, particularly empathy, responsibility, and respect for diversity (Yusuf, 2023). Local-dance activities have likewise been used to introduce multicultural understanding and cultural awareness to young learners through teachers' engagement with locally grounded movement practices (Yetti et al., 2024). These approaches align with culturally responsive pedagogy, which emphasizes the importance of connecting educational experiences with students' cultural knowledge, identities, and community contexts (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

In Indonesia, character and cultural education is expected to develop in harmony with local, regional, and national cultures, with schools serving as spaces in which community knowledge can be connected to formal learning (Thresia et al., 2024). Local wisdom has been incorporated into elementary education through folktales, legends, traditional games, and artistic practices (Annisabrina, Nasrul, Ifliadi, Abimanyu, & Agavin, 2023). Teachers have also used local stories, games, and cultural activities to cultivate cooperation, honesty, responsibility, and tolerance, although limitations in instructional resources, professional preparation, and institutional support continue to constrain implementation (Qudwatullathifah, 2025; Yunus, 2025). Arts-integration studies similarly suggest that culturally grounded and embodied activities can provide meaningful contexts for character-related learning (Grootenboer & Marshman, 2017; Hadjioannou, 2022).

Despite this growing scholarship, many community-based traditional performances remain insufficiently documented and rarely used in formal education, particularly those practiced in rural communities. Previous studies have examined Sasak musical traditions in community rituals, Peresean martial dance in physical education, and local-wisdom-based dance models for character and tolerance education (Rosala & Budiman, 2020; Widodo et al., 2024; Abriyanti et al., 2025). However, these studies do not address the distinctive historical narratives, commander-led formation, agricultural symbolism, and command-response structure of Baris Arug. The exclusion of local cultural expressions from school learning may widen the distance between formal knowledge and students' community experiences, thereby reducing the cultural relevance of character education (Yusuf, 2024; Kristjánsson, 2019). Consequently, contextual documentation of lesser-known dances

is necessary not only for cultural preservation but also for examining how embodied community practices may inform arts-based education (Bresler, 2004; Risner, 2010).

Baris Arug is a traditional Sasak dance originating from Longserang Village, Lingsar District, West Lombok Regency. Community accounts associate its emergence with a group of farmers who successfully opened and cultivated new agricultural land and subsequently expressed their collective joy through a marching performance. The dance combines commander-led movements, farmer costumes, masks, agricultural tools, ritual offerings, and spirited musical accompaniment. Within the community, these elements are associated with togetherness, courage, discipline, hard work, leadership, responsibility, and gratitude. Baris Arug is performed at weddings and circumcision ceremonies as communal entertainment while simultaneously reinforcing social cohesion and local cultural identity. Nevertheless, the dance remains known primarily within its community of origin, and written documentation of its historical background, performance structure, symbolic meanings, and sociocultural functions remains limited. Studies of Sasak culture and local-wisdom-based education have not specifically examined Baris Arug as a culturally grounded educational resource. Examining such an under-documented performance is therefore relevant to both culturally responsive dance pedagogy and the intergenerational transmission of cultural heritage (Hebert & Rinsma, 2019; Barnes, 2020).

Accordingly, this study aims to describe the historical background, performance structure, symbolic elements, and sociocultural functions of Baris Arug and to identify the character values embodied in the dance. It also explores the pedagogical possibilities of introducing these values through local-content and extracurricular activities in elementary schools. The study addresses the following research questions: RQ1: How do community oral histories explain the origin of Baris Arug dance? RQ2: What performance structures and symbolic elements characterize Baris Arug? RQ3: What character values are embodied in its movements, formations, objects, rituals, and community functions? RQ4: What age-appropriate pedagogical possibilities can be derived from these values for elementary education?

This study contributes a qualitative account of a lesser-known Sasak dance and proposes a provisional pedagogical mapping, presented in Table 5, that connects Baris Arug performance elements—such as its marching formation, masks, agricultural tools, ritual practices, and commander-led movements—with character-related meanings and possible educational activities. The framework is not presented as a validated character-measurement instrument or as evidence that participation in Baris Arug improves students' character. Rather, it provides a culturally grounded basis for the collaborative development and future evaluation of local-content and extracurricular learning activities. By distinguishing documented community meanings from educational propositions that still require classroom testing, the study contributes to arts-based character education while supporting efforts to document, preserve, and revitalize regional cultural heritage within Indonesian basic education (Arthur et al., 2020; Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Sanderse, 2013).

METHOD

Study Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to develop an in-depth, contextually grounded account of the historical background, performance structure, symbolic elements, sociocultural functions, and perceived educational potential of

Baris Arug dance in Longserang Village, Lingsar District, West Lombok Regency. A qualitative descriptive design is appropriate when a study seeks to document a phenomenon in its natural setting and provide a detailed account that remains close to participants' experiences and interpretations rather than generating numerical generalizations or testing abstract theoretical propositions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Furidha, 2023).

This design was selected because the study focused on how Baris Arug is remembered, performed, interpreted, and transmitted within the Longserang community. The study did not aim to construct a comprehensive ethnography of Sasak culture or test propositions associated with an explanatory case study. Nevertheless, it drew on arts-based and visually oriented qualitative practices by combining interviews, direct observations, photographs, video recordings, and contextual descriptions to document a traditional performance in its community setting (Bresler, 2004; Risner, 2010; Krempig & Enoksen, 2024; Adom & Harvey-Brown, 2024).

Study Site and Context

The study was conducted in Longserang Village, Lingsar District, West Lombok Regency, where Baris Arug originated and continues to be performed at community events, particularly weddings and circumcision ceremonies. Elementary schools in Lingsar District occasionally invite Baris Arug performers to participate in cultural events. This existing connection between the dance group and local schools informed the analysis of its pedagogical potential. However, the present study did not implement Baris Arug in classrooms or evaluate its effects on students.

Access to the research site was obtained by explaining the study's objectives and procedures to the Longserang Village authorities, community leaders, and Baris Arug practitioners. Field visits were then scheduled to coincide with rehearsals and community performances, enabling the researcher to observe the dance in its natural sociocultural context. Fieldwork was conducted over three months, from October 7 to December 28, 2024, and comprised eight site visits. These visits included four rehearsals totaling eight hours and four community performances totaling 30 hours. The performances consisted of two wedding celebrations and two circumcision ceremonies. In total, the researcher completed 38 hours of direct field observation.

Participants and Sampling

The study involved 17 key informants who possessed direct knowledge of, experience with, or responsibility for the performance and preservation of Baris Arug. They comprised one dance elder and leader, four senior dancers, four musicians, three community leaders, and five younger community members who participated as dancers or audience members. All informants were male, reflecting the current composition of the Baris Arug performance group.

Purposive sampling was used to identify information-rich participants based on their knowledge of the dance, duration of involvement, performance experience, community roles, and participation in cultural transmission (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015). All 17 informants participated in semi-structured interviews. The quotations presented in the Results section were selected as representative excerpts, whereas the themes and interpretations were developed from recurring patterns across the complete set of interviews.

Table 1 presents the number, gender, age, length of involvement, and interview duration of the informants in each participant category.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics (n = 17)

Category	n	Gender	Age/Age Range (Years)	Length of Involvement (Years)	Interview Duration
Dance Elder/Leader	1	M	101	56	85 minutes
Senior Dancers	4	M	45–60	25–40	45–60 minutes
Musicians	4	M	35–55	15–30	35–50 minutes
Community Leaders	3	M	50–65	30–45	40–55 minutes
Younger Members	5	M	18–30	2–10	25–40 minutes

Note. Pseudonyms were used for all informants except Amaq Suriah, who is a publicly recognized cultural figure and explicitly consented to the use of his real name. A total of 17 interviews were conducted between October and December 2024.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through three complementary techniques: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document study. The combination of verbal, observational, visual, and documentary evidence enabled the researcher to compare information across participants, events, and data types (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Pink, 2013; Andersson et al., 2023; Hansen et al., 2025). Table 2 summarizes the instruments, areas of inquiry, data sources, and forms of evidence collected through each technique.



Figure 1. Baris Arug Vertical Line Formation. Panel (a): The commander, wearing a red mask and occupying the front position, leads the vertical line formation during a performance procession in Longserang Village. Panel (b): Nine of the thirteen dancers — one commander and eight members — are visible marching with farming tools, including hoes and machetes. The image documents the coordinated movement and group formation observed during fieldwork. Photographs were taken with participants' consent in December 2024.

During participant observation, the researcher documented the preparation and performance of Baris Arug, including the setting, occasion, performers' roles,

movement sequences, floor formations, command-response interactions, audience participation, musical accompaniment, costumes, masks, farming tools, and ritual procedures. Detailed field notes were written during and immediately after each visit. Photographs and video recordings were also used to document the preparation, performance, and closing stages.

Figure 1 provides a partial visual record of the vertical line formation observed during fieldwork. Although a complete Baris Arug performance involves 13 male dancers, only nine dancers—one commander and eight members—are visible in the photographed formation. The figure also documents the commander's front position, the use of farming tools, and the coordinated marching arrangement.



Figure 2. Baris Arug Performance Sequence. Panel (a): Preparation stage—ritual offerings known as *andang-andang*, including rice, chicken, and flowers, are prepared under the leadership of Amaq Suriah. Panel (b): Dancers put on black farmer clothing and masks, including the commander's red mask. Panel (c): Musicians prepare the *jidor*, *tar*, and flute. Panel (d): The implementation stage features a vertical marching formation directed through shouted commands. The sequence was documented during Baris Arug performances in December 2024.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all 17 informants. The interviews lasted approximately 25–85 minutes, depending on each informant's role, experience, and the depth of information provided. The interview guide addressed the historical origin of Baris Arug, its creation and transmission, movement and formation meanings, costumes, masks, music, farming tools, ritual offerings, performance rules, community functions, character-related meanings, and perceived educational potential. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Brief interview notes were also produced to record contextual information and relevant non-verbal responses.

The document study provided contextual and comparative information about Baris Arug, Sasak traditional arts, Longserang Village history, local cultural events, and local-wisdom-based education. Twelve documents were purposively selected

based on their relevance to the study, comprising five books, four village records or archival documents, and three previous studies. Relevant information was recorded through excerpts, scanned copies or photographs, bibliographic notes, and analytical summaries.

Figure 2 complements the observation data by illustrating the principal sequence of a Baris Arug performance. The figure shows the preparation of the *andang-andang* ritual offerings, the fitting of costumes and masks, the preparation of the musical instruments, and the implementation of the commander-led marching formation.

Table 2. Instruments and Data Collection Techniques for the Study of Baris Arug Dance in Longserang Village, Adapted from Creswell (2014) and Creswell and Poth (2018)

Technique/Instrument	Focus of Observation or Questioning	Data Source/Participants	Data Recorded
Participant observation checklist	Performance setting, time, occasion, performers' roles, movement sequences, formations, command-response interactions, audience participation, musical accompaniment, costumes, masks, farming tools, and ritual procedures before, during, and after the performance	Baris Arug rehearsals and live performances at weddings and circumcision ceremonies in Longserang Village	Detailed field notes, photographs, and video recordings of preparation, performance, audience interaction, and closing activities
Semi-structured interview guide	Historical background of Baris Arug; accounts of its creation and transmission; meanings of movements, formations, costumes, masks, music, farming tools, and ritual offerings; performance rules and ethics; community functions; perceived character and educational values; and transmission to younger generations	One dance elder and leader, four senior dancers, four musicians, three community leaders, and five younger members selected purposively	Audio recordings, verbatim interview transcripts, and contextual interview notes
Document study protocol	Written descriptions of Baris Arug and Sasak traditional arts; records of village history and cultural events; photographs,	Books, journal articles, institutional or government records, village archives, and documentation held	Document excerpts, scanned copies or photographs, and

Technique/Instrument	Focus of Observation or Questioning	Data Source/Participants	Data Recorded
	programs, or archives of previous performances; and relevant research and official documents concerning local culture and education	by community members	bibliographic and analytical notes

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis followed the interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020). The analysis was conducted iteratively throughout data collection rather than only after fieldwork had been completed. This process enabled preliminary interpretations to be compared with subsequent interviews, observations, visual materials, and documentary evidence.

During data reduction, the researcher repeatedly read the 17 interview transcripts, field notes, and document excerpts and reviewed the photographs and video recordings. Relevant segments were coded and grouped into preliminary categories, including historical background, performance structure, movements and formations, symbolic objects, ritual practices, sociocultural functions, character-related meanings, and educational possibilities. For example, the codes “commander shouts instructions,” “dancers respond to cues,” and “incorrect steps are corrected” were initially grouped under performance structure and subsequently contributed to the theme of discipline and coordinated attention. Table 3 provides examples of how selected codes from different data sources were grouped into broader themes.

Table 3. Sample Codebook: Codes to Themes

Category	Sample Codes	Data Source	Emergent Theme
Performance Structure	“commander shouts instructions,” “dancers respond to cues,” “incorrect step is corrected”	Field notes, interviews, and video recordings	Discipline and coordinated attention
Symbols	“red mask represents the leader,” “positions remain fixed,” “members move as one line”	Interviews, photographs, and field notes	Leadership and group cohesion
Functions	“community entertainment,” “young people learn the tradition,” “villagers follow the procession”	Interviews, observations, and documents	Social cohesion and intergenerational transmission

During data display, the coded materials were organized into thematic matrices, code tables, and structured narrative summaries. Patterns were compared across informants, observations, documents, photographs, and video recordings to identify convergent interpretations, recurring meanings, and differences among participants’ accounts.

During conclusion drawing and verification, the researcher interpreted the relationships among community historical narratives, performance elements, symbolic meanings, sociocultural functions, and character-related values. Emerging interpretations were repeatedly checked against the raw data and compared across data sources. They were also discussed with the informants to identify factual inaccuracies or culturally inappropriate interpretations. The analysis remained close to participants' accounts and distinguished meanings documented within the community from educational propositions that had not yet been tested in elementary school classrooms (Saldaña, 2016).

Table 4 summarizes the complete analytical progression from data reduction to thematic verification and shows how the raw interview, observation, visual, and documentary data were transformed into the themes presented in the Results and Discussion sections.

Table 4. Data Analysis Procedures for the Baris Arug Study, Adapted from Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014)

Analysis Stage	Main Activities	Data Sources Used	Output/Resulting Data
Data reduction	Repeated reading of field notes, interview transcripts, and document excerpts; review of visual documentation; initial coding and grouping into categories relating to historical background, performance structure, symbolic meanings, sociocultural functions, character values, and educational possibilities	Observation notes, 17 interview transcripts, photographs, video recordings, and document excerpts	Code labels and grouped data segments for each preliminary category
Data display	Organization of coded data into matrices, sample codebooks, and narrative outlines; comparison of patterns across informants, observations, visual records, and documents; and identification of relationships among categories	Reduced and coded data from all sources	Thematic matrices, code tables, and structured descriptions of Baris Arug
Conclusion drawing and verification	Interpretation of patterns concerning historical narratives, performance structure, symbolic meanings, community functions, and character-related values; comparison of interpretations with raw data; discussion of preliminary themes with informants; and refinement of final themes	All analyzed data and feedback obtained from the informants	Verified themes and interpretations presented in the Results and Discussion sections

Trustworthiness and Ethics

The trustworthiness of the findings was supported through source triangulation, method triangulation, prolonged field engagement, iterative member checking, and detailed contextual description. Source triangulation involved comparing information provided by the dance elder and leader, senior dancers, musicians, community leaders, and younger members. Method triangulation involved comparing evidence obtained through interviews, observations, documents, photographs, and video recordings. The three-month fieldwork period enabled the researcher to observe repeated rehearsals and performances and compare participants' descriptions with documented performance practices (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tracy, 2010; Nowell et al., 2017).

Preliminary member checking began on October 25, 2024, when emerging descriptions and theme summaries were discussed with 14 informants who had participated by that stage of data collection. Their feedback resulted in one minor correction to the terminology used for a ritual element. As fieldwork continued, the interpretations were refined using the complete set of 17 interviews. The representative statements and their associated interpretations were subsequently presented to, heard by, and agreed upon by all 17 interviewed informants. This iterative procedure allowed participant feedback to inform the developing analysis while recognizing that member checking occurred during an ongoing period of fieldwork (Shin, 2022).

Institutional ethical approval was granted on October 7, 2024, through Research Implementation Assignment Agreement Letter No. 430/4889-KEBUD/DIKBUD/2024. Informed consent was obtained from all 17 informants on October 10, 2024, before their participation in interviews, observations, and visual documentation. Participants received information about the study's purpose and procedures, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality arrangements, the intended use of interview quotations and visual materials, and their right to withdraw.

Pseudonyms were used to protect the informants' identities, except for Amaq Suriah, who explicitly consented to the use of his real name. Verbal consent was also obtained from 28 audience members included in the field documentation. Photographs and video recordings used for research and publication were collected with explicit consent. Permission to conduct the study in Longserang Village was obtained from the Head of Longserang Village. Together, these procedures supported the credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results were developed from recurring patterns across 17 interviews, 38 hours of observation, visual documentation, and document analysis. The quotations presented below were selected as representative excerpts.

Background of the Creation of Baris Arug

Community oral histories associate the origin of Baris Arug with people who fled conflict during the reign of Anak Agung Gde Ngurah Karangasem and continued to seek refuge in the Longserang forest during the Dutch colonial period. According to the informants, the displaced community subsequently cleared forest areas and developed rice fields and gardens. Thirteen men who successfully cultivated the land

expressed their collective joy by forming a marching line while carrying agricultural tools. This performance later became known as *Baris Arug Arum Manis Pade Seneng*, which informants interpreted as a joyful or harmonious procession.

"Tiga belas orang laki-laki lari dari perang, lalu buka lahan sawah di Longserang. Panen berhasil, bikin barisan bawa alat tani untuk rayakan panen, itulah Baris Arug, Arum Manis Pade Seneng."

"Thirteen men fled the conflict and opened agricultural land in Longserang. After a successful harvest, they formed a procession while carrying farming tools to celebrate. This became known as Baris Arug, or Arum Manis Pade Seneng, the joyful procession." (Amaq Suriah, Dance Elder/Leader, 85-minute interview, November 15, 2024)

"Banyak orang yang menyelamatkan diri ke hutan Longserang pada zaman Anak Agung Gde Ngurah Karangasem, lanjut zaman Belanda."

"Many people sought refuge in the Longserang forest during the reign of Anak Agung Gde Ngurah Karangasem, and this continued into the Dutch colonial period." (Bapak M. [pseudonym], age 68, 52 years of involvement, 50-minute interview, November 15, 2024)

Village elders also traced the performance to at least the period of the Japanese occupation. Their accounts indicate that the dance has been transmitted across several generations, although the study did not establish a precise date of origin through archival evidence.

"This performance has existed since the Japanese occupation. It is already more than 50 years old." (Bapak S. [pseudonym], age 56, 39 years of involvement, 50-minute interview, November 15, 2024)

Performance Form of Baris Arug

Observation and visual documentation showed that a Baris Arug performance consists of two interconnected stages: preparation and implementation. The complete sequence is illustrated in Figure 2. The preparation stage begins with arranging ritual offerings known as *andang-andang* or *braspati*. The offerings include rice, betel leaves, areca nuts, a chicken, coconut, mixed flowers, and water. Amaq Suriah leads a collective prayer using these offerings to request safety and the smooth completion of the performance.

"Andang-andang isinya beras, daun sirih, pinang, ayam, kelapa, bunga, air. Saya yang pimpin doa biar pertunjukan lancar, tidak ada halangan."

"The andang-andang contains rice, betel leaves, areca nuts, chicken, coconut, flowers, and water. I lead the prayer so that the performance proceeds smoothly and without obstacles." (Amaq Suriah, Dance Elder/Leader, 85-minute interview, December 28, 2024)

After the ritual, musicians prepare the *jidor*, *tar* drums, and flute, while the dancers put on black clothing representing farmers' attire. They then prepare the farming tools and bamboo hats used as performance properties before putting on their masks. As shown in Figure 2, these activities form a structured preparation sequence leading to the commander-led marching performance.

The dance uses 13 masks: one mask for the commander and 12 for the other members. The commander's mask is predominantly red, whereas the members'

masks combine white, pink, and brown. The masks display different facial expressions, including laughing, whistling, serious, and cheerful expressions. Informants interpreted this variation as representing the emotions and experiences of farmers working together in the fields.

"Topeng komandan merah tebal, anggota campur putih-pink-coklat. Ekspresi beda-beda: ketawa, siul, serius, ceria gambaran petani di sawah."

"The commander's mask is predominantly red, while the members' masks combine white, pink, and brown. Their expressions differ – some are laughing, whistling, serious, or cheerful – representing farmers' emotions in the fields." (Pak Muis [pseudonym], Senior Dancer, 55-minute interview, November 15, 2024)

The dancers carry machetes, hoes, sickles, crowbars, and bamboo hats. These objects refer to forest clearing, land preparation, and agricultural work associated with the community's account of the dance's origin. Informants also explained that the masks and dancers have fixed positions within the line, which they understood as representing continuity, stability, and group cohesion. Figure 3 documents the masks, farming tools, and complete costume used during the performance.

"Alat tani: parang, cangkul, arit, linggis, caping bambu. Posisi topeng tidak pernah berganti sejak dulu, simbol kekompakan kelompok."

"The farming tools include machetes, hoes, sickles, crowbars, and bamboo hats. The positions of the masks have remained unchanged over time, symbolizing the group's unity." (Pak Jamil [pseudonym], Musician, 45-minute interview, November 15, 2024)



Figure 3. Baris Arug Masks and Farming Tools. Panel (a): The commander's predominantly red mask, interpreted by participants as a symbol of leadership. Panel (b): Members' masks in white, pink, and brown, displaying laughing, whistling, serious, and cheerful expressions associated with farmers' emotions. Panel (c): Farming tools – including machetes, hoes, sickles, crowbars, and bamboo hats – carried by dancers in fixed positions and associated with agricultural labor and group cohesion. Panel (d): The complete costume consisting of black farmers' clothing, masks, and performance properties. Photographs were taken during a rehearsal with participants' consent in December 2024.

During the implementation stage, Baris Arug is performed by 13 male dancers from Longserang Village: one commander and 12 members. The dancers form a vertical line and perform variations of marching movements directed by the commander through shouted instructions. Figure 1 presents a partial view of this formation, in which nine of the 13 dancers are visible.

The dancers are required to attend carefully to the commander's cues and coordinate their movements with the other members. When a dancer responds to an incorrect cue or moves at the wrong time, the commander immediately stops or corrects the movement. Field notes from the four observed performances recorded approximately five to seven corrections per event, primarily involving timing and responses to directional commands.

"Komandan teriak perintah: 'Hadap Timur! Hadap Utara! Hadap Barat!' Kalau salah ikut cue, langsung dimarahi: 'Oi salah! Ulang lagi!' Ini yang ajarkan disiplin."

"The commander shouts instructions such as, 'Face east! Face north! Face west!' When someone follows the wrong cue, the commander immediately corrects the dancer by saying, 'That is wrong; repeat it.' This is how discipline is practiced." (Pak Muis [pseudonym], Senior Dancer, 55-minute interview, October 25, 2024)

The dancers' positions also remain relatively stable across performances. Participants associated this continuity with commitment to one's role and the stability of the group.

"Posisi saya nomor 3 dari depan sejak 1995, tidak pernah pindah. Ini simbol kestabilan kelompok."

"I have occupied the third position from the front since 1995 and have never changed places. This represents the stability of the group." (Pak Jamil [pseudonym], Musician, 45-minute interview, October 28, 2024)

Together, Figures 1–3 document the principal visual and performative components of Baris Arug. Figure 1 shows the commander-led vertical formation and the coordinated use of farming tools. Figure 2 presents the transition from ritual and material preparation to the marching performance. Figure 3 details the masks, costumes, and agricultural properties through which participants communicate leadership, farmer identity, emotional expression, hard work, and group cohesion.

Functions of Baris Arug in Community Life

The interviews with 17 informants and observations of four community performances identified five interconnected functions of Baris Arug. First, the dance provides entertainment during weddings and circumcision ceremonies. Field notes recorded audiences of more than 100 people at each observed performance. Second, the procession creates opportunities for community participation because residents often walk behind or gather around the dancers. Third, its movements and agricultural properties remind community members of collective labor and the history of farming in Longserang. Fourth, the performance reinforces local cultural identity by maintaining recognizable masks, costumes, music, formations, and ritual practices. Fifth, rehearsals and performances provide a setting in which younger members learn the dance and the meanings associated with it.

"Baris Arug buat hiburan pesta kawin dan sunat. Semua banjar ikut jalan di belakang, suasana rame, ukhuwah tambah erat."

"Baris Arug provides entertainment at weddings and circumcision ceremonies. People from the village walk behind the procession, creating a lively atmosphere and strengthening social bonds." (Pak Razak [pseudonym], Village Youth Leader, 40-minute interview, October 15, 2024)

Participants also connected specific performance elements with character-related meanings. Farming tools were associated with hard work, the straight formation with discipline and coordination, and the commander's role with leadership and responsibility.

"Alat tani ingatkan kerja keras petani, barisan lurus ajarkan disiplin, komandan tunjukkan tanggung jawab. Ini pelajaran buat generasi muda."

"The farming tools remind us of farmers' hard work, the straight formation teaches discipline, and the commander demonstrates responsibility. These provide lessons for the younger generation." (Pak Hasan [pseudonym], Community Leader, 50-minute interview, October 12, 2024)

Based on the recurring interpretations found across interviews, observations, and visual documentation, Table 5 presents a provisional mapping between the principal elements of Baris Arug, their character-related meanings, supporting evidence, and possible educational applications. The proposed school activities have not yet been implemented or evaluated and should therefore be understood as pedagogical possibilities rather than demonstrated educational outcomes.

Table 5. Provisional Mapping of Baris Arug Elements, Character-Related Meanings, and Possible Educational Applications

Dance Element	Observed Behavior or Symbol	Character-Related Meaning	Supporting Evidence	Possible Age-Appropriate Educational Application
<i>Andang-andang</i> ritual offerings	Collective preparation and prayer before the performance	Gratitude, spiritual awareness, communal responsibility	"I lead the prayer so that the performance proceeds smoothly" (Amaq Suriah, December 28, 2024)	Guided cultural reflection on gratitude and the meaning of ritual traditions without requiring students to reproduce religious practices
Vertical line formation	Dancers maintain assigned positions and coordinate their movements	Discipline, coordination, commitment to group roles	Field observations; "I have occupied the third position from the front since 1995" (Pak Jamil, October 28, 2024)	Collaborative movement exercises and group reflection on shared responsibility
Commander's red mask	A single leader directs the formation and performance sequence	Leadership, responsibility, accountability	Participants identified the red mask as belonging to the commander; Figure 3	Rotating student-leadership activities using clearly defined and non-punitive responsibilities
Farming tools	Dancers carry objects associated	Hard work, independence, respect for	"The farming tools remind us of farmers' hard	Use of safe replicas, storytelling, or

Dance Element	Observed Behavior or Symbol	Character-Related Meaning	Supporting Evidence	Possible Age-Appropriate Educational Application
	with forest clearing and agricultural work	agricultural livelihoods	work” (Pak Hasan, October 12, 2024)	school-garden activities to introduce agricultural heritage
Shouted directional commands	Dancers attend to cues, coordinate responses, and correct timing errors	Attention, self-regulation, responsiveness, collective coordination	“Face east! Face north! Face west!” (Pak Muis, October 25, 2024); field notes documenting movement corrections	Cue-response movement games using supportive, non-punitive feedback

Note. The educational applications are interpretive propositions derived from the community meanings documented in this study. Their feasibility, cultural appropriateness, safety, inclusivity, and effects on students require collaborative development and classroom-based evaluation.

Discussion

Historical Background and Symbolic Foundations

The oral histories collected in this study associate Baris Arug with the experiences of 13 men who fled conflict, opened agricultural land in Longserang, and celebrated a successful harvest by forming a procession while carrying farming tools. Amaq Suriah’s account—“*Tiga belas orang laki-laki lari dari perang...*” (November 15, 2024)—connects the dance with collective struggle, agricultural labor, and communal joy. Because this chronology is based primarily on community memory rather than archival verification, it should be interpreted as a locally transmitted historical narrative rather than as a definitively established historical record. Nevertheless, the consistency of this narrative across informants demonstrates how the Longserang community understands the cultural foundations of Baris Arug.

The dance therefore functions as an embodied representation of the community’s relationship with land, labor, survival, and collective achievement. Its marching formation transforms agricultural experience into a shared cultural performance, while its tools and costumes preserve memories of forest clearing and cultivation. This finding is consistent with studies showing that local-wisdom-based dances often reflect communities’ relationships with nature and work and can communicate diligence, cooperation, and collective responsibility through embodied cultural symbols (Rosala & Budiman, 2020; Umah, 2021; McLeod, 2017; Grootenboer & Marshman, 2017). Traditional dance activities have also been associated with discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and cultural identity when students participate in structured and culturally meaningful practice (Trivena et al., 2024; Yetti et al., 2024). However, the present study identifies these values within community interpretations of Baris Arug; it does not demonstrate that the dance has already produced such outcomes among elementary school students.

Performance Structure and Sacred Dimensions

The performance sequence presented in Figure 2 shows that Baris Arug begins not with movement but with collective ritual preparation. The *andang-andang* or *braspati* offerings—comprising rice, betel leaves, areca nuts, chicken, coconut, flowers, and water—are prepared before the dancers put on their costumes and masks and before the musicians prepare the *jidor*, *tar*, and flute. The prayer led by Amaq Suriah expresses the performers' hope that the event will proceed safely and without interruption. This sequence indicates that Baris Arug is understood by its practitioners as more than community entertainment; it also contains spiritual, relational, and ethical dimensions.

The ritual communicates gratitude, humility, collective dependence, and respect for inherited cultural practice. Similar research has shown that rituals accompanying traditional arts can transmit religious and communal meanings across generations (Umah, 2021; Thresia et al., 2024; Hebert & Rinsma, 2019; Stunell, 2018). Nevertheless, the pedagogical adaptation proposed in Table 5 should not be interpreted as a recommendation to reproduce the ritual unchanged in schools. Sacred or community-owned practices may lose meaning when separated from their original cultural setting. Accordingly, any educational use should focus on guided cultural interpretation—such as discussing gratitude, communal preparation, and the cultural meaning of the offerings—rather than requiring students to participate in a ritual as a formal religious activity.

Community elders and cultural practitioners should be involved in deciding which elements may be shared, explained, adapted, or reserved for community performance. School-community co-design can reduce the risks of decontextualization, tokenism, and cultural appropriation while preserving the authority of local knowledge holders (Sanchez et al., 2023; Wallin & Scribe, 2022; Washington & Johnson, 2023). Thus, Figure 2 provides not only a visual description of the performance sequence but also a basis for distinguishing between cultural interpretation and direct ritual replication in educational settings.

Discipline, Coordinated Attention, and Leadership through Movement

The vertical formation illustrated in Figure 1, the fixed positions described by Pak Jamil, and the commander's role represented by the red mask in Figure 3, Panel (a), demonstrate that Baris Arug requires coordinated attention and commitment to shared performance rules. The commander gives directional cues, while the other dancers must listen, respond at the appropriate time, maintain their positions, and align their movements with the group. Field observations recorded approximately five to seven movement corrections during each performance, particularly when dancers responded to the wrong cue or moved out of time.

These practices were interpreted by informants as expressions of discipline. However, discipline in this context is better understood as coordinated attention, responsiveness, self-regulation, and responsibility to the group rather than obedience alone. This interpretation is consistent with research indicating that structured movement, shared rhythm, and synchronized group activity require participants to monitor cues, regulate their actions, and coordinate with others (Rosala & Budiman, 2020; Fitch & Leverenz, 2017; Reimer & Lemaire, 2020; Risner, 2010; Bentley et al., 2023; Vilar et al., 2023). Shared movement can also promote social alignment, cooperation, and group belonging because each participant's action affects the success of the collective performance (Good et al., 2022; Horwitz et al., 2022).

The commander's position also provides an observable representation of leadership and accountability. Leadership in Baris Arug is not expressed solely through status or costume but through responsibility for directing the group, maintaining the performance sequence, and correcting errors. As proposed in Table 5, this element could inform rotating student-leadership activities in which children guide movement sequences and assume responsibility for supporting group coordination. Such adaptations should use constructive, non-punitive feedback rather than reproducing the commander's reprimands as a classroom disciplinary technique. The educational value lies in attention, role responsibility, and collective coordination, not in verbal harshness or unquestioned compliance.

Symbolic Identity, Agricultural Heritage, and Productive Values

The visual elements documented in Figure 3 communicate several layers of cultural identity. The commander's red mask distinguishes the leadership role, while the white, pink, and brown member masks display laughing, whistling, serious, and cheerful expressions. Informants associated these expressions with the varied emotions experienced by farmers working collectively in the fields. The 13 masks therefore represent individual differences within a stable group formation rather than an undifferentiated collective.

The agricultural properties shown in Figure 3, Panel (c) – machetes, hoes, sickles, crowbars, and bamboo hats – connect the performance to the historical narrative of forest clearing and agricultural cultivation. Their meaning arises not simply from their physical appearance but from their relationship to livelihood, endurance, and the community's productive history. Pak Hasan's statement that the farming tools remind younger people of farmers' hard work illustrates how material objects can operate as mnemonic devices through which occupational knowledge and community values are transmitted. This finding is consistent with literature showing that familiar cultural objects can strengthen respect for local livelihoods, cultural identity, and intergenerational memory (Yusuf, 2023; Barnes, 2020; Leddy, 2019; Buck & Snook, 2016).

Table 5 accordingly proposes the use of storytelling, safe replicas, visual materials, or school-garden activities rather than authentic machetes, sickles, or other hazardous tools. Such adaptations would allow students to explore agricultural heritage and the value of work without introducing avoidable safety risks. The tools should also not be reduced to generic symbols of "hard work"; their educational interpretation should retain their connection with Longserang's agricultural history, the labor of earlier generations, and the community narrative from which Baris Arug emerged.

Sociocultural Functions and Educational Potential

The findings show that Baris Arug serves several interconnected community functions. It provides entertainment at weddings and circumcision ceremonies, draws villagers into shared public space, reinforces local identity, recalls agricultural productivity, and creates opportunities for younger members to learn from experienced performers. Pak Razak's account of villagers walking behind the procession demonstrates that the audience does not remain entirely separate from the event. The procession becomes a participatory social occasion through which relationships and collective belonging are reinforced.

These findings support the interpretation of Baris Arug as a community-based space for intergenerational cultural transmission. Rehearsals and performances allow younger members to observe movements, learn fixed roles, become familiar with masks and musical instruments, and hear explanations of the dance's history and values. This resembles other traditional arts settings in which cultural knowledge is transmitted through participation, mentorship, repetition, and shared performance rather than through verbal instruction alone (Thresia et al., 2024; Rachmatini et al., 2023; Trivena et al., 2024; Yetti et al., 2024).

Table 5 translates these community meanings into provisional educational possibilities, including collaborative movement exercises, rotating leadership roles, cultural reflection, cue-response games, agricultural storytelling, and school-garden activities. These proposals are consistent with arts-based character education and culturally responsive pedagogy, which emphasize embodied participation and connections between learning, identity, and community knowledge (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Arthur et al., 2020; Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Sanderse, 2013; Hadjioannou, 2022; Burns et al., 2020). However, the proposed activities have not yet been implemented or evaluated. Table 5 should therefore be interpreted as a framework for curriculum development and pilot testing rather than evidence that Baris Arug-based instruction improves students' character.

Implementation would require sustained collaboration among teachers, Baris Arug practitioners, village leaders, families, and curriculum developers. School-community partnership models indicate that the involvement of elders, cultural mentors, and traditional artists can strengthen cultural connectedness, student engagement, and the authenticity of locally grounded learning (Ferguson et al., 2021; Wallin & Scribe, 2022; Sanchez et al., 2023). Cultural practitioners should not be treated merely as occasional performers; they should participate in deciding the learning objectives, explaining cultural meanings, determining appropriate adaptations, and evaluating whether the educational materials represent the tradition respectfully.

Cultural Integrity, Safety, and Inclusive Participation

The educational adaptation of Baris Arug requires attention to cultural integrity, safety, and inclusion. First, the *andang-andang* ritual should be explained within its community context and adapted only with the agreement of cultural knowledge holders. Second, agricultural properties should be represented by safe replicas, photographs, or supervised learning activities. Third, the commander's corrective role should be transformed into supportive leadership rather than punitive classroom discipline.

A further consideration concerns gender. Baris Arug is currently performed by 13 male dancers, and all 17 informants in this study were male. This composition is an important characteristic of the documented community practice, but it raises questions about how the dance should be introduced in mixed-gender elementary classrooms. Schools should not automatically exclude girls from learning about or participating in adapted activities, nor should they alter culturally significant roles without consultation. A collaborative approach could provide multiple forms of participation—movement, music, narration, costume study, visual documentation, historical inquiry, and leadership—while cultural practitioners clarify which features are essential to the traditional performance and which may be adapted for educational

purposes. Culturally sustaining and critical dance pedagogies support such negotiated adaptations because they treat traditional arts as living cultural practices while examining issues of access, representation, and participation (Washington & Johnson, 2023; Allen-Handy et al., 2021; Mahafza & Smith, 2022).

Theoretical and Practical Contribution

The principal contribution of this study is not cross-cultural validation of a universal character-education model. Rather, it is the documentation of how one Sasak community interprets the historical narratives, performance structures, objects, rituals, and social functions of an under-documented traditional dance. Figures 1–3 provide visual evidence of the formation, performance sequence, masks, costumes, and farming tools, while Table 5 organizes the relationships between these elements, community meanings, and possible educational adaptations.

The proposed mapping extends embodied-learning and culturally responsive education perspectives by showing how character-related meanings are located in coordinated action, material culture, agricultural memory, ritual preparation, and intergenerational participation (McLeod, 2017; Gay, 2018; Barnes, 2020; Fitch & Leverenz, 2017). Unlike frameworks that begin with predetermined character categories and search for corresponding cultural examples, this study develops its mapping from meanings articulated by Baris Arug practitioners and observed within the performance context. This approach helps preserve the distinction between community-derived interpretations and externally imposed educational labels.

Nevertheless, the mapping remains provisional. The study did not measure discipline, cooperation, responsibility, gratitude, or cultural identity among students. Future research should therefore co-design an age-appropriate Baris Arug learning model with teachers and cultural practitioners and evaluate both implementation processes and student outcomes. Evaluation could combine validated character or social-emotional rubrics, structured behavioral observations, teacher records, student reflections, portfolios, and interviews. Rubric-based assessment can support systematic observation, but it requires clear indicators, trained raters, and evidence of reliability and cultural appropriateness (Pancorbo et al., 2021; Tobón et al., 2021; Pratiwi et al., 2023). Such research would determine whether the educational mechanisms proposed in Table 5 are feasible, safe, inclusive, culturally respectful, and capable of supporting measurable learning outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

This study documents Baris Arug as a traditional Sasak dance rooted in community narratives about farmers who opened agricultural land in Longserang and celebrated successful harvests through processional movements, ritual offerings, music, masks, and agricultural properties. Its performance structure—including collective ritual preparation, commander-led marching formations, fixed dancer positions, distinctive masks, and coordinated musical accompaniment—embodies locally understood values of hard work, discipline, coordinated attention, cooperation, leadership, responsibility, gratitude, and communal solidarity.

In community life, Baris Arug functions as entertainment at weddings and circumcision ceremonies, a participatory form of social communication, a reminder of agricultural livelihoods, a marker of Sasak cultural identity, and a medium for transmitting cultural knowledge across generations. The study also proposes a provisional pedagogical mapping that connects the dance's movements, symbols,

objects, and social practices with possible local-content and extracurricular learning activities. However, because the study did not implement Baris Arug in classrooms or assess changes in students' character, these educational applications should be understood as culturally grounded possibilities rather than evidence of educational effectiveness. The findings are also context-specific because they were derived from one Sasak farming community and 17 male informants involved in or knowledgeable about the tradition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools in Lingsar District and surrounding areas should collaborate with Baris Arug practitioners, village authorities, families, and teacher-education institutions to co-design age-appropriate learning materials, local-content activities, and extracurricular programs. Cultural practitioners should participate not only as performers but also as co-designers who explain the meanings, protocols, and limits of adaptation associated with the dance. This collaboration is essential to ensure that Baris Arug is introduced accurately, respectfully, and without separating sacred or community-owned elements from their cultural context.

Educational adaptation should prioritize safety, inclusion, and supportive pedagogy. The commander-led formation may be adapted into collaborative cue-response movement activities that develop attention, coordination, shared responsibility, and rotating leadership. The meaning of the *andang-andang* ritual may be explored through guided cultural reflection on gratitude and communal preparation rather than through compulsory ritual reproduction. Farming tools should be represented through photographs, stories, or safe replicas and may be connected with school-garden activities and discussions of agricultural heritage. Fixed masks and dancer positions may be used to examine cultural identity, continuity, and group responsibility. Because Baris Arug is traditionally performed by men, schools should consult cultural practitioners when designing inclusive forms of participation for girls and boys through movement, music, narration, costume study, historical inquiry, and visual documentation.

Local governments and teacher-education institutions should support implementation by developing culturally grounded teaching resources, providing professional development for teachers, facilitating partnerships between schools and cultural practitioners, and establishing safeguards for the respectful use of community knowledge and visual materials. Such support would help move local-wisdom-based arts education beyond occasional cultural performances toward sustained and contextually meaningful learning.

Future research should begin with collaborative curriculum development and small-scale feasibility studies before testing educational outcomes. Pilot studies should examine the cultural appropriateness, safety, inclusivity, acceptability, and practical implementation of Baris Arug-based activities in elementary school settings. Subsequent mixed-method or quasi-experimental research may evaluate changes in cooperation, responsibility, self-regulation, cultural knowledge, and cultural identity through validated questionnaires, structured behavioral observations, teacher assessments, student reflections, portfolios, video-based analysis, and interviews. Studies should also involve more diverse student populations and school contexts across Lombok to determine the transferability of the proposed pedagogical framework.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no financial, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct, interpretation, or reporting of this study.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study (field notes, interview transcripts, photos/videos) are available from the corresponding author, Sri Sukarni (srisukarni@undikma.ac.id), upon reasonable request. The data contain information that could compromise community privacy and are not publicly available due to cultural sensitivities.

Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Sri Sukarni	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓			✓	
Agus Salim		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
B Nufus Tarenaksa	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Tesa Yustika	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		
Ruslan Yusoh		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓			✓		

C : Conceptualization

M : Methodology

So : Software

Va : Validation

Fo : Formal analysis

I : Investigation

R : Resources

D : Data Curation

O : Writing - Original Draft

E : Writing - Review & Editing

Vi : Visualization

Su : Supervision

P : Project administration

Fu : Funding acquisition

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