

Sundanese Trisila values as a cultural framework for bullying prevention: A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how Trisila or the three core values of Sundanese culture (silih asih or mutual compassion, silih asah or mutual learning, and silih asuh or mutual nurturing) can serve as a preventive framework for bullying in boarding school environments. Using a systematic literature review approach guided by the PRISMA 2020 protocol, the study analyzed 6 scholarly articles published between 2015 and 2025 that discuss character education, cultural values, and bullying prevention in Indonesian and international contexts. The findings indicate that the integration of Trisila values aligns with moral and social-emotional learning frameworks in fostering empathy, cooperation, and responsibility among students. The study emphasizes that cultural-based counseling and education programs can reinforce both individual moral reasoning and communal harmony, thus mitigating bullying behavior in boarding schools. The novelty of this research lies in its cultural-philosophical perspective, which bridges local wisdom and contemporary character education models. Practical implications are directed toward school counselors and educators to implement Trisila-based character development programs as preventive and promotive efforts for a safer school climate.

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1. Introduction

Adolescence is a crucial developmental period characterized by rapid cognitive, emotional, and social changes that shape an individual's moral and interpersonal identity (Munsch et al., 2025). Ideally, adolescents develop empathy, self-control, and mutual respect, qualities that support healthy peer relationships and social harmony within school environments. These competencies form the foundation for building character, moral reasoning, and resilience during the transition from dependence to autonomy. However, there is often a gap between these ideals and the reality of adolescent behavior, especially in boarding schools. Recent studies indicate that bullying remains one of the most persistent behavioral problems among students (Sari & Abidin, 2023). It manifests through physical aggression, verbal harassment, social exclusion, and cyberbullying. In Indonesia, bullying cases have risen both in regular schools and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), suggesting that moral and emotional education has not yet fully internalized cultural and ethical values that promote empathy and social care (Warsongko et al., 2024). Surveys conducted by several educational researchers reveal that bullying often stems from peer hierarchy, a lack of emotional literacy, and the

limited integration of moral and cultural education. In response to this challenge, educators and scholars have increasingly turned to indigenous cultural frameworks as alternative foundations for strengthening character education (Azizah & Sa'adah, 2025; Mustofiyah et al., 2024.; Rijal, 2025). Local wisdom provides ethical values that are contextually relevant, affective, and community oriented dimensions often overlooked in modern curricula (Arifin & Kusdarini, 2024; Hasanah et al., 2016). One of the most profound examples of this wisdom in the Sundanese tradition is Trisila, a philosophical triad that consists of *silih asih* (mutual affection and compassion), *silih asah* (mutual learning and intellectual humility), and *silih asuh* (mutual nurturing and care (Fauzia et al., 2020). These three principles embody the essence of harmonious human relationships and are deeply rooted in Sundanese cosmology as the moral foundation of coexistence (Mulyani et al., 2024).

Integrating Trisila values into school-based counseling and character education provides an alternative paradigm that aligns with Indonesia's multicultural context. In boarding school settings, where students live and learn together under close supervision, the application of Trisila can nurture emotional sensitivity, cooperation, and collective responsibility. These values resonate with global frameworks such as Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and moral education but offer a deeper cultural grounding that reflects local ethics. Therefore, this study aims to systematically review empirical and conceptual literature to explore how Trisila can be applied as a preventive model for bullying in boarding schools, bridging cultural values with contemporary counseling practice.

Students in boarding schools are expected to possess strong personal qualities such as independence, discipline, and integrity. The boarding school system, which emphasizes togetherness, structure, and continuous supervision, is designed to cultivate these character traits. Within Indonesia, boarding schools are often associated with Islamic *pesantren*, institutions that have long upheld traditions of moral education. The *pesantren* system seeks to build strong moral character through an approach that integrates tradition with innovation (Kurniawati & Anshory, 2024). As modern education evolves, these institutions must adapt to current developments without losing their cultural and religious essence (Musaddad, 2023). This highlights the urgency of cultivating order, harmony, and togetherness within boarding environments as a foundation for moral and social character formation in the modern era. In Indonesia's broader educational landscape, local cultural values play a critical role in shaping students' social relationships. The Trisila concept, as part of Sundanese cultural heritage, emphasizes the importance of harmonious, collaborative, and empathetic human relations (Nugraha & Movitaria, 2022). The values of *silih asih*, *silih asah*, and *silih asuh* align closely with modern principles of character education, particularly in fostering social awareness, empathy, and moral responsibility (Nugraha & Movitaria, 2022). In the context of boarding schools, applying Trisila values can serve as a strategy for preventing bullying by cultivating a culture of care, empathy, and mutual respect among students.

Despite this potential, academic exploration of the relationship between local cultural values and efforts to reduce aggressive behavior in schools remains limited. Most studies on bullying prevention still focus on technical aspects, such as rule enforcement and individual interventions, rather than on value-based education. Research on Trisila as a form of Sundanese cultural wisdom has been primarily anthropological, lacking practical frameworks for educational application (Hasanah et al., 2016). Consequently, there remains a gap in the academic literature regarding how local wisdom can be systematically integrated into counseling and character education to prevent bullying. Previous studies have shown that character education rooted in Islamic and cultural values can reduce conflict and promote supportive school environments (Ramli et al., 2023). Integrating such values into educational and counseling services offers opportunities to strengthen the role of teachers and counselors as moral role models and agents of change. Teachers who internalize Trisila values can foster moral discipline and social harmony among students (Nugraha & Movitaria, 2022).

To address the existing research gap, the present study develops a conceptual framework that combines Trisila-based character education with preventive strategies for bullying in boarding schools. The values of *silih asah* (mutual learning), *silih asih* (mutual compassion), and *silih asuh* (mutual care) serve as an ethical foundation for building a supportive, collaborative, and respectful learning environment. Incorporating these values into educational and counseling programs may help reduce aggressive behavior and strengthen positive interpersonal relationships among students. Therefore, integrating local cultural values such as Trisila into educational policies and counseling practices is essential for preventing conflict and creating a more harmonious and inclusive learning environment. By applying Trisila principles, schools especially boarding schools can cultivate

empathy, mutual understanding, and social resilience, which ultimately contribute to the prevention of bullying and the development of a peaceful, character-based educational climate.

2. Method

2.1. Research design

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design to synthesize empirical and conceptual research concerning the integration of Trisila values in bullying prevention within boarding-school settings. The SLR method was selected to ensure a comprehensive, transparent, and replicable process of identifying, evaluating, and interpreting relevant literature (Page et al., 2021). Through this design, the study systematically explored how indigenous cultural values, specifically the Sundanese Trisila principles of *silih asih*, *silih asah*, and *silih asuh* have been discussed, applied, or theoretically proposed in educational and counseling contexts.

2.2. Article selection criteria

Inclusion criteria were established to ensure that only relevant and high-quality studies were included in the review. These criteria covered aspects such as publication year, research focus, methodology, and alignment with the study's objectives. The final list of selected studies that met these standards is summarized in Table 1, reflecting the rigor and consistency of the selection process.

Table 1. Article criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Articles published between 2015 - 2025	Articles not peer-reviewed (blogs, news, etc)
Empirical or Conceptual studies on character education, bullying prevention, or cultural values.	Papers lacking clear methodology or theoretical basis.
Studies Focused on Indonesia or similar boarding school context	Duplicate publications or conference only.
Published in English or Bahasa Indonesia	

Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria shown in Table 1, a total of 127 articles were initially identified from various digital databases. After removing duplicates, screening abstracts, and evaluating content quality, 35 articles were found to meet the inclusion criteria for full-text analysis. These selected studies provide a solid foundation for understanding how character education and cultural values, particularly the Sundanese Trisila principles, can be integrated into bullying prevention efforts within the boarding school context.

2.3. Data sources and search strategy

Searches were conducted through major databases including Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Garuda Indonesian Publication Index, using keyword combinations such as: Trisila, Character Education, Bullying Prevention, Boarding School, Indigenous Values, Counseling Education, Local Wisdom, Social Behavior. Additional manual searches from relevant journal references were performed to capture literature and contextual studies on Sundanese Culture. All retrieved articles were organized using Zotero App for data management and citation accuracy.

2.4. Data extraction and analysis

The included studies were analyzed thematically using a qualitative synthesis approach to identify patterns and conceptual connections. Each article was carefully coded based on the year of publication, authors and institution, study focus, research methodology, and key findings related to Trisila or similar cultural values such as empathy, mutual respect, and communal learning. The emerging themes were then categorized into three domains that align with the Trisila philosophy, namely *Silih Asih* (compassionate relationship), *Silih Asah* (collaborative learning), and *Silih Asuh* (nurturing and protective guidance).

2.5. PRISMA flow summary

Based on the PRISMA diagram shown in Figure 1, the review process consisted of four main phases: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. During the identification phase, a total of 20 records were retrieved from databases, with 3 records removed as ineligible by automation tools. In the screening phase, 17 records were reviewed, and 3 were excluded due to irrelevance. Subsequently, 15 reports were sought for retrieval, but 9 could not be accessed. In the eligibility phase, 6 full-text reports were assessed and all met the inclusion criteria. Finally, 6 studies were included in the systematic review for further analysis.

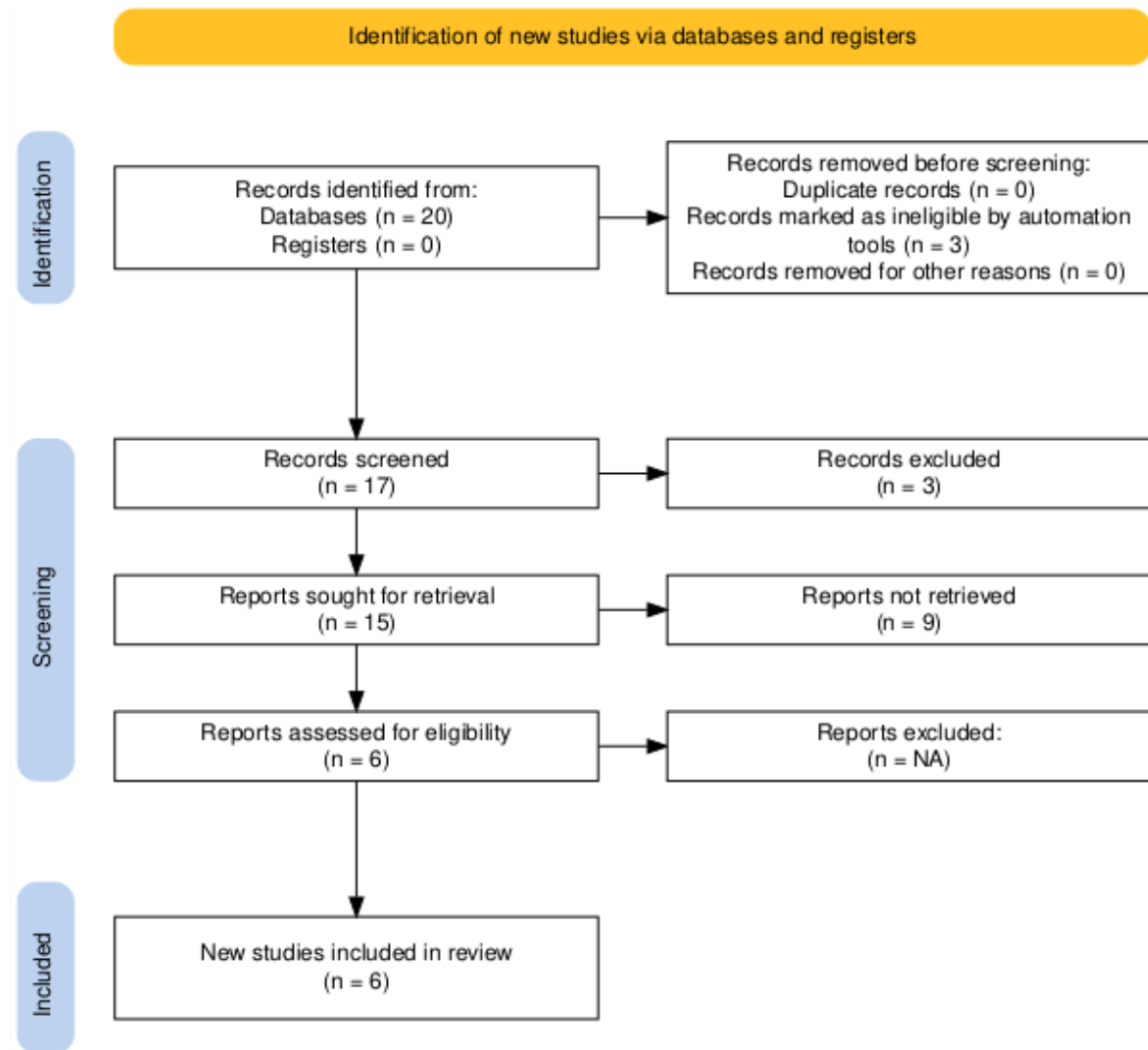


Fig. 1. PRISMA diagram

2.6. Validation and trustworthiness

To ensure methodological rigor, data coding was independently reviewed by two researchers with expertise in guidance and counseling. Inter-rater consistency was established through triangulation and peer debriefing. Disagreements in coding were resolved through consensus discussion. Thematic validity was confirmed by aligning findings with established theoretical frameworks (Dahal, 2025; Kushnir, 2025).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Validation and trustworthiness

Table 2 show literature review, total of 6 articles were included in the final synthesis. The studies were published between 2015 and 2025, comprising both empirical and conceptual research conducted in Indonesia and comparable cultural contexts. Most of the reviewed literature explored character education, bullying prevention programs, and the role of cultural or religious values in shaping prosocial behavior. The following table summarizes the key literature used in this review.

Table 2. Literature review

Author(s) & Year	Title	Journal	Focus	Implications
(Dwiputra & Sundawa, 2023)	Analysis of Potentials and Challenges of Culture-based Learning in Indonesia: A Systematic Literature Review	Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian Dan Kajian Kepustakaan Di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran Dan Pembelajaran,	Culture-based learning has the potential to develop students' attitudes, knowledge, and academic behavior.	The implication of this study is that integrating cultural values into guidance and counseling services in schools has the potential to improve social skills among boarding school students.
(Sumiratsih & Sriyanto, 2024)	Upaya Pencegahan Bullying dengan Menciptakan Iklim Sekolah Berbasis Kearifan Lokal.	Social Sciences & Humanities.	The study reveals opportunities for preventing bullying in schools by creating a positive school climate based on local wisdom.	Internalizing local wisdom values to create a safe and bully-free school environment.
(Komara et al., 2024)	Problem solving technique based on trisilas culture to improve self-regulated learning (SRL) for students in the digital era	Konseli: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling (E-Journal)	The application of problem-solving techniques based on trisila values is effective in improving self-regulated learning abilities.	Implementation of trisila values in problem-solving techniques in guidance counseling services.
(Rijal, 2025)	The Role of Character Education in Preventing Bullying Behaviour in Islamic Boarding Schools	Dirasah: Jurnal Studi Ilmu dan Manajemen Pendidikan Islam	Moral & character education	Character-based guidance reduces aggression and strengthens peer empathy.
(Abdurrohim et al., 2024)	Model Anti-Bullying Education Innovation in Islamic Boarding Schools	Al-Ishlah	Model anti bullying education	Preventive culture-based innovation reduces bullying frequency.
(Ariyanti et al., 2024)	The Role of Character Education in Preventing Verbal Bullying Behavior	Jurnal Cakrawala Pendas, 10(1)	Character education in preventing verbal bullying	Character learning reduces verbal aggression in peers.

3.1 Thematic synthesis based on trisila framework

The thematic analysis of the reviewed studies reveals that the Trisila framework, which includes silih asih (mutual compassion), silih asah (mutual learning), and silih asuh (mutual nurturing), serves as an integrative model for embedding Sundanese cultural values into guidance and counseling practices in boarding schools. Each dimension contributes to the formation of character, empathy, and self-regulation, which are essential in preventing bullying behaviors among adolescents in residential learning environments.

3.2 Silih Asih (mutual compasion): Building empathy and a positive school climate

The value of silih asih emphasizes compassion and empathy as the moral foundation of social interaction within the boarding school community. (Dwiputra & Sundawa, 2023) highlight that culture-based learning encourages social and emotional development while improving interpersonal skills and moral reasoning. Similarly that character education grounded in empathy and mutual respect

helps reduce aggressive tendencies and strengthens prosocial behavior among students (Rijal, 2025). In counseling practice, *silih asih* nurtures emotional sensitivity, mutual respect, and caring relationships among peers. This approach helps prevent bullying by promoting understanding and compassion as the basis of interaction.

3.3 Silih Asah (mutual learning): Self-regulation and reflective moral learning

The principle of *silih asah* reflects a reciprocal process of learning and self-improvement. The problem-solving techniques rooted in Trisila values effectively enhance students' ability to regulate their learning and emotions (Komara et al., 2024). When applied in counseling, *silih asah* promotes reflection, emotional awareness, and ethical decision-making. In the boarding school setting, this principle helps students manage conflict, develop moral reasoning, and take responsibility for their actions.

3.4 Silih Asuh (mutual nurturing): Guiding moral responsibility and care

The value of *silih asuh* highlights the importance of guidance, protection, and collective responsibility among members of the school community. The research found that creating a positive school climate based on local wisdom fosters belonging and reduces bullying incidents (Sumiratsih & Sriyanto, 2024). Another research also observed that culture-oriented preventive education promotes caring interactions and reduces aggression (Abdurrohm et al., 2024). Through mentoring, peer support, and empathetic teacher-student relationships, *silih asuh* creates a caring environment that supports safety and emotional well-being in boarding schools.

3.5 Integration of Trisila values in cultural counseling

The synthesis of these findings shows that integrating *silih asih*, *silih asah*, and *silih asuh* provides a comprehensive framework for character development in the context of counseling, particularly in boarding schools where students live, study, and socialize intensively within the same environment. The character-based education not only reduces verbal bullying but also enhances empathy and moral awareness among students in residential learning settings. In the boarding school context, Trisila values serve as daily ethical guidelines that shape both personal and collective behavior (Ariyanti et al., 2024). Counselors can apply these values in individual and group sessions to reinforce empathy (*silih asih*), reflection and self-discipline (*silih asah*), and mutual care (*silih asuh*). Together, these values create a counseling model that is culturally grounded, community-oriented, and aligned with the moral and social realities of students who live together in close-knit educational environments. Thus, the Trisila framework bridges Sundanese cultural wisdom with modern educational psychology and provides a sustainable foundation for fostering safe, respectful, and compassionate boarding school communities.

The trisila culture has great potential as a strategy for mitigating bullying in Islamic boarding schools. The application of these values not only reduces bullying, but also improves social relationships between students. Overall, the values of the Sundanese trisila culture have been proven to make a positive contribution to improving students' emotional capacity, overcoming conflict and bullying behavior, building a peaceful and inclusive school climate, and making counseling services more contextual, down-to-earth, relevant, and highly educational in instilling character education that can be used as a starting point for combating bullying behavior.

Although the trisila culture has great potential as a bullying mitigation strategy in Islamic boarding schools, the application of these values not only reduces bullying but also improves social relationships among students. Overall, the values of the Sundanese trisila culture have been proven to make a positive contribution to improving students' emotional capacity, overcoming conflict and bullying behavior, building a peaceful and inclusive school climate, and making guidance counseling services more contextual, down-to-earth, relevant, and highly educational in instilling character education that can be used as a starting point for combating bullying behavior.

The findings of this review offer several practical implications for various stakeholders in education. For counselors, it is recommended to apply Trisila values in counseling sessions through reflective discussions, empathy development, and peer mentoring as strategies to strengthen emotional safety and reduce bullying behaviors. For school leaders, embedding Trisila principles into character education programs and disciplinary policies can foster collaboration, respect, and a stronger sense of belonging among students. Meanwhile, for researchers, future studies are encouraged to investigate how Trisila-based counseling interventions can influence empathy, resilience, and moral behavior

across diverse educational and cultural contexts. In conclusion, the Trisila framework serves as a bridge between cultural identity and contemporary counseling practice. It shows that fostering empathy, self-awareness, and social care through local wisdom provides a sustainable and meaningful way to prevent bullying and cultivate harmony in boarding school environments

This study confirms that the Sundanese cultural values of Tri Silas, namely *silih asah* (mutual knowledge development), *silih asih* (mutual love), and *silih asuh* (mutual guidance), have great potential in mitigating the phenomenon of bullying in boarding schools. Based on a review of the literature, the application of these values can create a positive school climate, strengthen social relationships between students, and foster empathy, mutual respect, and solidarity. Thus, the internalization of Tri Silas not only serves as a strategy for preventing bullying but also as a foundation for strengthening character education and counseling based on local culture in boarding schools. The integration of Tri Silas values into educational policies and counseling services is expected to make boarding schools a safe, peaceful, and inclusive environment. In addition, this study opens opportunities for further empirical studies to test the effectiveness of implementing Tri Silas values in the context of modern education, so that guidance modules or intervention programs based on applicable and sustainable local cultural values can be developed.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that integrating the Trisila values of *silih asih*, *silih asah*, and *silih asuh* into guidance and counseling practice provides a culturally grounded framework for preventing bullying and developing character among students in boarding schools. The Trisila framework represents a holistic view of education that brings together moral understanding, emotional awareness, and social responsibility within a shared cultural context. The findings show that *silih asih* encourages empathy and mutual respect, *silih asah* strengthens self-control and moral reflection, and *silih asuh* promotes collective care and protection within the school community. When these values are applied consistently in counseling programs, they help build a learning environment that is safe, inclusive, and compassionate, which is essential for the personal and social growth of students in boarding schools. From a theoretical perspective, this study emphasizes the importance of local cultural wisdom as a foundation for modern counseling approaches. The Trisila framework offers a cultural and philosophical basis that complements contemporary practices such as social emotional learning and character education while preserving cultural authenticity and moral depth. In practical terms, this study suggests that school counselors and educators can incorporate Trisila values into individual and group counseling, mentoring programs, and character education initiatives. By applying these cultural principles, counseling can strengthen empathy, resilience, and moral awareness while helping students live harmoniously within their school community.

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